



# HISTORIC RESOURCES BOARD MEETING

## MINUTES: January 12, 2023

Council Chamber & Virtual Zoom  
8:30 A.M.

### Call to Order/Roll Call

Present: Chair Caroline Willis; Vice Chair Christian Pease, Board Members Michael Makinen, David Bower, Gogo Heinrich, Margaret Wimmer and Alisa Eagleston-Cieslewicz

Absent:

1. Adoption of a Resolution Authorizing Use of Teleconferencing for Historic Resources Board During Covid-19 State of Emergency

Board Member Bower moved to approve the Resolution. Seconded by Board Member Heinrich, the motion carried (6-0) by voice vote.

### Public Comment

### Oral Communications

### Agenda Changes, Additions and Deletions

### City Official Reports

2. Historic Resources Board Schedule of Meetings and Assignments

Ms. French presented the calendar of meetings for 2023. It is unlikely there will be a meeting on January 26th. The Board will not be meeting during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. The frequency of meetings will depend on the workload that comes in. Board Members should check their calendars and let her know the dates of upcoming vacations/absences in order to target which dates for meetings.

### Action Items

3. 3200 Park Boulevard/200 Portage/340 Portage [Files 22PLN-00287 and 22PLN-00288]: Consideration of Sobrato Organization, LLC (Sobrato)'s Proposed Redevelopment of a 14.65-acre site at 200-404 Portage Avenue, 3040-3250 Park Boulevard, 3201-3225 Ash Street and 278 Lambert. The Project Includes the Partial Demolition of the Former Bayside Canning Company Building (340 Portage) Which is Eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR). The City Circulated A Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the 200 Portage Townhome Development Project (91 units) on September 16, 2022, per the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The EIR Comment Period Ended on November 15, 2022. The Proposed Development Agreement is Evaluated as Alternative 3 in the DEIR. Zoning District: RM-30 (Multi-Family Residential) and GM (General Manufacturing). This Hearing will Include Consideration of the Potential for Listing the Remaining Cannery Building/Site on the City's Local Historic Resources Inventory

Claire Raybould, Senior Planner, presented the project and staff recommendations as detailed in the staff report. The goal was to provide information and background to the Board Members on the project as well as obtain feedback on key items related to the historic aspects of the site. She noted that there are

numerous addresses associated with the site. The City has used the address listed on the application filing, 3200 Park Blvd., but the project encompasses 340 Portage, which is often the address used for the cannery building. Ms. Raybould's presentation included the following:

- Diagram of the project parcels
- Project Background
- Project Overview: Key Negotiated Terms
- Historic Background
- Environmental Impact Report Findings
- Key Considerations – Remaining Cannery Design
- Key Considerations – Interpretive Display and Public Art
- Key Considerations – Local Register
- Recommendations

Tim Steele, Senior Vice Pres of Real Estate Development, Sobrato, introduced himself and colleague, Robert Tersini, as well as Matt Davis, historical architect with ARG (Architectural Resource Group).

Mr. Davis described ARG's involvement with the project, in developing the series of preservation design guidelines and parameters with respect to historic character, observing of current conditions and review of the Page & Turnbull report.

Chair Willis invited questions from the Board members.

Board Member Bower asked Ms. Raybould about the historic additions to the cannery building. The packet indicates a photo of the original cannery building on page 91 of the packet. Subsequent additions occurred in the 1940s at the latest. The additions are 73-plus years old, so those would be considered historic resources by Secretary of the Interior standards and part of the protected category. Board Member Bower said the Board has seen instances where subsequent additions to original buildings have been removed and original buildings renovated, with them still being eligible for historic register listings. He said he was confused as to why the original building, were it to be renovated under Secretary of the Interior standards, would not still be eligible to be listed.

Ms. Raybould introduced Julianne Murphy, Architectural Historian with Rincon Consultants, to respond. Ms. Murphy noted that her firm had prepared the EIR for the project and subsequent standards analysis for the development agreement. She said that in the HRE, Page and Turnbull did not provide a breakdown of contributing and non-contributing elements but stated the entire site is eligible for California Register. It was difficult to ascertain exactly when additions occurred, but they were all in place by 1948, so the period of significance for the site spans from 1916 to 1948. All of the building as well as the Ash building were considered a historical resource.

Board Member Bower asked again why the original building is not eligible without the additions.

Ms. Murphy said because the period of significance continues into 1948, that portion of the building is a historical resource, so its removal would not be aligned with the standards. If the period of significance had been identified with a narrower window and that had occurred following that period, then there would be standing to remove the later additions. However, because it has been identified as being part of the modifications that were made during the period of historic significance, it is a historical resource.

Board Member Bower questioned whether the Page and Turnbull reported period of significance is an arbitrary designation.

Ms. Murphy responded that the property is significant under Criterion 1, which is events, in its association with its function as a packing facility. That lasted from 1916 to 1948, so it is not arbitrary but based on its use as a cannery facility during that period.

Chair Willis asked, if the project goes through and the original part of the building stands in ten years and is separated from the demolished part and the adjacent part of the additions, would it be likely that a new study could determine that it is eligible for the National Register?

