

FINAL MEETING MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
CITY OF ALAMEDA HISTORICAL ADVISORY BOARD
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2015

1. CONVENE: 7:05 p.m.
2. ROLL CALL: Present: Chair Owens, and Board Members Chan, Piziali, and Vella.
Absent: Vice Chair Rauk was absent.
3. MINUTES:
2015-1984 Draft Meeting Minutes-May 7, 2015
Minutes approved 4-0.
4. AGENDA CHANGES AND DISCUSSIONS: None.
5. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS: None.
6. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS:
6-A 2015-1999 Programmatic Agreement Compliance Report to the State Historic Preservation Officer for the Administration of U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Funded Activities by the City of Alameda

Chair Owens asked about the purpose of this report and whether Board action was required.

Allen Tai, Secretary to the Board, explained that this is an annual compliance report submitted to the State by the Housing Authority. The report is being provided to the Board as information only, so no action is necessary.

7. REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS:

- 7-A 2015-1995 Certificate of Approval - PLN15-0136- Saikley Architects - 1732 Union Street. The applicant requests a Certificate of Approval for a second story addition to an existing pre-1942 single family residence that will result in the removal of more than 30% of the value of the existing structure. The project has been determined to be exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to Section 15301 - Existing Facilities - minor alterations of existing private structures.

Henry Dong, Planner I, provided a staff report.

Board member Vella asked about the proposed window treatments and materials and whether they meet City requirements. Mr. Dong advises that the window details conform to the City's residential design guidelines.

Board member Vella asked the project architect to explain the choice of windows for the new addition. Alexandra Saikley, project architect, explained that wood windows were the preference, but the home owners elected to go with fiberglass.

Board member Vella asked about the purpose of the bay window, and Ms. Saikley explained that the bay window adds articulation to the front elevation as recommended by staff.

Chair Owens asked about the basis for Certificate of Approval. Mr. Tai explained the project requires a Certificate of Approval because building the addition would require demolition of more than 30% of the value of the existing structure, which is determined by the Building Official.

The Board opened the floor to public comments.

John Watkins, a neighbor, was not in favor of the proposal. He believes the addition would block his view of the sky. Mr. Watkins thinks the project would remove an affordable housing unit from the City by making it larger.

Stacy Kaplan, a neighbor, commented that the project is incompatible with the scale and character of the block, as most homes on the block are modest small homes and not two-story homes. She expressed concern over replacing the small, affordable home with a larger, more expensive home. Ms. Kaplan also cited concerns over parking.

Peter Slote, a neighbor, commented on the impacts of the addition to neighboring houses. He described this block of Union Street as historically a place for small housing stock and should be a historic resource due to affordability and scale. He believes a big boxy second story addition on this lot is inconsistent with the neighborhood. He also noted that a three-bed, two-bath house is inconsistent with the property size and asked the Board to deny the request.

Meredith Levins, property owner, commented on her family's decision to move to Alameda in 2010 to start a family. She noted that the existing home is a 760-square-foot two-bed, one-bath home, and the project intended as a modest expansion while preserving important design elements. Ms. Levins noted the property has a driveway that can accommodate parking. She noted that the shadow study shows the project will not affect any neighbors and that the window placement is sensitive to their neighbors' privacy.

Ken Levins, property owner, said he liked the diversity of the neighborhood because it was not made up of cookie cutter homes. He wants to take the opportunity to modify the home they love to make it an optimal living space that is attractive. He noted that the

project design conforms to the City's design guidelines and that City rules allow modifying the house while preserving the historical character.

Chris Buckley, representing the Alameda Architectural Preservation Society, commented on the design of the project. He noted that the configuration of the roof is inconsistent with the Guide to Residential Design. He recommended the use of a side facing gable to envelope the second story into the roof of the first level or bring elements of the first level into the second level. Mr. Buckley suggested deleting the bay window in order to deemphasize the second level. He commented on the various forms of window treatment and recommended the windows show muntins. Mr. Buckley also recommended adding a belly band on the second floor to transition with the shingles, and address privacy impacts by raising the window sills to eye level. He asked for clarity from staff on the application of the Secretary's Standards for properties on the study list.

Mr. Tai noted that the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for treatment of historic properties sometimes conflict with the City's residential design guidelines. The primary example being the Secretary's Standards call for differentiating new construction from the existing while the City's guidelines suggest merging new construction into the existing building as if it were part of the original design.

Ms. Saikley described the intent behind the design and indicated exploring examples similar to Chris Buckley's suggestions. She described the front facing gable as the best approach to maintain the original bungalow facade while adding a second story. She noted that a side-facing gable on the second story would need to be much steeper, higher and inconsistent with the original rooflines. Furthermore, this type of roof form could not achieve the interior livable space that is desired. Ms. Saikley added that the proposed design preserves the front porch and sets back the second floor. She noted that other minor details could be added to windows to further enhance compatibility.

