



City of Santa Clara

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Agenda Report

22-1409

Agenda Date: 5/4/2023

REPORT TO HISTORICAL AND LANDMARKS COMMISSION

SUBJECT

Consideration of a Major Significant Property Alteration Permit for Additions and Renovations to a Historic Property Located at 4120 Bassett Street (CEQA: Categorical Exemption, 15301(e)(2) - Existing Facilities and 15331- Historical Resource Restoration / Rehabilitation)

BACKGROUND

The subject property is listed as a historic resource on the City's Historical Resources Inventory (HRI) and designated the Nora B. & James R. Cutting Residence. It is a 7,504 square-foot property with a two-story Neoclassic Rowhouse Revival single-family residence constructed in 1905-1906, although it is listed on the inventory as a Colonial Revival Cottage. The historic resource neighbors four other historic homes constructed between 1906 and 1920 that are listed on the HRI.

The existing residence has a partial subgrade basement with 1,030 square feet of unconditioned floor space. The main floor has an 84 square foot covered patio entry, 1,048 square feet of first floor living area with two bedrooms, one bathroom, and attached rear sunroom and outdoor deck. A 678 square foot unfinished attic is located on the second floor and is used for storage. Gross floor area of the structure is 2,840 square feet. The enclosed sunroom and redwood deck at the rear of the home and the concrete stairway leading to the front porch entry are not original to the home and it is not known when they were added. A 401 square-foot detached garage and a 125 square-foot detached accessory building are located to the rear of the residence. Dates for construction of these accessory buildings are also unknown.

The property owner is proposing to expand and convert the basement into an accessory dwelling unit (ADU); remodel and expand the main floor and convert the attic into living area; demolish the non-historic rear patio and stairway to construct a larger outdoor deck; and replace the concrete front stairs with wood stairs to compliment the home's architecture.

In accordance with the Historic Preservation Ordinance, the project is before the Historical and Landmarks Commission for a recommendation to the Planning Commission on the proposed significant property alteration to the historic residence. A Historic Resource Survey (DPR 523) of the property and a Historic Resources Design Review of the proposed project were prepared by Lorie Garcia of Beyond Buildings, which are provided as Attachments 1 and 2 respectively.

DISCUSSION

The proposed project is the combination of restoration and rehabilitation of a historic residence involving interior and exterior alterations and new construction to provide additional living area and functional use of the home. The proposal is to expand the existing basement and convert 818 square feet of the existing basement into a two bedroom and one-bathroom ADU with exterior access and a 116 square foot mechanical room. The remaining basement floor area (96 square feet) is left as crawl

space. The proposal includes demolition of the attached sunroom and raised deck at the rear of the residence to construct 441 square feet of additional living area, an open outdoor porch, and stairway. The rear addition and interior remodel provide 1,489 square feet of living area with three bedrooms, two bathrooms and stairway to the attic. A 539 square-foot addition to the attic is proposed along with conversion of the storage space to provide expanded living area with an open floor plan and full bathroom. The result is a three-bedroom, three-bathroom residence with 2,167 square feet of living area and an 818 square-foot one-bedroom, one-bathroom ADU within the historic structure. The gross floor area of the structure is 3,281 square feet.

The proposal includes selective removal and relocation of existing windows, salvage of the original siding and trim where removed for reuse, addition of an angled bay window on the main floor of the south/side elevation, and installation of new and preserved double hung windows across the building elevations. The proposal also includes the construction of a new side entry and stairwell to the ADU on the south/side building elevation and new attic dormers with hipped composition shingle roofs and double hung windows on the southside and northside elevations. The attic addition is proposed at a height lower than the ridge of existing roofline and includes a rear facing dormer with gable roof end and double hung windows, and composition shingle roof to match existing.

Analysis

The Historic Resources Design Review, prepared by Lorie Garcia of Beyond Buildings (Attachment 2), examines the proposed exterior alterations for historic compatibility with the original architectural design of the home and its compliance with the Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation. The evaluation begins with an assessment of existing conditions and finds that the home has been well maintained and is in good condition. It notes that with the exception of the prior sunroom addition, rear deck and stairway construction, original window replacement with noise reducing double hung windows (provided as part of the San Jose Airport Expansion Project) and replacement of the original terraced stoops with concrete stairs and pipe railings, the structure appears to have had minimal exterior changes since its construction in 1905-1906. It is noted as a fine example of the Bay Area's Neoclassical Rowhouse architecture and contributing resource to "Agnew Village" - a potentially eligible Historic District located in the northern portion of Santa Clara.

The evaluation proceeds with an analysis of the proposed alterations in relation to the Standards of Rehabilitation and concludes that the project would allow efficient contemporary use of the residence while preserving the character defining features of Neoclassic Row House architecture for its period of construction. As stated in the report:

"Included in the historic home's character defining features are its massing, its squared off plan with a rectangular footprint, its hipped roof form with the hipped roof punctuated by a small hip-roofed dormer that projects from the front-facing roof plane, the full-height, angled bay projecting from its front façade, its porch, which is integrated fully into the overall design rather than built as a separate attachment, its pattern of large, rectangular, vertically oriented, 1-over-1 double hung windows and its exterior cladding that consists of narrow shiplap siding above the water table and rows of wide horizontal siding, all of which represent the essential historic and architectural features and elements of the Neoclassic property."

The project retains the historic residential use of the property. The proposed rear living area additions, attic roof plane extension, and dormers are distinct from the original structure and are compatible with the size, scale, and massing of the historic architecture. The addition of an angled

bay window on the southside elevation is compatible with Neoclassical Rowhouse architecture. A new porch and stairway are proposed along the rear elevation of the living area additions that would not be visible from the street frontage nor impact the historic integrity of the original building architecture. Demolition of the exiting concrete stairs at the front of the home and new construction of terraced stoops in proportion to the original stairs are proposed using the exterior lap siding salvaged during construction of the rear additions and angled bay window.

The project plans include a detailed historic preservation treatment plan on Sheet HP1.0 of the Development Plan (Attachment 3) to guide the property owner and contractor in the proper techniques for construction of the addition and alterations according to the Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The proposed project is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per CEQA Guidelines Exemption Sections 15301(e)(2)-Existing Facilities and 15331-Historical Resource Restoration / Rehabilitation), in that the project involves an addition and renovations of a historic single-family residence.

PUBLIC CONTACT

On April 20, 2023, a notice of public hearing of this item was posted in three conspicuous locations within 300 feet of the project site and mailed to property owners within 300 of the project site.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Historical and Landmarks Commission find that based upon the analysis and findings of the historical evaluation, the Commission forward a recommendation of approval for issuance of a Major Significant Property Alteration Permit to the Planning Commission for the proposed additions and renovations to the historic residence located at 4120 Bassett Street, subject to the Historic Preservation Treatment Plan.

Prepared by: Debby Fernandez, Associate Planner

Reviewed by: Rebecca Bustos, Historical and Landmarks Commission Liaison

Approved by: Lesley Xavier, Planning Manager

ATTACHMENTS

1. Historic Resource Survey (DPR 523A)
2. SIS Evaluation
3. Development Plans