Ms. Murphy thought this would be a difficult case to make because in addition to significance there must be integrity, and integrity would consider how much of the building has been altered. If it included up to 40 percent, as proposed, and also have the building modifications required for this project, she felt the case to have still be eligible for listing would be extremely difficult.

Board Member Bower asked Ms. Raybould about the "unavoidable impact" statement in her presentation. He didn't feel that anything in the proposed development, the positioning of the new buildings or any of the work, would require demolition of any part of the cannery. It is a 14-acre site. Board Member Bower said he has followed all of the neighborhood and City planning options and all the different proposals. He felt "unavoidable" suggests to him that this is the only option available, and he did not think this was accurate.

Ms. Raybould responded that "unavoidable" spoke to the project as proposed, or specific alternatives. So, if this specific project or this specific alternative, moves forward, that would result in an "unavoidable impact" on a resource.

Board Member Bower said he wanted the record to be clear that this is not the only option. This option unavoidably destroys 40 percent of the cannery building, but it is not the only one available. He had the sense, during the presentation, that demolishing 40 percent of the cannery building was unavoidable, not related solely to this project. He wished to make a distinction between this project and other options.

Ms. Raybould noted that the City did not identify any potential feasible alternatives that would meet the project objectives and that would reduce it to a less than significant level. Alternative 2 in the EIR explored the reuse of the cannery building as is for housing, but it is presumed that that would also result in a significant and unavoidable impact because it is not clear that it could be done while still meeting the Secretary of the Interior standards. There would be significant changes needed to meet fire safety, building code, green building code, required windows and exits, required ADA compliance, et cetera. It was felt that it needed to still be identified a potentially significant and unavoidable impact for purposes of the EIR.

Board Member Bower remarked that at the Presidio in San Francisco, almost all of the original buildings around the parade field have been rehabilitated according to Secretary of the Interior standards, and there have been multiple new adaptive uses to them. He did not feel it is impossible to do and commented that the problem is that the primary driver of the project is housing, and it was easy to find a lot of housing space in this area.

Vice Chair Pease asked what advantage there would be post project in trying to list what remains of the cannery on the Local Registry.

Ms. Raybould responded, first, it would be whether it helps to identify and bolster the historic nature of the site and continue to display it as a historic resource in the city. It would also ensure that any future modifications to the building would need to be done in accordance with the SOI standards or otherwise go through a full CEQA process, so there would be some benefits. Staff was exploring this because Council had expressed an interest in the idea, so they wished to get feedback from HRB on whether there was merit in doing this.

Vice Chair Pease asked if the applicant would be willing to engage in conversation about what defining features might be preserved that might modify the proposal as it stands, so that later on when the property is listed on the Local Register those things are protected.

Mr. Steele replied they started with that kind of approach by having Mr. Davis present to help guide them through developing their scenario.

Mr. Davis added that one question he had was how far into the future the designation would be pushed. It wouldn't necessarily have to be all that far. He said he would be nervous about something that was posited too far down the road, because too much could happen between now and then, and the City would need to designate something locally that wasn't otherwise deemed California or National Register eligible.

Ms. French stated that the inventory in place in Palo Alto includes many modified buildings in Category 3 and 4 status, and the original inventory was not exhaustive as to whether all of them were eligible for California Register. This is a more recent effort in which, each time they come across a potential resource and prepare a Historic Resource Evaluation, they analyze it for eligibility for California Register, but they don't have a status on the existing inventory as to eligibility for California Register.

Mr. Davis added that personally he is excited about finding a way to recognize the property locally, because that would accord well with the public's ongoing appreciation of the building. The public wouldn't be as fixated on the portion to the north that is being removed, and they would see the monitor roofs and want to know about the longer history of the property. He felt there would still be plenty of material and structure onsite to convey that history. He felt it would be an opportunity for the City to speak to an aspect of its heritage that is almost entirely erased at this point.

Vice Chair Pease noted, since the Ash property is not to be post-project modified, it would still be eligible for the California Register, so he wondered, why not go ahead and recommend that it be done for that particular structure, as opposed to combining it with whatever remains of the cannery, and at some point, later on, add it to the Local Registry?

Ms. French asked if he meant putting it on the City inventory as opposed to them putting it on the California Register, which the City does not do.

Vice Chair Pease asked if the applicant would be willing to request that be done for that building since it will be eligible.

Ms. French responded that only an owner can put their own property on that. The City can put it on the local inventory if the applicant is amenable to that.

Vice Chair Pease said he presumed that going forward and wondered if the applicant would be willing to comment on that.

Ms. Raybould said the applicant could also choose to put it on the California Register.

Mr. Steele replied that they have not explored that in depth but would be open to exploring it.

Ms. Murphy pointed out that the existing HRE identifies the entire property as eligible for the California Register, so to pursue listing just the Ash building, that HRE would have to be updated to speak specifically to the eligibility of that building on its own. It would need to be revised, because the existing HRE identifies the entire property as eligible for the California Register.

