



## **CITY OF GLENDALE, CALIFORNIA REPORT TO THE PLANNING HEARING OFFICER**

### **AGENDA ITEM**

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**Report:** The proposed project encompasses the expansion of and improvements to the existing Armenian Apostolic Church located in the R-1250 (High Density Residential) zone. The Armenian Apostolic Church of Glendale (A Parish under the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America) Campus is located at 1015 North Central Avenue. The applicant is requesting a conditional use permit to allow the expansion of the existing church, and setback and standards variances to allow, 1) the removal and replacement of the existing church tower with new domes/bell tower elements with an overall building height of 55 ft. where 36 ft. is the maximum height allowed, 2) construction of a new detached accessory building consisting of an outdoor open alter with an overall height of 48 ft., 5-inches to the top of the dome/bell tower element where the maximum allowed is 15 ft., constructing new 24-ft. high columns and arched architectural elements and an 18-ft. high entry gate all within the new outdoor courtyard, 3) exceeding the maximum allowed floor area of 500 SF for the new accessory building (outdoor alter), and 4) expansion of the existing church floor area and construction of a new fence without complying the required minimum and average street-front setback area, and construction of a new accessory building (outdoor alter) located zero setback from the south interior property line.

**Location:** 1015 N, Central Avenue  
Glendale, CA 91202

**Business Name:** Armenian Apostolic Church

**Case Number:** Conditional Use Permit Case No. PCUP-002795-2024 and  
Variance Case No. PVAR-003198-2024

**Applicant:** Alajajian, Aram & Anoush Khachekian

**Owner:** Harout Markarian

<b>Approved for</b>	July 31, 2024
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## **ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION**

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**Prepared by:**

Milca Toledo, Senior Planner

**Reviewed by:**

Erik Krause, Deputy Director of Community Development

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## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

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The applicant is requesting approval of a conditional use permit (CUP) and setback and standards variances to permit the continued operation of a place of worship, The Armenian Apostolic Church of Glendale (A Parish under the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America), located in the R-1250 (High Density Residential) Zone, in conjunction with a 987 square foot (SF) addition to the existing church building located within the street front setback, consisting of a main and prayer altar, a backstage area behind the main altar and a baptismal area. As part of the project, the applicant is requesting the following discretionary approvals: a CUP to allow the expansion of the existing church, and setback and standard variances to allow, 1) the removal and replacement of the existing church tower with new domes/bell towers, proposing an overall building height of 55 ft. where 36 ft. is the maximum height allowed, 2) construction of a new detached accessory building (outdoor alter), proposing an overall height of 48 ft., 5-inches to the top of the dome/bell tower where the maximum allowed height is 15 ft., construction of multiple 24-ft. high columns and arched architectural elements and an 18-ft. high entry gateway all within the new outdoor courtyard, 3) exceeding the maximum allowed floor area of 500 SF for the new 1,156 SF accessory building (outdoor alter) with restrooms and storage, and 4) reducing the required street front and average setback for the new fence/gate and the church expansion, ranging from 5-inches to 12-ft., 4-inches from the street-front property line and average setback, ranging from 4-ft. to 10.5-ft. where a minimum 20 feet street-front setback and 23-foot average is required. And proposing zero-foot interior setback for the new accessory building (outdoor alter) along the south interior property line where the minimum required interior setback is 5-ft. with an average of 8 ft.

The approximately 7,880 SF, two-story building has been used as a church since its construction circa 1941. The new floor area to the first level of the church and the new outdoor alter will not be used as seating or viewing area, and therefore does not trigger an increase in the required number of parking spaces. The existing second floor is and will remain occupied with conference rooms and offices for the church. Currently, 31 parking spaces are provided on an on-site in a surface parking lot.

## **Code Requires:**

### Conditional Use Permit

1. Approval of a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) is required for a place of worship in the R-1250 (High Density Residential) Zone (GMC 30.11.020.B, Table 30.11-A).

