

INFORMATION ITEM

To: Mayor and City Council
From: City Staff
Subject: Status of Shotgun House

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to provide information concerning the status of a privately-owned historic structure temporarily located at the Santa Monica Airport.

BACKGROUND

The subject structure, characterized as a Victorian vernacular pre-1900 shotgun house, was originally located on private property at 2712 Second Street, Santa Monica. In 1998 when the owner of the subject property filed an application to demolish the abandoned house, the building was designated a Santa Monica Landmark by the City's Landmarks Commission. This designation allowed for its demolition provided that within 60 days from the hearing date, the applicant submit photographs and floor plans documenting the structure and provide evidence to prove that attempts were made to relocate the house but that they were unsuccessful. An appeal of this determination was filed by both the Ocean Park Community Organization (OPCO) and the Church in Ocean Park. The appeals focused on the Landmark Commission's decision to allow demolition of the structure. The City Council heard the appeals on February 16, 1999 and upheld the Landmark Commission's action designating the building a city landmark. Further, Council directed staff to analyze the project in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act

(CEQA) to determine whether the demolition would create a significant adverse impact on a City historic resource. On September 26, 2000, the City Council certified the Final Environmental Impact Report and adopted a Statement of Overriding Considerations allowing for the demolition of the structure.

Subsequently in July 2002, just prior to the building's demolition by the property owner, the Ocean Park Community Organization (OPCO) purchased the house for \$1.00 and the house was moved to the Santa Monica Municipal Airport on the future site of Airport Park. This step was to enable OPCO sufficient time to identify a site for permanent relocation, explore reuse alternatives and raise funds for the relocation and the rehabilitation efforts.

Since July 2002, OPCO and its Shotgun House Relocation Subcommittee focused efforts on identifying an appropriate City-owned site for the building and a possible building use. In January 2003, the Committee submitted a detailed report to the City identifying 14 relocation options. With input from the City's Recreation and Parks Commission, these options were narrowed down to two viable alternative sites: the Main Street community garden site (Hollister/Strand and Main Streets) and the Heritage Square Museum property at Ocean Park Boulevard and Main Street. Working with the OPCO Subcommittee, City staff determined that of the two sites, the Main Street community garden site would be more feasible given the existing leases on the Heritage Square site and related land use issues.

Under the community garden relocation option, the Shotgun House would be relocated to the Main Street frontage of the public parking lot adjacent to the gardens for use as a storage building for the community gardens and possible restroom for the gardeners. In order to maintain the 15 parking spaces, the lot would need to be re-striped and a sizeable portion of one garden plot adjacent to the parking lot would need to be converted to an accessible parking space. A Conditional Use Permit would be required and moving and rehabilitation costs for this alternative are estimated at \$400,000. This estimate includes design, site preparation including grading and parking lot modifications, moving costs, utilities, exterior and interior building rehabilitation, exterior lighting, landscaping and interpretive signage.

Staff met with the Main Street gardeners to discuss the relocation idea. Generally, the gardeners were not supportive of losing a gardening plot but indicated if this had to happen, they would like the building to be for gardeners' use only and that it include a restroom.

Given that the construction of Airport Park will commence in the near future, staff sent a letter to the OPCO Subcommittee in October requesting a status report on its fundraising efforts, the identification of proposed pro-bono services, contact information and identification of roles of project volunteers, and a report on the Santa Monica Conservancy's involvement in the project. The Committee responded in December 2004. They identified their committee members and a project volunteer who has offered to lead a community team of people to rehabilitate the house. They replied that the Santa Monica Conservancy has not made any formal commitment to take on this project and has not

been formally asked to do so by the Committee. They indicated that fundraising, including seeking grants, would occur once the house was moved to its new site and they gave no indication that any funds have been raised to date for this project.

City staff have concluded that:

- the cost of relocating and rehabilitating the structure exceeds the current fundraising capacity of the Committee in spite of the significant time and effort of Committee members during the last several years;
- even with a secured site, the cost of the project makes significant community fundraising an extremely difficult challenge given the limitations on general public access to the site and the structure.
- given the absence of outside funding commitments, the project's completion is uncertain. Dedication of public funding is difficult to justify given the limitations on use and the loss of garden space that is in extremely high demand in the community.

In the event that the Committee does identify a significant source of support for the project by April 15, 2005 when bids on Airport Park are due, the City staff will revisit the Community Gardens option, including meeting with impacted gardeners and recommending a course of action to the City Council so that impacts to the schedule for the start of construction of Airport Park are minimized.

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