Mr. Steel said that it was suggested in the Page and Turnbull report that that building had been moved on the site and that is not the original location of the building. In talking with Mr. Davis, there was some question whether it would or would not qualify based on it having been relocated.

Ms. Raybould agreed and reiterated that it has been relocated, and that they would have to analyze whether, with the modifications to the cannery building, this building on its own could be California Register eligible. She thought it could still be considered for the Local Register, with further evaluation needed to determine if it could still be eligible for the California Register. It is associated with the cannery building, and with the modifications to the cannery building, it may not still be California Register eligible.

Board Member Eagleston-Cieslewicz asked if there has been consideration to either examining statewide landmark or point of historical interest designations for the property.

Ms. Raybould replied that they have not explored those, but they could do so.

Mr. Steele added that Sobrato has not.

Board Member Bower shared that Palo Alto has a very famous Hostess House property that was moved from its original location into Palo Alto, and it is on the National Register of Historic Buildings. His understanding is that moving a building within the site vicinity does not necessarily prevent listing on an historic register if it maintains its relationship with the original purpose. He felt, in this case, the Ash Building was part of the cannery – the management offices. It was not moved less than 45 years ago, so he felt its position would qualify it as an historic resource. He asked Ms. Murphy is this is the correct understanding.

Ms. Murphy responded that moved resources are still eligible for listing if they retain their historic setting. The fact that it has been moved would not preclude it from being listed.

Vice Chair Pease asked if revisiting this to see if the property on its own might be eligible for the California Registry is a major piece of work, or a minor revision. He said it seemed like an important piece of data to have.

Ms. Murphy said it would require preparation of a Historic Resource Evaluation, which she didn't feel would be a significant amount of work, given that they have an HRE that could be used to help prepare a more detailed HRE specific to that building. Because it could only be placed on the California Register if the property owner is willing to do that, they would need to have further discussion with Sobrato about their willingness to do that. If the HRB is interested in having the City explore this further, there could be further discussion on that.

Chair Willis commented that hopefully the buildings will be documented before they are demolished or significantly altered, and perhaps that analysis might be something that could happen in concert with that. She hoped they would have a chance to study the original cannery building as a stand-alone, since it seems to be of a scale that could be maintained. She said she personally sees it potentially as art and felt it is worth trying to get some additional analysis of historic merit on individual pieces of the project.

Ms. Raybould asked if the Board was interested in continuing to have the City explore the remainder of the cannery building at all with respect to the Local Inventory, in addition to the Ash Street building.

Chair Willis asked if there were any further questions before responding to the question.

Board Member Bower wondered if there would be a presentation from the applicant in regard to the project.

Ms. Raybould responded that the applicant was not planning on another separate presentation.

Board Member Bower referred to the evaluation of the 74-unit housing building of compatibility, massing, and scale to the original, 1918 cannery building. He asked if there would be a presentation or discussion about those features.

Ms. Raybould responded that the information is part of the packet, for which they are looking for the Board's feedback. She asked if there was something specific he would like them to speak to.

Board Member Bower said it was the Rincon group's evaluation of the revised plans, wherein changes to the cannery building remove all original fabric and make it incompatible with Secretary of the Interior standards. He felt that should be at least one of the Board's focus. Typically, the architectural firm will present their thoughts on how they arrived at the design. Absent that, he did not feel they could make a complete and fully informed decision about the project. He found that the changes to the cannery building are equivalent to demolition, because they take everything away except the distinctive roof features, which puzzled him. He said if they were not going to present their architecture, then perhaps the Board could consider postponing the discussion until they can come back and do that.

Ms. Raybould answered that they were not looking for a recommendation that day. They were looking for feedback based on the information provided. She said they could have the applicant speak to the architectural intent. Generally, with respect to demolition, this project results in a significant and unavoidable impact and is essentially demolition of a resource. No matter what is done, it will not meet the Secretary of the Interior standards as designed, because demolition of at least 40 percent of the building is an impact on a resource. However, there is a remaining portion of the cannery building, and that portion has some redesign to it. From their analysis it is a fairly significant redesign in terms of placement of new doors, placement of windows. Some of the updates that will be needed to the corrugated metal may result in replacement in kind of potentially much of the façade components as well as some changes to the roof design to accommodate solar and some changes to raise up the rest of the ground level to align with the loading platforms in the rear.

Ms. Raybould continued that the question before the Board is whether there is merit in trying to follow the Secretary of the Interior standards for aspects of this remaining building even if it doesn't retain integrity. Or is it better to try to align it with more of the standards for urban design in terms of pedestrian, more open space, or light brought into a retail space? The question for the Board was whether there is merit in

retaining any of it. If so, is there merit in retaining certain features of it that are perhaps more critical to conveying the historic use of the site?

Board Member Bower suggested the Board may want to discuss just what they wish to accomplish and what they are being asked to do, and then make recommendations to the Council about how the Council should proceed.

Ms. Raybould reiterated they are not asking for any formal recommendations but were looking for initial feedback, and they plan to return to the Historic Resources Board for a formal recommendation.

