AGENDA

REGULAR MEETING OF THE DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

July 1, 2020 at 7:30 p.m.

This meeting will be held via teleconference. The meeting will be accessible at https://meetingsamer6.webex.com/meet/cityclerk and (408) 418-9388 (Access Code 296 024 026) at the date and time specified above.

7:30 p.m. CONVENE REGULAR MEETING

1. ROLL CALL – Chair Ben Chuaqui; Vice-Chair Wenlin Li; Members Carl Groch, Gyan Singh and John Thompson

2. COUNCIL/STAFF LIAISON ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORTS
   The City Council Liaison or City staff may report on matters of general interest to the Planning Commission, Council policies, priorities and significant actions taken by the City Council.

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC
   Remarks are typically limited to three minutes per person, and may be on anything within the subject matter jurisdiction of the body. Remarks on non-agenda items will be heard first, remarks on agenda items will be heard at the time the item is discussed.

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES
   Adoption of the March 4, 2020 meeting minutes

5. PUBLIC HEARING: 601 LEXINGTON AVENUE DESIGN REVIEW
   Application: PL20-0032
   Applicant: Erica Meeks
   Location: 601 Lexington Avenue
   APN: 503-402-008
   Zoning: RM (Multi-Family Residential)
   General Plan: High Density Residential
   Request: Design Review Board consideration of a Design Review application for a proposed conversion of a former church and office building into 6 residences, pursuant to Chapter 19.38, ECMC.
   CEQA: This project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to Section 15332 of the CEQA Guidelines, Class 32: In-Fill Development Projects.

6. ADJOURNMENT
In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the Staff Liaison, Jeff Ballantine, at (510) 215-4330. Notification 48 hours prior to the meeting will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting. (28 CFR 35.102-35.104 ADA Title I).

Any writings or documents provided to a majority of the members regarding any item on this agenda will be made available for public inspection at City Hall during normal business hours.
7:30 p.m. CONVENE REGULAR MEETING

1. **ROLL CALL** – Chair Ben Chuaqui; Members Carl Groch, Gyan Singh, and John Thompson. Vice-Chair Wenlin Li had an excused absence.

2. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**
   No speakers addressed the Board.

3. **ADOPTION OF MINUTES**
   **Moved/Second:** Boardmember Groch/Thompson. **Action:** Passed a motion to adopt the December 4, 2019 meeting minutes. **Ayes:** Boardmembers Chuaqui, Groch, Singh, Thompson. **Absent:** Li. **Noes:** None

4. **PUBLIC HEARING: REVISIONS TO ‘GRIFFIN ON SAN PABLO AVENUE’**
   **Application:** PL20-0010
   **Applicant:** Bavak El Cerrito LLC
   **Location:** 11048/11060 San Pablo Avenue
   **APN:** 502-411-021
   **Zoning:** Transit-Oriented Mid-Intensity Mixed Use (TOMIMU)
   **General Plan:** Transit-Oriented Mid-Intensity Mixed Use (TOMIMU)
   **Request:** Planning Commission consideration of an extension and amendments to a Tier IV Design Review approval. Modifications include: an increase in the number of units, a decrease in the number of parking spaces, building height, and modifications to the elevations and floorplans.
   **CEQA:** This project has been found to be consistent with the Program Environmental Impact Report prepared for the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15168 and 15182.

Planning Manager Sean Moss presented the staff report and answered questions from the Board.

The applicant, Paul Van Konynenburg, and the project architect, Brett Bailey, presented the project and answered questions from the Board.

The public hearing was opened.

The following speakers addressed the Board:
Howdy Goudy, El Cerrito
The public hearing was closed.

**Moved/Second:** Boardmember Groch/Thompson. **Action:** passed a motion to approve the project with the addition of the following conditions of approval:

1. Prior to issuance of a building permit, the project shall comply with electrical vehicle charging requirements of the City of El Cerrito and the State of California.

2. Prior to submittal of a building permit, the project plans shall be revised to provide access between the bicycle storage area and the bicycle shop, as determined feasible by the Zoning Administrator.

**Ayes:** Boardmembers Chuaqui, Groch, Singh, Thompson. **Absent:** Li. **Noes:** None

5. **PUBLIC HEARING: 921 KEARNEY STREET TIER IV DESIGN REVIEW**

- **Application:** PL17-0107
- **Applicant:** Charles Oewel, 921 Kearney LLC
- **Location:** 921 Kearney St
- **APN:** 503-233-032 and 503-233-007
- **Zoning:** Transit-Oriented Mid-Intensity Mixed Use (TOMIMU)
- **General Plan:** Transit-Oriented Mid-Intensity Mixed Use (TOMIMU)
- **Request:** Planning Commission consideration of Tier IV Design Review, pursuant to the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan, for a new 5-story building containing 59 residential units.

**CEQA:** This project has been found to be consistent with the Program Environmental Impact Report prepared for the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15168 and 15182.

Planning Manager Sean Moss presented the staff report and answered questions from the Board.

The applicant, Charles Oewel, and the project architect, Jo DeCredico, presented the project and answered questions from the Board.

The public hearing was opened.

The following speakers addressed the Board:
- Lisa Martinengo, El Cerrito
- Chris Hayamizu, 638 Kearney St.
- Dan Schulman, El Cerrito
- Gina Calicura, 808 Kearney St.

The public hearing was closed.

**Moved/Second:** Boardmember Thompson/Groch. **Action:** passed a motion to approve the project with the addition of the following conditions of approval:

1. Prior to submittal of a building permit, the project plans shall be revised to taper the porch ceiling on the ground floor unit entries at the front of the building.

**Ayes:** Boardmembers Chuaqui, Groch, Singh, Thompson. **Absent:** Li. **Noes:** None
6. **PUBLIC HEARING: 10290 SAN PABLO AVENUE TIER IV DESIGN REVIEW**

**Application:** PL19-0007  
**Applicant:** Toby Long Design  
**Location:** 10290 San Pablo Avenue  
**APN:** 503-394-024 and -026  
**Zoning:** Transit-Oriented Higher-Intensity Mixed Use (TOHIMU)  
**General Plan:** Transit-Oriented Higher-Intensity Mixed Use (TOHIMU)  
**Request:** Planning Commission consideration of Tier IV Design Review, pursuant to the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan, for a new 5-story building containing 54 residential units.  

**CEQA:** This project has been found to be consistent with the Program Environmental Impact Report prepared for the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15168 and 15182.

Planning Manager Sean Moss presented the staff report and answered questions from the Board.

The project architect, Toby Long, presented the project and answered questions from the Board.

The public hearing was opened.

The following speakers addressed the Board:
Robin Mitchell, El Cerrito  
Chris Hayamizu, 638 Kearney St.  
Howdy Goudy, El Cerrito

The public hearing was closed.

**Moved/Second:** Boardmember Groch/Singh. **Action:** passed a motion to approve the project with the addition of the following conditions of approval:

1. Prior to submittal of a building permit, the project plans shall be revised to provide a recess on the northern and southern building elevations where the corridors are located to the greatest extent possible.

2. Prior to submittal of a building permit, the project plans shall be revised to provide more solid balcony railings and the railings shall be in front of the facia.

3. Prior to submittal of a building permit, the project plans shall be revised by lowering the header above the balcony at the top of the building and facing San Pablo Avenue, such that the header aligns with the top of the adjacent windows.

4. Prior to submittal of a building permit, the applicant shall explore increasing the transparency of the first floor of the building that faces Eureka Avenue.

**Ayes:** Boardmembers Chuaqui, Groch, Singh, Thompson. **Absent:** Li. **Noes:** None

7. **ADJOURNMENT**  
10:27 p.m.
Design Review Board Staff Report
July 1, 2020

601 Lexington Avenue Design Review

DETAILS

Application Number: PL20-0032
Applicant: Erica Meeks
Location: 601 Lexington Avenue
APN: 503-402-008
Zoning: RM (Multi-Family Residential)
General Plan: High Density Residential
Request: Design Review Board consideration of a Design Review application for a proposed conversion of a former church and office building into a multifamily residential building with six residences, pursuant to Chapter 19.38, ECMC.

CEQA: This project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to Section 15332 of the CEQA Guidelines, Class 32: In-Fill Development Projects.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The proposed project includes the conversion of a former church and office building into a multifamily residential building with six residential units at 601 Lexington Avenue. The project proposes substantial new landscaping; common and private open spaces for the units; a new recycling and solid waste enclosure; and ADA accessibility improvements. The project will largely maintain the aesthetics of the existing building and will provide additional windows and doors that face Lincoln Avenue and Lexington Avenue.

The project requires approval from both the Planning Commission and the Design Review Board. On May 20, 2020, the Planning Commission approved Conditional Use Permits for a reduction of the required off-street parking; making substantial alterations to a nonconforming structure; an exception to buffer yard requirements; and an exception to retaining wall height requirements.

The Design Review Board’s purview includes:

- Building articulation, facade treatment and architectural details
- Exterior colors and materials
- Character defining features and the relation to existing settings
- Design of fences, walls, and screen plantings, including but not limited to height of those structures, materials, colors, and type
- Location and type of landscaping including selection and size of plant materials and design of hardscape including landscape lighting
- The size, location, design, color, number, lighting, and materials of signs
- Design of the streetscape, including but not limited to landscaping, furniture and materials

The project features a Mid-Century Modern architectural aesthetic, including cement plaster siding in tan-green and gray-green with white accents for window trim, porches, railings, and gutters.
Background

Site Location and Layout

The project site is located on the northwest corner of the intersection of Lexington Avenue and Lincoln Avenue. The project site is a 10,000 square foot lot that is relatively flat, slightly sloping upwards towards the north from Lincoln Avenue.

Vicinity Map

Existing/Previous Land Use

The project site is developed with a 5,077 square foot office building that was originally constructed as a church. The existing building is located slightly more than five feet from the western property line and encroaches into the required rear setback of 15 feet. The parking lot currently includes nine parking spaces.

