

SAINT MONICA COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH

CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT EXHIBITS

PREPARED BY:

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SAINT MONICA COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Date: 05/20/2024

Project Number: FZ-21-00103

Project Title: Saint Monica Coptic Orthodox Church

Hearing Date: May 28th, 2024

Lead Agency: City of Costa Mesa
Development Services Department
Planning Division
77 Fair Drive
Costa Mesa, CA 92626

Contact Person: Christopher Yeager, Associate Planner
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Project Location: 234/236/238 Fischer Ave, Costa Mesa, CA 92626
The Project address is 234 Fischer Ave, Costa Mesa, CA 92626. The Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) is: 427-032-03. The Project site is on Fischer Avenue between Redhill Ave. and Baker Street and is located south of State Route 55 (SR-55) and generally along the western portion of the city; refer to site plan. The site is located within the Costa Mesa, California.

Project Applicant/Project Sponsor's Name and Address:
Saint Monica Coptic Orthodox Church
Contact: Fr. Paul Mikhail
Saint Monica Coptic Orthodox Church
2925 N Weston St.
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(714) 299-7999

Zoning: MP Industrial

Architect: Visioneering Studios Architecture
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Santa Ana, CA 92701
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Description of Project:

The desire of Saint Monica Coptic Orthodox church is to bring light and hope to the city of Costa Mesa and beyond. Sheathed in sunlit perforated panels, the new Saint Monica Church campus will emerge out of an airport business park to bring ancient stories of hope, love, and peace into this generation.

Throughout the building, shadow and light animate the restrained yet soulful interiors. Instead of drywall and paint, natural materials and finishes as well as mosaics on exterior niches establish the color palette and emphasize the warmth of the composition. Visitors will experience three realms: social, sacred, and educational. A sunlit garden court, experienced first by a soaring vaulted ceiling, unites the learning center with the worship center and serves as a place for community.

The portico that links the social spaces features a series of pointed arches and a glass bridge. The arches frame several mosaic art niches that communicate timeless, inspirational messages of the history of the Coptic Church. The overall form and style adopt their influence from Early Mediterranean and Byzantine culture. A central feature of Byzantine culture was Orthodox Christianity society, which was very religious, and it held certain values in high esteem, including a respect for order and traditional hierarchies.

Key features include a sunlit dome, domed towers, a sky deck over the social spaces, cafe, youth center, prayer garden, prayer chapel, climbing wall, gymnasium, and a religious education center with outdoor play deck.

Variance:

The project will be the first Coptic Orthodox Church in the city. An integral part of the Coptic Orthodox Church identity are steeples and domes. We are requesting a variance for the height of these two architectural elements and not the building itself. The remaining roof area adheres to the height limit specified in the Zoning Code. There is a precedent within the City of Costa Mesa for church steeples to exceed the required building height of their respective Zones.

Regarding the amount of square-foot area that exceeds the Zoning code building height, the Worship Building has 347 square-feet of dome area that is 1.8% of the total 19,638 square-feet of the roof area; it also has 88 square-feet of steeple area, which is only 0.5% of the roof area. The religious education building has 169 square-feet of dome area, which is 3.7% of the total 4,481 square-feet of roof area of the religious education building. The total percentage of square foot area of all elements is 6% of the total roof area. The steeple and the dome of both buildings are only architectural features that are unoccupied spaces. They also have a cross feature on each that, due to its slender nature, does not contribute to the massing of the roof.

Physical Setting:

The subject property is a 1.6-acre lot that consists of two buildings and three individual industrial office space units located North of Fisher Avenue and West of Redhill Avenue; refer to location on Site plan. Records indicate that the building was first constructed in 1978.

234 Fisher is a 17,800 SF two-story unit with 4,327 SF of office space, one ground level truck door, warehouse space, and a shared fence yard. The second level includes a mezzanine with hatch that provides roof access. The front elevation includes a sloped roof area with composition shingles.