Ms. French added that if they are interested in further exploration of a nomination to the City's Local Inventory, there is work associated with that, so they needed clarity as to the leanings of the Board members in this regard, and whether it would include the Ash building only or the remainder of the cannery building as well.

Board Member Bower stated that there are questions included in the packet raised by former Council Member Holman about the draft Environmental Impact Report, although he could not tell if her questions had been answered in the revised plan.

Ms. Raybould did not know if her questions had been responded to in the most recent plan. The City is still evaluating this, as the second-round submittal was just submitted to the City, so the plans before the Board were the initial plans and will not reflect any potential modifications to address public comments or comments from other boards and commissions they have been to. Her formal comments were part of the Environmental Impact Report. The City is currently preparing formal responses. They will have formal written responses, modify the EIR where appropriate to address those comments, and request modifications to the plans as appropriate.

Board Member Bower noted one of her comments was in regard to cultural resources having to do with demolition of the cannery building and changes proposed.

Chair Willis invited comments from members of the public.

Karen Holman addressed the Board. She stated that the Council had no input from the HRB to use in negotiations with regard to the development agreement. She said surely the HRB could comment on alternatives to the development agreement proposal with regard to the cannery building. In response to Board Member Bower's comments, different configurations of development that could result in retention of the resource. The DEIR determines that the impact plan will eliminate the California Register eligibility of the cannery. On several occasions the NVCAP members asked that a feasibility study be performed to determine what could be done with and within the cannery building. As far as she knew, it was never performed to inform outcomes. However, for example, the DEIR assumes the housing within the cannery building would require a second floor and also would not satisfy the Secretary of the Interior standards. Both of those are without any rationale for why those conclusions are drawn. There are not rational alternatives considered that would retain at least enough of the cannery building to preserve its California Register status or what that threshold of retention might be.

Ms. Holman continued, neither investment tax credits nor the State Historic Building Code referenced that could help with a feasibility of retention compatible with design with the townhouses. She asked, does the ARB have such expertise? They are reviewing the townhouses independent of and without the HRB input. Yet, according to the staff report, the townhouses have gone to the ARB at least once. She asked, what historic compatibility expertise sits on the ARB?

Ms. Homan mentioned that, wrapping in front of the cannery building is an impact. The subsequent affordable housing project directly in front of the remaining cannery building is not considered an impact, or even evaluated. Ms. Holman stated that the DEIR mentions several impacts to the cannery building and determines there is a significant unavoidable impact. She respectfully added that it is not just a local impact, but a regional impact, given this is one of the last remaining examples of the Valley of Heart's Delight in the valley. She said the DEIR does not address this, but surely the HRB would do so. She hoped the name Portage Road will be changed to honor Thomas Foon Chew.

Ms. Holman noted that the staff report asks the HRB to consider adding the cannery remainder on the local inventory but as presented it does not even satisfy the Secretary of the Interior standards, even though in

the August report to the Council it was indicated that satisfaction of the Secretary standards is required. If it is not required then it is essentially a complete demolition. The staff report asks the HRB to consider adding the remainder as a Category 3 or 4, which would mean that they would not have any review in the future.

Ms. Holman suggested that among the positive actions the Board can take would be to list the Ash property on both the California and Local inventories. She hoped they would do this as a Category 1 on the Local Inventory. She said the City can apply to the California Register, and owner consent is not needed for that; the owner would need to object for that not to happen. Ms. Holman remarked that creating exhibits is not a mitigation, and there is no mitigation for demolition. She questioned why public art and memorializing the cannery and Chew's contributions have to be considered separately, as indicated in the staff report, and why the art could not memorialize the cannery period and Chew's accomplishments.

Ms. Holman referred to a report of existing damage near the monitor roof elements. The report was done by the applicant with no peer review that she was aware of. There is reference to rebuilding part of the roof due to required solar on the roof. She asked why solar is required, and why on the roof. She suggested that there are many ways to be green, and one of the highest ways is reuse and restore, not demolish. Ms. Holman concluded by stating her opinion that the Board would be fulfilling its role if the Council were informed of their expert opinions and experience with the Secretary of the Interior standards, where none exists among Council members who negotiated this agreement, that she is aware of. Council would be better informed by the Board's expert input.

Winter Dellenbach stated that she wished to associate herself with the comments of former mayor, Karen Holman. She stated that the Board members and the Board as a whole are being asked by the applicant to do something that is not only destructive to a valuable historic building, but something she sees as destructive to the community. She said they are being asked to ignore that to demolish nearly half of the building is to destroy its entire historical value. She felt putting up plaques and photos would mock its preventable loss. That Thomas Foon Chew owned the cannery must be given great thought by the Board and whoever else may be looking at this proposed project.

Ms. Dellenbach remarked that currently more than one third of the population is of Chinese Asian ancestry in Palo Alto and will probably grow, so the cultural significance of the cannery will grow also. She said few of the people in room, herself included, were speaking much of diversity, and she felt they need to be sensitive about this. She suggested imagining allowing 40 percent of other historical buildings and resources to be demolished for the trade-off of 2,600 square feet of retail and R&D offices. She felt this was distressing, heartbreaking and preventable by the Board members. She asked that they not allow this to happen, and that the cannery building stay intact.

