

**CITY OF REDONDO BEACH
PLANNING DIVISION**

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APPLICATION FOR HISTORIC VARIANCE

Application is hereby made to the Planning Commission/Harbor Commission of the City of Redondo Beach, for Historic Variance, pursuant to Section 10-2.2516 of Chapter 2, Title 10 of the Redondo Beach Municipal Code.

PART I - GENERAL INFORMATION

A	APPLICANT INFORMATION		
	STREET ADDRESS OF PROPERTY: 100-132 N Catalina Ave		
	EXACT LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTY: LOT: Lots 37-50 BLOCK: Block 178 TRACT: Redondo Beach Tract		ZONING: R3A
	RECORDED OWNER'S NAME: Gordon Ervin Stewart Trust dated April 29, 1993 Walter A. Griesser 2011 Trust, dated May 5, 2011 Melba L. House, trustee of the Melba. L. House Revocable Trust	APPLICANT'S NAME: Catalina Fund, LLC Attn: Jason Muller, General Manager	AUTHORIZED AGENT'S NAME: (if different than applicant)
MAILING ADDRESS: Brown & Streza LLP 40 Pacifica, 15th Floor Irvine, CA 92618 (949) 453-2900 x 154 Baker, Burton & Lundy Law Offices 515 Pier Ave, Hermosa Beach, CA 90254 241 Vista del Parque Redondo Beach, CA 90277 310-378-1866 310-374-2614	MAILING ADDRESS: 1221 Hermosa Ave, Suite 101 Hermosa Beach, CA TELEPHONE: 424-452-6199	MAILING ADDRESS: TELEPHONE:	

B	REQUEST
	<p>Describe the proposed project and indicate the development standards from which a Variance is requested:</p> <p>This project proposes a variance from City commercial parking standards as necessary to maintain the existing commercial buildings currently nominated as a Historic District. The project site is zoned for medium-density residential use but contains 24,350 SF of existing non-conforming commercial use across five buildings on site which have been nominated as a Historic District. The project proposes retaining key historical elements and facades of the existing commercial buildings and reducing the total square footage of the retail to 6,819 SF, which creates an efficiency on site to allow the proposed construction of 30 ground-up attached townhomes. The proposed residential component of the project is parked per code, utilizing state density bonus laws to waive the guest parking requirement.</p> <p>The existing commercial component is current parked at 2.2 stalls per 1000 SF of retail, or a total of 2.5 per 1000 SF including street parking. The proposed project reduces the retail and intensity of the commercial use, and is parked comparably at a total of 2.5 per 1000 including street parking, which will see an increase of two spots.</p> <p>Without this requested variance for parking, it is not feasible to retain the existing historic retail structures. Without a variance for existing commercial parking, the retail square footage will need to be reduced an additional 40%. Applicant respectfully requests that the application for the Historic Variance for Parking be decided in tandem with the concurrent request for Historic District and that approval of either application be contingent on approval of the other. Moreover, due to the co-dependent and integrated nature of the proposed residential project with the existing commercial buildings, It is further requested that both the application for the Historic District and Historic Variance be conditioned on approval of the final and complete project at Planning.</p>

Required vs. Proposed Parking

	Usable Commercial SF	Stalls	On site Parking		Total Parking	Total Parking Ratio
			Ratio	Street Parking		
4 Existing	24350	54	2.2/1000 sf	8	62	2.5/1000 sf
Proposed	6819	14	2.1/1000 sf	10	24	3.5/1000sf

C SHOWINGS: Explain how the project is consistent with the criteria in Section 10-2.2516 of the Zoning Ordinance.

1. Indicate the special circumstances applicable to your property, including size, shape, topography, location, or surroundings.

The commercial strip along N Catalina Ave sees a disproportionate amount of non-vehicular traffic relative to other commercial areas of Redondo Beach. Catalina Ave is heavily utilized as a common bike path, which starts at Torrance Beach and terminates in Santa Monica. Additionally, Catalina Ave is extremely conducive as a walking street, which was validated from its current commercial uses. It is anticipated that the proposed retail would primarily serve the 1,260+ residents living within a block from the proposed project.

2. Indicate how the strict application of the zoning provisions, in light of the above circumstances, deprives your property of privileges enjoyed by other property in the vicinity and in the same zone.

The goal of proposing the existing non-conforming commercial buildings as a Historic District was to preserve buildings which were closely associated with the City's transportation history and evolution, with the fraternal orders and philanthropic societies and which are representative of early 20th Century architecture.

Parking has been provided to roughly maintain the existing parking ratio on site; however, providing a parking count as required by current code would require the removal of additional commercial buildings, which is against the intent of the Historic District.

3. Indicate how the adjustment authorized by the Variance, if granted, does not constitute a grant of special privileges that is inconsistent with the limitations upon other properties in the vicinity and in the same zone.

A majority of existing commercial buildings along Catalina Ave are now non-conforming to the current medium-density residential use. Similarly, a majority of these existing commercial buildings are parked at former standards which now are also non-conforming, similar to the commercial on site.

FACT SHEET
CITY OF REDONDO BEACH HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGNATION

(Read before signing petition)

Having your property included as part of a historic district represents a special distinction. It will allow your property to qualify for some special benefits; however, it also involves some additional regulations. This sheet provides a summary of the main things you should know as a part of deciding to support an application for a historic district. If you would like further information, please call the Redondo Beach Planning Division at (310) 318-0637.

Eligibility Requirements

Generally, a historic district is comprised of a group of contiguous properties (including those separated by streets or alleys) that collectively have a special historical value. At least 75 percent of the buildings (excluding garages and other accessory buildings) must be at least 50 years old, or must be at least 30 years old in exceptional cases. No more than 25 percent of the buildings may be “non-contributing” as defined in the Municipal Code.

