



CITY OF GLENDALE, CALIFORNIA

Community Development
Planning

633 E. Broadway, Suite 103
Glendale, CA 91206-4311
Tel. (818) 548-2140 Fax (818) 240-0392
glendaleca.gov

September 17, 2024

Aram Alajajian Aram & Anoush Khachekian
Alajajian-Marcoosi Architects Inc.
320 Arden Avenue, #120
Glendale, CA 91203

**RE: 1015 NORTH CENTRAL AVENUE
CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. PCUP-002795-2024**

(The Armenian Apostolic Church of Glendale, A Parish under
the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America)

➤ (ALSO SEE: STANDARDS VARIANCE CASE PVAR-003198-2024)

Dear Mr. Alajajian and Ms. Khachekian:

On July 31, 2024, the Planning Hearing Officer conducted and closed a public hearing, pursuant to the provisions of the Glendale Municipal Code, Title 30, Chapter 30.42, on your application for a Conditional Use Permit application for a proposed project which encompasses the expansion of and improvements to the existing Armenian Apostolic Church of Glendale, located in the "R-1250" - (High Density Residential) zone. The applicant is requesting a **CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT** to allow the expansion of the existing church, and Setback And Standards Variances to 1) Allow the removal and replacement of the existing church tower with new domes/bell tower elements with an overall building height of 55 feet, construction of a new detached accessory building consisting of an outdoor open altar with an overall height of 48 feet, five (5)-inches to the top of the dome/bell tower element, construct new 24-foot high columns, arched architectural elements and an 18-foot high entry gate and fence in the courtyard area, 2) Exceed the maximum allowed floor area of 500 square feet for the new accessory building (outdoor altar), and 3) Expand the existing church floor area and construct a new fence within the required street-front setback, and construct a new accessory building (outdoor altar) with a zero setback from the south interior property line, located at **1015 North Central Avenue**, described as Lot C, Parcel Map 1340, Tract Nos. 4045 and 4048 as per Map Book 176, Page 16 / APN: 5636-007-075 and 076, in the City of Glendale, County of Los Angeles.

CODE REQUIRES

Conditional Use Permit

- 1) Approval of a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) is required for a place of worship in the R-1250 (High Density Residential) Zone (GMC 30.11.020.B, Table 30.11-A).

APPLICANT'S PROPOSAL

Conditional Use Permit

- 1) Approval of a Conditional Use Permit for the expansion of a place of worship at the subject site.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION

The applicant provided a historic resource evaluation, prepared by Kaplan Chen Kaplan and dated December 20, 2023, for the project site (the "Kaplan Report"). The report concluded that the project site at 1015 North Central Avenue is not listed on the National Register of Historic Places, California Register of Historical Resources, or Glendale Register of Historic Resources, and has not been identified as a historic resource in any survey, and therefore, not eligible for designation at the local, state, or federal levels. For this reason, the project was originally determined to be categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review as a Class 1 "Existing Facilities" exemption per Section 15301(e) of the CEQA Guidelines, because the project is a negligible expansion to an existing use; specifically it is an addition to an existing structure provided that the addition will not result in an increase of more than 50 percent of the floor area of the structure before the addition, or 2,500 square feet, whichever is less, and it is a continuation of the same land use type (place of worship). The project was also originally determined to be exempt from CEQA review as a Class 3 "New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures" exemption pursuant to Section 15303 of the State CEQA Guidelines because the project involves the construction of a new outdoor open altar.

Staff received a public comment letter from Ms. Francesca Smith, a Qualified Architectural Historian, dated July 30, 2024, for the Planning Hearing Officer's consideration (the "Smith Letter"). Ms. Smith also provided public testimony during the hearing. This letter introduced evidence into the record that the project site could be a historic resource as defined in §15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines and that the proposed project may have a significant effect on the environment. Based on the new information submitted with the Smith Letter, additional CEQA review is necessary to determine if substantial evidence was submitted to support a conclusion that the property is a historic resource, regardless of the fact that other conclusions can also be made that the property is not a historic resource. Substantial evidence is defined in CEQA Guidelines §15384 as follows:

- (a) "Substantial evidence" as used in these guidelines means enough relevant information and reasonable inferences from this information that a fair argument can be made to support a conclusion, even though other conclusions might also be reached. Whether a fair argument can be made that the project may have a significant effect on the environment is to be determined by examining the whole record before the lead agency. Argument, speculation, unsubstantiated opinion or narrative, evidence which is clearly erroneous or inaccurate, or evidence of social or

economic impacts which do not contribute to or are not caused by physical impacts on the environment does not constitute substantial evidence.

- (b) Substantial evidence shall include facts, reasonable assumptions predicated upon facts, and expert opinion supported by facts.

As the lead agency, the determination as to the appropriate level of environmental review required is made by the Director of Community Development and is based on substantial evidence in the whole record. In this case, the additional CEQA review, beyond a categorical exemption, is necessary to determine if substantial evidence has been submitted into the record and whether or not the existing church building is considered a historic resource as defined in §15064.5 of the State CEQA Guidelines. Based on the facts submitted in the record prior to the hearing, there is a possibility that the property at 1015 North Central Avenue could be a historic resource. Because the demolition and/or alterations to a historic resource could be considered a substantial adverse change, the lead agency does not have the authority to exempt the project from CEQA review and is required to prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) because the impacts could not be mitigated. Unless upon further review the lead agency determines that the existing building is not a historic resource as defined in §15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines.