Celia Schwarz, a neighbor, noted that the adjacent homes were all identical bungalows with small yards. She stated that the bungalows do not have bay windows, and she believes the subject property is overhanging her property by one foot. She believes that her neighbors have good jobs, and should therefore buy another property in Alameda without putting the neighbors through the proposed changes.

Chair Owens closed the public comments.

Board member Vella asked the architect to explain the purpose for reconfiguring the laundry room and bathroom on the first floor. Ms. Saikley explained the location of the laundry and bath were to allow stacking the bathrooms on both floors and consolidate the plumbing in one location within the small footprint of the house.

Board member Vella noted that Burbank Street has many bungalows with additions where good examples of the second story additions. She asked if the architect looked at the houses on Burbank Street for reference. Ms. Saikley replied no.

Board member Vella concurred with the overall comments made earlier by Christopher Buckley, and she agreed that the bay window on the front elevation should be eliminated. She suggested the architect look closely at the illustration provided by Mr. Buckley as a basis for design revisions.

Chair Owens asked whether there is a maximum floor area ratio in the Zoning Ordinance.

Mr. Tai replied no, but that the development standards provide a maximum height limit of two-stories and 35-feet. The development standards are further supplemented by the design guidelines.

Chair Owens asked whether the Board can add the building to the historic buildings study list. Mr. Tai explained that it would be an action that was not noticed for this meeting. Furthermore, a survey or historical context assessment would need to be prepared for the property to determine if it meets criteria for designation as a historic resource. The criteria is generally related to the property having distinctive architectural character or some significant historical association with local persons or events. Mr. Tai noted that this property is highly unlikely to qualify as a historic resource.

Board member Piziali commented that most of the Design Review issues are subject to Planning Board purview. The item before the Board is a Certificate of Approval for the demolition work that is proposed as part of the addition. He asked the Board to go along with the staff recommendation.

Chair Owens asked staff whether the project will go before the Planning Board. Mr. Tai responded that the Design Review for this project would be acted on at the staff level, and it would only go before the Planning Board upon an appeal or a Call for Review by members of the Planning Board. Otherwise, there will be no public hearing.

Chair Owens commented that he cannot find justifications for the property to qualify for the study list, and he reminded the Board that the vote before them is to approve or not approve the Certificate of Approval. He also disagrees with Mr. Buckley on requiring side facing gables, because the building is too shallow to accommodate that roof pitch. Chair Owens also suggested that casement windows should include muntins to match existing. He also acknowledged raising the sills on certain side elevation windows to address the neighbor's privacy concerns. He agreed with the use of a bay window or dormer on the front elevation to break up the façade. He expressed favor in approving the proposal.

Board member Vella also acknowledged there was no reason to add the building to the study list. She believes the project needs to incorporate as many features as possible found on surrounding homes. She agrees with raising the window heights and revisiting specific design treatment as previously noted to keep neighborhood compatibility.

Board member Chan concurred with the comments made by previous Board members.

Motion to approve by Board member Piziali, Seconded by Board member Vella. Approved 4-0. Vice Chair Rauk absent.

- 7-B 2015-1996 Certificate of Approval - PLN15-0277 - 763 Buena Vista Ave - Applicant: Italo Calpestri on behalf of Wei Lin Zhao. Applicant requests a Certificate of Approval to allow for the demolition of a single-family residence built prior to 1942. The property is not listed on the City's Historic Building Study List. The project site has two residential structures on-site, of which the building at the front, a single family residence, will be demolished and the building at the rear, a two-family residence, will remain. The project is intended to allow future subdivision of the property into three lots. The project is categorically exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 - demolition and removal of a single-family residence.

Mr. Tai noted that the applicant has requested the item be continued to the future public hearing that would be renoticed.

8. BOARD COMMUNICATIONS: None

9. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS:

9-A 2015-1997 Certificate of Approvals Recent Actions and Decisions

Mr. Tai gave an overview of the recent actions by staff.

9-B 2015-1998 Update on 1605 Park Street

Mr. Tai provided an update on the status of the fire damaged building at 1605 Park Street. He noted that work is in progress by the property owner to determine whether the existing building can be salvaged and whether there is any historical integrity remaining in the fire damaged structure.

Chair Owens inquired about the status of the retail space below China House restaurant. Mr. Tai replied that a renovation is pending building permits to convert the space into a tavern. The project was previously reviewed by the board.

10. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS: None.

11. ADJOURNMENT: Adjourned at 8:26 p.m.