### Setback and Standards Variance

1. The maximum allowed building height is three stories and 36 feet (GMC 30.11.030 Table 30.11-B)
2. The maximum allowed building height for an accessory building/structure is 15 feet (GMC 30.11.030 Table 30.11-B)
3. The maximum allowed floor area for an accessory building is 500 SF.
4. The minimum required street-front setback for a new building is 20 feet with a 23-foot average in the R-1250 Zone. (GMC 30.11.030, Table 30.11-B)
5. The minimum required interior setback for an accessory building is five feet with an 8-foot average in the R-1250 Zone. (GMC 30.11.030, Table 30.11-B)

## **ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION**

The project is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review as a Class 1 “Existing Facilities” exemption per Section 15301(e) of the State CEQA Guidelines, because the project is a negligible expansion to an existing use; specifically, it is an addition to an existing structure provided that the addition will not result in an increase of more than 50 percent of the floor area of the structure before the addition, or 2,500 square feet, whichever is less, and it is a continuation of the same land use type (place of worship). Also, the project is exempt from CEQA review as a Class 3 “New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures” exemption pursuant to Section 15303 of the State CEQA Guidelines because the project involves the construction of a new outdoor open altar. A historic assessment report was submitted by the applicant (prepared by Kaplan Chen Kaplan) for the property (Exhibit 6). The report concluded that the project site at 1015 N. Central Avenue is not listed on the National Register of Historic Places, California Register of Historical Resources, or Glendale Register of Historic Resources, and has not been identified as a historic resource in any survey, and therefore, not eligible for designation at the local, state, or federal levels.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

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Staff recommends approval of the Conditional Use Permit and Setback and Standards Variance requests with conditions subject to the draft findings and recommended

conditions approval included as Exhibit 1.

## SITE CONTEXT

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**General Plan:** High Density Residential

**Zone:** R-1250 (High Density Residential) Zone

**Description of Existing Property and Uses:** The 1.2-acre site is located on N. Central Avenue, bounded by Central Avenue to the east, W. Fairview Avenue on the north and portion of Glenoaks Boulevard on the south. The existing church building was originally constructed circa 1941 and has continuously been used as a church since then. The church building and associated buildings are located on two parcels (APN: 5636-007-075 and 5636-007-076) and a gate/fence is proposed on the adjacent parcel (APN: 5636-007-903), which the church is in the process of acquiring. The site is developed with the approximate 7,880 square-foot two-story church building at the corner of Central and Fairview Avenue and a two-story, approximate 14,873 square-foot children's day care center towards the west, facing Fairview Avenue. On-site parking is provided in a surface parking lot containing 31 parking spaces located towards the west end of the site, facing and accessible from both W. Glenoaks Boulevard and Fairview Avenue. The church and children's day care center buildings are currently vacant, pending establishment of the new church operation under the new owner/operator, The Armenian Apostolic Church of Glendale (A Parish under the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America).

The new operator requested and obtained building permits associated with tenant improvements to the existing church and children's day care center; construction is currently in progress.

### Neighboring Zones and Uses:

	<b>Zoning</b>	<b>Existing Uses</b>
<b>North</b>	R-1250 PPD (High Density Residential Precise Plan of Design)	Multi-family residential use (264-unit development)
<b>South</b>	C2-II (Community Commercial, Height District II)	Commercial office use
<b>East</b>	R-1250 & C3-III High Density Residential & Commercial Service Height District III	Private school (Incarnation Parish School) associated w/Incarnation Catholic Church

<b>West</b>	R-1250 (High Density Residential along Fairview Ave.); & C2-II (Community Commercial Height District II along Glenoaks Blvd.)	Multi-family residential uses along Fairview Ave. and Commercial office uses along Glenoaks Blvd.
<b>Project Site</b>	R-1250 (High Density Residential)	Church & Children's day care center (Armenian Apostolic Church)

#### **Previous Permits for the Site:**

- On August 1, 1941, building permit number 18996 was issued for the construction of a new church building.
- On December 14, 1978, the Zoning Administrator approved with conditions Standards Variance Case No. 6714-S to allow the installation of a new church bulletin.
- On November 7, 1986, Conditional Use Permit Case No. 8026-CU was approved to allow the operation of a children's day care.
- On July 9, 1982, Parcel Map GLN NO. 1340 was approved for the site, consisting of combining lots and an alley vacation.
- On March 9, 1993, Conditional Use Permit Case No. 9044-CU (Renewal) was issued to allow the continued operation of a children's day care center.
- On March 3, 1997, Administrative Exception Case No. 9656-AE was approved to upgrade the existing parking facility to comply with ADA for the existing church.