In 1949, the east-west oriented portion of the existing L-shaped building was constructed. In 1960, the Planning Commission approved Special Use Permit No. 1419 to allow an addition to the structure for the remaining rear portion of the building. In 2000, the Planning Commission approved a Use Permit to allow the conversion of the building to a professional office use for no more than 12 employees. Adventure Associates, Inc. continued to utilize this building as an office until October 2019. The building has been vacant since then.

The surrounding neighborhood contains single-family houses, multi-family residences, and commercial uses along nearby San Pablo Avenue. Many of the surrounding multi-family developments consist of four to eight residential units, with a few larger complexes containing more than 20 residential units.
Adjacent Designations and Land Uses

**North:** Multi-Family Residential (RM) Zoning and High Density Residential General Plan designation. Multi-family residential building with 4 units.

**East:** Multi-Family Residential (RM) Zoning and High Density Residential General Plan designation. Single family dwellings

**South:** Multi-Family Residential (RM) Zoning and High Density Residential General Plan designation. Single family dwelling

**West:** Multi-Family Residential (RM) Zoning and High Density Residential General Plan designation. Single family dwellings and a duplex

Analysis

Project Description

The applicant is proposing to convert the existing building into six residential units with a combined floor area of 6,887 square feet. The proposed project will not expand the building footprint but will raise the roof of the east-west oriented portion of the building to accommodate a new second floor. All of the proposed residential units would include two bedrooms and would range in size between 863 square feet and 1,326 square feet.

The number of off-street parking spaces would be reduced from nine spaces to six spaces in order to provide required common open space and a waste and recycling enclosure. The common open space area will include landscaping, synthetic turf, and a barbecue grill. Private open spaces will be provided for five of the six units. The applicant proposes to substantially increase the landscaping throughout the site with new trees, plants, and groundcover. In addition, one bicycle rack and one bicycle locker will be provided at the front of the site along with a wall-mounted bicycle rack in each unit.

Project Renderings

![Lincoln Avenue Frontage (with greenscreen guardrail)](image-url)
Design Review Process

Pursuant to Chapter 19.38 of the El Cerrito Municipal Code, the Design Review Board is authorized to review and act upon Design Review applications involving alterations to the exterior appearance of a structure for multi-family residential use. Generally, this review includes authority over the following elements:

- Building articulation, facade treatment and architectural details
- Exterior colors and materials
• Character defining features and the relation to existing settings
• Design of fences, walls, and screen plantings, including but not limited to height of those structures, materials, colors, and type
• Location and type of landscaping including selection and size of plant materials and design of hardscape including landscape lighting
• The size, location, design, color, number, lighting, and materials of signs
• Design of the streetscape, including but not limited to landscaping, furniture and materials

Zoning Standards

The site lies within the RM (Multi-Family Residential) zoning district, just outside the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan Area. A summary of the zoning standards is provided in the table below. Standards to which the project requires an exception are highlighted in yellow.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required</th>
<th>Proposed</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Density</td>
<td>6 Units with a minimum lot size of 9,650 sq. ft.</td>
<td>6 Units with a lot size of 10,000 sq. ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Lot Coverage</td>
<td>60% for lots less than 30% slope</td>
<td>41.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Height</td>
<td>35 ft.</td>
<td>28 ft. 5 in.</td>
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</table>

Setbacks

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Front</td>
<td>10 ft.</td>
<td>15 ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Side (Interior)</td>
<td>5 ft.; 10 ft. for portions of buildings taller than 25 ft.</td>
<td>5 ft. 2 in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The portion of the building within 10 ft. of the northern property line is less than 20 ft. tall. Therefore 5 ft. setback is required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Side (Street)</td>
<td>8 ft. 6 in.</td>
<td>8 ft. 6 in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rear</td>
<td>15 ft.</td>
<td>5 ft. 1 in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CUP granted for substantial changes to an existing non-conforming building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covered Parking Setback</td>
<td>20 ft.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>There is not any existing or proposed covered parking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projections</td>
<td>Canopies not exceeding 10 feet in length shall not extend more than 3 ft. into front setback and at least 5 ft. from street side lot line</td>
<td>Existing canopy facing south is approximately 3.5 ft. from street side lot line.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CUP granted for substantial changes to an existing nonconforming building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Vehicle Parking</td>
<td>2 spaces/unit with 1 covered space/unit including 25% reduction for developments within ¼ mile of BART station (9 spaces total)</td>
<td>6 uncovered spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CUP granted for parking reduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requirement</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>Proposed</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bicycle Parking</td>
<td>Long Term: 1 space per 4 units (2 total)</td>
<td>Long Term: 1 wall-mounted bike rack in each unit plus 1 bike locker (7 total)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Short Term: 2 spaces minimum</td>
<td>Short Term: 1 bike rack (2 total spaces)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape/Open Space</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Minimum site area</td>
<td>15% of the site</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>that must be devoted to landscaping</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Minimum requirements for</td>
<td>150 sq. ft./unit minus private open space provided in excess of</td>
<td>585 sq. ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>common open space</td>
<td>requirement (458 sq. ft.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum requirements for</td>
<td>80% of units must be provided with private open space. Min 100 sq. ft.</td>
<td>5 of the 6 units (83%) have private open space. 442 sq. ft. of private open space provided in excess of requirement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>private open space</td>
<td>for ground level spaces and 50 sq. ft. for above ground level spaces</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking Lot</td>
<td>Minimum of 15% of parking lot area shall be landscaped. Minimum of one</td>
<td>15% of parking lot will be landscaped. Seven 24” box (25 gallon) trees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscaping</td>
<td>15-gallon tree shall be provided for every four parking spaces (2 trees).</td>
<td>proposed in parking lot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retaining Walls</td>
<td>There shall a minimum of 4 feet separation between retaining walls and</td>
<td>1 ft. separation between an existing and a proposed retaining wall on</td>
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<td></td>
<td>a retaining wall in a street facing side yard shall not exceed four feet</td>
<td>southern property edge. Combined height exceeds four ft.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tall</td>
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<tr>
<td>Buffer Yards</td>
<td>Buffer Yard width of 5 ft. required along western property edge to include</td>
<td>Not provided</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>6 ft. tall screening wall and combination of trees &amp; shrubs</td>
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Planning Commission Review Approval

On May 20, 2020, the Planning Commission reviewed the application for the aspects of the project that do not meet the development standards of the El Cerrito Zoning Ordinance. At this meeting, the Planning Commission adopted Resolution PC 2020-05 approving Conditional Use Permits for a reduction of the required off-street parking; making substantial alterations to a nonconforming structure; an exception to
buffer yard requirements; and an exception to retaining wall height requirements for the project. As part of this Resolution, the Planning Commission recommended that the applicant make the following two revisions to the project:

1. Include a door on the south side of Unit 1 to provide direct access from the living room to the private open space of Unit 1.

2. Consider revisions to the proposed lawn in private open space areas and to the proposed turf in the common open space area to address potential usability and maintenance concerns.

On June 15, 2020, the applicant team held a virtual meeting with City staff and Planning Commissioner Andrea Lucas to further discuss the second recommendation regarding lawn and artificial turf. The applicant addressed Commissioner Lucas’ concerns regarding usability and maintenance by describing the proposed turf material and confirming that the applicant intends to own the property and provide maintenance of the private and common open space areas long-term.

In response to these Planning Commission recommendations and with further direction from Commissioner Lucas, the applicant revised the plans to: (1) provide a door on the south side of Unit 1 to the private open space and (2) convert a portion of the lawn areas for private open spaces for Units 1, 2, and 3 to hardscape.

**Architectural Design**

The project will largely maintain the aesthetics of the existing building and will provide additional windows and doors that face Lincoln Avenue and Lexington Avenue. As described in the Historic Resource Evaluation prepared for the project (see Attachment 4), the existing building is considered a Mid-Century Modern substyle of Modernism with decorative wood detailing, projecting canopies, stucco siding, and a strong gable roof form. The existing building is L-shaped. The proposed project will not expand the building footprint but will raise the roof of the east-west oriented portion of the building to accommodate a new second floor.

The project will feature cement plaster siding painted tan-green (Meditation AF-395) and gray-green (Hazy Skies OC-48) similar to the subtle green of the existing building. The building will feature white (Floral White OC-48) accents for the window trim, porches, railings, and gutters. White vinyl windows and glazed fiberglass doors with a Golden Oak finish would be featured throughout the project. Minor modifications to the design of the wood detailing on the primary entrance facing Lexington Avenue are also proposed.

A new trash enclosure is proposed adjacent to the proposed common open space area. The trash enclosure would include CMU block and perforated sheet steel gates (see Sheet A2.5 in Attachment 2).

An existing two-foot-tall retaining wall is located on the southern property line facing Lincoln Avenue. The project will include a new retaining wall that varies in height from 2 ft. 11 in. to 3 ft. 5 in. tall that is above the existing retaining wall and approximately one foot from the existing retaining wall. The project will also include a 3 ft. 6 in. tall railing on top of the new retaining wall, in order to comply with California Building Code requirements. The combined height of the existing retaining wall, new retaining wall, and railing will vary in height from approximately 8 ft. 5 in. to 8 ft. 11 in. The applicant proposes two alternatives for the railing (see Sheet L-2 in Attachment 2). Alternative 1 for the railing proposes a vegetated greenscreen metal mesh and Alternative 2 proposes a black metal picket guardrail. In addition, a third railing option is available for consideration (see Attachment 3), where the private open space for Unit 1 is lowered such that a new retaining wall is not required adjacent to the private open space for Unit 1.
Landscape Design

The project proposes substantial new landscaping throughout the site, including in proposed common and private open space areas. The common open space area will include landscaping, synthetic turf, and a barbecue grill. Private open spaces will be provided for five of the six units and will include hardscape, lawn, and landscaping. The landscaping features a mixture of native and other drought tolerant plants including saratoga laurel (*Laurus ‘Saratoga’*), olive (*Olea europea*), coast rosemary (*Westringia fruticosa ‘Morning Light’*), coffeeberry (*Rhamnus ‘Eve Case’*), lavender (*Lavandula x Intermedia ‘Provence’*), and lemon thyme (*Thymus citriodorus*).

