



City of Palo Alto

Historic Resources Board Staff Report

(ID # 6570)

Report Type:

Meeting Date: 2/11/2016

Summary Title: 1250 Bryant Street - Historic Rehabilitation

Title: 1250 Bryant Street [15PLN-00346]: Request by Gordana Pavlovic, on behalf of the property owner, Gua Hua-Zhu, for Historic Resources Board review of proposed new additions and facade alterations at the first and second stories of an existing two-story single family residence, and construction of a new one-story secondary dwelling unit and two-car garage, in the Professorville Historic District. Environmental Review: The project is exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act under Class 15268 (Ministerial Projects). Zoning District: R-1 (Single-Family Residential).

From: City Manager

Lead Department: Historic Resources Board

Recommendation

Staff recommends the Historic Resources Board recommend to the property owner that the application is consistent with the standards of review contained in Municipal Code Section 16.49.050 (b), and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

Background

On December 10, 2015, at the request of the applicant, the Historic Resources Board (HRB) reviewed the subject application in a Study Session, prior to a formal review. At the meeting, individual Board members provided comments to the applicant, including recommended revisions to the project. No action was taken.

The applicant submitted revised application materials for formal review by the Board. The currently proposed plans are attached as Attachment A.

The current application is subject to review by the Historic Resources Board per the Municipal Code. According to Code, the Board shall review building permit applications for exterior alterations involving single-family and duplex residences which are historic structures/sites in the downtown area or which are significant buildings elsewhere in the City. Compliance with

the recommendations shall be voluntary, not mandatory.¹ The subject property at 1250 Bryant Street is a “significant building” because it is located within a historic district that has been placed on the Palo Alto Historic Inventory.²

In evaluating applications, the Board shall consider the architectural style, design, arrangement, texture, materials and color, and any other pertinent factors. The prime concern should be the exterior appearance of the building site. The proposed alterations should not adversely affect the exterior architectural characteristics nor the historical, architectural or aesthetic value of the building and its site; or the relationship of the building, in terms of harmony and appropriateness, with its surroundings, including neighborhood structures.³ In 1987, the City Council adopted the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation for use by the Historic Resources Board. The Standards for Rehabilitation promote historic preservation best practices that help to protect our nation’s irreplaceable cultural resources.

Discussion

A project description is included below. This is followed by an analysis of the proposed project for consistency with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation.

Project Description

The existing property at 1250 Bryant Street (previously known as 281 Embarcadero Road) is located in the Professorville historic district. It is located in the expanded district area designated by the City, which has not been surveyed for contributing and non-contributing properties. It appears to meet the qualifications of a contributing property as described in the district inventory form.

The house at 281 Embarcadero Road was constructed in 1908 by George Pierce for \$5,000. Mr. Pierce (also spelled Peirce), a teacher, lived at the property for at least a decade after its original construction. It appears that the original house was a two-story residence with a compact square plan and pyramid roof. By 1919, a one-story wing was attached at the north side. By 1924, a covered entry porch and second-story sleeping porch were added to the south side, facing Embarcadero Road; another covered entry porch was added to the east side, facing Bryant Street; and a detached garage was constructed with access to Bryant Street. At unknown times, another second-story sleeping porch was added to the north side above the first-story wing, and a concrete and brick patio with brick steps and a wood trellis was added to the south side entry porch on Embarcadero Road. In 2015, the primary street address was changed to 1250 Bryant Street.

The project proposes to rehabilitate the historic property for continued and expanded residential use. The proposed rehabilitation involves making minor alterations to the existing historic residence (including retention, reuse, and restoration of specific characteristic

¹ Section 16.49.050 (a).

² Section 16.49.020 (f).

³ Section 16.49.050 (b) (2).

features), removing and replacing the existing garage in a different location, and constructing a new secondary dwelling unit on the property.

At the existing historic residence, on the Embarcadero Road (south) elevation, the project proposes to remove the non-historic concrete/brick patio, brick steps, and wood trellis (date unknown); and to reverse the orientation of the existing side-facing porch (constructed between 1919 and 1924) from south-facing (away from Bryant Street) to north-facing (toward Bryant Street), by opening up the existing north wall, reconstructing wood entry steps that appear to have previously existed, and sealing up the south side with a new stucco wall.

On the Bryant Street (east) elevation, five existing minor windows of various sizes and types on the primary building wall (out of 18 total windows) would be removed and four new windows would be installed. Also, existing wood trim that demarcates the roofline of the one-story wing (constructed between 1919 and 1924), prior to the addition of the north side second-story sleeping porch (date unknown), would be removed.

On the north elevation, the project proposes to expand the existing one-story wing (constructed between 1919 and 1924) and second-story deck to the west, which would involve the removal of an existing first-story back wall with entry door and windows, exterior wood staircase, and deck screens. The expanded second-story deck would receive a new trellis screen. At the west side of the elevation, a new second-story, projecting hipped bay with column support would be constructed. New contemporary patio doors would be installed at the first story. Existing art glass windows at the first story would be retained and reused at the new second story addition.