#### **COMMENTS FROM OTHER CITY DEPARTMENTS**

The Neighborhood Services Division, Police Department and Public Works Engineering Division had no comments regarding the proposed use. Comments were provided by Public Works - Traffic Engineering and Urban Forestry Division and Glendale Water and Power (GWP). Public Works Traffic Engineering and GWP provided standard comments. Additionally, GWP requested verification that the proposed location for the new electrical transformer vault facility does not conflict with an existing easement. Urban Forestry will require an arborist report to be submitted for the existing oak tree on-site and existing street trees in the public-right-of-way.

#### **REQUIRED FINDINGS OF FACT**

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**Conditional Use Permit:** Pursuant to Section 30.42.030 of the Glendale Municipal Code, a conditional use permit may be granted only if the following findings of fact can be made:

- A. That the proposed use will be consistent with the various elements and objectives of the general plan.
- B. That the use and its associated structures and facilities will not be detrimental to the public health or safety, the general welfare, or the environment.
- C. That the use and facilities will not adversely affect or conflict with adjacent uses or impede the normal development of surrounding property.
- D. That adequate public and private facilities such as utilities, landscaping, parking spaces and traffic circulation measures are or will be provided for the proposed use.

**Setback and Standards Variance:** Pursuant to Section 30.43.030 of the Glendale Municipal Code, a Variance shall be granted only if all of the following findings of fact can be made:

- A. The strict application of the provisions of any such ordinance would result in practical difficulties or unnecessary hardship inconsistent with the general purposes and intent of the ordinance.
- B. There are exceptional circumstances or conditions applicable to the property involved or to the intended use or development of the property that do not apply generally to other property in the same zone or neighborhood.
- C. The granting of the variance will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to the property or improvements in such zone or neighborhood in which the property is located.
- D. The granting of the variance will not be contrary to the objectives of the ordinances

## **ANALYSIS OF REQUEST**

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The applicant's request is in conjunction with the expansion of and improvements to the existing church located in the R-1250 (High Density Residential) zone. The applicant is requesting approval of a CUP to permit to allow the continued operation of the site as a place of worship (church) in conjunction with a 987 square foot (SF) addition to the existing church building consisting of a main and prayer altar, a backstage area behind the main altar and a baptismal area. In addition to the CUP described above, the applicant is requesting the following setback and standard variances to allow; 1) the removal and replacement of the existing church tower with new domes/bell towers, proposing an overall building height of 55 ft. where 36 ft. is the maximum height allowed, 2) construction of a new detached accessory building (outdoor altar), proposing an overall height of 48 ft., 5-inches to the top of the dome/bell tower where the maximum allowed height is 15 ft., construction of multiple 24-ft. high columns and arched architectural elements and an 18-ft. high entry gateway all within the new outdoor courtyard, 3) exceeding the maximum allowed floor area of 500 SF for the new 1,156 SF accessory building (outdoor altar with restrooms and storage), and 4) reducing the

required 20-foot and average 23-foot street-front setback and 5-foot and average 8-foot interior setback associated with the expansion of the existing church, construction of the new accessory building (outdoor altar) and installation of new gates/fences.

The approximately 7,880 SF building has been used as a church since its construction circa 1941. The new floor area will not be used as seating or viewing area, and therefore does not trigger an increase in the number of required parking spaces.

### Conditional Use Permit

The proposed use will be consistent with the various elements and objectives of the General Plan. The Land Use Element of the General Plan designates the subject site as High Density Residential. The zone is intended for high density residential development with an overall average density of 34 - 43 units per acre. The Land Use Element is the most directly related to the approval of this use; the proposed project is consistent with the Land Use Element, which designates the project site as High Density Residential, allowing for residential uses and permitting churches to operate with an approved conditional use permit. The church use is compatible with the church and private school located across the street to the east in that it provides a service to those residential uses and is a low-intensity institutional/public assembly use. The Circulation Element identifies North Central Avenue as a Minor Arterial, West Glenoaks Boulevard as a Major Arterial, and Fairview Avenue as a Local Street that are fully developed and can adequately handle the traffic circulation around the site. The City's Traffic Engineer reviewed the project and determined that no significant increase in traffic would occur as a result of the project proposal.