[The Board took a five-minute break]

Chair Willis opened Board comments.

Board Member Wimmer remembered briefly reviewing the project a year or two ago when they were talking about possibilities for the site. She recalled being presented with some photos and architectural features that were worthy of maintaining and preserving. She said she agreed with the need to preserve the historic value of the site and that the current discussion has identified what that value is. She said it is definitely necessary to protect the Ash building but also the two significant original cannery buildings. As Board Member Bower had pointed out, it was a stand-alone building. In the current presentation, the applicant has obviously emulated that design and has tried to retain an essence of it in its new design, which is a great effort, but perhaps they should take it a step further to make it into a preservation effort rather than an emulation effort.

Board Member Wimmer also liked the idea of Parcel 2, which sounded to her like it would be an open space, perhaps park space. In the location of the original cannery buildings, there could be a nice connection of the open space to those. She would like to see more of a preservation effort and have the cannery buildings more celebrated and preserved with an open space, community use building. She felt that, with the high-density apartments and condos that are now introduced in the site, the open space of the park and open space of the cannery buildings would be a relief to that. She felt that it would be one great way to preserve the site.

Chair Willis asked that as they give comments, they try to focus on staff's recommendations on interpretive signage and art.

Board Member Wimmer added that art should be part of this project and signage is important as well, but until something is presented to them, she has no specific comments on it.

Board Member Bower commented that he shared Board Member Wimmer's concerns about demolition of the building. He said he thinks that the reviews of the building by Rincon Associates and Page and Turnbull were very helpful and very detailed, and he appreciated those. He said his comments were not reflective of their work, although he did have a problem with the concept that the original historic inventory review grouped all three of the buildings together as though they were one. His sense in reading the materials was that if you lose one you lose them all. He did not think that was consistent with anything he has heard in the numerous seminars he has been to over 15 years as a Board member. He was distressed, knowing the history of this development, that the best they could do is to take away 40 percent of a building that is the last cannery in this part of Santa Clara County. He noted that Sunnyvale has cannery buildings that have been repurposed, but they mostly stand as they were. He was distressed that this was the best that Palo Alto could do with a building that represents a part of the community's history that is very unique. That is, an Asian American businessman coming to the area and successfully developing a canning business at a time when historically Asian Americans were not highly thought of. As Council member Holman had pointed out, there is a substantial Asian American community living in Palo Alto, many of them his neighbors. He said he would be astounded if they were not offended by this. He had felt there are alternatives to this project that would meet the requirements of getting a large number of housing units in without requiring substantial destruction of the cannery building but assumed because the project has been going on so long that that is probably not likely.

Board Member Bower additionally stated that, as he has often heard in seminars, there is no mitigation for demolition. Plaques and dioramas, displays can be put up, but these are not a mitigation feature. He felt if the project moves forward, the HRB should seriously consider reviewing the original 1918 cannery building. In most cases he has heard about, a project like this would often require at least consideration of renovation of the building, and not what is proposed. Any number of things could be done to renovate the building and make it more useful. Board Member Bower continued that, as a retired general contractor, he knows there is enormous flexibility in terms of engineering that would allow the building to remain without being substantially demolished. He stated that replacing roof shingles, replacing siding, replacing windows with like materials is not in conflict with Secretary of the Interior standards. He felt that when the project comes back to the Board, they need a presentation from the architects explaining their thinking and reason for the designs they are putting forward that are not compliant with the SOI standards of compatibility, scale, mass, et cetera. He felt the cannery building could be saved and restored and does not have to be demolished.

Vice Chair Pease said he felt their goal should be to maximize the preservation of the story of Thomas Chew's life as much as possible within the reality of whatever project goes forward. He asked for more information, so that at the next session they could be more specific with recommendations in that regard. He was interested in the idea of getting the Historic American Buildings survey done of the entire site, or at least the entire cannery building if it is subject to a partial demolition, because it is more than pictures and plaques. If done correctly, it would create a database of content and data allowing the structure to be studied for years to come. He did not see why there isn't a lesson in the public schools about this building and this man. He said there are many other stories that are taught about local history, and this one is a big missing item that has surprised many people when they heard about it over the past year or so.

Board Member Heinrich said she is new to the Board and this is the first she has seen the plans and studied them. She wondered if anyone had ever looked at swapping the City designated park area with the cannery. She wondered if the cannery could have an adaptive reuse as the open space, playgrounds, et cetera, for the community, and the park space built up for housing. This would retain the cannery intact, putting basketball, badminton, ping pong, the indoor sports, there.

Ms. Raybould responded that the project includes not just housing but a significant amount of research and development use and a retail space on the site, so the City's parcel, 3.25 acres, would not be big



enough to provide all of that research and development as well as townhomes or other sorts of housing use.

Board Member Heinrich asked about the square footage of the cannery.

Ms. Raybould stated it is much larger than the park.

