



PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

STAFF REPORT

DATE: JULY 20, 2021

TO: HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

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

SUBJECT: CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS
MAJOR ALTERATIONS TO A NON-CONTRIBUTING RESOURCE
(BUNGALOW HEAVEN HISTORIC AND LANDMARK DISTRICTS)

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Find that the proposed project is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15303, Class 3, of the CEQA guidelines pertaining to new construction or conversion of small structures such as the proposed fence and garage and Section 15301, Class 1, pertaining to existing facilities such as the existing house, and whether there are no features that distinguish this project from others in the exempt class; therefore, there are no unusual circumstances.
2. Find the removal of a mature protected tree, a *Liquidambar styraciflua* (American sweetgum/Liquid amber) with a DBH of 20" meets finding #4 of the Tree Protection Ordinance (PMC Section 8.52.075.A): *"There is a substantial hardship to the property owner in the enjoyment and use of the real property if the injury or removal of the private tree is not permitted."*
3. Find that the project complies with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings and the Design Guidelines for Historic Districts; and
4. Approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed front yard fence, front porch, exterior alterations, and new garage, and protected tree removal 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 or zoning permit.

Conditions:

1. The porch posts shall be revised so that they appear more substantial, or be revised to a paired porch post design.
2. The proposed fiber cement lap siding and shingles shall have a smooth textured finish.
3. The orientation of the fence pickets shall be revised to vertical pickets.
4. A final color and material palette shall be provided to staff for review and approval prior to submittal of the project for building plan check.
5. This project will be subject to a framing, exterior lathing, and final site inspection (50%, 75%, and 100% inspection points) and sign-off by staff of the Design & Historic Preservation section to ensure that the work plan undertaken, as described above, is as indicated and specified in the decision letter and that all work is performed consistent with the approved plans and the Guidelines for Historic Districts

BACKGROUND:

This 1,107 square-foot, one-story vernacular bungalow was constructed in 1914 by John Keith and is a non-contributor to the Bungalow Heaven Landmark and Historic Districts. The structure is a non-contributor as it has been significantly altered, including the addition of two bedrooms to the front of the house and the construction of a flat-roofed front porch that extends into the carport (in 1954), outside of the period of significance for the Bungalow Heaven Historic and Landmark Districts.

The house is deeply setback into the lot, well behind the front setbacks of the adjacent properties and behind the average setback on the block-face. The most notable features of this house include a cross gabled roof-form, full width street facing gable, horizontal lap siding, vertical gable vents, and decorative eave brackets/outriggers. The flat porch/carport extends across the width of the entire house and across the driveway, and is a simple wooden structure supported by cylindrical steel posts. The landing and walls of the front porch are constructed of brick.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The primary components of the proposed project are described in greater detail below:

Perimeter Fencing

The project includes a proposed 48" tall front yard fence and driveway gate. The design of the fence calls for 4" x 4" redwood posts, spaced 8' on-center, horizontal 1" x 4" wood slats spaced equidistant and a 1" x 5" top rail. The driveway gate would match the design of the fence. The driveway gate will also be motorized and will slide open horizontally.

Garage/Carport:

The existing non-original carport is proposed to be demolished and a new one-story, 355 square-foot garage is proposed to be constructed in the rear yard. The new garage would have a street facing gable, decorative outriggers, fiber cement shingles in the gable end, and fiber cement horizontal lap siding with an eight-inch exposure and corner boards. The garage door would be a standard sized paneled garage door with a top row of simulated divided lights.

Front Porch:

The existing flat-roofed, non-original front porch and brick landing is proposed to be demolished and replaced with a new 167 square-foot front porch. The full width front porch would have a concrete deck, a street facing gable, a 2'8" fascia with decorative 4"x6" outriggers, and fiber cement shingle siding in the gable end. The porch would also have four 21" square smooth stucco clad CMU piers, each with a 3.5" concrete cap. Each pier would support a 7"x 7" square post. Between the piers, a short railing consisting of equidistant vertical wood pickets and top and bottom rails is proposed. A set of three concrete stairs centered on the street facing elevation would lead from the existing grade to the concrete porch deck.

Exterior Siding / Window Replacements

All of the existing windows are proposed to be replaced with vinyl Craftsman style windows with new 5" fiber cement Craftsman style trim. The existing horizontal lap siding on the street facing elevation is also proposed to be replaced with fiber cement lap siding with an 8" exposure with corner boards.

Tree Removal:

One mature Liquidambar styraciflua (American sweetgum/Liquid Amber) with a DBH of 20" is proposed to be removed as part of this project. The trunk of the tree would be approximately 3'6" from the proposed porch, and is six feet from the side yard property line. This tree is protected under the City's Tree Protection Ordinance (PMC Section 8.52.075.A) as it is considered to be within the "front yard" setback.

Rear Addition:

A one-story rear addition and an open deck are also proposed. However, these alterations will not be publicly visible due to the deep setback of the existing primary structure and the location of the existing structures on the adjacent lots. Therefore, they are not subject to this review.

ANALYSIS:

Pursuant to PMC Section 17.62.090, and the Bungalow Heaven Conservation Plan, the proposed exterior façade remodel of a non-contributing structure is a Major Project requiring a Certificate of Appropriateness, with the Historic Preservation Commission serving as the review authority. Pursuant to PMC Section 17.62.090.E.3.b, approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness shall be based on the following finding:

If a project is an alteration or new construction, the project complies with the Secretary's Standards or adopted guidelines based on the Secretary's Standards.

