PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

DATE: AUGUST 27, 2026

TO: BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS

FROM: BEILIN YU, ZONING ADMINISTRATOR

SUBJECT: APPEAL OF HEARING OFFICER'S DECISION:
SINGLE-FAMILY COMPATIBILITY PERMIT #7377
3140 EAST CALIFORNIA BOULEVARD

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board of Zoning Appeals:

1. Adopt the Environmental Determination that the project is exempt from environmental review pursuant to the guidelines of the California Environmental Quality Act (Public Resources Code §21080(b)(9); Administrative Code, Title 14, Chapter 3, §15303, Class 3, New Construction and Conversion of Small Structures); and

2. Uphold the Hearing Officer's decision and approve Single-Family Compatibility Permit #7377 with conditions.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

On October 21, 2025, JWDA-MS Architects ("Applicant"), on behalf of the property owner, submitted an application for Single-Family Compatibility Permit (SCP) #7377 to facilitate the construction of a new 4,955 square-foot, two-story single-family residence with a 467 square-foot attached garage that exceeds Neighborhood Compatibility. Based on a Neighborhood Compatibility Analysis, prepared by staff, the allowable floor area of the residence is 3,630 square feet. A residence may exceed Neighborhood Compatibility subject to approval of a Single-Family Compatibility Permit, up to the maximum allowed gross floor area of all structures on the site (5,799 square feet).

On June 3, 2026, at a regularly noticed public hearing, the Hearing Officer considered the SCP. Staff recommended that the Hearing Officer approve the SCP, subject to conditions of approval. At the conclusion of the public hearing, and after public testimony, the Hearing Officer made the required findings in the affirmative and approved the SCP (Attachment C). On June 15, 2026, a request was filed by Tom Altmayer and Beatrice Haddad (Appellants) to appeal the Hearing Officer's decision to the Board of Zoning Appeals (Attachment D).

Based on the previous analysis and the recommended conditions of approval, Staff recommends that the Board of Zoning Appeals uphold the Hearing Officer's decision and approve the SCP, based on the findings provided in Attachment A and conditions in Attachment B.

BACKGROUND:

Existing Site Characteristics:
The subject property is a 20,499 square-foot, rectangular-shaped parcel that is improved with a 2,116 square-foot, two-story residence and a 378 square-foot, attached two-car garage. The property is located on the south side of East California Boulevard between Carroll Way and Brightside Lane. Vehicular access to the site is provided from a driveway along East California Boulevard.

Adjacent Uses:
North – Single-Family Residential
South – Single-Family Residential
East – Single-Family Residential
West – Single-Family Residential

Adjacent Zoning:
North – RS-2 (Single-Family Residential, 0-2 Dwelling Units Per Acre)
South – RS-2 (Single-Family Residential, 0-2 Dwelling Units Per Acre)
East – RS-2 (Single-Family Residential, 0-2 Dwelling Units Per Acre)
West – RS-2 (Single-Family Residential, 0-2 Dwelling Units Per Acre)

Previous Zoning Cases:
Exception #23598 – Permit to build on a portion of lot in Zone E. Approved April 9, 1929.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The application is a request to allow the demolition of the existing 2,116 square-foot two-story residence and 378 square-foot attached garage, and the construction of a new two-story 4,955 square-foot residence with an attached 467 square-foot garage. Based on a Neighborhood Compatibility Analysis, the allowable floor area of the residence is 3,630 square feet. Residences may exceed Neighborhood Compatibility subject to approval of a Single-Family Compatibility Permit (SCP), up to the maximum allowed gross floor area of all structures on the site (5,799 square feet). The proposed residence exceeds the Neighborhood Compatibility maximum allowed square footage by 1,325 square feet.