After considering the evidence presented with respect to this application, the plans submitted therewith as well as oral and written testimony received at the hearing, specifically as it relates to the historic status of the existing project site, the Community Development Department has **DENIED** the Conditional Use Permit request because the appropriate level of CEQA review has not been conducted and not all of the required findings can be made based on the following:

REQUIRED/MANDATED FINDINGS

A. That the proposed use will not be consistent with the various elements and objectives of the general plan.

The City of Glendale's General Plan establishes the policies for use and protection of resources to meet community needs and consists of eight topics (elements): Circulation, Historic Preservation, Housing, Land Use, Noise, Open Space and Conservation, Recreation, and Safety. The applicant is requesting a conditional use permit to allow the expansion of an existing place of worship that has been in operation at this location since 1941 and while the request is consistent with the majority of the elements and objectives of the general plan, it will not be consistent with the Historic Preservation Element which sets goals and policy direction that reinforce Glendale's historic preservation ethic, unless the City as lead agency determines there are no historic resources on the project site. As noted above in the Environmental Determination section, additional CEQA review is necessary to determine if substantial evidence was submitted into the record and whether or not it supports a conclusion that existing church building is a historic resource, regardless if other conclusions can also be made that the property is not a historic resource. Goal 1 of the Historic Preservation Element is to preserve historic resources that define community character and the creation with

various policy objectives that are intended to guide decision making. Without the appropriate level of CEQA review being conducted, the proposed expansion of the existing church building and additional site improvements could be considered a substantial adverse change to a historic resource. This would not be consistent with the Historic Preservation Element's policy objectives ("PO") to encourage support for the importance of history and historic preservation (PO 1-1), discourage demolition of historic resources (PO 1-6), encourage the preservation of individual historic resources (PO 1-8), and ensure protection of historic resources through the enforcement of existing codes (PO 1-11).

The Land Use Element of the General Plan designates the subject site as High Density Residential. The zone is intended for high density residential development with an overall average density of 34 - 43 units per acre. The Land Use Element is the most directly related to the approval of this use; the proposed project is consistent with the Land Use Element, which designates the project site as High Density Residential, allowing for residential uses and permitting churches to operate with an approved conditional use permit. The church use is compatible with the church and private school located across the street to the east in that it provides a service to those residential uses and is a low-intensity institutional/public assembly use.

The Circulation Element identifies North Central Avenue as a Minor Arterial, West Glenoaks Boulevard as a Major Arterial, and Fairview Avenue as a Local Street that are fully developed and can adequately handle the traffic circulation around the site. The City's Traffic Engineer reviewed the project and determined that no significant increase in traffic would occur as a result of the project proposal.

Operation of the church shall be required to comply with the City's Noise Ordinance (Chapter 8.36 Noise Control), and, as such, will be consistent with the General Plan Noise Element. No other elements of the General Plan, including the Housing, Open Space and Conservation, Recreation, and Safety Elements, will be negatively impacted. For these reasons, the applicant's request is not consistent with the General Plan, specifically the Historic Preservation Element.

B. That the use and its associated structures and facilities will be detrimental to the public health or safety, the general welfare, or the environment.

The proposed continued operation and expansion of a place of worship and its associated structures and facilities, will be detrimental to the public health or safety, the general welfare, or the environment. As noted in the environmental determination section, based on the facts in the record, there is a possibility that the property at 1015 North Central Avenue could be considered a historic resource as defined in §15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines. The proposed demolition and alterations to the historic resource would be considered a substantial adverse change in the environment and would be materially detrimental to the public welfare if the existing building was determined to be a historic resource. Accordingly, the appropriate level of CEQA review has not been conducted, due to the additional information submitted into the public record to support

this project and this finding cannot be completely made in favor of the proposal without first conducting the appropriate level of CEQA review.

With the exception of the additional CEQA review that is necessary, this finding can be partially made in favor of the requested conditional use permit for the expansion of the existing church. City records indicate that a place of worship has operated at this location since 1941. For decades, a church has operated at this location without any major incident and is currently owned and operated by the Armenian Apostolic Church of Glendale. The church will operate as a congregation facility for worship, education and fellowship, and as a meeting place for community members and non-profit groups. Church events and activities will take place generally, for example, between the hours of 9am to 9pm, seven days per week, with other gatherings as needed. The addition to the main church building and the construction of the new ancillary structure will be visible from the street. The additional floor area is ancillary to the primary use and does not expand the church seating or viewing area; thus, no intensification of the use or associated parking demand is anticipated. Further, the Neighborhood Services Division and Police Department had no comments about the continued operation and expansion of a place of worship at the subject site; the associated structures and facilities have been operating for over 50 years as a church use with no evidence of being detrimental to the community.

C. That the use and facilities will not adversely affect or conflict with adjacent uses or impede the normal development of surrounding property.