Board Member Heinrich said her thought was, in order to keep as much of the cannery as possible, maybe the open space could get put into the cannery. She added that she would like to see the original plans of the cannery in order to have context for what they are looking at. She agreed that the Ash property should be separated out and given its own historic registry.

Ms. Raybould did not know that they have more information than what is provided in the Historical Resources Evaluation. She asked Board Member Heinrich to clarify what she would be looking for.

Board Member Heinrich responded she didn't see any floor plans, elevations, the original architectural drawings.

Ms. Raybould said they don't have any additional information other than what is provided in the HRE. What exists today is consistent, in their understanding, with all of the changes that were done within the period of significance.

Chair Willis thought part of that issue was that all of their archives burned at some point, and many of the original drawings went up in flames within what was City Hall at the time. She suspected that there were never serious architectural drawings for this building anyway, just because of its use.

Board Member Eagleston-Cieslewicz shared that her feeling about listing on the City's registry is that she would like to look at the Ash building and the cannery building separately, because however the project ends up, they will be very different in terms of their level of integrity. She felt it would be helpful to be able to examine the buildings on their own rather than as an entire site. She agreed that she hoped that there would be ways to incorporate greater sensitivity to preservation of the character-defining features into the plan. However, she also recognized that in its current form that is not sufficient to maintain eligibility for the California Register. She felt that preserving what they can is better than preserving none. She agreed with the hope that some thorough documentation can be completed of aspects of the building that are going to be demolished so that there is a reference that people can look back at for purposes of study later on, if necessary. She felt that documentation is important when a resource is going to be lost, wholly or in part.

Board Member Eagleston-Cieslewicz continued that it was hard for her to comment on interpretive signage or public art without more of a concrete proposal. She was supportive of the idea, and as someone who works in public art, she would recommend that at this point in early planning phases for a public art installation to start thinking now about the ultimate maintainability of any artwork that is installed in a public location because they see a lot of use, interaction and potential exposure to the elements. All of this takes a toll over time on the artwork, and there are things that can be done in the planning process to make that future easier. She asked that if they are thinking about a public art installation to think about how it is maintained and cared for going forward. She also encouraged significant engagement and dialogue with Palo Alto's Asian community in the process as it is vital to communicating the story of this location.

Chair Willis was reminded about the old Fry's where there were significant displays about the history of the building, and she wondered if those were still in existence. She thought it might be worth checking to see if they were still there. She felt it is worth exploring the very earliest structure as a stand-alone historic resource that potentially qualifies for the National Register. Her first impression of it was the sheer mass of the building as a very strong visual aspect. Because the original building is still very identifiable and potentially restorable, she felt they should look at it as a separate resource. Her biggest objection to the work happening along Park, was the fact that it is shutting off the cannery site from the public view. In addition to losing 40 percent of the building itself, they would be losing the visual connection to the neighborhood. Opening up some kind of visual avenue into the into the site would be an important aspect. She felt that in considering housing and parkland, it would be important to center the open space around the original part of the building, and that the site is a good candidate to be a California Historic Landmark, which they have used with similar sites where buildings have been totally demolished. She agreed that a

significant part of their city is Asian, and it would be respectful to have a historic landmark marker on the site. She felt that the State of California would be open to that as a sign of goodwill if the applicant would apply for it. She supported looking at putting the central portion of the building on the Local Register.

Chair Willis commented that, although it's sad to lose the massing of the building, she felt that something that reads in the early historic period would have great value to the community. Her assessment was that once one wing is gone, the middle part is stronger on its own, rather than combined with the additional office spaces closer to El Camino. She agreed that it is an important educational tool and that they should perhaps explore the possibility that a high school intern could take the existing information and turn it into a lesson plan for third grade history classes that teachers could use. She also felt that if the applicant was interested and willing, the California Preservation Society has open day in September, and it would be a good opportunity to educate the community about this building while it is still intact.

Chair Willis invited further comments or discussion.

Board Member Heinrich asked if the descendants are still around and if they would have any information.

Ms. French replied that they did hear from a granddaughter in the Chew family in 2019. She said she would be happy to forward minutes from that meeting, in which Board Members Wimmer and Bower were in attendance. She noted that this was a study session and also an action item because they plan to come back to address some of the questions and requests, and the project itself.

Ms. French noted that Board Member Makinen was in attendance remotely.

Chair Willis asked Board Member Makinen if he had any comments.

Board Member Makinen commented that he agreed with most of the Board members that more needs to be done as far as looking at the preservation, historic reuse, and especially the adaptive re-use of these unique buildings. He agreed with Board Member Bower's comparison with the work done at the Presidio when they made the effort to focus on adaptive reuse of the buildings, not the destruction of the historic character. He felt that the alternatives have not been given due diligence, and the project has been channeled into a certain direction and manipulated to try to get the historic buy-in that what is being proposed is proper. He felt it is not the proper approach and they should look at the unique opportunities for adaptive reuse. He was particularly interested in concept of an art center that could be adaptively used in the cannery building. He commented that once the buildings are gone, it's forever. They are a big part of Palo Alto's heritage, and he would be disappointed to see the project proceed as proposed.

