



Agenda Report

25-361

Agenda Date: 4/3/2025

REPORT TO HISTORICAL AND LANDMARKS COMMISSION

SUBJECT

PUBLIC HEARING: Consideration of a Historical Preservation Agreement (Mills Act Contract) (File No. PLN25-00085) for 1111 Harrison Street

BACKGROUND

Property owners Steven and Katherine Reeber filed a Historical Preservation Agreement (Mills Act Contract) (File No. PLN25-00085) request for the property located at 1111 Harrison Street. Enacted in 1972, the California Mills Act legislation grants participating local governments the authority to enter into contracts with owners of qualified historic properties who actively participate in the restoration and maintenance of their historic properties while receiving property tax relief. Santa Clara participates in the Mills Act Program. A requirement of the Mills Act Contract is that the building must be a qualified structure, listed on either a local, State, or National register. The subject site is currently listed on the City's Historic Resource Inventory (HRI).

The subject property is an approximate 7,414 square-foot lot located on the corner of Harrison Street and Main Street (See Attachment 2 for vicinity map). Constructed in 1892, the existing residence on the property is a 1,991 square-foot house designed in the West Coast Stick variety of the Stick architectural style. The structure is set back from the street allowing for a cultivated lawn, ornamental shrubs, and concrete walkways to and from the house. The West Coast Stick style is a transitional style from the preceding Gothic Revival to the subsequent Queen Anne.

The property owners submitted the requisite application, including an updated historic survey (Department of Parks and Recreation DPR 523A Form) of the property (Attachment 2), a Statement of Justification for the request (Attachment 4), and a 10-Year Restoration and Maintenance Plan for evaluation of the proposed workplan to restore, rehabilitate, and maintain the property (Attachment 5).

The Historical and Landmarks Commission (HLC) provides Mills Act Contract recommendations to the City Council for their final determination. Approved contracts are executed between the City and the property owner and recorded with the County for a minimum ten-year term. Contracts are automatically renewed each year and are transferred to new owners when the property is sold.

If approved, this would be the first Mills Act Contract for this calendar year, where 10 are permitted.

DISCUSSION

A Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) 523A Form was prepared by Lorie Garcia of Beyond Buildings on August 28, 2024, assessing the historical significance of the property based on National and State Register criteria and the City's local criteria for significance. The evaluator found that the structure at 1111 Harrison Street is well maintained and that the design elements that comprise the architectural integrity of the structure have not been diminished. The evaluator concluded that the property continues to retain enough of its historic character and appearance to be recognizable as a historic resource on the City's HRI.

The property owners submitted a Statement of Justification and 10-Year Plan for restoration and maintenance of the property. The Restoration and Maintenance Plan includes retrofitting or replacing the existing brick foundation along with landscaping modifications to improve drainage, repair of the exterior siding, damaged trim, and exterior paint, updating the HVAC system, and window restoration. The property owners

acknowledge that some of the work may overlap as necessary to further the improvement plan. The property owners will obtain Significant Property Alteration permits for the work described in the Restoration and Maintenance Plan as required by the Historic Preservation Ordinance.

Staff finds that the work proposed in the 10-Year Restoration and Maintenance Plan adheres to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (Attachment 3). The proposed improvements, and the owner's statement of justification, support the preservation, protection, and maintenance of a locally designated significant structure.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The Mills Act Program is exempt from CEQA environmental review requirements per CEQA Section 15061(b)(3). The activity is covered by the general rule that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment.

PUBLIC CONTACT

No public notice is required for a Mills Act Contract and no public inquiries have been made regarding the project.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Historical and Landmarks Commission determine the project to be exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Section 1561(b)(3) and find that the Mills Act Application and associated 10-Year Plan for restoration and maintenance accomplish the intent of preserving and maintaining the historical significance of the property; and therefore, recommend City Council approval of a Mills Act Contract, and the adoption of a 10-Year Restoration and Maintenance Plan associated with the Historical Preservation Agreement for the property located at 1111 Harrison Street.

Prepared by: Daniel Sobczak, Associate Planner

Reviewed by: Rebecca Bustos, Principal Planner

Approved by: Lesley Xavier, Planning Manager

ATTACHMENTS

1. Legal Property Description
2. Historic Survey (DPR 523A Form)
3. Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation
4. Statement of Justification
5. 10-Year Restoration and Maintenance Plan
6. Draft Historic Property Preservation Agreement (Mills Act Contract)