Art in Public Places

The project is required to comply with Chapter 13.50: Art in Public Places of the El Cerrito Municipal Code. The applicant is proposing to provide onsite public art at the ground floor main entrance on Lexington Avenue. The process for selecting the artist and providing the public art shall comply with the requirements in Chapter 13.50 of the El Cerrito Municipal Code.

Public Notice and Comment

The required public notice for the project was published in the East Bay Times and mailed to owners of property within 300 feet of the project site on or before June 11, 2020. At the suggestion of City staff, the applicant held an informational virtual meeting for neighbors on May 12, 2020 and sent notices to property owners within 300 feet of the project site for this meeting. Four neighbors from three properties on Lexington Avenue attended the virtual meeting. These neighbors asked questions regarding parking spaces and proposed floor plans, and they expressed appreciation that proposed changes to the exterior of the building are relatively minimal.

Prior to the Planning Commission meeting on May 20, 2020, City staff received written comments from one neighbor, Lorraine Shiraki. City staff contacted this neighbor and successfully addressed her concerns by requiring the applicant to plant a tree in this neighbor’s property at the applicant’s expense and requiring the applicant to address any potential light glare issues onto adjacent properties (see Conditions of Approval 9 and 10 in Attachment 1). The applicant agreed to these conditions of approval. City staff have not received any additional written public comments.

Environmental Review

This project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to Section 15332 of the CEQA Guidelines, Class 32: In-fill Development Projects. A Class 32 Exemption Memo was prepared by Urban Planning Partners on May 11, 2020 for the proposed project (see Attachment 4). This Memo provides analysis demonstrating the project complies with the following the conditions under which a project qualifies for a Class 32 exemption:

(a) The project is consistent with the applicable general plan designation and all applicable general plan policies as well as with applicable zoning designation and regulations.

*As discussed in this staff report, the project is consistent with the general plan designation (High Density Residential) and applicable general plan policies as well as with the zoning designation (RM) and regulations. Per Sections 19.24.050, 19.27.050, 19.25.090, and 19.06.030 of the El Cerrito Municipal Code (ECMC), the project would require a Conditional Use Permit for providing reduced off-street parking; making substantial alterations to a building with a nonconforming rear setback; an exception to buffer yard requirements; and an exception to retaining wall height requirements, respectively. The general findings required for Conditional Use Permits in Section 19.34.040, ECMC include the finding that the project is consistent with the purposes of the district*
in which it is located and conforms in all significant respects with the El Cerrito General Plan. This staff report provides detailed analysis demonstrating that the project is consistent with each of the required findings.

(b) The proposed development occurs within city limits on a project site of no more than five acres substantially surrounded by urban uses.

The project site is within the City of El Cerrito and the site is 0.23 acres.

(c) The project site has no value as habitat for endangered, rare or threatened species.

The San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan EIR did not identify any “candidate, sensitive, or special-status species” with habitat in the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan Area. While the site is not within the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan Area, the site sits about 180 feet from the plan area. The site has been extensively disturbed by past development and no longer provides suitable habitat for any special-status animal or plant species.

(d) Approval of the project would not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality.

The project would generate less than 100 peak hour trips and is not considered to have significant traffic impacts per the Contra Costa County Transportation Authority (CCTA) traffic impact study guidelines. The project would not result in significant temporary (construction) noise as construction would occur during the times specifically allowed under Section 16.02.060, ECMC and since the project involves no foundation work or significant site preparation work. Operational noise impacts would not be significant since the proposed multifamily residential use is consistent with the existing multi-family and single-family residential uses in the surrounding neighborhood. The project is below the number of dwelling units in the screening criteria from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) CEQA Air Quality Guidelines and would not cause a significant impact to air quality. The project would be required to comply with the Contra Costa Clean Water Program, the California Stormwater Quality Association’s Best Management Practices for Construction Activities, and the Association of Bay Area Government’s Manual of Standards for Erosion and Sediment Control Measures. Compliance with these standards and regulations would minimize any water quality impacts of the project.

(e) The site can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services.

The site is currently served by all utilities.

In addition, a Historic Resource Evaluation was prepared by Left Coast Architectural History on May 11, 2020 for the proposed project as an attachment to the CEQA Memo. The Historic Resource Evaluation concluded that the church at 601 Lexington Avenue does not appear to be historically significant as it bears no associations with important events, people, architectural styles or design professionals, nor does it have information potential. As a result, this building does not appear to be eligible for listing on the California Register and, subsequently, would not qualify as a historic resource under CEQA.

Compliance with the General Plan

The proposed project is consistent with the following goals and policies of the El Cerrito General Plan:

**LU1.2 Multifamily Neighborhoods.** Ensure that new development in multifamily neighborhoods supports, rather than detracts from the existing residential character of the area.

The proposed project is consistent with the multi-family and single family residential character of the surrounding neighborhood. The project will feature six residential units that will face the
adjacent streets add to surveillance of the street and integrate well into the surrounding community.

**LU1.3 Quality of Development.** Ensure that all multifamily or mixed-use development in residential areas addresses compatibility and quality of life issues.

The proposed project is consistent and compatible with the surrounding multi-family and single family residential neighborhood. The project has been reviewed thoroughly to ensure that it will not negatively impact the surrounding neighborhood.

**CD1.3 High-Quality Design.** Encourage higher-quality design through the use of well-crafted and maintained buildings and landscaping, use of higher-quality building materials, and attention to the design and execution of building details and amenities in both public and private projects.

The proposed project will largely maintain the aesthetics of the existing building, while providing additional landscaping, common open space, doors, and windows that will enhance the aesthetics of the building and the site. The project will be considered by the Design Review Board as required to ensure high-quality materials and design.

**CD1.9 Building Design.** A variety of attractive images will be achieved by encouraging a variety of building styles and designs, within a unifying context of consistent “pedestrian” scale along streets and compatibility among neighboring land uses.

The project will add new multi-family housing next to surrounding residential uses. The modern architecture with articulated facades will improve the aesthetics of an existing building in an already diverse neighborhood architectural theme. The project also adds window openings, patios and landscape along the street frontages, continuing the consistent pedestrian-scaled streetscape.

**CD2.1 Street Frontages.** Encourage street frontages that are safe, by allowing for surveillance of the street by people inside buildings and elsewhere, and are interesting for pedestrians.

The residential units will include doors, windows, and private open spaces that face Lincoln Avenue and Lexington Avenue which will allow for surveillance of the street.

**CD2.7 Accessible Design.** Site and building design must meet basic accessibility needs of the community and not be exclusively oriented to those who arrive by car.

The project will feature one fully accessible unit and four additional units that are accessible on the ground floor. The project will provide an ADA accessible parking space and an ADA accessible ramp from the parking lot four of the units. The project’s location, in close proximity to public transportation, will provide important transportation options for residents and visitors of the project. In addition, the project will include ample short-term and long-term bicycle parking facilities for residents and visitors of the project.

**CD3.2 Usable Open Spaces.** Require the provision of usable open space in the form of ground-floor patios, upper-floor decks, and balconies, as well as common recreational facilities.

Five of the six residential units will feature private open spaces (ground level yards or an upper level balcony). The project also features landscaped common open space.

**CD3.3 Site Landscaping.** Improve the appearance of the community by requiring aesthetically designed screening and landscaping on public and private sites. Ensure that public landscaping includes entry areas, street medians, parks, and schools. Require landscaping for all private sites, yard spaces, parking lots, plazas, courtyards, and recreational areas.
The project proposes substantial new landscaping throughout the site, including in proposed common and private open space areas and in the parking lot. Many of the plants are native or drought tolerant. The proposed landscaping will aesthetically enhance the project site.

CD4.2 Building Articulation. Ensure that buildings are well articulated. Avoid large unarticulated shapes in building design. Ensure that building designs include varied building facades, rooflines, and building heights to create more interesting and differentiated building forms and shapes. Encourage human scale detail in architectural design. Do not allow unarticulated blank walls or unbroken series of garage doors on the facades of buildings facing the street or the Ohlone Greenway.

The building façade is articulated with architectural projections and recesses, window trim, and wood detailing. The proposed project will not expand the building footprint but will raise the roof of the east-west oriented portion of the building to accommodate a new second floor. Additional windows and doors are proposed that face Lincoln Avenue and Lexington Avenue that will provide additional articulation.

CD4.3 Front Yards. Provide front yards in residential areas with structures and parking lots stepped back along public streets in keeping with the character and setbacks of surrounding buildings. Ensure that yard spaces are landscaped appropriately to fit the surrounding context.

Four of the six units will have landscaped open spaces facing Lincoln Avenue. Landscaping in the front yard facing Lexington Avenue will be substantially increased and will provide screening of the parking lot.

CD5.1 Design Review Process. Continue design review and approval process for all new development, changes, additions, and modifications of existing buildings (except for single-family homes on existing lots).

The project requires approval by the Design Review Board.

H1.6 Retain existing residential zoning and discourage non-residential uses in these zones. The City will strictly enforce the Zoning Code which states that non-residential uses in residential areas are limited to churches, daycares, and schools.

The project is within the RM (Multi-Family Residential) zoning district. The zoning designation will remain in place as part of the project. The project proposes a multifamily residential use in the district.