Board Member Bower said he has been looking at page 76 of the packet, the conclusions of Page & Turnbull regarding character-defining features, including location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, association. Their conclusion is that the subject property retains its integrity, meaning it would be eligible for listing. He pointed out that six of the seven criteria are met by the current building. He remembered projects where only one or two of the criteria were met, indicating that it is not a marginal building, but a significant space that retains its character and its meaning for the community. He questioned a reference to TDR rights as part of the project.

Ms. Raybould responded the reference is to TDM - transit demand management.

Ms. Raybould asked for direction from the Board on what is worth them exploring moving forward. She clarified that the City is starting the public art process. The next week they would be having a meeting with the Public Arts Commission to get initial feedback on placement of art. The applicant has brought on an art consultant to help manage the process. She said what they wanted to understand was if there was interest in something specific that the Board would like the to explore and what the Board thinks are the key aspects of the history they would want prioritized. She assumed that this was mostly focused on Thomas Foon Chew and his role in the canning industry and how it relates to the community he brought together. She felt this would be something they would want to explore as part of the public art piece.

Ms. Raybould added that there is a significant amount of money that would be available for the public art, so in reference to Board Member Wimmer's comments about the public space, there has been exploration about whether it's worth trying to split it and do some public art related to the cannery building and also a public art in-lieu type fee for a portion of it which could then be potentially controlled with the public park once it is dedicated and available. She said she was still unclear about direction. The comments regarding

alternatives could be looked into, but in terms of direction she asked for more clarity. She asked whether there are more specific features in the building, as it is proposed to remain, that the Board thinks are more valuable to retain, and whether they wish for it to align as much as possible with the Secretary of the Interior standards. Some of the changes that are being made is going from a warehouse use to office and retail, so from that perspective there are certain urban design features that would be desirable for a retail type use. So some of the changes are more appropriate from an urban design perspective but are less in line with the Secretary of the Interior standards. She questioned if there is a balance to be made with respect to that, or if there is a desire to retain the building as is.

Chair Willis suggested that each Board member offer their opinions regarding preservation, the most important historic features, and how they would be presented. She felt they had some consensus on the Local Registry.

Ms. Raybould noted there were a couple Board members that felt there was value in identifying the remainder of the building on the Local Register, but not sure this was shared by all. She wondered if it was more important to explore the Ash building but wasn't sure she was clear on that.

Board Member Wimmer summarized her thoughts by stating that the ideas for the Ash building make sense, but in terms of the cannery, she would take the original main building and follow the Page and Turnbull memo discussing the character-defining features, and retain all of it, so that it maintains its historic status. The additions to the building on the El Camino side, with the single story additions, does nothing to the historical aspect. But to maintain the main building with the feature roofs, if they could preserve that, she felt that the Board would have done a great job. She believed if the building could retain its historic value, then it should definitely be on a local inventory, and they could then go for a national listing if possible. She said they would need to start locally. It would also be nice to somehow have the protection of the building as a condition for a big housing development plan. She felt this would be a fair tradeoff.

Ms. Raybould wanted to make it clear that, although they can explore further based on Board Member Bower's comments, but from their historic consultant and possibly the applicant's historic consultant, the removal of the portion of the building for the townhomes, as identified in the EIR, up to the monitor roofs, would be a significant and unavoidable impact on a historic resource, and enough to lose its integrity for the California Register, or potentially the National Register. They could preserve all remaining aspects exactly as is, but even so, they do not believe it would be eligible for the California Register. However, the City has authority to place it on a Local Register if they wanted to.

Board Member Wimmer said having it on a Local Register is an achievement. It is their community, their heritage, their history. She said if, as a City, this can be recognized, perhaps it is not necessarily important to have it on a national register, unless there is some benefits to being on the National Register. Just having it on the Local Register is an achievement.

Board Member Bower offered his summary. His strongest feeling is that the building should be retained in its current form and renovated and repurposed according to the Secretary of the Interior standards in any way useable. He did not see the need to have the 74 housing units.

Chair Willis asked for the focus to be on the interpretive signage, the art, the Local Registry and perhaps California Historic Landmark.

Board Member Bower said he didn't have comment about art or signage because there is currently nothing proposed.

Chair Willis thought staff was looking for whether they want any signage.

Ms. Raybould said any early feedback on what they might want to see, because that process will be started, and they expect to return to the Board with something.

Board Member Bower asked if she was referring to something like a plaque describing the historic significance.

Ms. Raybould explained there are two requirements of the applicant. One, a mitigation measure – a requirement to provide interpretive display. This would include, at minimum, a plaque of some sort, probably in the open retail space. In addition there is approximately \$840,000 that would be required as

part of the public art in-lieu fee based on the valuation of the project, which could be aligned with the interpretive display. However, an interpretive display wouldn't necessarily cost that much. There will be additional money for which the Council has expressed an expectation that at least a portion of that would be used to further convey the history of the site in some way. They will be exploring art installations in or near the cannery building that would help with that. Potentially some of the money would go to in-lieu and presumably be used somewhere in the area, potentially in the future public park.

