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I agree with the consultant that neighborhood has been so completely redeveloped over the years with strip-commercial properties that the 'context' of the home is lost. But knowing the history of development of the vernacular Craftsman style in Santa Clara (we have a large collection of 1900 to 1920s vernacular Craftsman), I disagree that this building would not be eligible for listing were it not located at some other site. It has all the parts, or character-defining features of a vernacular Craftsman common to many other homes in our town.

Unfortunately, since it is now engulfed with commercial development and in neglected condition this has become the wrong house, at the wrong location, at the wrong time. The OHP asks evaluators to comment on "Context" or "Setting". This report discusses the dramatic changes to the properties adjacent to this historic house, and to the larger neighborhood of this block and the development of the El Camino itself. So it is clear that these changes are so dramatic that "Context" is gone.

I say this because, even though Staff is only asking you to comment on whether or not the building is eligible for listing, it is your duty as the HLC to voice your thoughts on any proposed demolition of any building being evaluated under the City's criteria from the Preservation Ordinance - particularly one that is clearly eligible for listing.

However, before demolishing the entire building and having all of it end up in the landfill, the developer could offer the important character-defining features, as called out in the consultant's report (most notably the windows and their trim) to any salvage companies still in operation in the Bay area. This includes Urban Ore, Sunrise Salvage, and others in the Berkeley/Oakland area.

These professionals could come in and strip out these valuable materials and then local homeowners (such as the owners of the proposal that was just before you - 783 Park Court) could buy these parts and utilize them in their own rehabilitation and restoration projects in town. This is not financially infeasible for the developer to do. Other towns (such as Palo Alto) have achieved this as official programs, but it requires a cooperative effort between the Commission, Staff and Council. Meanwhile the Commission could at least voice its support for having this happen on an individual basis on this particular project.

And finally, before any historic structure can be demolished (at least in all the jurisdictions I work in) some level of photodocumentation must be filed with one or more local archives. The National Register of Historic Places has recently published new requirements for photodocumentation that allows 35mm digital photographs of a certain size and quality to be created for such documentation of minor buildings such as this. See their website for more details. This is much, much cheaper than full-blown documentation according to the Library of Congress standards.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. I suggest the Commission find that, despite its deteriorated condition, the integrity of the historic character-defining features remains evident enough for listing in the HRI.
2. Further, I recommend that the Commission find demolition of this historic structure to be acceptable only if the historically important windows and window trim, front porch columns, and any other salvageable, character-defining features be salvaged by the developer and either sold to a Bay area salvage company or advertised for a period of time to Santa Clara residents.
3. And a level of photodocumentation of the structure, acceptable to the Commission, be performed and filed with local archives such as the Santa Clara Library.

Volunteer Architectural Advisor to the HLC  
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