Operation of the church shall be required to comply with the City's Noise Ordinance (Chapter 8.36 Noise Control), and, as such, will be consistent with the General Plan Noise Element. No other elements of the General Plan, including the Circulation, Historic Preservation, Housing, Open Space and Conservation, Recreation, and Safety Elements, will be negatively impacted. Therefore, the proposed addition of the existing land use is consistent with the various elements and objectives of the General Plan.

The proposed continued operation and expansion of a place of worship and its associated structures and facilities, are not anticipated to be detrimental to the public health or safety, the general welfare, or the environment, as conditioned. City records indicate that a place of worship has operated at this location since 1941. For decades, a church has operated and will continue to operate at this location without any major incident, currently owned and operated by the Armenian Apostolic Church of Glendale. The church will operate as a congregation facility for worship, education and fellowship, and as a meeting place for community members and non-profit groups. Church events and activities will take place generally, for example, between the hours of 9am to 9pm, seven days per week, with other gatherings as needed. Conditions of Approval included in this staff report suggest several measures to prevent any noise or disturbances from affecting surrounding properties. The addition to the main church building and the construction of the new ancillary structure will be visible from the street. The additional floor area is ancillary to the primary use and does not expand the church seating or

viewing area; thus, no intensification of the use or associated parking demand is anticipated. Further, the Neighborhood Services Division and Police Department had no comments about the continued operation and expansion of a place of worship at the subject site; the associated structures and facilities have been operating for over 50 years as a church use with no evidence of being detrimental to the community. The use and associated facilities, therefore, are not anticipated to be detrimental to the public health or safety, the general welfare, or the environment, as conditioned.

Approval of the conditional use permit will not adversely impact nearby uses, nor impede the normal development of surrounding properties. The subject site has been used as a church since its construction in 1941 and has not proven to adversely impact nearby uses or impede the normal development of surrounding properties. The project proposes a 987 SF addition to the existing church building, consisting of a main altar and a prayer altar, a backstage area behind the main altar and a baptismal area. Additionally, a new 1,156 square-foot detached accessory building is proposed, consisting of an outdoor altar, restrooms and storage area associated with the church. Approval of the conditional use permit is not anticipated to cause adverse impacts nor impede the normal development of surrounding properties since these properties are already developed and the existing church has operated since 1941 and children's day care has operated under previous CUPs without incident. The immediate area includes multi-family residential, and a variety of commercial uses located nearby along N. Central Avenue and W. Glenoaks Boulevard. The proposed expansion is not anticipated to conflict with adjacent uses, and no other City divisions cited any concerns with the proposed operation. The proposed project will provide adequate public and private facilities, such as utilities, landscaping, parking spaces and traffic circulation. The suggested conditions of approval will mitigate any potential negative impacts to the surrounding neighborhood associate with the continued use of the site as a place of worship.

Adequate public and private facilities such as utilities, landscaping, parking spaces and traffic circulation measures are provided for the proposed use. The site has appropriate utilities and infrastructure necessary for the church to continue operating at the site. No changes are proposed that would render existing utilities and infrastructure inadequate or require them to be upgraded. The site has 31 parking spaces to service church patrons. The parking requirement for a church use is based on number of fixed seats or floor area of seating or viewing area. The proposed 987 SF addition to the church and the new, 1,156 SF open outdoor altar with restrooms and storage do not include any fixed seats and does not increase the seating or viewing area; therefore, it does not trigger an increase in the required number of parking spaces. The proposed landscaping on site proposes to comply with the Zoning Code.

#### Setback and Standards Variance

The subject site is located in the R-1250 (High Density Residential) zone. This area contains high density residential development and permits churches to operate with approval of a conditional use permit. The church use is compatible with the surrounding



residential uses, providing a service to residential uses offering a low-intensity institutional/public assembly use.