That the use and facilities will not adversely affect or conflict with adjacent uses or impede the normal development of surrounding property. The subject site has been used as a church since its construction in 1941 and has not proven to adversely impact nearby uses or impede the normal development of surrounding properties. The project proposes a 987 square-foot addition to the existing church building, consisting of a main altar and a prayer altar, a backstage area behind the main altar and a baptismal area. Additionally, a new 1,156 square-foot detached accessory building is proposed, consisting of an outdoor altar, restrooms and storage area associated with the church. Approval of the conditional use permit is not anticipated to cause adverse impacts nor impede the normal development of surrounding properties since these properties are already developed and the existing church has operated since 1941 and children's day care has operated under previous Conditional Use Permits (CUPs) without incident. The immediate area includes multi-family residential, and a variety of commercial uses located nearby along North Central Avenue and West Glenoaks Boulevard. The proposed expansion is not anticipated to conflict with adjacent uses, and no other City divisions cited any concerns with the continued operation of the site as a place of worship. The proposed project will provide adequate public and private facilities, such as utilities, landscaping, parking spaces and traffic circulation.

D. That adequate public and private facilities, such as utilities, parking spaces and traffic circulation measures are provided for the use.

Adequate public and private facilities such as utilities, landscaping, parking spaces and traffic circulation measures are provided for the proposed use. The site has appropriate utilities and infrastructure necessary for the church to continue operating at the site. No changes are proposed that would render existing utilities and infrastructure inadequate or require them to be upgraded. The site has 31 parking spaces to service church patrons. The parking requirement for a church use is based on number of fixed seats or floor area of seating or viewing area. The proposed 987 square-foot addition to the church and the new, 1,156 square-foot open outdoor altar with restrooms and storage do not include any fixed seats and does not increase the seating or viewing area as defined in the zoning code; therefore, it does not trigger an increase in the required number of parking spaces. The proposed landscaping on site proposes to comply with the Zoning Code.

APPEAL PERIOD

The applicant's attention is called to the fact that this grant is not a permit or license and that any permits and licenses required by law must be obtained from the proper City and public agency.

Under the provisions of the Glendale Municipal Code, Title 30, Chapter 30.62, any person affected by the above decision has the right to appeal said decision to the Planning Commission, if it is believed that the decision is in error or that procedural errors have occurred, or if there is substantial new evidence which could not have been reasonably presented. It is strongly advised that appeals be filed early during the appeal period so that imperfections/incompleteness may be corrected before the appeal period expires. Appeals must be filed prior to expiration of the 15-day period, on or before **OCTOBER 2, 2024**. Information regarding appeals, appeal forms and fees may be obtained by calling the Community Development Department (CDD) staff at 818-548-2140, or the case planner, Milca Toledo at 818-937-8181.

All appeals must be filed using the City's online permit portal: www.glendaleca.gov/Permits. Create an account, click "Apply," type "appeal" in the search bar, and apply for "Appeal of Planning Decision." Any appeal must be filed within fifteen (15) days following the actual date of the decision with the prescribed fee prior to the expiration of the 15-day appeal period, on or before OCTOBER 2, 2024. Information regarding appeals and appeals and fees may be obtained by calling the Community Development Department staff at 818.548.2115, or contacting the case planner, Milca Toledo at mitoledo@glendaleca.gov or 818-937-8781.

NOTICE – subsequent contacts with this office

The Applicant is further advised that all subsequent contacts with this office regarding this determination must be with the Case Planner first and then, the Hearing Officer who acted on this case. This would include clarification, verification of condition compliance and plans or building permit applications, etc., and shall be accomplished **By Appointment Only**, in order

to assure that you receive service with a minimum amount of waiting. You should advise any consultant representing you of this requirement as well.

You may contact the case planner, Milca Toledo, during normal business hours at (818) 937-8181 or via e-mail at mitoledo@glendaleca.gov.

Sincerely,
Bradley Calvert
Director of Community Development



Vista Ezzati
Principal Planner
VE:MT:sm

CC: City Clerk (K.Cruz); Police Dept. (J.Newton/Z.Avila); City Attorney's Dept. (G. van Muyden/Y.Neukian); Fire Prevention Engineering Section (S.Partamian); Public Works (S.Hernandez); Traffic & Transportation Section (P.Casanova/Mark Bueno); General Manager for Glendale Water and Power (M.Young); Glendale Water & Power--Water Section (G. Tom/S.Boghosian/R.Takidin/ C.Babakhanlou/D.Scorza); Glendale Water & Power--Electric Section (B. B.Ortiz/E.Olsen/ M.Navareete/M.Kouassi); Parks, Recreation and Community Services Dept. (T. Aleksanian/A.Limayo); Neighborhood Services Division; Integrated Waste Management Admin; Maintenance Services Section Admin.; Street and Field Services Admin.; Engineering and Environmental Management; Kaplan Chen Kaplan; Francesca Smith; Damian Sullivan; D.Danialian; A.Dervishian; M.Melconian; A.Saifan; H.Sardarbegian; A. Tadevosyan; K.Timourian; and case planner-Milca Toledo.