Required Findings

Pursuant to ECMC Section 19.38.060, in acting to approve or conditionally approve a Design Review application, the Design Review Board shall find that the application is consistent with the following:

1. The applicable standards and requirements of this Zoning Ordinance;

   As described in the Zoning Standards portion of this staff report, the project meets the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance except with regards to providing reduced off-street parking; making substantial alterations to a nonconforming structure; an exception to buffer yard requirements; and an exception to retaining wall height requirements. On May 20, 2020 the Planning Commission adopted Resolution PC 2020-05 approving Conditional Use Permits for each of these items.

2. The design policies of the General Plan and specific plans adopted by City Council;
The design is consistent with the General Plan policies that influence design, specifically, LU1.3 Quality of Development, CD 1.3 High Quality Design, CD1.9 Building Design, CD 2.1 Street Frontages, CD2.7 Accessible Design, CD3.3 Site Landscaping, CD4.2 Building Articulation and CD 5.1 Design Review Process.

3. Any applicable design guidelines adopted by the City Council;

   There are no design guidelines adopted by the City Council for this part of the city. This finding is not applicable.

4. The design review criteria set forth in the following subsection;

   The project is in keeping with the design review criteria as outlined below (Section 19.38.060 B of the El Cerrito Municipal Code).

5. Any planning or zoning approvals by the Planning Commission or Zoning Administrator;

   The project has received all required Planning Commission approvals including Conditional Use Permits for providing reduced off-street parking; making substantial alterations to a nonconforming structure; an exception to buffer yard requirements; and an exception to retaining wall height requirements.

6. Any other relevant policies or regulations of the City.

   No other City policies apply to this project.

Pursuant to ECMC Section 19.38.060 (B), when conducting design review, the Design Review Board shall be guided by whether the project satisfies all applicable criteria, the policies of the General Plan's Community Design Element, and by any other policies or guidelines that may be adopted by the City Council for this purpose. Criteria listed below are specific criteria that, if applicable, all projects must satisfy for approval.

1. The aesthetic design, including its exterior design and landscaping, is appropriate to the function of the project and will provide an attractive and comfortable environment for occupants, visitors, and the general community.

   The project provides an attractive and comfortable environmental for all with enhanced articulation for the existing building and by providing significant new landscaping and common open space and private open space areas.

2. Project details, colors, materials, and landscaping, are fully integrated with one another and used in a manner that is visually consistent with the proposed architectural design.

   The building materials integrate well with the building design and the façade articulation. The proposed landscaping is appropriate for the site and integrates well with the proposed design aesthetic. The overall design scheme is visually consistent.

3. The project has been designed with consideration of neighboring development.

   The surrounding neighborhood contains single-family houses, multi-family residences, and commercial uses along nearby San Pablo Avenue. The structures are predominantly one and two stories high with some structures up to 4 stories high, and are typically mid-century in design. The massing of the proposed project is consistent with the prevailing one and two stories in the neighborhood with similar front, side and rear setbacks.
4. The project contributes to the creation of an attractive and visually interesting built environment that includes well-articulated structures that present varied building facades, rooflines, and building heights and encourages increased pedestrian activity and transit use.

*The proposed continuation of the Mid-Century Modern design of the existing building and the proposed additional windows and doors will add visual interest to the existing building and the surrounding area. The project will also maintain the existing variation in building facades, rooflines, and projections of the existing building. The El Cerrito Plaza Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) station and AC Transit bus routes are less than a quarter of a mile away from the project, making it an ideal walking or biking distance to mass transit.*

5. Street frontages are attractive and interesting for pedestrians, address the street and provide for greater safety by allowing for surveillance of the street by people inside buildings and elsewhere.

*The units will face street frontages on Lexington Avenue and Lincoln Avenue, with doors, windows, fenced yards and landscaping along the street-frontages that will allow for surveillance of these streets.*

6. The proposed design is compatible with the historical or visual character of any area recognized by the City as having such character.

*This finding is not applicable. The project location is not in a part of the city that has been recognized as having a historically or visually significant character.*

7. The aesthetic design preserves significant public views and vistas from public streets and open spaces and enhances them by providing areas for pedestrian activity.

*The proposed project will not expand the building footprint but will slightly raise the roof of the east-west oriented portion of the building to accommodate a new second floor. The project will not substantially impact any potential views from public streets or open spaces.*

8. The proposed landscaping plan is suitable for the type of project and will improve the appearance of the community by enhancing the building, minimizing hardscape and softening walls; and the landscape plan incorporates plant materials that are drought-tolerant, will minimize water usage, and are compatible with El Cerrito's climate.

*The project proposes substantial new landscaping throughout the site, including in proposed common and private open space areas; the parking lot; and along the street frontages. The plant palette incorporates drought-tolerant plants, including coast rosemary, coffeeberry, and lavender suitable for El Cerrito’s climate and the characteristics of the site. The proposed landscaping will screen the parking lot and soften the building walls.*

9. The project has been designed to be energy efficient including, but not limited to, landscape design and green or eco-friendly design and materials.

*The project will be required to comply with the energy requirements of Title 24 of the 2019 CalGreen building code.*

10. The project design protects and integrates natural features including creeks, open space, significant vegetation, and geologic features. Projects along the Ohlone Greenway shall enhance the usability and aesthetic appeal of the Greenway by integrating it into the fabric of the City through building designs that include entries, yards, patios, and windows that open onto and face the Ohlone Greenway.

*The project site does not include natural features and is not adjacent to the Ohlone Greenway. This finding is not applicable.*
Staff Recommendation

Based on the information contained in this report, staff recommends approval of Planning Application No. PL20-0032, as conditioned by the draft resolution in Attachment 1.

Proposed Motion


Appeal Period

Within ten (10) calendar days after the date of the decision, the Design Review Board action may be appealed to the Planning Commission.

Attachments

1. Draft Resolution
2. Project Plans
3. Railing Alternative 3
4. CEQA Class 32 Memo
A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF EL CERRITO DESIGN REVIEW BOARD GRANTING DESIGN REVIEW APPROVAL FOR THE PROPOSED CONVERSION OF A FORMER CHURCH AND OFFICE BUILDING INTO A MULTIFAMILY RESIDENTIAL BUILDING WITH SIX RESIDENTIAL UNITS AT 601 LEXINGTON AVENUE

WHEREAS, the site is located at 601 Lexington Avenue; and

WHEREAS, the existing Assessor’s Parcel Number of the site is 503-402-008; and

WHEREAS, the General Plan land use classification of the site is High Density Residential; and

WHEREAS, the zoning district of the site is RM (Multi-Family Residential); and

WHEREAS, the project is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15332 of the CEQA Guidelines, Class 32: In-Fill Development Projects; and

WHEREAS, on February 27, 2020, the applicant submitted a Design Review application for the proposed conversion of a former church and office building into 6 residential units at 601 Lexington Avenue; and

WHEREAS, on May 20, 2020, the El Cerrito Planning Commission adopted Resolution PC 2020-05 approving Conditional Use Permits for a reduction of the required off-street parking; making substantial alterations to a nonconforming structure; an exception to buffer yard requirements; and an exception to retaining wall height requirements for the project; and

WHEREAS, on July 1, 2020, the Design Review Board, after due consideration of all evidence and reports offered for review, does find and determine the following:

Pursuant to ECMC Section 19.38.060, in acting to approve or conditionally approve a Design Review application, the Design Review Board shall find that the application is consistent with the following:

1. As described in the Zoning Standards portion of this staff report, the project meets the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance except with regards to providing reduced off-street parking; making substantial alterations to a nonconforming structure; an exception to buffer yard requirements; and an exception to retaining wall height requirements. On May 20, 2020 the Planning Commission adopted Resolution PC 2020-05 approving Conditional Use Permits for each of these items.

2. The design is consistent with the General Plan policies that influence design, specifically, LU1.3 Quality of Development, CD 1.3 High Quality Design, CD1.9 Building Design, CD 2.1 Street Frontages, CD2.7 Accessible Design, CD3.3 Site Landscaping, CD4.2 Building Articulation and CD 5.1 Design Review Process.

3. There are no design guidelines adopted by the City Council for this part of the city. This finding is not applicable.

4. The project is in keeping with the design review criteria as outlined below (Section 19.38.060 B of the El Cerrito Municipal Code).

The project has received all required Planning Commission approvals including Conditional Use Permits
for providing reduced off-street parking; making substantial alterations to a nonconforming structure; an exception to buffer yard requirements; and an exception to retaining wall height requirements.

5. No other City policies apply to this project.

6. The project provides an attractive and comfortable environmental for all with enhanced articulation for the existing building and by providing significant new landscaping and common open space and private open space areas.

7. The building materials integrate well with the building design and the façade articulation. The proposed landscaping is appropriate for the site and integrates well with the proposed design aesthetic. The overall design scheme is visually consistent.

8. The surrounding neighborhood contains single-family houses, multi-family residences, and commercial uses along nearby San Pablo Avenue. The structures are predominantly one and two stories high with some structures up to 4 stories high, and are typically mid-century in design. The massing of the proposed project is consistent with the prevailing one and two stories in the neighborhood with similar front, side and rear setbacks.

9. The proposed continuation of the Mid-Century Modern design of the existing building and the proposed additional windows and doors will add visual interest to the existing building and the surrounding area. The project will also maintain the existing variation in building facades, rooflines, and projections of the existing building. The El Cerrito Plaza Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) station and AC Transit bus routes are less than a quarter of a mile away from the project, making it an ideal walking or biking distance to mass transit.

10. The units will face street frontages on Lexington Avenue and Lincoln Avenue, with doors, windows, fenced yards and landscaping along the street-frontages that will allow for surveillance of these streets.

11. This finding is not applicable. The project location is not in a part of the city that has been recognized as having a historically or visually significant character.

12. The proposed project will not expand the building footprint but will slightly raise the roof of the east-west oriented portion of the building to accommodate a new second floor. The project will not substantially impact any potential views from public streets or open spaces.

