

PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

STAFF REPORT

DATE: MAY 7, 2019

TO: HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

FROM: DAVID M. REYES, DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS – RELOCATION OF A CITY-OWNED HISTORIC RESOURCE FROM 19 EAST ORANGE GROVE BOULEVARD TO 1655 (FORMERLY ADDRESSED AS 1661) NORTH FAIR OAKS AVENUE— FRANK DECKER HOUSE

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Find that the proposed project is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Article 19 Section 15331 (Class 31, Historical Resource Restoration/Rehabilitation). Class 31 consists of projects limited to the maintenance, repair, stabilization, rehabilitation, restoration, preservation, conservation or reconstruction of historical resources. This project is the relocation of a city-owned locally designated historic resource;
2. Find that the relocation of the historic resource would not cause a significant adverse effect in that the proposed relocation will preserve all character-defining features and that the new site for the structure is on a privately owned residential parcel and would, therefore, not create a substantial adverse change in the significance of the house or historic designation status with regard to the surrounding environment or setting;
3. Find that no protected native, specimen, or landmark trees under the tree protection ordinance (Section 8.52 of the Pasadena Municipal Code (PMC)) will be removed as part of this relocation.
4. Find that the project complies with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings; and
5. Approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the relocation of the Frank Decker House, as illustrated in Attachment A, subject to the following conditions, which shall be subject to staff review and approval prior to issuance of a building permit:

Conditions:

1. Provide a final preservation plan with specific details as to the manner in which the building will be protected during the relocation to ensure the overall project meets the Secretary of the Interior Standards.
2. An historic preservation architect shall be involved in each aspect of the relocation, including the planning and preparation for the structure's move and during the building moving process in order to provide specific guidance on the relocation to ensure the ultimate preservation of the resource. A pre-moving meeting shall take place with the historic preservation specialist, City representatives and the contractor so that all parties understand the totality of the relocation.
3. Details of the manner in which the building envelope will be secured against moisture penetration shall be provided and a maintenance monitoring program shall be in place once the building is situated on its new foundation, and shall adhere to the Secretary of the Interior's Technical Preservation Brief 31 regarding structural stabilization, vandalism reduction, building ventilation, and the development of a maintenance monitoring plan. The rehabilitation of the house shall be undertaken as soon as possible following its relocation to avoid further deterioration of the house.
4. Digital photography of the exterior and interior of the building shall be taken in advance of the building move and it would be recommended that a video of the move be taken as well.
5. Provide a final rehabilitation plan for the existing building consisting of detailed construction drawings and specifications necessary in order to assure appropriate treatment and inclusion as an integral component of the new development. This plan shall be provided to staff for review and approval upon relocation of the resource and prior to the commencement of any rehabilitation work.
6. This project will be subject to ongoing and final construction (on-site) inspections for review and approval of project progress by the Design and Historic Preservation Section staff. On-site inspection helps to ensure the project is undertaken as indicated on all plans and that all project requirements are as approved by the commission. Projects that do not receive on site approval during the construction process may be delayed in obtaining a Certificate of Occupancy from the Building Department until all architectural/design issues are resolved. At a minimum, staff inspections shall be required at the time that the house is successfully secured to its new foundation as well as at approximately the 50% and 75% completion stages of rehabilitation.

BACKGROUND:

The City Council designated the Frank Decker House, located at 19 East Orange Grove Boulevard, as a historic resource in 1988. It was constructed in 1892, and the two-and-a-half-story wood-frame multi-family residential structure (approximately 3,316 square feet) has an irregular plan and massing. The house is a vernacular example of the Queen Anne style. It features a one-story wrap-around porch with turned-wood posts; wood siding with patterned ornamental shingles in the gable ends; corner boards, and a wide entablature on the second floor; a complex hipped roof with gables on projecting bays; tall window openings with paired or single double-hung sashes with horned stiles; and several ornamental windows (lunette with art

glass, 32-light attic windows). Changes to the building over time have included: a replacement of the foundation and flooring for the wrap-around porch; replacement handrails and entry on the front porch, an enclosed rear porch on the second floor; and the probable loss of some ornamental features (e.g., brackets, roof cresting, finials, pendants, pinnacles; tall ornamented chimneys, colored bordered-glass lights). The house, built by local contractor Richard Woods, was originally used as a single-family residence and later converted to apartments. When the City Council designated it as a landmark in 1988 the building was officially given the name “Decker House” in recognition of two of its early—but not original—occupants Frank (proprietor of a cigar shop) and Anna Decker.

The house was previously located at 760 North Fair Oaks Avenue. Design Review approval was issued in 2015 for its temporary relocation to the adjacent property at 19 East Orange Grove Boulevard in order to allow the construction of an affordable senior housing development (Heritage Square) to commence at the 760 North Fair Oaks Avenue property. The Design Commission reviewed the temporary relocation in conjunction with its review of the design of the new development project.

