



MINUTES HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Special Meeting
7:00 p.m., Monday, December 5, 2005
Los Altos Community Meeting Chambers
One North San Antonio Road, Los Altos, California 94022

CALL TO ORDER

Chair DREWES called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chair DREWES, Vice Chair GIRDLEY, Commissioners BLAKE, and FOERSTER

Absent: Commissioners DUREKAS, HAMBLIN, SCHINK

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Commissioner FOERSTER, seconded by Commissioner GIRDLEY, to adopt the October 24, 2005 meeting minutes.

The motion passed by a 4-0 vote.

PUBLIC COMMENT

John Baer expressed his concern about historic homes being demolished. He feels homes unique to Los Altos should be retained. He also felt there should be more notice of homes on the HRI that are proposed to be demolished and that the issue should be included on the agenda of the special meeting with the City Council. Mr. Baer suggested that a notice be placed in the paper when the Historic Commission is considering demolition of homes on the HRI. He further recommended that the cost to appeal the demolition of homes on the HRI was too high and should be reduced.

DISCUSSION AND PUBLIC INTEREST ITEMS

1. **121 Pepper Drive:** Presentation by Steve Aced regarding consideration to include the property in the Historic Resources Inventory.

The home is a Monterey Colonial. Steve Aced, a local designer, discussed the evolution of the Monterey Colonial architecture. Some of the characteristics of this style include: simply balcony posts, a second floor balcony along the front of the home that cantilevers over the first floor, simple building form (often L-shaped), low pitched roof, stucco on the first floor with wood on the second, glass doors on the balcony and symmetrical window patterns.

Mr. Aced also commented on the rating sheet prepared by Chair DREWES. Since there are few examples of this style of architecture in Los Altos, Mr. Aced compared it to similar homes in Palo Alto. He felt the style would score between 10 and 20. The score for design might increase if it is determined that Sylvester Iron Works, a prominent local company, did the ironwork. He could not find information on the architect/builder but indicated that the information might be available at the County offices. If Sylvester Iron Works or Batchholder worked on the home, the score might

increase. He felt the exterior was in excellent condition. He also noted that the landscaping on the site is consistent with this style of architecture. The home has been altered along the back, but the alteration could be removed to restore the home to its original style.

Bob Bridger, the homeowner, spoke. He stated that they have no objection to putting the home on the HRI, but they would like to make alterations in the future and want to retain the character of the home.

Abigail Aherns supported retaining the home.

John Baer supported retaining the home.

All of the Commissioners present supported retaining the home and would like to see it on the inventory. Commissioner FOERSTER noted that while he would like to see it on the HRI, he didn't think it would receive landmark status.

Mr. Aced agreed to review the analysis prepared by Chair DREWES and update the form with additional information about the style of architecture and the home at 121 Pepper Street. He also agreed to participate in preparing a score for the full Commission to consider at a future meeting.

- 2. 571 Cherry Avenue:** Consideration of a request from the property owner at 571 Cherry Avenue to discuss the property's HRI ranking and eligibility to participate in the Mills Act.

Commissioner FOERSTER mentioned he spoke with the new homeowner, who could not attend the meeting, but wants input from the Commission about increasing the score of the home and potentially participating in the Mills Act. Commissioner FOERSTER suggested that a Commissioner should meet with the owner to discuss the home and schedule it for a future meeting for the Commission as a whole to discuss.

Abigail Aherns mentioned the owner has the original blueprints, which was prepared by a prominent architect.

Following discussion, it was agreed that Commissioners DREWES and GIRDLEY would meet with the owner and review the score for the home and prepare a report for the January meeting.

- 3. Historic Resources Inventory Update:** Discussion of the list of potential properties to review as part of a possible update to the inventory.

Steve Aced provided background on how the HRI was established. Consultants prepared most of the evaluations. Mr. Aced and Mark Sandoval, who are both local architects and were on the Historic Commission at that time, prepared the recommended scores for the full Commission to consider. To develop the score for architecture and design, the homes were grouped by architectural type and compared to one another. When there were only a couple of homes with a particular style, the score was compared to other homes styles that were in similar condition. Mr. Aced agreed to help score the home at 121 Pepper and it was suggested to contact Mr. Sandoval to see if he would assist.

4. **Discussion items for meeting with City Council:** Consider items to include on the agenda for the Historical Commission/City Council study meeting on December 13.

The Commission agreed to discuss the following with the Council:

- Status Report
- Potential reduction in appeal fee for homes on the HRI
- Updating the HRI and possible Packard Grant proposal
- Notification regarding demolition of homes on the HRI

5. **Annual Report:** Discuss preparation of the annual report.

Commissioner DREWES will prepare the annual report for discussion with the City Council on December 13.

6. **Letter to Town Crier:** Discuss preparing a letter to the Town Crier recognizing their recent series of articles regarding historic homes.

Approved sending Chair DREWES letter to the Town Crier.

7. **Council Assignments:** Assign Commission members to attend 2006 City Council meetings.

The Commission accepted the assignments prepared by staff.

8. **December 26 meeting:** Cancellation of the December 26 meeting.

CHAIR'S REPORT

None

CORRESPONDENCE

None

COMMISSION REPORTS AND DIRECTION ON FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

121 Pepper Drive and 571 Cherry Avenue would be placed on the agenda if they are ready in time.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair DREWES adjourned the meeting at 9:45 p.m.

Curtis Banks, Senior Planner
Staff Liaison to the Historical Commission