13. The project proposes substantial new landscaping throughout the site, including in proposed common and private open space areas; the parking lot; and along the street frontages. The plant palette incorporates drought-tolerant plants suitable for El Cerrito's climate and the characteristics of the site. The proposed landscaping will screen the parking lot and soften the building walls.

14. The project will be required to comply with the energy requirements of Title 24 of the 2019 CalGreen building code.

15. The project site does not include natural features and is not adjacent to the Ohlone Greenway. This finding is not applicable.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that after careful consideration of maps, facts, exhibits, correspondence, and testimony, and other evidence submitted in this matter, and, in consideration of the findings, the El Cerrito Design Review Board hereby approves Application No. PL20-0032, subject to the following conditions:
Planning Division:

1. The project will be constructed substantially in conformance with the plans received by the City on June 24, 2020. Minor changes may be approved by the Zoning Administrator. All improvements shall be installed in accordance with these approvals. Once constructed or installed, all improvements shall be maintained as approved.

2. If the applicant constructs buildings or makes improvements in accordance with these approvals, but fails to comply with any of the Conditions of Approval or limitations set forth in these Conditions of Approval and does not cure any such failure within a reasonable time after notice from the City of El Cerrito, then such failure shall be cause for non-issuance of a certificate of occupancy, revocation or modification of these approvals or any other remedies available to the City.

3. These Conditions of Approval shall apply to any successor in interest in the property and Applicant shall be responsible for assuring that the successor in interest is informed of the terms and conditions of this approval.

4. If not used, this approval shall expire two years from the date of this action. If the Design Review Board approves the design review application for this project (PL20-0032) within such time, then this approval shall expire two years from the date of action by the Design Review Board.

5. A construction staging plan shall be submitted to the Zoning Administrator for review and approval prior to the issuance of a building permit. The construction staging plan shall illustrate where the construction equipment will be staged and the location of parking for the construction employees. This construction and staging plan may also require the submission of a Temporary Use Permit.

6. Prior to issuance of building permit, the applicant shall demonstrate compliance with Chapter 13.50: Art in Public Places of the El Cerrito Municipal Code to the satisfaction of the Zoning Administrator. The project shall be fully compliant with Chapter 13.50 prior to issuance of Certificate of Occupancy.

7. The applicant shall provide a site survey conducted by a licensed surveyor prior to issuance of a building permit. If the survey substantially deviates from materials provided to the Planning Commission, then reconsideration by the Planning Commission may be required.

8. The applicant shall propose a small loading area for solid waste containers, such as an extended red curb on both sides of the driveway, for review and approval by the Zoning Administrator prior to issuance of a certificate of occupancy.

9. The applicant shall propose a large tree on the rear yard of 602 Kearney Street of species, size, and location to be reviewed and approved by the Zoning Administrator and the property owner of 602 Kearney Street prior to issuance of a building permit. The tree shall be planted prior to issuance of a certificate of occupancy at the applicant’s expense.

10. The applicant shall ensure that the project site does not create glare impacts to adjacent neighbors from lighting on the project site for review and approval by the Zoning Administrator prior to issuance of a certificate of occupancy.
Building Division:

Prior to issuance of building permit, applicant shall address the following:

11. In order to not provide an accessible path to every residential unit, the applicant shall perform a site analysis, per Chapter 11A Section 1150A of the California Building Code, that demonstrates that providing an accessible route is not technically feasible.

12. There must be an accessible path from each unit to the common outdoor space.

13. All units must comply with current requirements for energy efficiency, water conservation, sub-metering, etc.

14. All areas of the building must be protected by an automatic fire sprinkler system in accordance with fire department requirements and under a separate permit.

Fire Department:

Prior to issuance of building permit, applicant shall address the following:

15. Building Construction

16. Access
   a. Any electronic gates installed shall be equipped with Knox Key System.
   b. Any non-electric gates installed shall have Knox Box next to gate(s).
   c. A “KNOX BOX” shall be installed with keys for all common areas.

17. Fire Flow Requirements
   a. Provide code analysis of required total firefighting water.
   b. Based on required fire flow, show on plans the number of fire hydrants required and locations based on maximum spacing requirements.
   c. If required, plans for fire service underground shall be submitted for review, approval and permit under separate cover.

18. Automatic Fire Sprinklers
   a. Automatic Fire Sprinklers shall be installed throughout the building.
   b. Fire sprinkler plans shall be submitted for review, approval and permit under separate cover.

19. Fire Department Connection / Underground
   a. Fire riser and FDC locations shall be submitted for review and approval.
   b. Fire FDC’s shall be in locations acceptable for fire department for emergency operations.
   c. Fire system underground pipe plans shall be submitted for review and approval.

20. Fire Alarm System
   a. Automatic fire alarm system is required.
   b. Fire alarm plans shall be submitted for review and approval.

21. Smoke Detection
   a. Smoke detection shall be installed in each bedroom, in hallways adjacent to bedrooms, and one detector per floor level (top and bottom of stairs).
b. Smoke detectors shall be 120v powered with battery backup.
c. Smoke detectors shall be interconnected.

22. Carbon Monoxide Detectors
   a. Carbon monoxide alarm shall be installed outside of and adjacent to sleeping areas where fuel-burning appliances are installed; and in dwelling units that have attached garages.
   b. Carbon Monoxide detectors shall be installed in accordance with NFPA 720.
   c. Carbon Monoxide alarms shall be 120v powered with battery backup and interconnected with the smoke detectors.

23. Electrical
   a. All electrical breakers shall be labeled.

24. Premises Identification
   a. Approved numbers or address shall be provided in such a position to be plainly visible and legible from the street fronting the property.
   b. Address shall be either internally or externally illuminated.

25. Emergency Egress
   a. Every sleeping room shall have at least one operable window or door approved for emergency escape or rescue in accordance with CFC 1030.
   b. Escape or rescue windows shall be installed in accordance with CFC 1030.

Public Works:

26. Applicant shall provide a detailed civil plan for off-site work (improvements in the PROW) for the Public Works Department to review and approve prior to issuance of building permit.

27. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, applicant shall submit an estimate of grading and earthwork to be completed for the project. Any earthwork and/or grading operations in excess of 50 cubic yards will require the applicant to submit a detailed grading plan, obtain a Grading & Transportation Permit and pay all associated fees.

28. Applicant shall provide a detailed drainage plan including rain leaders, roof slopes, downspouts, etc. for the Public Works Department to review and approve prior to issuance of building permit.

29. Applicant shall submit an Erosion and Sediment Control Plan for construction for review and approval by the Public Works Department prior to issuance of a building permit.

30. Before the start of any work in the public right-of-way, including any street tree, sidewalk and driveway work, applicant must obtain a Public Works Encroachment Permit and pay all associated fees. Any sidewalk, curb ramp and driveway work shall meet current ADA and City of El Cerrito Standards.

31. Approval from the East Bay Municipal Utilities District (EBMUD) and Stege Sanitary District is required.

City Arborist:

32. Protect existing street trees during construction, per Section 015639 of the Tree and Plant Protection specifications of the Urban Tree Foundation.
33. The applicant shall enlarge planter strip tree well openings subject to the approval of the City Arborist prior to issuance of a certificate of occupancy. This shall include removing concrete panels adjacent to existing trees (1 each) and replacing with arbor mulch or approved equal. Then repair concrete pavement in ROW per City standard.

34. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall submit a landscaping plan, showing all planting in the right-of-way. The applicant shall remove and replace one to three street trees on Lincoln Avenue in front of the project site. All new street trees shall be selected from the City Master Tree List and approved by the City Arborist before installation. Tree species, location, spacing, tree well size, and planting details, are to be approved by the City Arborist before installation. Any new street trees are required to have irrigation and an establishment period of three years prior to acceptance by the City.

CERTIFICATION

I certify that this resolution was adopted by the El Cerrito Design Review Board at a regular meeting held on July 1, 2020, upon motion of Commissioner __________, second by Commissioner __________:

AYES:
NOES:
ABSTAIN:
ABSENT:

__________________________
Jeff Ballantine, AICP
Senior Planner
TRASH ENCLOSURE PLAN

1. TRASH ENCLOSURE ELEVATIONS

2. TRASH ENCLOSURE WALL MATERIAL

3. TRASH ENCLOSURE SCREEN MATERIAL

4. TRASH ENCLOSURE ELEVATIONS

5. TRASH ENCLOSURE PLAN

TRASH ENCLOSURE ELEVATIONS

- Front / East

- Right side / North

- Rear / West

- Left side / South

TRASH ENCLOSURE WALL MATERIAL

- CMU Block: #170 Buff Burnish by Capitol Products, Inc.

TRASH ENCLOSURE SCREEN MATERIAL

- Perforated Sheet Steel Screening at Enclosure Doors
  - Grecian Pattern, 35% Open by Industrial Metal Supply

TRASH ENCLOSURE PLAN

- 12" Access, Rear Loading Area

- 2 (42") Doors (2) 42" Doors

- 6'-8" Access Stall Loading Area


- Steel Frame Doors w/ Perforated Metal Panel Screening, Typ. See 4/A2.5

- Perforated Sheet Steel Screening at Enclosure Doors
  - Grecian Pattern, 35% Open by Industrial Metal Supply

- CMU Block Enclosure w/ Climbing Vines on 3 Sides, See Landscape Dwg
  - 4 Axl. 5"
Lexington Residences

Conversions of former church/commercial office into six residential units

Guardrail Alternate 2 -- Black Metal Picket

Guardrail Alternate 1 -- Greenscreen Metal Mesh
Plant Images

Shrubs and Ferns

- *Hebe scoparia* 'Morning Light'
- *Carmelia x 'Tidy Plant'
- *Ruscus aculeatus' Cornells'
- *Carmelia axonopoda' Turnsole'
- *Elaeagnus' Blue Jasmine'

Ferns

- *Polystichum polyblepharum'
- *Phlebodium aureum' White Fern'

Grasses and Perennials

- *Perovskia atriplicifolia' Russian Sage'
- *Muhlenbergia rigens' Deko Grass'
- *Caryopteris clandonensis' Bluebeard Sage'
- *Thymus sibiricus' Russian Sage'
- *Lavandula x intermedia' Provence' Blue Lavender'

Existing Trees

- *Olea europaea' Monarch' Olive Tree'
- *Lilium' Dragon Tree'

Trees

- *Larix decidua' European Larch'
- *Olea europaea' Olive'

Vines

- *Pison jutta' Creeping Fig'
- *Parthenocissus tricuspidata' Boston Ivy'
ATTACHMENT 3

GOI LEX
6/18/20

42" GREEN SCREEN
GUARD RAIL
12" BACK (UNIT 2+3)

(N) CMU WALL
± 3" HT

OPEN SPACE AT SAME LEVEL

(N) CMU WALL
± 3 4/" HT

± 30" HT
GREEN SCREEN
FOR PRIVACY
ON TOP OF WALL OK.
ALONG UNIT 1

(N) BLOCK WALL
± 7" HT
NO GUARD RAIL

± 11'6" x 20'0"
= 230 SF
lawn

UNIT 3
52.65

UNIT 2
52.65

8'
lawn

DROP ± 3" DOWN.

