



City of Sunnyvale

Agenda Item-No Attachments (PDF)

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REPORT TO HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION

SUBJECT

File #: 2017-7878

Location: 562 S. Mathilda Avenue (APN: 209-29-057)

Zoning: DSP-20

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: Shawn Karimi (applicant/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: Transit Mixed Use

Existing Site Conditions: Single Family Home

Surrounding Land Uses

North: Residential Condominiums

South: Commercial Office Building

East: Residential Apartments

West: City Hall across S. Mathilda Ave.

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 562 S. Mathilda Avenue, and staff is requesting a determination in order to conduct appropriate environmental review prior to reviewing building renovations or future redevelopment of the site. The property is located in the southern portion of Block 20 of the Sunnyvale Downtown Specific Plan. The Plan indicates that this area is appropriate for office uses.

See Attachment 1 for a map of the vicinity and mailing area for notices.

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's plans are to significantly alter or demolish the existing structure in order to expand the adjacent medical office use, there is a potential adverse impact to the environment if the structure is determined to be 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 562 S. Mathilda Avenue concludes 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; Anthony Kirk, which is included in Attachment 3. The evaluation, completed October 13, 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 built in 1930 for John and Josephine Musso, and their family of two children. As stated in the attached DPR forms, the house is described architecturally as a modest example of the Spanish Colonial Revival style, but does not retain many features that are typical of this style.

If the Commission determines that the structure does have local historic significance, and significant modifications are proposed, further environmental review would be conducted using CEQA guidelines. An Initial Study would be required and the project would be reviewed including concern for historic preservation. 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.

Historic Preservation Policies

In order to determine any local historic significance, the Heritage Preservation Commission should evaluate the property 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: 204 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 form and the criteria listed in the Municipal Code, that the home should be removed from the inventory. Although the home appears to be in good condition, the home does not retain many features associated with its intended Spanish Colonial Revival style. With the exception of an asymmetrical design and utilization of stucco wall cladding, the home does not have any identifying features of Spanish Colonial Revival design. The home includes a French door on the north side, and a combination gabled roof, finished with red tile, and a flat, parapet roof, finished with tar and gravel roof. The report further notes that the integral porch has a closed railing which is atypical of the style and a focal window that is pointed rather than arched, as is typical of Spanish Colonial Revival houses.

The house is not the work of a prominent architect or a master builder and does not appear significant on the local level. The analysis concludes that the property does not appear to be eligible for listing in the City of Sunnyvale Cultural Resource Inventory, the California Register of Historical Resources, and the National Register of Historic Places. 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 562 S. Mathilda 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 Anthony Kirk