The 1.2-acre site is located on the west side of N. Central Avenue, bounded by Central Avenue to the east, W. Fairview Avenue on the north and W. Glenoaks Boulevard to the south. The existing church building was originally constructed circa 1941 for use as a church and has continuously been used as such since then. The site is developed with an approximate 7,880 square-foot two-story church building at the corner of Central and Fairview Avenue, a two-story, approximately 14,873 square-foot children's day care center and an on-site surface parking lot towards the westerly portion of the lot facing Fairview Avenue.

The applicant is requesting four deviations (variances) from the zoning code related to the expansion of the existing church building and additional improvements to the site. The requested variances are related to the overall height of the church building, to exceed maximum height and floor area for the new accessory building (outdoor alter), constructing new 24-ft. high columns and other architectural elements and an 18-foot-high entry gate in the courtyard, and reduced street-front and interior setbacks for the main church building, the new accessory building, and new gates/fences. The strict application of the provisions of the ordinance would result in practical difficulties that are not consistent with the intent of the ordinance that allows a church establishment, providing a service to those residential uses in the neighborhood that is a low-intensity institutional/public assembly use. The proposed remodel to the existing church building and proposed upgrades to the church site will serve Glendale and surrounding communities.

As proposed, the existing church tower, which includes the main alter, has an overall height of 55 feet. In accordance with GMC 30.11.030, Table 30.11-B, the maximum allowed building height is three-stories and 36 feet. Thus, the existing building height is considered legal, non-conforming. The variance request to increase the church's building height involves removing the existing 55-ft. church tower and replacing it with a new dome/bell tower at the main alter. The 55 ft. height for the church will be consistent with the existing height of 55 ft., and additional dome/bell towers are proposed at a slightly reduced height. Similarly, the proposed overall height of 48 ft., 5-inches for the new outdoor alter where the maximum height allowed is 15 feet is necessary to accommodate a dome/bell tower element. The proposed overall height of the buildings, inclusive of the dome/bell tower elements, are appropriately designed for the Apostolic Church using traditional Armenian architecture. Additionally, new 24-ft. high columns and arched architectural elements and an 18-foot-high gate entry are proposed within the outdoor courtyard on and around the new outdoor alter. To deny the requested height increase of 19 feet for the main church, an approximate 33 ft. height increase for the new accessory building/outdoor alter and the new 24-ft. high architectural features and the 18-ft. high entry gate in the courtyard would not be consistent with nor accommodate the needs of the church's religious use, traditions and church services.

The expansion of the existing main church building's footprint for purposes of creating a new covered entry facing Central Avenue, a new main and secondary alter and a

baptismal area would result in encroaching into the street front setback area. And the new fence/gate will also be encroaching into the required street-front setback area. In accordance with GMC 30.11.030, Table 30.11-B, the minimum required street-front setback for a building is 20 feet and an average of 23 feet and 20 feet for gates or fences and the minimum required interior setback for a new accessory building is five and an average of eight feet along the south side of the property, measured from the property lines. The applicant's request to expand the main church building and install a new fence/gate, would result in reducing the existing non-conforming street front and average setback along N. Central Avenue, ranging from 5-inches at the northeast entry corner to 12-ft., 4-inches towards the south and average setback, ranging from 4-ft. to 10.5-ft. To deny the variance request for reduced setbacks associated with the church expansion would not enable the church to have the necessary space and features it needs in order to carry out religious traditions and services associated with the religion. Requiring the applicant to comply with the Zoning Code setback requirements would result in impractical changes to the existing church that would unduly restrict the use of the site as a place of worship. Also, to comply with the minimum required 20-ft. street front setback for the new fence/gate, would not allow the church site to provide safety and security for the church, its staff and members.

For the church to come into compliance with the setback regulations, a large majority of the church would have to be demolished resulting in a hardship requiring more investment for the church to provide services to the community. If this was a commercial zoned property as is the case with the adjacent parcel to the southwest and directly across Central Avenue to the east and Glenoaks Boulevard to the south, the proposed minor expansion of the existing church building could be done without the need for a variance as there is no street front setback required in the C3 zone. This is also true of the setback request for the security fence proposed in these areas of the subject property. Development of the site as proposed is consistent with the surrounding C3 zoned properties.