PROJECT HISTORY:

The proposed relocation of the City-owned Frank Decker House from 19 East Orange Grove Boulevard to a privately-owned parcel to the north at 1655 North Fair Oaks Avenue is part of an affordable housing development known as Decker Court. A Certificate of Appropriateness for this project (relocation) was approved by the Historic Preservation Commission in December of 2016 and the applicant applied for a building permit for the Decker Court affordable housing development in December of 2017. A building permit for the Decker Court project was issued on March 14, 2019. The plans for Decker Court include a building pad and structural plans for the location and rehabilitation of the Decker House. However, during the course of the plan-check process, the approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness for the relocation of the Decker House expired. Therefore, a new Certificate of Appropriateness is required to be issued prior to the house being relocated.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The project is the proposed relocation of the City-owned Frank Decker House from 19 East Orange Grove Boulevard to a privately-owned parcel to the north at 1655 North Fair Oaks Avenue is necessary so that it can be rehabilitated and incorporated into an affordable housing development consisting of nine residential units (including the Decker House) known as Decker Court. A relocation plan has been prepared by Historic Resources Group (Attachment A) and Brandt House and Building Movers have been engaged to perform the relocation. Staff has reviewed the rehabilitation plan and finds that it is consistent with the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

ANALYSIS:

Pursuant to Section 17.62.090.E.3.a, approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness shall be based on the following findings:

- a. *If a project is a demolition or relocation, including demolition in a historic or landmark district, the project will not cause a significant adverse effect as defined in the State CEQA guidelines*

Pursuant to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, relocation of an historical resource may constitute an adverse impact to the resource; however, in situations where relocation is the only feasible alternative to demolition, mitigation measures can be introduced to diminish the effect of the relocation of an historical resource to below a level of significance. The building is moving to a new location that is compatible with the original character, setting and use of the historical resource. The proposed location is very similar in context to the house's original context. The house is currently located in a multi-family residential neighborhood and will be relocated to a multi-family zoned location on the same street to the north of its current location. The surrounding area in the vicinity of the current location of the house has experienced recent growth and has become a higher density residential neighborhood than it was prior to its temporary relocation in 2015. Its proposed permanent location is more similar to the low and medium density residential development that surrounded the house's original location and, as such, the site of the proposed relocation is compatible with the original character and use of its original context. Further, the house will be oriented so that its primary façade and significant remaining character defining features will be immediately visible from the public, and not partially obscured from public view as it currently is.

In addition, pursuant to Title 14, Chapter 3 Section 15064.5.b.2.B of the California Public Resources Code pertaining to determining the significance of impacts to archeological and historical resources, the significance of an historical resource is materially impaired when a project, "Demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics that account for its inclusion in a local register of historical resources."

Further, Title 14, Chapter 3 Section 15064.5.b.3 of the California Public Resources Code goes on to provide the following guidance:

Generally, a project that follows the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings or the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings (1995), Weeks and Grimmer, shall be considered as mitigated to a level of less than a significant impact on the historical resource.

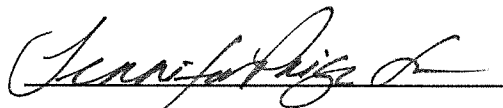
The resource, pursuant to the recommended conditions of approval and the submitted documentation, will be protected and its character-defining features and site conditions preserved and the structure will, therefore, retain its local historic designation. The rehabilitation and relocation plans submitted for this project have identified the extant character defining features that are to be protected during the relocation in order to preserve the integrity of the structure and its local historic designation. The recommend conditions of approval are intended

to insure qualified professionals oversee the relocation process and that the significant character defining features are protected and rehabilitated as part of the proposed development. The conditions of approval are also intended to ensure that the house is not relocated prior to a project being permitted at the receiver site, to reduce the risk of it being relocated, only to further deteriorate.

CONCLUSION:

The project allows for the relocation of a locally designated historic resource on a major vehicular corridor within the City. The resource is to be sited in a similar position as seen historically on a nearby parcel north of its current location and the character defining features have been identified and will be protected as part of the relocation process. A condition of approval has been recommended to ensure the resource will be protected during the moving process and that a historic preservation architect shall be in place to monitor the relocation and ensure a successful outcome. It is also recommended that the staff of the Design and Historic Preservation Section would also monitor the project, as conditioned, to further help assure the success of the building relocation and ultimate rehabilitation of the structure on the new site in conjunction with the new development planned at that location.

Respectfully Submitted,




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Attachment:

- A. Application Submittal, Including the Decker Court Plans, Rehabilitation Plan and Relocation Plan