236 Fisher Avenue is a 3863 SF two-story unit with 1,770 SF of office space, one ground level truck door, warehouse space, and a shared fence yard. The right elevation includes a sloped roof area with composition shingles.

238 Fisher is a 4,347 SF two-story freestanding office building. The tenant occupying the unit is Orkin, a residential and commercial pest control company. The pitched roof area is a standing seam metal roof.

A surface parking lot surrounds the property. The landscaping consists of groundcover, shrubs, trees, and grass.

Demolition:

The existing buildings will be demolished in phases, as new construction is completed. Phase 1 will have 238 Fischer demolished for the new Religious Education Center. Phase 2 will include a new elevated play deck, and Phase 3 and 4 will demolish 234 and 236 Fischer for the new Worship and Multi-purpose Building.

Construction:

Project construction would occur in four phases, as shown below:

Phase 1: Includes the construction of the 10,515 SF Religious Education building. This 3-story structure will have an entry lobby with check-in desk, elevator, and staff area. It will accommodate approximately 100 children and used solely by the congregation. Site improvements include covered parking lot to increase overall parking to 100 spaces.

Phase 2: Includes the construction of Play Deck. This 6,285 SF structure will be built over the existing parking lot at the Northeast of the site. The Play Deck will include a water feature, play equipment, turf areas and walking track. An elevator and stairway accesses will be provided. The existing parking lot will remain beneath it.

Phase 3: Includes the construction of the new 16,643 SF Multi-purpose Gymnasium. This 3-story building will include a gymnasium, activity room, elevator, kitchen, café, administrative offices and 4,500 SF rooftop patio for gathering. The use of the building will include temporary worship services, sporting events, church gatherings, youth gatherings and church administration. The parking lot will be renovated to increase parking count and provide landscaping to enhance the project. A fire lane will also be constructed to provide emergency services to the buildings. The parking lot will provide 90 parking spaces in this phase, to accommodate 270 seats.

Phase 4: Includes the construction of the new 18,511 SF Worship Building. This 3-story building will include a religious sanctuary, large atrium with skylights, 2nd floor balcony, cry rooms, chapel, gift shop and 10 religious enrichment classrooms. The use of the building will include worship services, religious education, church gatherings, weddings, and baptisms. Site improvements will include an outdoor prayer garden, enhanced paving, water feature, playground, and landscaping. The parking lot will still provide 90 parking spaces in this phase, to accommodate 270 seats.

A breakdown of the proposed buildings is provided below in **Table 1**, *Proposed Project Structures and Other Components*.

Table 1: Proposed Project Structures and Other Components

Building	Purpose	Building Height No. of Stories	Building Area (SF)
Existing			
Existing Buildings	<i>Temporary Worship (234) + 236 + 238 Fischer buildings</i>	20'-0" 2-stories	26,057 SF
Phase 1			
Building A	<i>Demolish existing complete and build new Religious Education Building</i>	45'-0" 3-stories	10,515 SF
Phases 2			
	<i>Play Deck</i>	1-story over parking	6,285 SF (Unenclosed – not included in FAR)
Phase 3			
Building B	<i>Demolish existing complete and build new Multi-purpose Gymnasium and Activity Space</i>	45'-0" 3-stories	16,643 SF
Phase 4			
Building C	<i>Demolish existing complete and build new Worship Building</i>	45'-0" w/ (1) 70'-0" Tower 3-stories	18,511 SF
Total (Proposed) Building SF			45,669 SF

Church classrooms and building design features would include high-efficiency wall assemblies and windows to reduce heating and cooling loads, Energy Star appliances, high-efficiency heating and cooling systems, high efficiency domestic hot water systems, high-efficiency light-emitting diode (LED) lighting throughout common areas, 'smart' lighting, and landscape design.

