TO: HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: CITY MANAGER DEPARTMENT: PLANNING AND COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT

DATE: APRIL 10, 2006 CMR:186:06

SUBJECT: 449-453 ADDISON AVENUE: RECOMMENDATION FROM THE HISTORIC RESOURCES BOARD AT THE REQUEST OF THE OWNER, MARGO SCHMIDT, TO DESIGNATE A RESIDENTIAL BUILDING TO THE CITY OF PALO ALTO'S HISTORIC INVENTORY IN CATEGORY 2 PURSUANT TO MUNICIPAL CODE CHAPTER 16.49 (HISTORIC PRESERVATION ORDINANCE)

RECOMMENDATION
The Historic Resources Board (HRB) and staff recommend that the City Council grant the owner's request to designate the residential building located at 451-453 Addison Avenue as a significant building in Category 2 of the Historic Inventory. The HRB also recommends designation of the rear residence at 449 Addison Avenue to the Historic Inventory as a Category 4 building.

BACKGROUND
There are two residences on the project site. The cottage at 451-453 Addison Avenue is an example of the Queen Anne style applied to a small residential building. It is a late and simplified example of the Queen Anne style that places more emphasis on the careful arrangement of a few forms than on a profusion of detail. The residence at 449 Addison Avenue was originally a stable and remodeled as a dwelling in 1937. It is understated in style and architectural details.

DISCUSSION
The designation of the Queen Anne cottage to the Historic Inventory in Category 2 is consistent with the focus on architectural significance of the historic categories. The cottage is an outstanding example of the Queen Anne style for the following reasons:

- The front projecting Queen Anne bay may be the strongest such element in the City.
- The delicate horizontal airy character of the porch provides a hospitable scale and a cordial openness, and at the same time the delicacy of the porch enhances the projecting bay’s sense of flight. On the other hand, the horizontal orientation of the porch contrasts dramatically with the vertically oriented bay.
• All the elements of the front façade of the cottage either echo each other (which provides unity), or they contrast with each other in a carefully planned manner (which provides drama).

Although several alterations occurred during the historic period, the cottage has maintained a high degree of architectural integrity during the last 50 years.

The residence at the rear of the property (449 Addison Avenue) has not been altered since it was remodeled as a residence in 1937; however, it does not meet the designation criteria for a Category 2 structure of the Inventory as requested by the applicant due to its limited style and architectural details.

HISTORIC RESOURCES BOARD REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATION

On June 1, 2005 the HRB reviewed the application to designate the residential structures at 449-453 Addison Avenue to the City's Historic Inventory (see Attachment C). Staff gave a presentation and recommended designating the cottage at 451-453 as a Category 2 to the City’s Historic Inventory, affirming that the cottage has a high degree of historic integrity under designation standards of today. Staff did not recommend designation of the rear residence at 449 Addison, a former stable, to the Historic Inventory, explaining that it appears too understated in style and details to meet the designation criteria of any category of the Inventory. The applicant, Margo Schmidt, informed the Board that the buildings on site will be renovated and used as individual residences.

At the meeting, the HRB unanimously voted (4-0-0-3, Bernstein, Makinen, and Kohler absent) to support the staff recommendation for designation of 451-453 Addison as a Category 2 historic building. The Board stated in its motion that the cottage at 451-453 Addison Avenue meets a number of the criteria which are required for a property to be placed on Palo Alto’s Inventory. The property is identified with Frank C. Thiele, an important historic figure in Palo Alto. The house is also representative of the Queen Anne architectural style yet it also represents the beginning of a transition from the Queen Anne style to the Colonial Revival style that occurred in Palo Alto. The cottage was built by local builder, Gus Laumeister, and includes outstanding architectural design, details, materials and craftsmanship. The Board acknowledged that the Category 2 designation would allow some exterior modifications as long as the original character of the building is retained. The Board also recommended designation of the former stable at 449 Addison as a Category 4 building because it is an example of a type of building that was once common but now rare, consistent with one criterion for buildings to be designated.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment B: Historic Resources Board Staff Report of June 1, 2005.