



# City of Sunnyvale

## Agenda Item-No Attachments (PDF)

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File #: 17-0994, Version: 1

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### REPORT TO HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION

#### **SUBJECT**

**File #:** 2017-7701

**Location:** 316 Morse Avenue (APN: 204-040-025)

**Zoning:** R-2

**Proposed Project:**

**RESOURCE ALLOCATION PERMIT** to consider the historic significance of a single-family home which is listed as part of the Sunnyvale Heritage Resources Inventory.

**Applicant / Owner:** Catherine Liu (applicant) / Xiangyang Yao (owner)

**Environmental Review:** Environmental review will be conducted as required by California Environmental Quality Act provisions and City Guidelines upon determination of significance by the Heritage Preservation Commission.

**Project Planner:** Ryan Kuchenig, (408) 730-7431, rkuchenig@sunnyvale.ca.gov

#### **REPORT IN BRIEF**

**General Plan:** Residential Low Medium Density

**Existing Site Conditions:** Single Family Home

#### **Surrounding Land Uses**

**North:** Single Family Home

**South:** Commercial Retail/Office Building

**East:** Single Family Home

**West:** Single Family Home

**Issues:** Historic Significance of the Single-Family Home

**Staff Recommendation:** Determine that the single-family residence does not have local historic significance and recommend that the home be removed from the City Heritage Resource Inventory

#### **BACKGROUND**

##### **Description of Proposed Project**

The applicant is requesting a determination from the Heritage Preservation Commission in regards to the local historical significance of the property at 317 Morse Street, and staff is requesting a determination in order to conduct appropriate environmental review prior to reviewing building renovations or future redevelopment of the site.

See Attachment 1 for a map of the vicinity and mailing area for notices and Attachment 2 for the Data Table of the project.

**Previous Actions on the Site :** There are no previous actions related to this site.

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), any application that may cause a substantial adverse change to a Heritage Resource is subject to environmental review. Since, the applicant intends to build an addition and change the façade material of the home, there is a potential adverse impact to the environment if the structure is considered historic. CEQA statute states the following:

***“§ 21084.1, Historical Resource:*** *A project that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment. For purposes of this section, a historical resource is a resource listed in, or determined to be eligible for listing in, the California Register of Historical Resources. Historical resources included in a local register of historical resources, as defined in subdivision (k) of Section 5050.1, or deemed significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (g) of Section 5024.1, are presumed to be historically or culturally significant for purposes of this section, unless the preponderance of the evidence demonstrates that the resource is not historically or culturally significant. The fact that a resource is not listed in, or determined to be eligible for listing in, the California Register of Historical Resources, not included in a local register of historical resources, or not deemed significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (g) of Section 5024.1 shall not preclude a lead agency from determining whether the resource may be an historical resource for purposes of this section.”*

Generally, when projects such as these are reviewed by local agencies, a historical and architectural evaluation is requested from the applicant, which evaluates the historical significance of the structure at the National, State, and local levels. This report is used as “the preponderance of evidence” as stated in the CEQA statute. In this case, the report for the residence at 316 Morse Avenue determined that the single-family home is not eligible to be listed on the National and State registries of historic resources. The report also concluded that the single-family home should be removed from the City of Sunnyvale Heritage Resource Inventory because City adopted criteria are not met.

### **Required HPC Determination**

The applicant has submitted a historic and architectural evaluation by a consultant; Brunzell Historical, which is included in Attachment 3. The evaluation, completed August 16, 2017, includes DPR (State of California Department of Parks and Recreation) 523A and B forms. The report concludes that property does not qualify for State or National registers and that the property does not meet any of the City’s criteria for designation. The evaluation states that the house was constructed between 1930 and 1932 by Fred Ferreira and occupied by the family until at least 1944. As stated in the attached DPR forms, several additions and alterations have been constructed by subsequent owners of the property over the years. Some of these modifications predate building permit requirements or were done without permits. The original DPR form could not be located for the property; therefore, it is not clear as to the reasoning behind the original nomination of the property on the City’s Heritage Resource list.

If the Commission determines that the structure has local historic significance, and significant modifications are proposed, further environmental review including an Initial Study would be required. An Environmental Impact Report (EIR) would likely be required if the home is proposed to be destroyed. If the Commission determines that the structure does not have local historic significance, redevelopment of the site or other modifications to the home could proceed with appropriate environmental review based on the scope of the proposed project without concern for historic preservation.