The proposed two-story residence is comprised of five bedrooms and five bathrooms. A new circular driveway is proposed to provide access to the property. Three outdoor balconies are proposed, with one above the entryway and two extended beyond the second story bedrooms overlooking the rear yard. There are no protected trees proposed for removal as part of this project. The proposed project would comply with all other applicable development standards of the Zoning Code including maximum allowed gross floor area for the site.

HEARING OFFICER MEETING:

The application was presented to the Hearing Officer at a public hearing on June 3, 2026. Staff determined that the necessary findings could be made and recommended the Hearing Officer approve the SCP. Prior to the hearing, staff received three public comments in opposition of the

project. During the public hearing, the Applicant team made a presentation, and five additional public comments were received: one in favor and four in opposition.

At the conclusion of the public testimony, the Hearing Officer approved the Single-Family Compatibility Permit, based on findings in the Hearing Officer Decision Letter (Attachment C). The Hearing Officer adopted the recommended conditions of approval, with the following added conditions to address adjacent neighbors' privacy concerns:

- Condition 13, requiring additional screening landscape along the eastern property line.
- Condition 14, requiring treated privacy glass to be installed at all second story windows on the east and west elevation
- Condition 15, requiring screening on the rear balcony to reduce visibility into the neighboring properties to the east and west

To supplement the decision, the Hearing Officer provided an addendum explaining his reasons for approving the application and responding to the appeal (Attachment E).

ANALYSIS:

Single-Family Compatibility Permit

The subject property is located in the RS-2 (Single-Family Residential, 0-2 Dwelling Units Per Acre) zoning district. Pursuant to Table 2-3 (RS and RM-12 Residential District Development Standards), Zoning Code Section 17.22.040 (RS and RM-12 Residential Districts General Development Standards), the allowable floor area of a residence shall not exceed 35 percent above the median residence size of all properties within a 500-foot radius of the subject property. The 500-foot radius shall serve as the project's "neighborhood" for purposes of neighborhood compatibility. Los Angeles County Assessor information is used to determine the sizes of the existing residences within the radius and to calculate the Neighborhood Compatibility maximum. Note that the data obtained from the Los Angeles County Assessor only includes the square footages for the residence; the data does not include basements, attics, attached garages, accessory residence units, and any detached structures.

A radius of 500 feet from the project site encompasses 60 properties within the City limit, all of which are developed with residences. The median size of the residences within the neighborhood is 2,689 square feet and 35 percent above the median value is 3,630 square feet. As proposed, the single-family residence would be 4,955 square feet in area and would exceed 35 percent above the median value by 1,325 square feet. The data obtained for the median calculation is included in Attachment F.

Pursuant to Zoning Code Section 17.22.090 (Single-Family Compatibility Permit), with the approval of a SCP application, the allowable floor area of the residence may exceed 35 percent above neighborhood compatibility. Compliance with the maximum gross floor area allowed for the zoning district, which includes all structures on the site, is still required. In this case, the maximum gross floor area allowed for all structures on the site is 20 percent of the lot size plus 1,700 square feet, which equates to 5,799 square feet. As proposed, the project results in a gross floor area of 5,422 square feet, which includes the 4,955 square-foot residence and the 467 square-foot attached garage. Thus, the project complies with the maximum gross floor area requirement.

The proposed project complies with all applicable development standards as required by the City's Zoning Code, including, but not limited to, building height, encroachment plane, parking,

setbacks, floor area, and site coverage. A summary of development standards is provided in Table 1.