Similarly, the new, 1,156 SF accessory building is proposed to be setback zero feet from the interior property line along the south side of the property. The accessory building features an outdoor alter with restrooms and storage area. In accordance with the Zoning Code, accessory buildings are limited to 500 sq. ft. (total floor area) and must be setback a minimum of 5-ft., and an average of 8 ft. from the interior setback. Generally, accessory buildings/structures associated with a residential use, they are subordinate and incidental to the main (i.e., main residential) building located on the same lot. In this case, the new outdoor alter is subordinate and incidental to the church building and will be utilized by church members for religious use, traditions and services associated with the religion. The location and size of the accessory building is necessary to accommodate the needs of the church traditions and services. By limiting the total floor area of the building to 500 sq. ft. and requiring the building to be setback a minimum of 5 ft. and an average of 8 ft. from the interior property along the south side of the property would be impractical and unduly restrict the use of the site as a place of worship. To deny the requests would preclude the church and its members from carrying out traditions and services associated with the religion. Further, denying the

request would impact the proposed improvements to the existing site, currently developed with a church.

There are exceptional circumstances and conditions applicable to the subject property that would not apply generally to other property in the same zone or neighborhood. Firstly, the project site is larger in comparison to most of properties in the surrounding neighborhood and has frontage on three streets (North Central Avenue, Fairview Avenue, and West Glenoaks Boulevard). Secondly, the project site has been in operation as a place of worship (church) in a residential zone for approximately 83 years, with development and operational needs that differ from a typical residential use. The expansion of the church and gates/fences within the street front setback area and construction of a new outdoor alter within the interior setback will maintain the usable outdoor areas of the church site, and provide safety and security for the church, its staff and congregation members. Also, the location of the new fence/gate will allow for improvements to the site and adequately secure the outdoor courtyard area, including the new outdoor alter and the existing children's day care center. Thirdly, the existing site has an irregular shape. The entire easterly property line, parallel to Central Avenue is angled, so portions of the church building were originally constructed within the required setback areas, a condition that continues today. Fourth, a portion of the site is adjacent to a small (approximately 3,720 SF), undeveloped parcel of land on the south side (adjacent to Glenoaks Blvd) that is currently owned and maintained by the City. The applicant has informed the City that the Church owner intends to purchase, maintain and merge the adjacent 3,720 SF parcel with the subject (church) site. Should this property be acquired, and the parcels are combined, the new outdoor (accessory building) will no longer be located zero feet from the interior (south) property line, but rather, it would be located 15 feet from the street side property line (facing W. Glenoaks Blvd).

Granting of the variances associated with the church expansion and site improvements, including constructing a new outdoor alter and new security gates/fencing will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to the property or improvements in such zone or neighborhood in which the property is located. The applicant's request to reduce required setbacks (street-front and interior) for the main church building, the new accessory building, and new gates/fences, exceed the maximum allowed height for the main church building, the new accessory building (outdoor alter), and the new architectural elements in the courtyard, and to exceed the maximum allowed floor area for a new accessory building will not significantly deviate from the existing conditions. For example, portions of the existing church building currently encroach into the street front setback, ranging from 7-inches to 10-ft., 7-inches, and the existing overall height of the church building is 55 ft. The applicant's proposal requesting to expand the building footprint of the church by placing the addition, ranging from 5-inches from the street front property line (at its closest point) to 12-ft., 4-inches and constructing a new fence/gate within the street-front setback area will not significantly deviate from the existing setback conditions. Also, as proposed the existing building height is and will remain at 55 ft. high for the main church and the proposal involves reconstructing a new dome/bell tower with the same building height of 55 ft.

