



Administrative Report

J.1., File # PC25-1453

Meeting Date: 10/16/2025

To: PLANNING COMMISSION

From: Steven Giang, Senior Planner

TITLE

DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON AN EXEMPTION DECLARATION, CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT, PLANNING COMMISSION DESIGN REVIEW, AND VARIANCE FOR THE ADDITION OF A NEW CONCRETE CAST-IN-PLACE MAUSOLEUM TO AN EXISTING MAUSOLEUM ON PROPERTY (PACIFIC CREST CEMETERY) LOCATED IN A RESIDENTIAL (R-1) ZONE. (CASE NO. 20250095)

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Open public hearing, receive and file all documents and correspondence on the proposed project;
2. Accept all testimony from staff, applicant, and the public and deliberate;
3. Close public hearing;
4. Adopt a Resolution by title only approving an Exemption Declaration, Conditional Use Permit, Planning Commission Design Review, and Variance for the addition of a new concrete cast-in-place mausoleum to an existing mausoleum on property (Pacific Crest Cemetery) located in a Residential (R-1) zone.

BACKGROUND

Pacific Crest Cemetery was established on the subject property in 1902. The cemetery consists of approximately 17 acres, 90% of which is developed with gravesites and private driveways. There are several buildings on the property including a chapel, crematory facilities, office, and storage buildings. Previous Planning Commission approvals have included the approval of a metal storage building in 1969, a 1,100 square foot building addition in 1971, a mausoleum expansion in 1975, a new mausoleum in 1989, an addition of a crematory space in 1996, and a variance for a mausoleum addition in 2000.

The surrounding properties are zoned Public-Right of Way (P-ROW) to the east, Low-Density Multi-family Residential (R-3) to the north, Public-School Facilities (P-SF) to the west, and Single-Family Residential (R-1) to the south. The surrounding properties are developed as follows: railway tracks are located to the east of the property, multi-family developments are located to the north, school facilities are located to the west, and single-family homes are located to the south.

DISCUSSION

The applicant's current request is to construct a 1,892 square foot mausoleum addition adjacent to the south end of an existing mausoleum. The proposed addition is rectangular in shape and is approximately 19 feet wide by 112 feet long. The proposed addition is approximately 16 feet in height. The building materials include polished granite and stucco. The new structure will add 312 casket spaces and 648 niche (small compartment or recessed designed to hold urns) spaces to the cemetery.

The proposed mausoleum addition is to be located along the easterly property line, approximately 820 feet from the southerly property line and 600 feet from the northerly property line. Technically, the proposed structure should be setback a minimum of 5 feet from the easterly property line because it is the side yard of a R-1 zoned property (182nd street is considered to be the front of the property per the Zoning Ordinance). However, if the proposed structure were setback five feet from the easterly property line it would reduce the width of the structure from 112 feet to 107 feet and result in the elimination of the planned niche space. Additionally, it would not align with the existing eastern wall of the adjacent mausoleum thereby creating an "attractive nuisance" in the vacant space between the new structure and the eastern property line fence. It should be noted that the proposed structure cannot be moved further west because of the location of existing graves and that the proposed structure is designed to match the existing mausoleum's east side façade.

The specific site of the mausoleum addition is currently unused cemetery space, which is currently planted with grass and small plants. Since this site was designated by the cemetery operators for future use as a mausoleum space, it does not contain any graves.

ANALYSIS

Pursuant to Section 10-2.501 of the Redondo Beach Municipal Code, a Conditional Use Permit is required for expansions to existing cemeteries. The Zoning Ordinance also requires Planning Commission Design Review for any addition of 1,000 square feet of gross floor area to existing developments on sites involving 10,000 square feet or more in order to consider the impacts of the site layout, the overall building design, and architecture of the structure. The Planning Commission must also consider the Variance request because the proposed addition is to be located directly adjacent to the easterly property line which should technically be setback 5 feet from the property line because it is the side yard of an R-1 zoned property.