Table 1: RS-2 Development Standards

Development Standards	Requirement	Proposed	Compliance
Minimum Setbacks			
Front	46'-4'	48'-8"	Complies
Side (East)	10'	23'-2"	Complies
Side (West)	10'	11'	Complies
Rear	25'	87'-1"	Complies
Maximum Site Coverage	35% of the lot size (7,174 sf)	30.5% of lot size (6,267 sf)	Complies
Maximum Floor Area (Gross)	5,799 sf (20% of lot size + 1,700 sf)	5,422 sf	Complies
Maximum Building Height	32'	29'	Complies
First Story Top Plate Height	10'	10'	Complies
Second Story Top Plate Height	20'	20'	Complies
Encroachment Plane	30-degree angle	30-degree angle	Complies
Neighborhood Compatibility	3,630 sf	4,955 sf	*SCP*
Parking	2 covered spaces	2-car garage	Complies

The purpose of the SCP is to provide a review process for the City to consider the appropriateness of proposed development in single-family zones to ensure that a proposed project is consistent in size and scale with existing residences within a 500-foot radius. The applicable review authority may approve a SCP application, only after making these required two findings:

1. The design, location, and size of proposed structures and/or additions or alterations to existing structures would be compatible with existing and anticipated future development along both sides of the blockface in terms of aesthetics, height, materials, massing, and scale; and
2. The proposed project includes contextual front yard setbacks and residence entryways consistent in scale with entries on both sides of the blockface.

The subject property is situated on the south side of East California Boulevard within a blockface extending between Carroll Way and Brightside Lane. The neighborhood consists of one- and two-story single-family residences that were built during different development periods and in various architectural styles, including Spanish Revival, Minimal Traditional, and Ranch style residences. The proposed design of the new residence features characteristics of the Spanish Revival style including an articulated form, a hipped roof form clad in clay tiles, exterior walls clad in stucco, rectangular and arched windows and openings, and second-story balconies. The façade is designed with a balanced composition that incorporates a hierarchy of articulated elements including the central main entrance, fenestration pattern consisting of varied but balanced groupings of window openings, and projecting forms along the front elevation.

The proposed aesthetics and materials are compatible with the proposed architectural style of the residence, and of the residences on the blockface designed in the same Spanish Revival architectural style. Additionally, the project maintains contextual consistency with the original height of the residence, setbacks, and incorporates second-story balconies which further break

down the massing and scale of the residence. Much of the proposed footprint of the residence would sit within the footprint of the original residence, reducing visible impacts to the neighborhood.

The proposed residence would maintain compatibility in massing and scale within the blockface and would not create an incompatible building form. Although the proposed project will result in an increase in building height, it will be compatible with the surrounding single-family residential context since it is located within a neighborhood that consists of both one- and two-story single-family residences.

The proposed residence and the new entryway would be in generally the same location as the existing structure. The existing residence provides a 52-foot front yard setback, and the proposed project would be located at least 48 feet from the front property line. The proposed Spanish Revival architecture would be represented in various elements, such as the arched double door entryway framed by two concrete columns. Therefore, staff finds that the project is consistent with the residential character on both sides of the blockface and would not pose an impact to the contextual front yard setbacks and entryways.

Project Review, Notice, and Hearing

Projects involving a new two-story residence and subject to the Single-Family Compatibility Permit are required to provide a Notice of Application to all properties within 500 feet of the subject property upon determination of a complete application and installation of story poles. The Notice of Application provides a minimum 14-day notification period to properties within 500 feet of the subject property.

If no request for a hearing is received during the Notice of Application period, the Zoning Administrator may render a decision on the application, which is appealable to the Board of Zoning Appeals. If a request for a hearing is received, a staff report would be submitted for consideration by the Hearing Officer at a publicly noticed hearing. The Hearing Officer would then conduct a public hearing on the application before the approval or disapproval of the permit.

The applicant installed story poles prior to the Notice of Application period that depict the outline and location of the proposed residence. The Notice of Application period for this project was from April 1, 2026 through April 15, 2026. During the Notice of Application period, a request for hearing was received; therefore, the Hearing Officer was the initial decision-making authority for this project. As noted earlier, the Hearing Officer's decision was appealed to the Board of Zoning Appeals. The comments provided during the Notice of Application period were provided to the Board of Zoning Appeals for review.

