



# CITY OF LONG BEACH

DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

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December 12, 2016

## CHAIR AND CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSIONERS

City of Long Beach  
California

### RECOMMENDATION:

Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness to construct a new one-story 850 square-foot cottage consistent with the previously approved Environmental Impact Report and Master Plan for the landmark designated Rancho Los Cerritos site at 4600 Virginia Road. (District 8)

APPLICANT: Rancho Los Cerritos Foundation  
4600 Virginia Road  
Long Beach, CA 90807  
(Application No. HP16-583)

### REQUEST

The proposed project is a new one-story 850 square-foot building that is consistent with the approved Rancho Los Cerritos Environmental Impact Report and Master Plan. The purpose of the building is to provide for security and office space. This new auxiliary structure will permit existing operations to be relocated from inside the historic home freeing up the east and south wings of the historic dwelling to be opened to the public.

### BACKGROUND

Rancho Los Cerritos (the Rancho) is located at 4600 Virginia Road. The site is an approximately 4.74-acre parcel located on the north side of Virginia Road and bordered by the Virginia Country Club on the south and east and single family residential uses on the west and north (Exhibit A – Location Map). The site is located in the Park (P) Zoning District and in Land Use District (LUD) 11 – Open Space and Park District.

The Rancho is designated as a Long Beach Historic Landmark, a California Historical Landmark, a National Historic Landmark and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Rancho has been owned by the City of Long Beach since 1955 and is operated as a public museum and historic site. The City entered into a partnership with

the nonprofit organization, Rancho Los Cerritos Foundation, in 2014 for the Foundation to assume responsibility for daily operations and the management of the historic site.

The two-story ranch house was originally constructed in 1844 by Jonathan Temple as part of a 27,000 acre cattle ranch operation. The house, built with two and three foot thick walls from sun-dried adobe, blended Spanish/Mexican features with the Monterey style of architecture. The property was sold in 1866 to Flint, Bixby & Co. and used as a sheep ranch. Gradually, the property was subdivided throughout the nineteenth century for various dairy farm, crop production and residential uses. Over the years, the house was occupied by members of the Bixby family as well as a number of tenants. In 1930, Llewellyn Bixby Sr., president of the Bixby Land Company, made plans to preserve and restore the home. The ranch house was renovated for use as their private residence in 1930-31 by architect Kenneth S. Wing. The original building configuration remained intact with renovations following the Spanish Colonial style with red-tiled roofing, courtyard landscaping and a sunporch. The ranch house remained with the Bixby family until the City acquired the rancho as an historic site.

A comprehensive Master Plan and Environmental Impact Report for the Rancho Los Cerritos historic site was adopted and certified on April 18, 2002 by the Planning Commission (Exhibit B – Master Plan Executive Summary). A Certificate of Appropriateness, and a Resolution was adopted for the Rancho Los Cerritos Master Plan and approved by the Cultural Heritage Commission on May 15, 2002.

The Rancho Los Cerritos Foundation is the fundraising and development organization for the Rancho and spearheaded the preparation of the Rancho Los Cerritos Master Plan. The Master Plan was designed to serve as a guide for site development and interpretation over a twenty-five year time frame. Key restoration and new construction projects under the Master Plan include:

- 1) seismic strengthening and restoration of the historic adobe,
- 2) reconstruction of the Cota Adobe for use as a Visitors' Center,
- 3) reconstruction of the barn and complex north of the ranch house,
- 4) redesign and construction of the entryway at Virginia Road including a new entrance gate and security,
- 5) restoration of the historic orchard to the south of the ranch house with an ADA-accessible path,
- 6) construction of an 850 square foot Caretaker Residence, and
- 7) construction of a small wooden building in the maintenance yard.

Implementation of the plan was divided into three phases: Phase I (2001-2004), Phase II (2005-2014) and Phase III (2015-2024) (Exhibit C – Plans & Photographs).

In 2006, Phase II Master Plan improvements were slated for implementation, including construction of a 2,900 square-foot Visitor Center, 850 square-foot caretaker's residence, new monument entry signage, fencing and landscaping. The Cultural Heritage Commission reviewed the two new buildings and associated projects and found

them to be consistent with the approved Master Plan and issued a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed improvements on October 13, 2006.

On December 31, 2006, Phase II Master Plan improvements approved by the Planning Commission included a modification to the approved Master Plan, Standards Variance, and Administrative Use Permit to locate eight on-site staff parking spaces to off-site, and allow joint use parking spaces without a deed restriction at the Virginia Country Club. Phase II improvements have all been implemented with the exception of the construction of the caretaker's residence.

### **ANALYSIS**

The proposed project, a cottage for a security and office space, requires approval of the Cultural Heritage Commission due to the expiration of the 2006 approved Certificate of Appropriateness (Exhibit D – City of Long Beach Notice of Final Action). The proposed cottage is the same size, configuration, location, and design as depicted in the Master Plan. However, there is no longer a need to have a caretaker living onsite due to installation of a more robust security system for monitoring the entire site. The cottage will now function as a security office for a guard who will monitor the site during non-public hours and in the evenings. The building's multi-purpose room will be used as office space, which will allow the east and south wings of the historic house for interpretation.

The cottage, a small single-story building, is located adjacent to the driveway entrance to the Rancho away from the historic structures. Exterior materials will be similar to the materials used for the recently added Visitors' Center including a slump block foundation wall, wood board and batten siding, wood shingles on a low pitched roof, and wood doors and windows. The building has been designed to be compatible with the site, but with differentiated new materials and detailing so to not create a false sense of history. The height of the cottage will be 11' 6" from floor level to top of ridge. The roof style will be hip and gable with a 4:12 slope. Roofing material will be the same wood shingles used for the Visitors' Center. The wood window style is casement, fixed and double hung. Entryways are wood painted French doors. A low wood deck situated on the east side of the building will be accessible from the security office and multi-purpose room and includes a brick pathway to the driveway. In addition, historically appropriate landscaping will be used to screen the new structure (Exhibit E – Color Elevations & Material Board).

### **RECOMMENDATION**

In compliance with Section 2.63.070 of the City of Long Beach Municipal Code (Cultural Heritage Commission), the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings, staff has analyzed the proposed project and found the project meets these requirements and those of the City's zoning codes and is recommending approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness subject to the conditions of approval (Exhibit F – Conditions of Approval, Findings & Analysis).



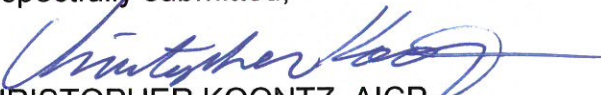
**PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE**


Public notices were distributed on November, 2016, and a notice was also emailed to Los Cerritos Neighborhood Association, Sleepy Hollow, Country Club Manor. No responses were received as of the date of preparation of this report.

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

In accordance with Section 15303(a) of the Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the Rancho Los Cerritos Master Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR 25-99 SCH #99148658) was certified and a subsequent addendum (18-06) was approved by the Lead Agency, the Long Beach Planning Commission, no subsequent environmental review is required.

Respectfully submitted,

  
CHRISTOPHER KOONTZ, AICP  
ADVANCE PLANNING OFFICER

  
LINDA F. TATUM, AICP  
PLANNING BUREAU MANAGER

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Attachments: Exhibit A – Location Map  
Exhibit B – Master Plan Executive Summary  
Exhibit C – Plans & Photographs  
Exhibit D – City of Long Beach Notice of Final Action  
Exhibit E – Color Elevations & Material Board  
Exhibit F – Conditions of Approval, Findings & Analysis