In addition, the Bungalow Heaven Conservation Plan sets forth review guidelines for considering alterations to non-contributing structures. The guidelines are as follows:

- a. *The Commission shall consider an alteration or addition in terms of its relationship to the existing structure and to the appearance of adjacent or other surrounding ("immediate neighborhood") structures in the Landmark District or neighborhood.*
- b. *The design for an addition should always be compatible with its surrounding in terms of mass, materials, and relationship of solids to voids.*
- c. *An addition or alteration should avoid obscuring or damaging historic materials, which may exist on the non-contributing structure.*
- d. *The Commission will encourage (but not require) the retention of existing historic features on houses that could, upon rehabilitation, become contributing to the district.*

The project was reviewed using the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and the Design Guidelines for Historic Districts, which are based on the Secretary's Standards and the above referenced guidelines set forth in the Bungalow Heaven Conservation Plan. The applicable standards and guidelines include:

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

Standard 9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

Design Guidelines for Historic Districts

11.2 A building should fit within the range of yard dimensions seen in the block. The front yard setback should match the established range of adjacent buildings. Where the setbacks are uniform, a building should be placed in general alignment with its neighbors.

- 11.5 Orient the front of a house to the street and clearly identify the front door. A prominent entry will contribute to the “pedestrian-friendly” character of the street. Use a porch element to define the entry. Although some buildings were raised a few feet traditionally, a first floor or entrance that is raised an entire story—to accommodate a garage—is inappropriate.
- 11.6 Design a porch to be similar to those seen historically. A new porch should not visually overwhelm the primary facade. Use materials similar to those seen historically. Wood balustrades and porch posts (sometimes with brick piers) were most common. Concrete porch decking was also a traditional part of a residential porch.
- 11.7 Porch posts or columns should be of a substantial enough size that the porch does not appear to float above the entry. Wood, brick or stone columns are best for most structures in the neighborhood. A stucco finish on the columns may also be considered.
- 11.9 A building should appear similar in mass and scale to that of single family structures seen traditionally in the neighborhood.
- 11.10 A front elevation should appear similar in scale to those seen traditionally in the block. Stepping a building down in height as it approaches smaller structures on adjacent lots is encouraged. Where the immediate context dictates, the front should include a one-story element, such as a porch. A single wall plane should not exceed the typical maximum width as seen in the immediate context.
- 11.18 New materials that are similar to traditional materials may be considered. Alternative materials should appear similar in scale, proportion, texture and finish to those used traditionally. They also should have a proven durability in the Southern California climate.
- 11.19 Roof materials should be composite shingles and convey a scale and texture similar to those used traditionally. Typically, roof materials should be earth tones and have a matte, non-reflective finish. Tile may also be considered on building styles that incorporate this material.
- 11.20 New interpretations of traditional building styles are encouraged. A new design that draws upon the fundamental similarities among historic buildings in the community without copying them is preferred. This will allow them to be seen as products of their own time yet compatible with their historic neighbors. The exact copying or replication of historic styles is discouraged.
- 11.21 Building components should be similar in scale to those used historically.
- 11.24 Windows and doors should be of a traditional size and should be placed in a similar solid-to-void relationship as historic buildings in a district. Windows should be simple in shape, arrangement and detail. Unusually shaped windows, such as triangles and trapezoids may be considered as accents only. The number of different window styles should be limited.

- 11.25 Windows and doors should be finished with trim elements similar to those used traditionally in a district. This trim should have a dimension similar to that used historically.

As conditioned, the proposed design, scale, materials and location of the proposed project, including the garage, front porch, façade alterations and fence are consistent with the applicable standards and guidelines, as well as with the existing site design and massing of the house and the development patterns in the surrounding neighborhood. The project would remove an incompatible, non-original flat-roofed porch and carport and replace them with a more appropriate front porch with Craftsman style details and a compatible detached two-car garage. The open design and height of the proposed front yard fence and driveway gate are also consistent with the contemporary fences in the surrounding context. However, staff recommends several conditions of approval to ensure even greater consistency between the proposed project and the applicable standards and guidelines. Staff recommends a condition of approval that the porch post details be revised to appear more substantial, or that the design be revised to incorporate paired porch posts. Staff also recommends that the design of the fence be revised to include vertical pickets, as the proposed horizontal orientation is a contemporary design that is not found elsewhere in the district. Further, the proposed fiber cement cladding is appropriate for use on a non-contributing resource and it has proven to be an attractive and durable material. However, staff recommends a condition requiring that it have a smooth finish, rather than a faux wood grain. Staff also recommends a condition of approval requiring staff review and approval of a final color palette. A color palette has not yet been developed at this stage. Finally, staff recommends a standard condition requiring a final inspection to ensure the work performed is consistent with this decision.

Pursuant to Section 8.52.075 of the Municipal Code the protected tree (One mature Liquidambar stryaciflua (American sweetgum/Liquid Amber) with a DBH of 20”) may be removed if it meets one of the six findings in the Tree Protection Ordinance (PMC Section 8.52.075.A).

The proposed tree removal meets finding #4: *“There is a substantial hardship to the property owner in the enjoyment and use of the real property if the injury or removal of the private tree is not permitted.”* Due to the unusual circumstance of this non-contributing house being sited, far back on this single-family zoned property (significantly further than any of the surrounding properties) the subject tree is considered to be within the front yard setback area. If not for this unique setback, the tree would be located outside of the required front or side yard setback areas and not be subject to the Tree Protection Ordinance. The location of the existing tree has created a hardship for the applicant as they do not have suitable space that can accommodate replacement trees without impacting underground utilities or the usable yard areas.

CONCLUSION:

Upon implementation of the proposed conditions of approval, the proposed project would be consistent with the applicable design guidelines, be an appropriate design for the house, and be an appropriate and compatible new feature in the Historic and Landmark Districts.

Respectfully Submitted,



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Attachments:

- A. Plans and Photographs