Conditional Use Permit

Concerning the Conditional Use Permit, the addition of mausoleum space is clearly an appropriate use for an existing cemetery. While the proposed addition of mausoleum space does not constitute an expansion of the lot area it does constitute an intensification of the use. Since the intensification of this particular use does not result in any need for additional parking, nor does it appear to create any other negative impacts for the surrounding land uses, the approval of a Conditional Use Permit is appropriate.

As such, staff recommends that the Planning Commission make the necessary findings to approve the requested Conditional Use Permit as follows:

(1) The proposed use is in conformity with the General Plan and is adequate in size and shape to accommodate the use;

The proposed mausoleum addition meets Goal LU-1 (Balance) of the Redondo Beach General Plan by supporting a sustainable mix of land uses that maintain community character while meeting the long-term needs of residents. The project enhances an existing institutional use within the city's established fabric, providing continued access to local memorial and funeral services without expanding the cemetery footprint or increasing operational intensity. By efficiently utilizing previously designated cemetery land and maintaining compatibility with surrounding residential and public uses, the project upholds the goal of fostering a balanced, livable, and service-supported community.

(2) The site has adequate access to a public street of adequate width to carry the quantity of traffic generated by the proposed use;

The additional mausoleum area is not expected to generate a significant increase in additional traffic. Additionally, the nature of traffic generated by this land use is typically very limited, therefore the existing ingress/egress from Inglewood Avenue will remain adequate.

(3) The proposed use shall have no adverse effect on abutting property or the permitted use thereof, subject to the conditions of approval; and

The proposed mausoleum addition will have no adverse effect on abutting properties or the permitted use. The adjacent properties include a railway right-of-way to the east, multi-family residential uses to the north, school facilities to the west, and single-family residences to the south. The proposed addition is internal to the cemetery grounds, screened by landscaping, and setbacks, which minimize any potential visual or operational impacts on neighboring properties.

(4) The Conditions stated in the resolution and design considerations integrated into the project are deemed necessary to protect the public health, safety, and general welfare.

The conditions stated in the resolution ensure compliance with all applicable building, fire, and accessibility standards. These conditions, along with the integrated design measures, maintain safe circulation and operations within the cemetery, thereby protecting public health, safety, and general welfare.

Planning Commission Design Review

Concerning the Planning Commission Design Review, the proposed mausoleum addition does not negatively impact the existing cemetery layout, parking, or traffic circulation. The proposed building design is functional and while it is not identical to the existing structure, it is compatible. The proposed building materials are appropriate and will match the building materials of the existing structure.

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission make the necessary findings to approve the requested Planning Commission Design Review as follows:

(1) The design of the project considers the impact and needs of the user in respect to circulation, parking, traffic utilities, public services, noise and odor, privacy, private and common open spaces, trash collection, security and crime deterrence, energy consumption, physical barriers, and other design concerns;

The project design integrates with existing cemetery circulation, parking, and utility systems, ensuring no new impacts to traffic, noise, or neighboring privacy. It provides efficient, low-maintenance, and secure facilities consistent with user needs and site operations.

(2) The location of the structure respects the natural terrain of the site and is functionally integrated with natural features of the landscape to include the preservation of existing trees, where feasible;

The mausoleum addition is sited on level, previously landscaped ground within the existing cemetery, requiring no significant grading or alteration of natural terrain. The project preserves surrounding vegetation and integrates with existing landscaping to maintain the site's established visual character.

(3) The design of the project is harmonious and consistent within the proposed architectural style regarding roofing, materials, windows, doors, openings, textures, colors, and exterior treatment;

The mausoleum addition matches the existing structure in scale, materials, and detailing, using the same polished granite, stucco finish, and neutral color palette. The design ensures architectural continuity and a cohesive visual appearance across the cemetery site.

(4) The design of the proposed addition is integrated and compatible with the existing mausoleum structure and is appropriate in context of the existing cemetery; and

The proposed addition directly aligns with the existing mausoleum's form, façade, and orientation, creating a seamless architectural extension. Its scale and materials are consistent with the existing cemetery context, preserving visual and functional harmony on site.

(5) The design of the project provides innovation, variety, and creativity in the proposed design solution services to minimize the appearance of flat facades and box-like construction.