UNIT 1
52.65

52.61

CONSIDER 36" HT GREEN SCREEN @ STEP TO HIDE
HANDRAIL NECESSARY.
INTRODUCTION

This memorandum documents Urban Planning Partner’s finding that the 601 Lexington Avenue project (project) qualifies for a categorical exemption as an In-Fill Development Project (Class 32 exemption) under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).\(^2\) Section 15300 of the CEQA Guidelines defines certain classes of projects which have been “determined not to have a significant effect on the environment and which shall, therefore, be made exempt from the provisions of CEQA.” The CEQA Guidelines Section 15332 describes the conditions under which a project qualifies for a Class 32 exemption:

(a) The project is consistent with the applicable general plan designation and all applicable general plan policies as well as with applicable zoning designation and regulations.
(b) The proposed development occurs within city limits on a project site of no more than five acres substantially surrounded by urban uses.
(c) The project site has no value as habitat for endangered, rare or threatened species.
(d) Approval of the project would not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality.
(e) The site can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services.

Urban Planning Partner’s review and analysis of this project demonstrates that the project meets the required conditions. Our findings are described below:

\(^2\) CEQA Guidelines Section 15332
a) The project is consistent with the applicable general plan designation and all applicable general plan policies as well as with applicable zoning designation and regulations.

The project site’s General Plan land use designation is High Density Residential and the zoning designation is RM (Multi-Family Residential). Per the El Cerrito General Plan’s Community Development and Design Element, the High Density land use designation is “intended to provide opportunities for multiple-family residential development,” with residential densities of between 21 to 35 dwelling units per acre.

The project’s proposed multifamily residential use would be compatible with the project site’s General Plan land use designation and the RM zoning district, which permits multifamily residential uses by-right.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 1 DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS IN THE RM ZONE</th>
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<tr>
<td>Standard</td>
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<td>Minimum Lot Size for 6 units in the RM district</td>
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<td>Residential Density (General Plan)</td>
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<td>Lot Coverage</td>
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<td>Setbacks</td>
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<td>Max. Height</td>
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<td>Parking</td>
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Source: El Cerrito Municipal Code Table 19.06-B.

As seen in Table 1 above, the project would meet the applicable regulations for developments in the RM zone. Per Sections 19.27.050 and 19.24.050 of the ECMC, respectively, the project would require a use permit to alter an existing non-conforming structure and permit a parking reduction. The general findings for approval for use permits, described in Section 19.34.040, include finding that the project “is consistent with the purposes of the district in which it is located and conforms in
all significant respects with the El Cerrito General Plan.” Thus, approval of the project would necessitate the project being consistent with the zoning and General Plan land use designations.

b) The proposed development occurs within city limits on a project site of no more than five acres substantially surrounded by urban uses.

The project site is 10,000 square feet in area, or 0.23 acres, and is located within the City of El Cerrito’s city limits. The CEQA Guidelines do not specifically define urban uses, but a definition of “qualified urban uses” is provided in CEQA Guidelines Section 15191, which states that a qualified urban use is any “residential, commercial, public institutional, transit or transportation passenger facility, or retail use, or any combination of those uses.” The project site is bordered on all sides by residential uses and thus is “substantially surrounded by urban uses.”

c) The project site has no value as habitat for endangered, rare or threatened species.

The project site is within a highly developed urban area. The project site itself was first developed in 1949 and is currently developed largely with impervious surfaces, apart from five street trees and some assorted landscaping containing small shrubs and grasses. Per the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan (SPASP) Environmental Impact Report (EIR), neither the Specific Plan area nor the vicinity contain any plant or animal species “identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations.” The San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan boundary is approximately 180 feet west of the project site, terminating at the western edge of Kearny Street, and it is thus reasonable to assume that the findings of the SPASP EIR regarding endangered species apply to the project site. Furthermore, the project site does not contain any federally protected wetlands or riparian habitat.

d) Approval of the project would not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality.

1) Traffic

The City of El Cerrito uses the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) traffic impact study guideline thresholds to determine whether a traffic study is required and for determining potential traffic impacts. According to the CCTA guidelines, a project that generates less than 100 peak hour trips is considered to have no significant impacts.

The project would eliminate 4,170² sf of office use and create six new multifamily dwelling units. According to the Institute of Transportation Engineers’ (ITE) Trip Generation Manual, 10th Edition, multifamily housing (ITE land use code 220) generates 7.32 daily and 0.56 peak hour trips per unit. Using these figures, the new project would generate approximately 44 daily and 4 peak hour trips

total. Without considering, the net change from office to residential these trip totals are less than the CCTA traffic study thresholds and thus the project would not have any significant impacts related to traffic.

2) Noise
Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines contains criteria for determining the significance of the project’s noise impacts. In December 2018, Appendix G and the criteria for noise were revised as shown below eliminating the significance criteria related to the exposure of future residents or employees of projects to existing ambient noise at the project site, which is no longer a consideration on CEQA as it is regulated by state and local policies.

Would the project:

a) Exposure of persons to or generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?

b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?

c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?

d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?

e) For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?

f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?

Temporary Noise Increase (Construction)

Construction of the project would result in a temporary increase in noise in the project vicinity. Given the project is an adaptive reuse project, the scope of the construction would be less than if the site was being development with all new construction. The project involves no foundation work or significant site preparation work, such as grading, excavation, or pile driving. These construction activities are typically the noisiest phases of construction. Section 16.02.060 of the Municipal Code restricts the time that construction activities may take place from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturdays, with construction being totally prohibited Sundays and holidays. The code further states work must be controlled to prevent causing a public nuisance such as dust, noise, vibrations, uncontrolled storm water runoff, and traffic congestion. Limiting construction to these hours ensures that no increase in noise would occur during nights and on Sundays and holidays when the ambient noise is typically lower and an increase in noise would be perceived as louder. The limited construction scope together with the limited hours for construction activity, would ensure that the project would not result in a substantial temporary increase in noise.

Permanent Noise Increase (Operation)
The proposed project would result in the adaptive reuse of the project site with residences, whereas the site is currently utilized for commercial office. Overall operational noise levels would generally be low, consistent with similar uses, and would primarily be associated with vehicle noise associated with residents accessing the site, but this would be similar to existing conditions when accessed by office users and would not result in a substantial permanent increase in noise at the site or its vicinity. The project site is not within 2 miles of a private airstrip or public airport. The nearest such facility is Oakland International Airport, located approximately 11.9 miles southeast of the project site.

Vibration

Neither project construction nor operation are anticipated to result in any noticeable vibration. The scope of the construction is limited and would not involve grading or the use of heavy equipment that would result in vibration. Residential use does not cause noticeable vibration. As a result, the project would not result in any significant impacts related to noise.

Non-CEQA Informational Section: Ambient Noise

Although not required under CEQA, this analysis of the potential for future residents of the project site to be exposed to noise in excess of the standards established by the City of El Cerrito for residential uses is provided for informational purposes. Per the ECMC Section 19.21.050, outdoor noise levels for residential areas shall not exceed a Ldn\(^3\) of 60 dB, or 70 dB if the noise source is a Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) facility. As the project site is surrounded by residential uses, the primary noise sources are traffic noise on adjacent streets and BART trains passing on the tracks to the east.

The project site is located at the intersection of Lincoln Avenue and Lexington Avenue, both of which are low-volume, low-speed residential streets in the vicinity of the project site. The major source of traffic noise from the project would be from San Pablo Avenue, whose centerline is approximately 420 feet west of the project site. Noise from the BART tracks, approximately 450 feet to the west, would also be perceptible at the project site.

The initial study for the 921 Kearny Street project used the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Highway Traffic Noise Prediction Model to predict traffic noise levels at that project site, which was approximately 165 feet from the centerline of San Pablo Avenue. The FHWA model showed that traffic noise from San Pablo Avenue would be 59.3 dBA at 100 feet from the centerline of the road, and 55 dBA at 195 feet from the centerline of the road. As noise attenuates with distance, the perceived noise from San Pablo Avenue at the project site would be less than 55 dBA and thus compliant with the residential area noise standards in ECMC 19.21.050.

\(^3\)Ldn (Day/Night Noise Level) is the average A-weighted sound pressure level during a 24-hour day, obtained after addition of 10 decibels to levels measured during the night between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.
Noise measurements taken at the project site for the 921 Kearny Street project initial study showed that the maximum noise perceptible at the project site during afternoon peak traffic hour was 65.7 dBA, with passing BART trains generating the loudest noise recorded. The 921 Kearny project site is approximately 390 feet west of the BART tracks. As the project is further from the BART tracks than the 921 Kearny project, noise from passing BART trains would be lower than the 65.7 dBA measured at the 921 Kearny project site and thus compliant with the residential area noise standards in ECMC 19.21.050.