An EIR would require approximately six months additional time to complete. The EIR would explore

alternatives to the demolition of the structure and require greater public notice regarding the potential impact to the property. The intent of the report is to provide information regarding the home and disclose all impacts that de-listing the structure may create.

### Historic Preservation Policies

In order to determine any local historic significance, the Heritage Preservation Commission should evaluate the home with respect to the City's Municipal Code, Title 19 (Zoning Ordinance) which provides the criteria for nomination of a City Heritage resource. Criteria for evaluation and nomination of heritage resources in Section 19.96.050 of Title 19 state the following:

*"Any improvement, building, portion of buildings, structures, signs, features, sites, scenic areas, views, vistas, places, areas, landscapes, trees, or other natural objects or objects of scientific, aesthetic, educational, political, social, cultural, architectural, or historical significance can be designated a heritage resource by the city council and any area within the city may be designated a heritage resource district by the city council pursuant to provisions of this chapter if it meets the Criteria of the National Register of Historic Places, or one or more of the following:*

*(a) It exemplifies or reflects special elements of the city's cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic engineering, architectural, or natural history;*

*(b) It is identified with persons or events significant in local, state, or national history;*

*(c) It embodies distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction, or is a valuable example of the use of indigenous materials or craftsmanship;*

*(d) It is representative of the work of a notable builder, designer, or architect;*

*(e) It contributes to the significance of an historic area, being a geographically definable area possessing a concentration of historic or scenic properties or thematically related grouping of properties which contribute to each other and are unified aesthetically or by plan or physical development;*

*(f) It has a unique location or singular physical characteristic or is a view or vista representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community, or the city of Sunnyvale;*

*(g) It embodies elements of architectural design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship that represents a significant structural or architectural achievement or innovation;*

*(h) It is similar to other distinctive properties, sites, areas, or objects based on a historic, cultural, or architectural motif;*

*(i) It reflects significant geographical patterns, including those associated with different eras of settlement and growth, particular transportation modes, or distinctive examples of park or community planning;*

*(j) It is one of the few remaining examples in the city, region, state, or nation possessing distinguishing characteristics of an architectural or historic type or specimen;*

*(k) With respect to a local landmark, it is significant in that the resource materially benefits the historical character of a neighborhood or area, or the resource in its location represents an established and familiar visual feature of the community or city.*

*(l) With respect to a local landmark district, a collective high integrity of the district is essential to the sustained value of the separate individual resources;*

*(m) With respect to a designated landmark and designated landmark district, the heritage resource shall meet Criteria of the National Register of Historical Places, which are incorporated by reference into this chapter. (Ord. 2623-99 § 1 (part): prior zoning code § 19.80.060)."*

The criteria for the National Register for evaluating properties are included in Attachment D.

**Public Contact:** Nine notices were sent to surrounding property owners and residents adjacent to the subject site in addition to standard noticing practices, including advertisement in the Sunnyvale Sun Newspaper and on-site posting. No letters or calls were received from the public by staff.

## Conclusion

Staff has reviewed the proposal to remove the home from the Heritage Resource Inventory and has concluded, based on the provided information including the revised DPR forms and the criteria listed in the Municipal Code, that the home should be removed from the inventory. It is unclear as to the original rationale for including the property within the City's Heritage Resource inventory; however, research has determined that original design has been significantly compromised over the years and that there is no evidence of notable people or events for historical context.

The home may have at one time exemplified classic craftsman style design; however, it has been altered significantly over the years and it is difficult to discern the original characteristics. The evaluation notes that the home has been significantly altered over the years, including the addition of second-story dormers that altered the original single-story massing and roofline. The enclosure of the front porch and replacement of wood-sash windows with aluminum sliders, as well as replacement of wood siding further change the architectural integrity of the original design. There are no known significant associations of the property with any persons considered prominent in the development of Sunnyvale. Staff concurs with the historical evaluation and recommends that the Heritage Preservation Commission determine that the residence at 316 Morse Avenue does not meet the criteria for a Heritage Resource as identified in Section 19.96.050 of the zoning ordinance.

## ALTERNATIVES

1. Determine that the single-family home does have local historic significance.
2. Determine that the single-family home does not have local historic significance.

## RECOMMENDATION

Alternative 2. Determine that the single-family home does not have local historic significance.

Prepared by: Ryan M. Kuchenig, Senior Planner

Approved by: Gerri Caruso, Principal Planner

## ATTACHMENTS

1. Vicinity and Noticing Map

2. Proposal Letter from the Applicant
3. Evaluation Letter & DPR Forms Completed by Brunzell Historical