On the west elevation, the existing central window bay would be expanded in width, which would involve shifting the existing brick chimney and a second-story window slightly to the south. At the north side of the elevation, an existing back entry door would be replaced by a pair of windows at the first story, and a new square bay window would be constructed under the eave at the second story.

Also, all existing wood windows would be replaced with new insulated (double-paned) wood windows that match the existing window designs, with the exception of existing art glass windows, which would be retained and reused.

At the vacant west side of the property, the project proposes to construct a new, one-story secondary dwelling unit with a rectangular plan and a hipped roof. Ornamentation would be limited to a pair of entry columns. Also, a new one-story, two-car garage with a square plan and pyramid hipped roof would be constructed in the northwest (rear) corner of the lot with access to Bryant Street, replacing the existing garage to be demolished. The new secondary dwelling unit and garage would be stucco-clad with wood doors and windows.

Other proposed site improvements include excavation of a new basement under the existing

historic structure (involving no change in building height or grade), construction of basement light wells at interior elevations, and installation of wood picket fences to screen the light wells.

Analysis

The following table includes staff’s analysis of the proposed project for consistency with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation.

Standards for Rehabilitation	Staff Analysis
<p>1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Not consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable</p> <p><u>Explanation:</u> Generally, the proposed rehabilitation of the existing property for continued/expanded residential use would require minor alterations and additions to the exteriors of the existing site and structures.</p>
<p>2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Not consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable</p> <p><u>Explanation:</u> The proposed rehabilitation would retain and preserve all of the existing characteristic materials, features, and spaces. The essential building characteristics – square compact plan, pyramid roof, and centrally aligned projections (porches, dormers, and bay window) – would be retained by the new additions and alterations. The proposed entry porch reversal would maintain the location, appearance, and design of the historic feature. Proposed window changes would be consistent with the existing fenestration pattern, which is irregular in window sizes and placement. Existing materials would not change; existing wood windows would be replaced with new wood windows.</p>
<p>3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Not consistent</p>

Standards for Rehabilitation	Staff Analysis
<p>Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable</p> <p><u>Explanation:</u> The proposed additions and alterations to the existing historic structure are based on existing architectural features and vocabulary, and would not be conjectural. The proposed new garage and secondary dwelling unit would be compatible with, but would not mimic, the historic structure in order to avoid creating a false sense of development on the property.</p>
<p>4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consistent</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not consistent</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable</p> <p><u>Explanation:</u> Changes that appear to have gained significance over time – including the existing first-story entry porches and the second-story sleeping porches, which are important architectural features – would be preserved and rehabilitated. Other changes that have not gained significance – including the existing garage and the porch trellis, which are not important architectural features – would be removed.</p>
<p>5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consistent</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not consistent</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable</p> <p><u>Explanation:</u> Existing examples of material craftsmanship such as art glass windows and brick chimneys would be retained.</p>
<p>6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consistent</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not consistent</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable</p> <p><u>Explanation:</u> Existing stucco cladding would be patched and repaired to match existing. New</p>

Standards for Rehabilitation	Staff Analysis
Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.	wood entry steps would be constructed to replacing missing steps, based on existing physical evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Not consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable <u>Explanation:</u> No such treatments are proposed or expected to be needed.
8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Not consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable <u>Explanation:</u> If archeological resources are discovered, the applicant would be required to comply with all applicable federal and State regulations pertaining to archeological resources.
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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Not consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable <u>Explanation:</u> The proposed new second-story projecting bays would be compatible in massing, size, materials, and details, while being differentiated from historic bays by being located off-center on the elevations. Proposed new patio doors would be recognizable as contemporary elements. The proposed new garage and secondary dwelling unit would be compatible with the compact massing, hipped/pyramid roofs, and stucco cladding of the historic building; they would be subordinate in scale and location; and they would be simplified in detailing.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consistent

Standards for Rehabilitation	Staff Analysis
<p>manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Not consistent</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable</p> <p><u>Explanation:</u> The proposed building additions, alterations, and landscape changes are designed to be appurtenant to the historic structure, and if necessary they could be removed/reversed in the future without affecting the essential physical form and integrity of the property.</p>

Environmental Review

The project is exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act under Class 15268 (Ministerial Projects), because it involves issuance of a building permit, which is ministerial and it is not subject to a discretionary action.

Summary

Staff recommends that the application is consistent with the standards of review contained in Municipal Code Section 16.49.050 (b), and the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation.

Prepared by: Matthew Weintraub, Historic Planner

Reviewed by: Jodie Gerhardt, Current Planning Manager

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Project Plans to HRB Members and Libraries Only (available online) (DOCX)

ATTACHMENT A

Hardcopies to HRB Members and Libraries only

Project plans can be reviewed at

<http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/news/displaynews.asp?NewsID=3227>