Appeal Points and Response to Each Appeal:

The appeal points and Staff responses to the Appellants' appeal points are provided in the section below. Additionally, the appeal application was provided to the Hearing Officer who provided responses in the form of an Addendum (Attachment E) and are also included in the section below.

1. *The approved residence is out of scale with surrounding homes. The residence will significantly after the character of the immediate neighborhood. The visual impact of a residence of this size and height cannot be adequately mitigated through landscaping or balcony screening alone.*

Staff's Response: The Neighborhood Compatibility Analysis considers properties within a 500-foot-radius of the subject site, not only the adjacent sites. The 500-foot-radius includes one-and two-story residences of sizes ranging from 1,681 square feet to 7,829 square feet. As proposed, the 4,955 square-foot residence would not be the largest residence in the neighborhood. Two properties on the north side of East California Boulevard, across the street from the subject property, are 7,313 square feet and 7,829 square feet. Further, the proposed residence would be proportional to its lot size with a compliant gross floor area and much of the proposed footprint of the residence will be located within the footprint of the original two-story residence, reducing visible impacts to the neighborhood. As it relates to the height, the proposed two-story residence would be compliant with the maximum first and second story top plate heights and overall height allowed within the zoning district. Therefore, the size and height of the proposed residence will not be out of character for the neighborhood.

Hearing Officer's Response: The proposed residence incorporates architectural elements that are characteristic of the surrounding neighborhood. These design elements are consistent with several residences within the immediate vicinity. Equally important, the proposed residence maintains generous setbacks that are consistent with the established development pattern. The residence's proposed front setback will be matching the existing development pattern and maintaining a front setback comparable to neighboring homes. The majority of the new structure will occupy approximately the same footprint as the existing residence, with the building mass generally centered on the lot rather than pushed toward adjoining properties.

I also found that the building's architectural articulation, varying roof forms, recessed wall planes, balconies, and fenestration effectively reduce the perception of bulk and mass. These design features prevent the structure from appearing massive and help ensure that it remains visually compatible with surrounding residential development despite its larger floor area.

2. *Substantial second-story massing adjacent to neighboring properties and garage orientation facing the east side of the property affect the privacy, enjoyment, and quality of life of the adjacent homeowners.*

Staff's Response: The proposed residence would provide greater front, side, and rear yard setbacks than required by the Zoning Code. Additionally, the proposed residence has been designed to comply with the side encroachment plane requirement, which regulates the massing of a proposed structure along the interior side property lines. Lastly, the height of the residence has also been designed compliant with the Zoning Code.

To provide additional buffer and privacy, the Hearing Officer added three conditions of approval requiring additional landscaping along the east property line, requiring that the project's windows along the east and west side elevations be treated so that views to surrounding properties would be obscured to provide additional privacy, and that additional screening be provided along the sides of the balconies.

The attached garage is located on the east side of the proposed residence and will be set back more than 30 feet from the east side property line, a greater setback than the minimum required for the residence, and a greater setback than what would be required for a detached garage. As such, the location of the garage would not result in an impact on the adjacent property.

Hearing Officer's Response: The proposed residence complies with all applicable setback requirements, and the separation between the proposed residence and surrounding residences is consistent with the existing development pattern in the neighborhood. Additionally, the proposed balconies are incorporated as architectural features of the residence and are not an unusual or incompatible element within the context of the surrounding residential area. The City's Zoning Code recognizes that two-story residences may include elevated windows, balconies, and outdoor living areas, and I found no substantial evidence demonstrating that the proposed design would create unreasonable privacy impacts that would warrant denial of the permit.

However, recognizing the concerns raised by neighboring residents and to further enhance compatibility between the proposed residence and adjacent properties, I determined that additional measures would be appropriate. Accordingly, I imposed conditions requiring additional tree plantings along the side property lines and the use of tempered windows on side elevations to provide additional screening and minimize potential privacy concerns. These conditions provide an additional level of protection for neighboring properties while allowing the project to proceed consistent with the City's zoning regulations and neighborhood compatibility objectives.

GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY:

The subject site is designated as Low Density Residential in the General Plan Land Use Element. The existing site would continue as a single-family residential use; therefore, the character of the neighborhood, consisting of single-family residences would be maintained and enhanced.

The proposal would maintain consistency with General Plan Land Use Policy 21.5 (Housing Character and Design) which encourages that when replacement housing is proposed, these should reflect the unique neighborhood character and qualities, including lot sizes; building form, scale, massing, and relationship to street frontages; architectural design and landscaped setbacks. The proposed residence has been designed to contribute and enhance the architectural character of the residential neighborhood. The placement of the residence is generally in the same location as the existing structure and minimizes potential impact to the adjoining properties by providing sufficient setbacks from the front and side property lines. Moreover, the contextual materials of the finished design are consistent with the materials found throughout the surrounding residence units.

General Plan Land Use Policy 22.1 (Appropriate Scale and Massing) requires building scale and massing that is compatible with existing development in single-family neighborhoods. As proposed, the residence would comply with the maximum site coverage, floor area, encroachment plane, and setback requirements. The proposed residence would be located at least 48 feet from the front property line, therefore minimizing any potential massing as viewed from the public right-of-way. The proposed design would center the massing on the lot and be an appropriate scale and massing with the neighborhood. Therefore, the proposed project is consistent with this Policy of the General Plan.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

This project has been determined to be exempt from environmental review pursuant to the guidelines of the California Environmental Quality Act (Public Resources Code §21080(b)(9); Administrative Code, Title 14, Chapter 3, §15303, Class 3, New Construction or Conversion of

Small Structures), and that there are no features that distinguish this project from others in the exempt classes, and no other exceptions to the exemption applies; therefore, there are no unusual circumstances. Section 15303 exempts the construction and location of limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures. This includes but is not limited to one single-family residence, or a second residence unit in a residential zone. In urbanized areas, up to three single-family residences may be constructed or converted under this exemption. The project includes the construction of a new single-family residence and therefore, it is exempt.

REVIEW BY OTHER DEPARTMENTS:

The project was reviewed by the Building and Safety Division, Design and Historic Preservation Section, Departments of Fire, Water and Power, Public Works, and Transportation. As part of the Design and Historic Preservation review, a Historic Resource Evaluation was conducted to assess if the property is eligible for designation as an individual historic resource. Staff determined that the property is not eligible for designation as the existing structure is not historically significant. Thus, the proposed demolition of the existing residence is allowed.

The Departments of Public Works and Water and Power provided comments that are included as recommended conditions of approval in Attachment B. In addition to the recommended conditions of approval, all departments would review the project for compliance during the building permit plan review process.

CONCLUSION:

It is staff's assessment that the findings necessary for approving the SCP can be made. The proposed project would comply with the applicable development standards of the Zoning Code, apart from neighborhood compatibility. The design, massing and scale of the proposed residence would be compatible with the residential development within the surrounding neighborhood and would not be detrimental to the general welfare of the City. The approval of the SCP request would allow the property owner to construct a new single-family residence and allow enjoyment of the residence without impacting the character of the surrounding residential neighborhood. Therefore, staff recommends that the Board of Zoning Appeals uphold the Hearing Officer's decision and approve Single-Family Compatibility Permit #7377 with the specific findings in Attachment A to approve the application with the conditions in Attachment B.

Respectfully Submitted,

Beilin Yu
Zoning Administrator

Prepared By:

Alison Maldonado-Walker
Planner

Attachments:
Attachment A – Single-Family Compatibility Permit Findings
Attachment B – Conditions of Approval
Attachment C – Hearing Officer Decision Letter (dated June 10, 2026)
Attachment D – Appeal Request (dated June 15, 2026)
Attachment E – Hearing Officer Addendum (July 13, 2026)
Attachment F – Neighborhood Compatibility Analysis