TO: HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: CITY MANAGER DEPARTMENT: PLANNING AND COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT

DATE: APRIL 7, 2008 CMR:192:08

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF THE RECLASSIFICATION OF AN EXISTING CITY OF PALO ALTO HISTORIC RESOURCE FROM A CATEGORY 4 TO A CATEGORY 2 AND RECORD OF LAND USE ACTION FOR 2300 WELLESLEY AVENUE (COLLEGE TERRACE LIBRARY)

RECOMMENDATION
The Historic Resources Board (HRB) and staff recommend that the City Council approve the reclassification of the College Terrace Library as a Category 2 historic resource, based upon the findings in the Record of Land Use Action (Attachment A).

BACKGROUND
On behalf of the City of Palo Alto, the Public Works Engineering Division requested the reclassification of this existing historic resource. This reclassification will make this site eligible for participating in the Transfer of Development Rights program, which will be pursued later this year.

The College Terrace Library is significant for its association with a prominent local architect, Charles K. Sumner and a well-known local builder, George B. Moore. Since the time of its construction as a branch library in 1936, it has played a significant role in the College Terrace neighborhood community by serving not only as a library, but also for many years as a community center and meeting place. In addition, the library retains a high degree of material integrity. Therefore, based on these significant elements, the library appears eligible for listing as a Category 2 resource on the Palo Alto Historic Inventory. The attached HRB staff report (Attachment D) provides more details about the historic character of the building and the proposed reclassification.

Upon reclassification as a Category 2 historic resource, demolition would be prohibited unless conditions were met as set forth in PAMC 16.49.060. Additionally, alterations or additions to the building would require review by the Historic Resource Board and the building would be subject to maintenance regulations for historic structures as set forth in PAMC 16.49.080 and the enforcement provisions set forth in section 16.49.090.

As a Category 2 resource, and with the planned historic rehabilitation of the building, the project would be eligible for a 2,500 square foot floor area bonus. The Transfer of Development Rights program would allow the City to sell the bonus floor area at market rate at the optimum time when the real estate market improves.
BOARD REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATION
On March 5, 2008, the HRB reviewed the proposed project and recommended (5-0-0-2) that the College Terrace Library be reclassified to a Category 2 Historic Resource. No members of the public spoke on this item. The meeting minutes are found in Attachment E.

RESOURCE IMPACT
The reclassification will make this site eligible to participate in the Transfer of Development Rights program. Public Works plans to apply for and utilize this program so the City can sell the development rights at a future date at the going market rate and have those funds return to the Infrastructure Reserve of the General Fund. A recent example of this type of transaction was in 2005 when the bonus 2,500 square feet (from the Children’s Library rehabilitation) was sold for $237,500 ($95 per square foot).

POLICY IMPLICATIONS
The proposed reclassification is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and Palo Alto Municipal Code and furthers the City’s historic preservation policies.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW
This project is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), per Section 15301, Existing Facilities.

PREPARED BY:_________________________________
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ATTACHMENTS
A. Record of Land Use Action
B. Application Submittal Letter, providing background and photos
C. Department of Parks and Recreation Primary Record Form (DPR Form)
D. Historic Resources Board Staff Report, March 5, 2008
E. Historic Resources Board Draft Verbatim Minutes, March 5, 2008

COURTESY COPIES
Woojae Kim, Public Works
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