The Project includes 97 surface parking spaces which will be provided for visitors along the northern, southern, and western portions of the site. The Project would utilize the existing two access driveways along Fischer Avenue. As shown in the Site Plan, the proposed structures would be generally located

in the north and eastern portion of the Project site. The proposed Project includes 8862 SF of landscape area (13% of the Project site).

The total duration of construction activities associated with the Project is estimated to be approximately 5 years (60 months) provided funding is in place as planned. Construction is expected to begin in the fourth quarter (Q4) of 2024 or as early as city approvals are secured and end during the last quarter (Q4) of 2029. Construction activities would include site preparation, demolition of existing buildings, new buildings, paving, and landscaping.

Operations:

Currently, the church has one liturgy service on the following days: Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. Liturgical prayers last 2 to 2-½ hours. The prayers take place at Church in accordance with the Coptic Orthodox faith and tradition. Weekday liturgies are between 8:30 am to 10:30 am and are attended by few congregations since it is during working hours. As for Saturdays, liturgy prayers are between 8:00 am to 10:30 am with slightly higher attendance than weekdays. For Sundays, liturgy prayers start at 8:00 am and ends by 11:00 am with highest attendance.

In addition, during the week on Thursday and Friday night from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm there is a college and graduate meeting that takes place. The meeting generally entails a bible reading, sermon, and a group discussion at the Church. On Saturday night, from 5:00 pm to 9:00 pm, there are bible study meetings for children aged Kindergarten through college, followed by a Vesper prayer and a sermon. On Sunday night, from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm, there is couples meeting.

After the Sunday liturgy, light snacks are served to the congregation using the kitchen at the multipurpose room. Confession hours are typically done after services unless by appointment with the priest.

Religious sacraments such as weddings, baptisms, and funerals may also take place within the Church during the week. Weddings may only take place outside of Advent, Lenten, and similar periods during the year, totaling approximately 20 weeks in a calendar year. Generally, wedding services take place on Saturdays or Sundays and last up to 1 ½ hours. Baptisms by appointment take place right before liturgies by 60 minutes. Baptisms typically take place more before the Saturdays or Sundays liturgy. Funeral prayers services are by appointment year-round, except during the Holy week (Easter week) where no funeral prayers are permitted. Typically, it takes place between 10:30 am to 12:00 pm.

In addition to the typical or regular liturgies and sacramental services, the Coptic Orthodox Church is known for vigils around major church fasts like Christmas and Easter. The Advent (pre-Christmas) period is highlighted by several night-long vigils. In the spring during Pascha week (Pre-Easter), which culminates with the Feast of the Resurrection (Easter Sunday), the congregation spends that week's Friday evening and Saturday morning in a long service. Vigils reflect traditional and deeply cherished church rites that

are centuries old and yet remain a part of a lasting identity of Egyptian Christians in the diaspora. They are a central practice of the Church.

The religious bookstore/library/gift shop will sell books, icons, rosaries, audio/visual materials and is open after the Saturday and Sunday liturgies and after church meetings. The reception area, multipurpose room, and commercial kitchen will be available for use by parishioners for either regular meetings such as the senior or women's group meeting and preparation of related group meals, or for special occasions/receptions such as wedding, baptisms, or funerals.

The property will be utilized consistently at each phase. At the completion of phase one, the church will utilize the existing and new improvements for typical church uses as outlined above.

All activities would comply with the City's municipal code including limitations on noise, lighting, and parking. The Project and associated activities are those associated with a place of worship and does not include formal "school classrooms" or similar weekday daily school uses that would generate weekday traffic.

Access:

Regional access is provided via SR-55 via Baker Street ramps, approximately 1.0-mile to the North of the site.

Local access is provided via Redhill and Fischer Ave. Fischer Avenue is classified as local/collector roadway which is typical for 2-lane roadways within the city. Redhill Avenue is classified as a major arterial roadway which typically range between 4-lane roadways.

Site ingress would be provided on Fischer Avenue via the two driveways, one existing and one new. The Northwest access will be closed for fire lane and intermittent use.