Board Member Bower responded that he doesn't believe that signage as Ms. Raybould described to be appropriate because he does not believe it's a mitigation feature. He appreciated why it has been included but he reiterated that there is no mitigation for demolition and didn't see that this would be of value. He encouraged the money being set aside to be used for art and have the Art Commission find public art. He would redirect the money to public art in the park, which he stressed that he loves in new projects, but doesn't want people to think that, because they have a photographic view of what the building used to look like and some history, that it is mitigation. He said he does not oppose the public art but stated that it is not mitigation in his opinion and is not what the Board should be considering. He felt the Board should be considering not having to mitigate demolition. He added that they should certainly have it on the Local Inventory.

Vice Chair Pease agreed the project should go on the Local Inventory but also felt there should be some conversation between the Arts Commission and someone from a historic perspective in at least an informal or public event, a study session type meeting, before going forward. He stated that art and history are not necessarily incompatible.

Ms. French interjected that they have the opportunity to have a presentation from the HRB if anyone is interested in attending that meeting. She will make sure that the Board is aware of the details of that meeting.

Ms. Raybould advised that the packet for the initial Public Arts Commission meeting would go out that day. The meeting will be to get initial feedback from the Commission. It was scheduled for the next Thursday, at 7:00 p.m. if there was an HRB representative wishing to be present.

Ms. French said they could come back to that discussion.

Board Member Heinrich's opinion was that she would like to see the portion of cannery be put on the Local Registry. She would like to see the Ash building be put on the California or National Registry. Regarding art and signage, she felt a combination of interpretive of all three would be helpful to focus the money on the history.

Board Member Eagleston-Cieslewicz was also interested in exploring a local listing for both the cannery building and the Ash building. She encouraged considering the buildings separately so they could potentially be in different category levels. She strongly supported pursuing interpretive signage for the site as well as a California Landmark designation or Point of Historical Interest designation as appropriate.

Chair Willis supported a California Historic Landmark designation. She acknowledged the difficulties but expressed that she would like to see the original building as art. She would like to see the art money go into the building to give it a strong historical presence for what its original image and function was. She noted that Fry's may come back to them in ten years, because in her mind Fry's was a turning point in the community. She commented that Fry's was a community center and a lifeline to a new way of life in terms of home electronics. She thought it had been close to 50 years, and they should not totally ignore that aspect of the site. She felt they should explore the Local Inventory, but her opinion was that the additions are a distraction, and if there was a strong central building as a local historic landmark or resource it would serve the community well. She would also like to see it set off from its attached neighbor. She said she thought the Board would do better to regroup and circle the wagons around the original structure, which was very important in terms of the original time of its significance, not perhaps, through the 1940s but it's earliest times.

Board Member Makinen referred to earlier comments regarding the uniqueness of the building in Palo Alto. He felt they need to be very careful that what is going to happen with it is what the community needs, not what the developer needs. He said they need more art in their life, more public spaces to reflect and enjoy life. They don't need additional office spaces, et cetera, but more things for cultural enlightenment. Any

efforts to encourage that direction for adaptive reuse of the building is what should be done. It is a unique building and a unique opportunity to redirect the way the project is going to be something that will benefit the bulk of people in the city of Palo Alto. He felt the alternatives have not been give due diligence in terms of how the structures could be utilized. He was in favor of putting them on any registry they can put the properties on.

Chair Willis asked Ms. Raybould if any further clarification was needed.

Ms. Raybould indicated she did not and said the comments were very helpful.

Chair Willis asked if they needed a motion to continue to a date uncertain.

Ms. French did not feel that was required unless they wished to continue some conversation on February 9<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Raybould reiterated that the intent is to come back with a more detailed plan, any interpretive signage, ideas of public art, potentially more information related to the listing of the building. These things will be explored, including the Board's feedback.

Chair Willis requested that the Board have access to the new drawings and the materials for Public Arts Commission online. Ms. French said they can send an email to the Board with links as appropriate to the art and the minutes from the previous HRB's look at the HRE, among other items.

Chair Willis thanked Ms. Raybould for her presentation and input.

### **Approval of Minutes**

#### 4. Approval of Historic Resources Board Draft Minutes of November 10, 2022

Board Member Heinrich moved to approve the minutes of the November 10, 2022, meeting as corrected. Seconded by Vice Chair Pease, the motion carried (6-0-1) by voice vote.

### **Commissioner Questions, Comments, Announcements or Future Meetings and Agendas**

Board Member Heinrich reported that she attended the PAST meeting the previous evening. They are proceeding with sales of the Birge Clark book and are planning their future walking tours for the spring.

Ms. French noted that the City received a substantial commitment of funds from the National Park Services for the Roth Building, which is the former Palo Alto Medical Foundation, to be a museum. Staff is working with them on documentation related to environmental review to make sure the City does receive the funds.

Chair Willis inquired if there was update on consultants. Ms. French replied that she hopes the February meeting will be a good meeting for the Board in that regard.

### **Adjournment**

Motion by Vice Chair Pease to adjourn. Seconded by Board Member Bower, the motion carried, by voice vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:51.