Similarly, construction of a new 1,156 SF accessory building with an overall height of 48 ft., 5-inches (to the top of the bell tower) for purposes of creating an outdoor alter, restrooms and storage for the existing church will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to the property or improvements in such zone or neighborhood in which the property is located. The new outdoor alter will be located in the new courtyard adjacent to the church, abutting a 3,720 SF vacant parcel on the south side (facing W. Glenoaks Blvd.). According to the applicant, said vacant parcel is intended to be purchased by the Armenian Apostolic Church in the near future. Thus, the request to increase building height for the new outdoor alter will not conflict with adjacent properties or uses. The existing church and children's day care center are two-stories and there are similar multi-story commercial buildings with similar heights surrounding the subject site, including a two-story church and school and a three-story building across the street to the east and a four-story commercial office building located across the street, southeast of the subject site. Additionally, the subject site is located in a transition zone where a commercial zone parcel abuts the southwest portion of the site and are located across the street to the south, facing W. Glenoaks Blvd. The proposed overall height of the accessory building, inclusive of the dome/bell tower element is appropriately designed for the Apostolic Church using traditional Armenian architecture. The church remodel, new gate/fence, new outdoor alter and all improvements to the site will be required to obtain design review approval prior to the issuance of a building permit to ensure that all improvements are architecturally compatible with the existing development. Additionally, aside from the variances requested, all other Zoning Code requirements are being complied with (e.g., lot coverage, floor area ratio, landscaping, etc.).

The purpose of setback requirements is to ensure that there is an effective separation between properties to foster compatibility, identity, privacy, light, air and ventilation, and provide for landscaped areas for visual relief. Additionally, the objective of street-front setback area is to maintain the open streetscape of residential neighborhoods. Similarly, the objective of the interior setback is to enable appropriate open space, light, and ventilation between properties. The purpose of height regulations is to mitigate design including mass and scale and the objective of the floor area ratio standard is to limit the overall bulk of the buildings and structures in proportion to a given lot size. And the objective of the regulation limiting floor area for accessory buildings to 500 SF is to prevent overbuilding a lot with excessively large accessory buildings, which are subordinate to the primary structure. The purpose of the variance process is to assure that no property, because of the special circumstances applicable to it, shall be deprived of privileges commonly enjoyed by other parties in the same zone and vicinity.

Construction of a new fence in the street front setback area, remodel and expansion of the existing church and construction of a new outdoor courtyard with a new outdoor alter, columns, arched architectural elements and a new entry gate will allow improvements to the church site be consistent with and accommodate the needs of the church's religious use, traditions and church services associated with the religion. The intent of the ordinance prohibiting development in the street-front and interior setback areas, limitations to the maximum overall building height and floor area for accessory buildings applies to residential uses allowing for uniformed development that provides

for cohesive neighborhoods that create the same opportunity for all properties to experience access to light and air. The subject property has been in operation as a place of worship/church in a residential zone for approximately 83 years and is located on a corner lot at the end of the block. While the proposed expansion and remodel of the existing church and site improvements would not fully comply with zoning regulations, notwithstanding, the church will continue to comply with the intent of the regulations as it has for decades, taking into account the existing use of the site as a church. The church was originally developed in a residential zone where they are permitted subject to the approval of a CUP and where the development and operational needs of the church differ from a typical residential use. Suggested conditions of approval have been included to mitigate any potential negative impacts. As such, granting of the requested variances will be in keeping with the character of the existing church use, and will not be contrary to the objectives of the ordinance. Furthermore, for the church to come into compliance with the setback regulations, a large majority of the church would have to be demolished resulting in a hardship requiring more investment for the church to provide services to the community. If this was a commercial zoned property as is the case with the adjacent parcel to the southwest, directly across Central Avenue to the east and Glenoaks Boulevard to the south, the proposed minor expansion of the existing church building could be done without the need for a variance as there is no street front setback required in the C3 zone. This is also true of the setback request for the security fence proposed in these areas of the subject property, and building height is limited to 90 feet in the C3 District III zone as is the case with the property developed with a church and private school across the street to the east.

## **EXHIBITS**

1. Draft Findings of Fact and Conditions of Approval for: Conditional Use Permit Case No. PCUP-002795-2024 and Variance Case No. PVAR-003198-2024
2. Location Map
3. Photos of the site and the neighborhood
4. Reduced Plans
5. Departmental Comments
6. Historic assessment report was submitted by the applicant (prepared by Kaplan Chen Kaplan)