3) Air Quality

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) provides guidelines for assessing air quality impacts of projects under CEQA in the San Francisco Bay Area Air Basin. By the nature of the project (multifamily residential), operation of the project would not be considered a source of Toxic Air Contaminants (TAC) or PM$_{2.5}$. Additionally, as shown in Table 2, the project is below the screening criteria in the BAAQMD CEQA Air Quality Guidelines. Projects of a smaller size than those in the screening criteria are assumed to have less than significant impacts on air quality. As the project is below the number of dwelling units in the screening criteria, both operation and construction of the project would result in a less-than-significant impact from air pollutant emissions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Phase</th>
<th>Project</th>
<th>BAAQMD Screening Criteria (low-rise apartments)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Operation</td>
<td>6 dwelling units</td>
<td>451 dwelling units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>6 dwelling units</td>
<td>240 dwelling units</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: BAAQMD, 2017. CEQA Air Quality Guidelines Table 3. May. The BAAQMD database of permitted stationary sources of air pollution shows that no stationary sources are within 1,000 feet of the project site. The closest stationary source is the Unlocal #4296 gas station at 3160 Carlson Boulevard, approximately 1,025 feet southwest of the project site. The air quality analysis conducted for the SPASP EIR concluded that any site at least 131 feet away from this gas station would not be exposed to significant air quality impacts. The other potential source of air pollution at the project site is high-volume roadways. The SPASP EIR concluded that projects at least 75 feet east of San Pablo Avenue and 750 feet east of I-80 would not experience significant air quality impacts from these sources. The project site is over 2,500 feet away from Interstate-80 (I-80) and thus residents at the project would not be exposed to significant air pollution from that roadway. The closest high-volume roadway is San Pablo Avenue, the centerline of which is approximately

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El Cerrito Municipal Code Section 8.49.070
450 west of the project site. As a result, the project would not result in exposure of sensitive receptors (new residents) to significant levels of air pollution.

4) Water Quality

During construction, the project would be required comply with the City’s municipal stormwater permit requirements under the Contra Costa Clean Water Program⁶, the California Stormwater Quality Association’s Best Management Practices for Construction Activities, and the Association of Bay Area Government’s Manual of Standards for Erosion and Sediment Control Measures⁷. Compliance with these standards and regulations would minimize any water quality impacts resulting from construction of the project. Additionally, the project would reduce the amount of impervious surfaces by converting a portion of the paved parking lot to landscaping, thus reducing the amount of stormwater runoff from the site. No streams, rivers, or wetlands are on or near the project site and thus none of these features would be impacted by the project. Water would be provided to the site by the East Bay Municipal Utilities District and thus the project would not affect ground water recharge, well water supplies, or aquifers. Lastly the project site is not within a flood hazard area as mapped by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

e) The site can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services.

The project site is within the city limits of El Cerrito and currently adequately served by public services and utilities. The project site currently contains an operating office building and is served by existing sewer, water, and electrical lines. The City of El Cerrito provides police and fire services.

EXCEPTIONS TO CATEGORICAL EXEMPTIONS

Section 15300.2 of the CEQA Guidelines describes criterion which would prohibit the use of a Class 32 CEQA exemption:

Criterion 15300.2(b): Cumulative Impact. All exemptions for these classes are inapplicable when the cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time is significant.

Criterion 15300.2(c): Significant Effect. A categorical exemption shall not be used for an activity where there is a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.

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⁶ El Cerrito Municipal Code Section 8.49.070
⁷ El Cerrito Municipal Code Section 8.40.90.
**Criterion 15300.2(d): Scenic Highways.** A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may result in damage to scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or similar resources, within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway. This does not apply to improvements which are required as mitigation by an adopted negative declaration or certified EIR.

**Criterion 15300.2(e): Hazardous Waste Sites.** A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.

**Criterion 15300.2(f): Historical Resources.** A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.

None of the criterion described in section 15300.2 exist at the project site. No successive projects of the same type in the same place are known or are expected to occur over time that would result in cumulatively considerable impacts. The project site and surrounding environment contain no unusual circumstances which would cause the project to have a significant effect on the environment. The project is not located on or near a Scenic Highway nor a Hazardous Waste site and thus these exceptions would not apply.

No historic resources exist at the project site. The CEQA Guidelines Section 15064 defines a historical resource as being:

1) Listed or eligible to be listed in the California Register of Historic Resources
2) Listed in a local register of historic resources or identified as significant in a historic resource survey
3) Any object, building, structure, site, area, place, record, or manuscript which a lead agency determines to be historically significant or significant in the architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural annals of California

The church structure currently at the project site was constructed in 1949. It does not appear on any local, state, or national list or register of historic resources. As stated in the attached memo from Left Coast Architectural History dated May 11, 2020 (Attachment A), the church structure is not a historic resource for the purposes of CEQA.

**CONCLUSION**

On the basis of the evidence provided above, the project is eligible for a Class 32 categorical exemption, in accordance with Section 15332, Infill Development Projects, of the CEQA Guidelines. Because the Project meets the criteria for categorically exempt infill development projects, and
because it would not have a significant effect on the environment, this analysis finds that a Notice of Exemption may be prepared for the Project. No further review is needed.
ATTACHMENT A: 601 LEXINGTON AVENUE, EL CERRITO HISTORICAL RESOURCE EVALUATION
601 Lexington Avenue, El Cerrito
Historical Resource Evaluation

Prepared for:
Urban Planning Partners, Inc.
388 17th Street, Suite 230
Oakland, CA 94612

11 May 2020
INTRODUCTION

This Historic Resource Evaluation was prepared by Caitlin Hibma, architectural historian qualified under the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Architectural History, for Urban Planning Partners, Inc. It examines the historic significance and integrity of the property addressed 601 Lexington Avenue in the City of El Cerrito (APN: 503-402-008-0), which was built in 1949 according to County Assessor's data. The study provides a record of research findings, evaluation according to the California Register of Historical Resources significance criteria and aspects of integrity, and culminates in a preliminary determination of the property's eligibility for designation as a Historic Resource.

METHODOLOGY

This report was undertaken during statewide shelter-in-place orders, effective during April 2020. The following methodology was vetted and approved by the City of El Cerrito Planning Division. Research was performed remotely using sources available online or through communications with the El Cerrito Historical Society. The significance and integrity evaluation contained herein is based on that research. A caveat is provided that other historical information may be available that was not able to be obtained by this effort and which may have the potential to change the conclusions of this analysis.

No site visit was performed. Instead, visual inspection of the property was made using Google Maps and Google Street View, which provided imagery current to January 2019.

Research was performed via online repositories, including the following archives/sources:

- *Architect & Engineer* trade periodical (via Internet Archive; archive.org)
- California Digital Newspaper Collection (https://cdnc.ucr.edu/cgi-bin/cdnc)
- City of El Cerrito Building Division building permits and other property records (obtained by project sponsor and provided to Left Coast Architectural History by Urban Planning Partners)
- El Cerrito Historical Society (email from Left Coast Architectural History to echistorical@gmail.com on 17 April 2020; response received from David Weinstein stating that ECHS had no information available for the property.)
- Google Maps/street view (maps.google.com)
- NETR Historic Aerials (https://www.historicaerials.com/)
- Newspaper Archive (newspaperarchive.com via San Francisco Public Library)
- Oakland city directories (including surrounding cities); 1949, 1951, 1953-1957 (via Ancestry.com) (Subject property not listed at any time)
- Pacific Coast Architecture Database (http://pcad.lib.washington.edu/)
- Sanborn Fire Insurance maps (ProQuest via San Francisco Public Library)

This memorandum culminates in an evaluation and determination of eligibility of the property for the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR), which establishes each property's status as a Historic Resource according to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Evaluative procedures for CRHR eligibility are outlined below:

**Evaluative Procedures**

CEQA states that any property listed or determined eligible for listing on the CRHR qualifies as a Historic Resource under CEQA and must be given consideration in the CEQA process. To evaluate and determine
eligibility for listing on the CRHR, it must be found that a property is significant under one or more of the following criteria.

**Criterion 1 (Events):** Resources that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history, or the cultural heritage of California or the United States.

**Criterion 2 (Persons):** Resources that are associated with the lives of persons important to local, California, or national history.

**Criterion 3 (Architecture):** Resources that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represent the work of a master, or possess high artistic values.

**Criterion 4 (Information Potential):** Resources or sites that have yielded or have the potential to yield information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California, or the nation.

In addition to possessing significance under one of the aforementioned criteria, a property must also retain historic integrity to be eligible for listing on the CRHR. The process of determining integrity references seven variables or aspects to define integrity, as follows:

- **Location** is the place where the historic property was constructed.
- **Setting** addresses the physical environment of the historic property inclusive of the landscape and spatial relationships of the building(s).
- **Design** is the combination of elements that create the form, plans, space, structure and style of the property.
- **Materials** refer to the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern of configuration to form the historic property.
- **Workmanship** is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history.
- **Feeling** is the property’s expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time.
- **Association** is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property.

**RESEARCH FINDINGS**

**Current Historic Status**

- National Register of Historic Places – Not Listed
- California Register of Historical Resource – Not Listed
• Contra Costa County Historic Resources Inventory (current July 2019) – Not listed
• City of El Cerrito - No local inventory of historic resources; not listed.

**Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps**

• July 1926 – The only Sanborn map edition available for the City of El Cerrito was published in July 1926. The map shows that the parcel currently addressed 601 Lexington Avenue may have consisted of two lots, both of which were vacant, suggesting that the subject property was not developed prior to the construction of the current building.

