

PROPOSAL:

Nebraska Lutheran Campus Ministries is requesting a special permit to expand or reconstruct an existing non-conforming property at 535 N. 16th St. in the Greek Row Historic District of the UN-L City Campus. Prior to review by Planning Commission of this request, the Preservation Commission is asked to give advice on the request.

DISCUSSION:

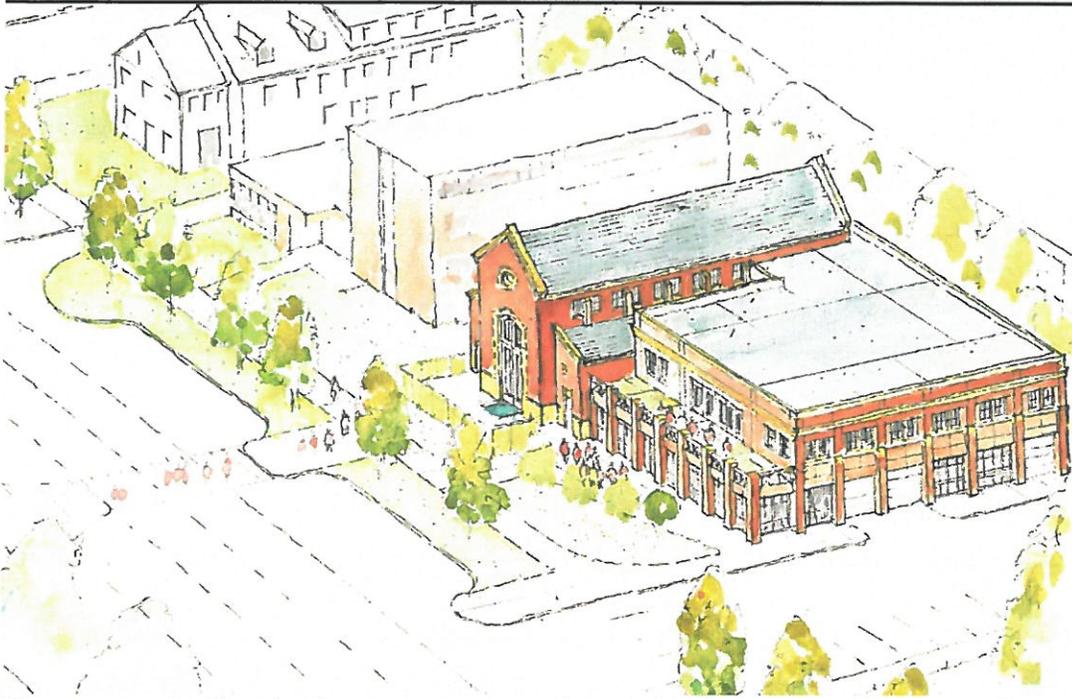
The existing Lutheran Center at 535 N. 16th St. is an International Style structure built in 1951, with a 1958 two-story addition. The building was identified as “non-contributing” to the character of the Greek Row National Register district when it was listed in 1997.



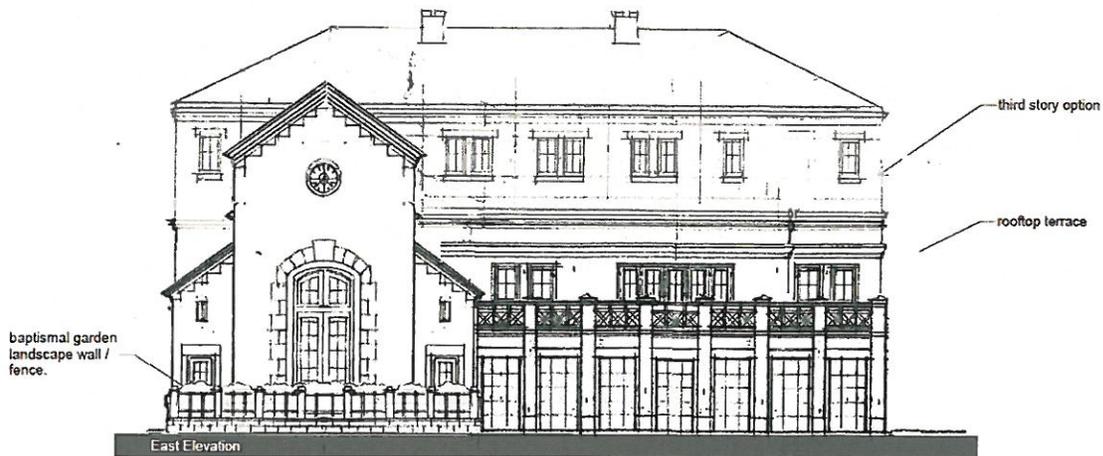
The Lutheran Campus ministry proposes to remove the existing building and construct in its place a new chapel, offices, gathering spaces, and some housing. The current building does not meet the setback requirements of the zoning district and the special permit being sought would continue and somewhat expand those non-conforming characteristics.

The advice sought from the Preservation Commission is whether the proposal, if granted, would adversely affect the historic characteristics of the Greek Row District.

While the existing building may have merit as an example of the International Style, the historic development of the district occurred before the prevalent use of that style in Lincoln and Period Revival buildings establish the predominant character of the district. The proposed building does not explicitly copy any of the “Greek” chapter houses, having a decidedly ecclesiastic emphasis, but it does refer to historic architecture.



The proposal offers both a two-story version and a three-story option, with an additional story of housing on the back (west) side. We have requested of the project architect (The Clark Collaborative) an additional perspective drawing to better understand the impact of the three story option. The existing flat-roofed, two-story Lutheran Center is considerably shorter in appearance than most of the neighboring historic buildings.



3 Story Concept

The Greek Row District includes several tall 2.5 story buildings and the UNL dormitories across 16th St. to the east and behind the Lutheran Center to the west are 3 stories in height. The proposed options, at either height, seem to fit within the range of massing of buildings in the district.



Sigma Phi Epsilon Fraternity House, adjacent subject property to the north

Recommended finding:

The building requested to be allowed by this special permit does not appear to diminish the significant features of the Greek Row Historic District.