Designation Procedure

The only way in which a historic district can be nominated is upon the submission of an application supported by the owners of every property in the proposed district. If you sign a petition supporting an historic district application, you may withdraw the inclusion of your property at any time before a final decision is made by the City.

Decisions regarding proposed historic districts are made by the City Preservation Commission (a seven-member body appointed by the Mayor and City Council). Following a noticed public hearing, the Commission may either approve the application as submitted, approve it in a modified manner, or deny it. Anyone dissatisfied with the Commission’s decision may appeal it to the City Council, which would then make the final decision.

No Building Permits Issued Pending Hearing

No building permits (except those needed for safety) are allowed to be issued within a proposed historic district between the time that an application has been submitted and the time that a final decision is made. This regulation is intended to assure that, if a designation is made, new construction in the district will conform to the special regulations set out for it.

Status of Designation

Once the designation of an historic district has been made, it may only be removed in the event of the substantial destruction of the buildings that comprise the district. This action may be initiated by the City or by a minimum of 51 percent of the property owners in the district.

It is also important to note that, like a zoning designation, an historic district designation runs with the property. It continues to remain part of the historic district even if it is sold or transferred.

Demolitions, Alterations, and New Construction

After a district has been designated, any new buildings or exterior alterations (except those not considered to be visible from the public right-of-way) are required to be approved by the Preservation Commission. Basically, the Commission reviews the project to determine that it is in keeping with the architectural style and character of the existing building and the historical character of the district. The Commission may approve, conditionally approve, or deny projects based on its determination. No special approval is required for ordinary maintenance or repairs.

The Commission may not deny an application to demolish a building, but may delay the demolition for up to 90 days (which can be extended up to an additional 90 days by the City Council) for purposes such as to compile photographic records or arrange for moving the building to another site.

Incentives

There are several types of regulatory and/or financial incentives available for buildings in historic districts and individually designated landmarks:

The City, through use of a state law called the Mills Act, may enter into agreements with the owners of designated historical buildings to qualify owners for a reduced property tax rate in exchange for assuring the continued preservation of the buildings.

Designated historical buildings may also be permitted to utilize the State Historic Building Code, which applies somewhat less stringent building code standards to renovating or remodeling historic buildings, often resulting in lower construction costs.

Properties that are part of a designated historic district or that are a designated landmark are also eligible to apply for special zoning provisions which may provide relief from various land use requirements or development standards if such relief is deemed appropriate to help preserve a historic building.

Historic Context and Historic District Evaluation

According to *National Register Bulletin 15, How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* "a district derives its importance from being a unified entity, even though it is often composed of a variety of resources. The identity of a district results from the interrelationship of its resources, which can convey a visual sense of the overall historic environment or be an arrangement of historically or functionally related properties." In addition, "a district must be significant, as well as being an identifiable entity" and that the majority of the components "add to the district's historic character, even if they are individually undistinguished."⁷

The buildings at 112 N. Catalina Avenue, 124 N. Catalina Avenue, 126 N. Catalina Avenue and 132 N. Catalina Avenue meet Criterion a: Exemplifies or reflects special elements of the City's cultural, social, political, aesthetic, engineering, or architectural history.

The building at 112 N. Catalina Avenue is associated with many fraternal orders and philanthropic societies over the first half of the 20th Century. These groups were essential to building community in Redondo Beach especially in the early decades of the 20th Century. The building at 132 N. Catalina Avenue is associated with the early industrial and transportation history of Redondo Beach and it retains interior mechanical equipment from the early 20th Century. The two buildings, 112 N. Catalina Avenue and 132 N. Catalina Avenue, date from the first decade of the 20th Century were constructed shortly after the railroad tracks and service had been established. Those two buildings are related to the early years of rail service in Redondo Beach. The buildings at 112 N. Catalina Avenue and 132 N. Catalina Avenue retain sufficient elements and can be restored using the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

The buildings at 124 N. Catalina Avenue and 126 N. Catalina Avenue were constructed in the 1940s on land that had been used in previous decades to support the rail regional rail network. When the rail service was disbanded, the tracks and all ancillary elements were removed. The buildings at 124 N. Catalina Avenue and 126 N. Catalina Avenue represent the transition from a mixed industrial/commercial block to that of a post-railroad era and into a block of commercial buildings serving local residents.

The group of four buildings represent the commercial development of Redondo Beach in the first half of the 20th Century with a period of significance of 1904 to 1950. Two of the buildings are rare resources as buildings from the first decade of the 20th Century. Only three City of Redondo Beach Landmarks are commercial buildings and none of them date from the first decade of the 20th Century. Only a few other commercial buildings were identified in the City of Redondo Beach Historic Resources Inventory and none of them date from the first decade of the 20th Century.

These four buildings convey a visual sense of the first half of 20th Century commercial development in the City of Redondo Beach. The buildings are significant for their associations with the history of railroads in Redondo Beach and with fraternal orders and philanthropic societies in Redondo Beach. Based on the facts presented above, the properties at 112 N. Catalina Avenue, 124 N. Catalina Avenue, 126 N. Catalina Avenue and 132 N. Catalina Avenue comprise a locally eligible historic district as they represent the continuum of commercial buildings constructed in Redondo Beach over the first half of the 20th Century and represent the land use evolution of the area. The buildings:

- are associated with the transportation history of the City
- are associated with fraternal orders and philanthropic societies who contributed to the social history of the first half of the 20th Century
- are representative examples of their property types as commercial buildings from the first half of the 20th Century

⁷<https://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/pdfs/nrb15.pdf>, p. 5.