TO: HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: CITY MANAGER DEPARTMENT: PLANNING AND COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT

DATE: SEPTEMBER 18, 2006 CMR:367:06

SUBJECT: 1456 EDGEWOOD DRIVE: RECOMMENDATION FROM THE HISTORIC RESOURCES BOARD TO RECLASSIFY A SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENCE BUILT IN 1866 FROM CATEGORY 3 TO CATEGORY 2 ON THE CITY’S HISTORIC INVENTORY 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 request by Stoecker and Northway Architects, in behalf of Philip and Judith Lavery, the property owners, to reclassify the single-family residential building located at 1456 Edgewood Drive from Category 3 to Category 2 of the City’s Historic Inventory.

BACKGROUND
The residential structure at 1456 Edgewood Drive was originally designated a Category 3 property on the City’s Historic Inventory in 1980 because of its age, condition and association with a first-generation pioneer of the City. Although architecture is the focus of the definition of the Historic Categories in the Historic Preservation Ordinance, the listings of ten other properties on the Inventory are based on history rather than architecture. In 1999, a qualified historic consultant, Architectural Resources Group (ARG), recommended designation of the house as a “Historic Landmark Residence” due to its significant history. In 1999-2000 another state-certified consultant, Dames & Moore, evaluated the property to determine its eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places. Although a determination of eligibility was not made at that time due to restricted access and visibility of the property, the property remains potentially eligible for the National Register.

DISCUSSION
The structure at 1456 Edgewood Drive is a large rambling country house that still retains vestiges of its original rural character. Although the property had a number of additions and alterations during its early period, it appears that little has changed since 1939 except for the major change to the site that occurred during the 1940s when the extensive garden in front of the house (facing Hamilton Avenue) was eliminated through subdivision of the property into several parcels, leaving the front entry of the house six feet from the new property line. As a result, the rear of the house with its basement entry and an enclosed
sleeping porch on the second floor became the front façade facing Edgewood Drive. Many historic windows remain on the house including a large quantity of early glass. The original front entry has been enclosed with compatible multi-pane doors. In the interior, the living room, dining room, and small rooms grouped around the original front entry remain highly intact. The board and batten character of the walls help to convey the rural sense of the property.

Since 1456 Edgewood Drive was designated to the Historic Inventory in 1980 in Category 3, the City Council has already found that the house meets the criteria for designation that apply to all historic designations in Palo Alto regardless of the category proposed. Although the definition of Category 2 in the Historic Preservation Ordinance is based on architectural significance, there is, as mentioned above, substantial precedent in the Historic Inventory for designating properties in both Categories 1 and 2 based on history.

If the Council chooses to accept the Board's recommendation include:

- Upon designation in Category 2, demolition of the single-family house would be required to comply with the application and moratorium process provided in PAMC 16.49.070.
- Upon designation in Category 2, review of proposed alterations or additions to the single-family house by the Historic Resources Board would be required as provided in PAMC 16.49.050 (1)(B). Compliance of the property owner with the recommendations shall be voluntary, not mandatory.

**HISTORIC RESOURCES BOARD REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATION**

On August 2, 2006 the Historic Resources Board voted (6-0-0-1, Haviland absent) to recommend reclassification of the structure at 1456 Edgewood Drive to a Category 2 based on its conclusion that the house still retains its original character. The large preserved rural aspect of the site and house (including the interior) is very rare in Palo Alto. Specifically, the HRB recommended the reclassification of the property in Category 2 based on the following findings:

- The property is associated with one of the earliest pioneers of Palo Alto, Dr. William A. Newell, a prominent San Franciscan who relocated to Palo Alto. It is also associated with other prominent early residents.
- It is a very rare example of an early large vernacular country home that has survived with a high degree of historic integrity.
- The property is potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.
- In 1999, a qualified historic consultant recommended a designation of the house as a Historic Landmark Residence, the highest designation of an Interim Historic Ordinance then in effect.
- The property has regional significance as an example of an early farm property.
- There is substantial precedent in the Historic Inventory for designating properties in significant categories (Categories 1 and 2) for themes other than architecture.
ATTACHMENTS
Attachment A: Historic Resources Board staff report of August 2, 2006

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