



File #: 23-0521, Version: 1

REPORT TO HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION

SUBJECT

Proposed Project:

RESOURCE ALTERATION PERMIT: to remove 148 Crescent Avenue from the Heritage Resource Inventory and consider the impacts of an 18-unit townhouse development (#2021-7826) and minor exterior improvements for the house at 156 Crescent Avenue.

Location: 148 and 156 Crescent Avenue (APNs: 211-35-008 and 211-35-009)

File #: 2021-7265

Zoning: R-3/PD (Medium Density Residential / Planned Development)

Applicant / Owner: Samir Sharma (applicant) / Crescent Ave LLC (owner)

Environmental Review: A Class 32 categorical exemption relieves this project from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) provisions.

Project Planner: Momo Ishijima, (408) 730-7532, mishijima@sunnyvale.ca.gov

General Plan: Medium Density Residential

Existing Site Conditions: A one-story single-family house, a two-story single-family house, a warehouse building, and accessory structures

Surrounding Land Uses

North: Senior residential care facility across Crescent Avenue

South: Multi-family residential (apartment complex) and duplex

East: Multi-family residential (condominium development)

West: Multi-family residential (senior apartment complex)

Issues: Removal and alteration of Heritage Resources

Staff Recommendation: Approve the Resource Alteration Permit based on the Findings in Attachment 2 and subject to the Conditions of Approval in Attachment 3.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project is redevelopment of a combined 0.85-acre site with a three-story 18-unit townhouse development and minor exterior improvements to a 1,062-square foot single-family home (156 Crescent Avenue).

The 148 and 156 Crescent Avenue properties are both listed as heritage resources on Sunnyvale's Heritage Resource Inventory. The applicant proposes to remove 148 Crescent Avenue from the Heritage Resource Inventory, and demolish the house, detached garage, and covered patio structure. The house at 156 Crescent Avenue would be retained with minor exterior improvements, and the office, warehouse, and storage buildings in the rear would be demolished. The associated entitlements are a Special Development Permit and Tentative Map (#2021-7826), which will be considered by the Planning Commission tentatively scheduled on May 22, 2023.

Sunnyvale Municipal Code (SMC) Section 19.96.030(g) states that the Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) is required to review all applications for permits regarding heritage resources that involve changing use, exterior alteration, or demolition. All related environmental documentation shall also be reviewed. Therefore, the HPC's role in the project is to make a decision on the proposed removal of 148 Crescent Avenue from the Heritage Resource Inventory and evaluate the proposed exterior alterations to the heritage resource to remain at 156 Crescent Avenue. The Planning Commission will make a decision on the overall townhome project with retention of the heritage resource at 156 Crescent Avenue.

See Attachment 1 for a map of the vicinity and mailing area for notices and Attachment 4 for the proposed project plans.

The Historical Resource Evaluation conducted by TreanorHL (Attachment 6) and a Peer Review Memorandum prepared by Page & Turnbull (Attachment 7) provide overviews of the historic qualities of the project site including the houses. Attached to the Historic Resource Evaluation report are Primary Record for the State of California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR 523A) forms that provide detailed architectural descriptions, historical background and context, and historic evaluations. TreanorHL also conducted a compliance review of the project with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (Attachment 8). The following staff report sections provide brief highlights from the DPR documents and other supplemental reports provided by the applicant.

Background

The area was originally developed as part of the Easter Gables subdivision plotted with narrow deep lots approximately one acre in size with bungalows at the front and poultry buildings and agricultural areas in the rear. The house at 156 Crescent Avenue was constructed in 1927 as a Craftsman-style bungalow. Tony and Elvira Parish operated the Parish Egg Basket, an egg retail business, at the site from the 1940s to the late 1960s. The Ranch-style house at 148 Crescent Avenue was constructed in 1953 and was expanded with a two-story rear addition in 1964. Rocco Furia, son of the Parish's, resided at this house with his family. The properties were under the ownership of the Parish-Furia families until the applicant purchased the properties in 2022.

The properties were included on the Sunnyvale Heritage Resource Inventory in 1979 as the "Crescent Avenue Streetscape". There were 10 bungalows identified at the time and over the years, some of the properties have been redeveloped with single-family and multi-family homes. Only four bungalows remain including the homes at 148 and 156 Crescent Avenue.

EXISTING POLICY

The proposed project is consistent with the purposes of the Heritage Preservation Ordinance. Resource Alteration Permit findings are included in Attachment 2.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The Class 32 Categorical Exemption relieves this project from California Environmental Quality Act

(CEQA) provisions. Class 32 Categorical Exemptions include in-fill developments that are:

- Consistent with the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance;
- Within city limits on sites that are no more than five acres;
- Not on sites that include habitats for endangered, rare or threatened species;
- Not having a significant effect on traffic, noise, air quality or water quality; and
- On sites that are adequately served by utilities and public services.

DISCUSSION

Present Site Conditions

The project site is located mid-block on the south side of Crescent Avenue between Manet Drive and Sunnyvale Saratoga Road, a six-lane Class I arterial street. The site is surrounded by two- to three-story multi-family developments and a duplex. The 148 Crescent Avenue site is a 6,450-square foot rectangular lot. The 156 Crescent Avenue site is 30,942 square feet and extends deeper beyond the front parcel (148 Crescent Avenue). The combined site is currently developed with two single-family homes, a detached garage with a patio cover, three accessory structures, a 5,800-square foot cold storage warehouse, surface parking, and landscaping.