The front design (northern elevation) incorporates varied surface treatments, recessed niches, and material contrasts to create depth and visual interest. These elements break up flat planes and reduce the perception of mass, achieving a balanced and refined appearance. The south-facing façade's flatness does not negatively affect the project's visual quality because it directly faces a non-public, utilitarian area. This wall is oriented toward an existing maintenance and service building within the cemetery and is entirely screened from public view and adjacent properties. Therefore, this elevation has no visual or aesthetic impact and does not warrant the same design treatment as publicly viewable façades.

Variance

The Zoning Ordinance permits the Planning Commission to grant a variance from the required development standards in those instances where it is demonstrated that there are special circumstances applicable to the property. The variance request for this proposal is the elimination of the required side yard setback of 5 feet for an R-1 zoned property. In this instance, the special circumstance is that the use of the property is unique as is the specific use of the adjacent property to the east. Specifically, the cemetery use is a unique case in that it generates very few negative impacts with the possible exception of long automobile processes that are occasionally generated by funerals. However, the mausoleum facility itself does not generate any direct negative impacts in terms of its use. In terms of location, the fact that the proposed mausoleum facility is to be constructed directly adjacent to a railroad right-of way eliminates the need to have a 5-foot side yard setback, which is normally intended to provide a reasonable physical separation between buildings on adjacent properties.

As such, staff recommends that the Planning Commission make the necessary findings to approve the requested Variance as follows:

(1) There are special circumstances applicable to the property, including size, shape, topography, location, or surroundings, such that the strict application of the zoning provisions deprives such

property of privileges enjoyed by other property in the vicinity and under identical zone designation;

The property's configuration and surroundings create a special circumstance that justify the variance. The mausoleum site is a narrow area along the cemetery's eastern boundary, directly adjacent to a railway right-of-way rather than another private parcel. Enforcing the required five-foot side yard setback would substantially reduce the mausoleum's width, eliminate planned crypt and niche spaces, and render the project infeasible. Because the adjacent property is a railroad corridor with no habitable use, maintaining the setback would serve no functional or aesthetic purpose. Therefore, the strict application of the zoning code would deprive the cemetery of a reasonable development privilege consistent with its long-established institutional use.

(2) Any Variance granted shall be subject to such conditions as will assure that the adjustment thereby authorized shall not constitute a grant of special privileges inconsistent with the limitations upon other properties in the vicinity and zone in which such property is situated; and

The variance does not constitute a special privilege, as it allows development consistent with the established cemetery use and maintains compliance with the intent of the zoning district. The adjustment only accommodates site-specific constraints created by the adjacent railroad right-of-way and ensures the addition aligns with existing structures, without granting development rights unavailable to other similarly situated properties.

(3) the granting of the requested Variance is not contrary to the objectives of the General Plan which recognizes the need to provide such facilities in the community.

The variance supports the objectives of the Redondo Beach General Plan by allowing the continuation and improvement of an existing institutional use that serves community needs. The project remains consistent with Goal LU-1 (Balance) and Policy LU-1.13 (Public and Institutional Uses) by enhancing public facilities without altering land use patterns or impacting surrounding residential areas.

In light of this policy and the points noted above, particularly the minor nature of the requested Variance, constraints of the existing gravesites for the addition/expansion, and the lack of impacts upon adjacent properties, it is staff's opinion that the granting of the requested Variance is appropriate.

ENVIRONMENTAL STATUS

Staff has determined that the proposed project is Categorically Exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), under Article 19, Section 15301 (Existing Facilities) of the California Guidelines for Implementation of the CEQA. Specifically, the project includes a negligible expansion of the existing residence.

CONCLUSION

The Planning Department recommends that the Planning Commission make the findings as set forth in the staff report, adopt an Exemption Declaration, and grant the requested Conditional Use Permit, Planning Commission Design Review, and Variance, subject to the plans and applications submitted.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Draft Resolution

Attachment B - Architectural Drawings

Attachment C - CEQA Exemption Declaration

Attachment D - Application