![1926 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. Boundaries of subject property outlined in red.](image)

**Aerial Photographs**

The earliest aerial photograph available via the Historic Aerials website dates to 1946 and shows that the subject property was vacant at that time, supporting the idea that the property was undeveloped prior to construction of the subject building in 1949.
The next available aerial photographs date to 1958 and 1959. They show a large rectangular building located at the corner of Lexington and Lincoln Avenues and oriented on an east-west axis. The size and shape of the building corresponds to the east-west oriented mass of the current L-shaped building. The northern portion of the lot remained open and scattered trees are visible.

By 1968, when the next aerial image was taken, the north-south oriented mass of the L-shaped building appears to have been added, extending across the back of the open northern portion of the parcel, while the open northeastern portion bears no vegetation and may have been occupied with a surface parking area, as today.

Additional aerial photos from 1980 through 2016 indicate no additional changes to the property.¹

**Building Division Records**

The following building permit records, architectural drawings, and other records are on file at the City of El Cerrito Building Division:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Contents/Scope of Work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>07/11/60</td>
<td>Architectural drawings</td>
<td>“Additions to First Church of Christ Scientist” by Corlett &amp; Spackman Architects of San Francisco. Illustrates addition of rear north-south ell to existing church building. Owner: First Church of Christ Scientist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Use permit application #5748</td>
<td>Change of use from church to professional office. Owner: Adventure Associates, Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/15/05</td>
<td>Building permit #05 1042</td>
<td>Replace 8 windows, same sizes, no location changes. Owner: Adventure Associates, Inc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chain of Title & Occupancy**

Deduced from city/county directories, building permit records, and newspaper advertisements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Owner</th>
<th>Tenant/Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1949 – 2000</td>
<td>First Church of Christ Scientist</td>
<td>Same/religious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 – recent</td>
<td>Adventure Associates, Inc.</td>
<td>Same/commercial – professional office</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Architect & Builder**

- No original building permit or other archival information was found that identified the original architect and/or builder of the church.

¹ Images not included due to copyright restrictions.
Historic Resource Evaluation

- Corlett & Spackman Architects: designers of the 1960 rear ell addition. Partnership of William G. Corlett III and Wendell Ross Spackman. Firm based in San Francisco, established 1952. Spackman retired in 1976 and other partners joined, firm name changed, still operates as CSDA Design Group. Portfolio of work during Corlett & Spackman era includes: Greenbrae Elementary School, Greenbrae, CA (1953); Center Street School, Castro Valley (1955); American Corp Sisalkraft’s West Coast plant (1957); American Trust Company Branch Banking Facility, Napa, CA (1959); main arena for Squaw Valley Winter Olympics (1960); Sunset View Mortuary, Kensington, CA (1962); U.C. Santa Cruz dorms and dining commons (1968); American International School of Tokyo, Japan K-12 campus (1968); Glen Park BART Station, San Francisco (1970).²

Newspapers

The following advertisements for church activities were found in local newspapers:

* "CHRISTIAN SCIENCE: HEALING BY THE POWER OF GOD" A FREE LECTURE by Ralph Castle, C.S. of San Francisco, California
Member of the Board of Lectureship of The Mother Church, The First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston, Massachusetts
Sunday Afternoon December 16 3 O’Clock
in the edifice of:
First Church of Christ, Scientist, El Cerrito
601 Lexington Avenue, Corner of Lincoln Avenue
The Public is cordially invited to attend
Radiocast, KRE, 1400 Kilocycles — KRE-FM, 102.9 Megacycles

Berkeley Gazette, 15 December 1951.

* First Church Christ, Scientist
601 Lexington Avenue, El Cerrito
SUNDAY SERVICE 11 a.m.
Monday, October 6, 8 p.m. (at the church)
Col. William Little
Lecture on “Know Yourself”
Visitors cordially invited

Oakland Tribune, 4 October 1969.

² PCAD, https://csdadesigngroup.com/firm/
Historical Significance

The California Register of Historical Resources (California Register) is an inventory of significant architectural, archaeological, and historical resources in the State of California. In order for a property to be eligible for listing in the California Register, it must be found significant under one or more of the following criteria.

- **Criterion 1 (Events):** Resources that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history, or the cultural heritage of California or the United States.

- **Criterion 2 (Persons):** Resources that are associated with the lives of persons important to local, California, or national history.

- **Criterion 3 (Architecture):** Resources that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represent the work of a master, or possess high artistic values.

- **Criterion 4 (Information Potential):** Resources or sites that have yielded or have the potential to yield information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California, or the nation.³

The building at 601 Lexington Avenue does not appear to be eligible for individual listing in the California Register under any of the above criteria. A full evaluation follows:

**Criterion 1 (Event)**

The building at 601 Lexington Avenue does not appear to be associated with historical events or patterns of development significant to the history of El Cerrito or the State of California that would raise it to a level of individual significance and eligibility. A few newspaper advertisements indicate that the church hosted religious

Historic Resource Evaluation

lectures in addition to its presumably regular services. However, these lectures do not appear to be of any historic significance and no other specific events of historical importance are known to have occurred at the property. The church was built in 1949, falling into a late period of El Cerrito's development, after the city was established and and had grown to notable size. The church's construction may be loosely related to population growth in the area spurred by World War II, but was built 4 years after the end of the war and so is not directly related to the war-era boom, nor was it specifically influenced by war-time activities. Based on this analysis, the property is not eligible for individual listing in the California Register under Criterion 1 (Events).

**Criterion 2 (Persons)**

The building at 601 Lexington Avenue does not appear to be associated with any people significant to the history of El Cerrito or the State of California that would raise it to a level of individual significance and eligibility. The property served as a church for the majority of its history. Research identified no names of specific individuals associated with church leadership or membership who may have been historically significant. The only names that were found were those of people who gave religious lectures at the church, but none of them have known activities or achievements beyond their church involvement or appear to be historically significant. Based on this analysis, the property is not eligible for individual listing in the California Register under Criterion 2 (Persons).

**Criterion 3 (Architecture/Design)**

The building at 601 Lexington Avenue does not appear to exhibit the high architectural merit or associations with a master architect that would raise it to a level of individual significance and eligibility. The building was originally designed in 1949 as a simple rectangular church building with some Modernist decorative detailing located around the primary entrance. The church's aesthetic is best assigned to the Mid-Century Modern substyle of Modernism, which embraced cantilevered roofs and overhangs, the use of bright or contrasting colors, projecting eaves, canted windows, projecting boxes that frame upper stories, stucco siding, spandrel glass, large expanses of windows, flat or shed roof forms, vertical corrugated siding, stacked roman brick cladding, and occasionally, vertical wood siding. The church at 601 Lexington exhibits few of these character defining features, except its stucco siding and perhaps the asymmetrically patterned box-like framing that creates a grid incorporating a window and louvered vent above the main entrance. It is noted that churches – as less utilitarian and more ceremonial, and therefore dramatic and expressive, structures - “embraced Midcentury Modern design elements that emphasized exaggerated roof forms, projecting overhangs, and articulated facades.” The subject church, other than having a strong gable roof form, does not exhibit any of these traits either. The 1960 rear addition, which imposed an L-shaped plan on the building, only mimicked existing materials and decorative elements, like the asymmetrically patterned box framing, on other areas of the building. It perhaps instilled slightly more Modernist influence in roofline details like broader eaves and clerestory windows at the location of a roof level change, but did not impose any stylistic expression of its own on the building. Based on this, the church does not appear to be a strong example of the Midcentury Modern style, especially as applied to ecclesiastical buildings, which were often more dramatic than buildings of other uses.

No architect or builder were identified with the original design or construction of the church. The rear ell addition was designed by Corlett & Spackman Architects, a prominent Bay Area architecture firm; however, this project – an addition to an existing building, mimicking its prevailing style – does not rank highly within the firm's portfolio of independently designed, publicly prominent, high-style projects that included schools and state college campuses, mortuaries, factories, banks, BART stations, and an Olympic venue. The firm's Sunset View Mortuary, in neighboring Kensington and only two years older than the addition to 601 Lexington Avenue,

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5 Ibid.
is a quasi-ecclesiastical building that stands as an excellent comparative example of the firm's work, both in location and use, and is far more expressive and noteworthy in its architecture.

Because the building lacks architectural merit, is not the original work of any known architect or builder, and is not a prime example of work by Corlette & Spackman Architects, it does not rise to a level of individual significance that would make it eligible for individual listing in the California Register under Criterion 3 (Architecture/Design).

**Criterion 4 (Information Potential)**

Criterion 4 is typically concerned with archaeological investigation. Where buildings or architectural elements are concerned, it typically relates to rare construction types, of which 601 Lexington Avenue is not an example. Therefore, the property does not appear to be eligible for individual listing in the California Register under Criterion 4.

**Integrity**

In order to qualify for listing in the California Register, a property must possess significance under one of the aforementioned criteria and have historic integrity. The church at 601 Lexington Avenue does not appear to qualify for designation on an individual level; therefore, an analysis of its integrity is not required. However, it can be noted that the church retains integrity of location and setting having never been moved from the primarily residential neighborhood in which it is located, which was developed throughout the 20th century and not drastically changed since the time the church was built. The building itself has undergone some alterations, the exterior extent of which appears to include window replacement; steel-sash for vinyl along the southern facade (likely occurred in 2005). This affects integrity of design, materials, and workmanship to some extent, but the church generally remains physically intact. The rear ell addition changed the original design, but occurred within the historic period and is stylistically and materialistically in keeping with the original portion of the church and so is not considered to diminish integrity. The church's integrity of feeling as a Midcentury neighborhood church remains intact. There are no significant associations giving the church significance, so integrity of association is not pertinent. Overall, the building retains integrity, although it is not historically significant.

**CONCLUSION**

The church at 601 Lexington Avenue does not appear to be historically significant; bearing no associations with important events, people, architectural styles or design professionals, nor having information potential. The building retains physical integrity, but this does not support historic significance or designation eligibility. Therefore, 601 Lexington Avenue does not appear to be eligible for listing on the California Register and, subsequently, would not qualify as a historic resource under CEQA.