Proposal

The proposed project includes the following:

1. 148 Crescent Avenue: The historical evaluation revealed that the Ranch-style house constructed in 1953 is ineligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places and the California Register of Historic Resources under any evaluation criteria, such as association with significant events or persons, or informational potential. The house has been modified and does not retain distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction. The project proposes to delist the house and property from the Historic Resource Inventory, and demolish the house, detached garage, and patio cover.
2. 156 Crescent Avenue: The historical evaluation revealed that the Craftsman-style house constructed in 1927 is individually eligible for listing on the National Register and California Register under Criterion C/3 due to the year of construction and the physical integrity of the house conveying the period of significance. None of the accessory structures or warehouse are eligible. The project proposes to retain the house with plans for interior remodeling, and minor exterior improvements such as repairs and replacements of siding and windows, and painting.
3. Townhouse Development: The two lots will be combined for the development of 18 townhouse-style condominiums. The existing accessory structures and warehouses will be demolished.

Site Layout

The lot is narrow and deep measuring 120 feet wide at the street and 230 feet in length. The house at 156 Crescent Avenue will be retained at its current location. One three-story building with 10 units will be located on the west side and another three-story building with eight units will be located on the east side. A single driveway access is proposed from Crescent Avenue with five guest parking spaces, a small open amenity space, bicycle racks and mailboxes located at the south end.

Architecture

The house at 156 Crescent Avenue is a surviving example of the bungalows constructed as part of the Easter Gables subdivision. The 1,062-square foot rectangular house was constructed by H. A. Iverson and characterized by Craftsman-style details such as the front porch with square columns, exposed roof rafters, deep eaves with triangular braces, and half-hipped gable ends on the roof, and horizontal siding. The project proposes minor exterior improvements such as repairs and replacement of siding, windows, and painting which will not alter the character defining features of the historic house.

The proposed townhouses are designed to utilize and incorporate some of the above-listed Craftsman-style architectural elements in material, colors, and form to accompany the heritage resource. However, the design distinguishes itself from the house and does not physically impact the character-defining features of the house. (See Attachment 5 for the Color Board).

The historic evaluation, along with the peer review, found that the proposed exterior modifications to the heritage resource house is substantially compatible with the *Secretary of the Interior's Rehabilitation Standards for the Treatment of Historic Resources*. The evaluation concludes that the proposed development will provide a new backdrop to the existing house and will not impact the character-defining features or integrity of the heritage resource. The proposed designs complement the house without mirroring all of the architectural features.

Neighborhood Impacts and Compatibility

The action under consideration by the Heritage Preservation Commission is a Resource Alteration Permit for the delisting of the adopted Sunnyvale Cultural Resource and modification to accept a reduced site area with the proposed development and determine the appropriateness for rehabilitation plans for the heritage resource house.

The applicant proposes to develop 18 townhouses on the site, which will be reviewed by the Planning Commission for consistency with the Zoning Code. This type of redevelopment has been anticipated in the City's General Plan and Zoning since the site was zoned to allow for medium density residences. If redeveloped, the site will no longer provide any appearance of its former use as a poultry farm. The house at 156 Crescent Avenue will maintain a visible presence from street view and the community will continue to enjoy a heritage resource in an improved condition. The demolition of the existing home at 148 Crescent Avenue will not be impactful because it does not exhibit any significant characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction appropriate for preservation.

The proposed townhouse buildings are three stories at 35 feet in height. The project site is surrounded by multi-family developments which are similar in height. The senior apartment complex to the west is also three stories at 40 feet in height and the condominium development to the east is also three stories at 35 feet in height. Sufficient setbacks and landscaping will be maintained around the heritage resource house to preserve integrity.

A neighborhood outreach meeting was held on December 7, 2022. Five members of the public attended the meeting and expressed support of the project. Questions related to construction schedule, setbacks and availability of Below Market Rate units were raised.

Fiscal Impact

No fiscal impacts other than normal fees and taxes are expected.

Public Contact

587 notices were sent to surrounding property owners and residents within 1,000 feet of the subject site in addition to standard noticing practices, including advertisement in the Mercury News and on-site posting. As of the time of staff report production, staff has not received any letters or calls from the public.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve the Resource Alteration Permit based on the Findings in Attachment 2 and subject to the Conditions of Approval in Attachment 3.
2. Approve the Resource Alteration Permit with modified conditions.
3. Deny the Resource Alteration Permit and provide direction to staff and the applicant where changes should be made.

RECOMMENDATION

Alternative 1: Approve the Resource Alteration Permit based on the Findings in Attachment 2 and subject to the Conditions of Approval in Attachment 3.

Prepared by: Momo Ishijima, Senior Planner

Approved by: George Schroeder, Principal Planner

ATTACHMENTS

1. Vicinity and Noticing Map
2. Recommended Findings
3. Recommended Conditions of Approval
4. Site and Architectural Plans
5. Color Board
6. Historical Evaluation by TreanorHL
7. Peer Review by Page & Turnbull
8. Secretary of the Interior Standards Compliance Review by TreanorHL
9. CEQA Findings