REPORT TO HISTORICAL AND LANDMARK COMMISSION

SUBJECT

Public Hearing: Consideration of HLC Referral for projects near Historical Resource Inventory for the property located at 655 Jefferson Street

BACKGROUND

The existing single-story two-bedroom two-bathroom house was built on 1905 on a 5,000 square feet lot. The existing house is 1,414 square feet three-bedroom three-bathroom with an attached 278 square feet one-car garage. The applicant is proposing to demolish the third bedroom and the third bathroom previous addition at the back of the house that has no record of the Building Permit. A 694 square feet one-story addition to the back of the house to convert into a four-bedroom four-bathroom house with an existing one-car garage is proposed.

The applicant requests approval of a Variance to the Planning Commission to the 40% lot coverage requirement of the R1-6L to allow 43.2% lot coverage and to the covered parking requirement of the R1-6L Single Family Zoning District in order to move forward with a proposed 694 square feet addition to the rear of the existing house with one-car garage.

The project requires Planning Commission review and Architectural Committee review for the variance request. The property is located adjacent to two Mills Act properties to the north and south of the project site (1490 Santa Clara Street and 653 Jefferson Street). If the project is located within 200 feet of an HRI property, then prior to submitting the application to the Planning Commission and Architectural Committee, the application shall be referred to Historical and Landmark Commission (HLC) for recommendation. The HLC shall review the project for neighborhood compatibility and consistency with the City's Design Guidelines and make a recommendation to the Planning Commission.

DISCUSSION

The property was originally developed with a house and an attached one-car garage in 1905, predating the City's requirement for two covered parking spaces pursuant to Section 18.12.120(a) of the Santa Clara City Code (SCCC).

The application proposes 694 square feet addition to allow four-bedroom four-bathroom residence with an existing attached one-car garage. Pursuant to the General Plan, an expansion to an existing house with one-car garage beyond three bedrooms or 500 square feet triggers the requirement for a covered two-car garage.

Consistency with General Plan:

The project site has a General Plan land use designation of Very Low Density Residential. This designation is intended for residential densities up to 10 units per acre and is typically represented in

detached single-family neighborhoods. The proposed project to maintain an existing one-car garage is not consistent with following:

> General Plan Implementation Action 4: One- and Two-Story Additions: Santa Clara's zoning regulations for single family homes are liberal enough that virtually every home can be added onto. The major exception is when older homes with only a one car garage are expanded beyond three bedrooms or by another 500 square feet. This triggers a two-car covered parking requirement. However, parking variances are usually granted when the house layout makes a two-car garage impossible.

Zoning Conformance:
The proposal is subject to the parking requirements of the Zoning Code unless a variance is granted by the Planning Commission. Pursuant to Chapter 18.108 of the City's Zoning Ordinance, where practical difficulties, unnecessary hardships and effects inconsistent with the general purposes of the Zoning Code may result from the strict application of certain provisions, variances may be granted. However, granting of a variance would require making the findings in SCCC Section 18.108.040, including that there are unusual conditions applying to the land or building which do not apply generally in the same district.

The subject property is narrow, measuring 40 feet in width, where properties in R1-6L zoning district are required to be at least 60 feet in width. However, the property is located in a residential neighborhood originally constructed mostly with one-story homes on narrower lots with one-car garages. Therefore, there are no unusual conditions applying to the property. Allowing one covered parking would be an exception as compared to the other single family homes in the R1-6L zone, similarly situated in the neighborhood and in the City.

The addition would result in 43.2% lot coverage whereas 40% lot coverage is the maximum allowed. A Variance is required in order to allow 43.2% lot coverage. The subject property's lot size is five thousand (5,000) square feet, where the minimum lot area for R1-6L zoning district is six thousand (6,000) square feet. However, the property is located in a residential neighborhood with a mix of lot sizes including lots smaller than 6,000 square feet. Therefore, there are no unusual conditions applying to this property.

Impacts to the Integrity of Nearby Listed Properties:
The City of Santa Clara Historic Preservation Ordinance formally establishes procedures for properties that are listed on the City's HRI or located within 200 feet of these properties. As this property is adjacent to two Mills Act properties and involves exterior alterations, it is a historic preservation goal of the City to protect historic resources from incompatible development and to evaluate potential negative effects on the historic integrity of the resource or its historic context.

Conclusion:
The property is located in a residential neighborhood originally constructed with one-story homes on narrower lots with attached one-car garages. Therefore, the proposed project does not meet the purpose and intent of the Zoning Code in that there are no unusual conditions applying to the land or building that do not apply generally in the same district.

The proposed addition is at the back of the property and with the location of the addition, there is no impact to the integrity of the nearby HRI properties. However, the project expansion is not typical for

the area or context, being within an historical area, and has no unusual conditions applying to this property. Therefore, staff does not support for the Variance request.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The scope of the proposed addition is exempt from the CEQA environmental review requirements per CEQA Section 15301, Class 1 Existing Facilities.

PUBLIC CONTACT

The notice of public meeting for this item was posted at three locations within 300 feet of the project site and was mailed to property owners within 300 feet of the project site. No public comments have been received at the time of preparation of this report.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation that the Historical and Landmarks Commission finds that the proposed project would not adversely impact the integrity of the listed resources in the vicinity of the project site, but has some limited historic context implications due to the size of the proposed addition.

Recommendation to the Planning Commission that there are no unusual conditions applying to this property and deny the Variance request.

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Approved by: Gloria Sciara, Development Review Officer

ATTACHMENTS

1. Project Data Sheet
2. Development Plans
3. Letter of Justification

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