

DESIGN ASSISTANCE SUBCOMMITTEE

July 11, 2007, 3:00 pm – 5:00
4th Floor Conference Room
City Administration Building
202 C Street, San Diego, CA

MEETING NOTES

1. ATTENDANCE

Boardmembers: David Marshall (Chair), Delores McNeely, and John Eisenhart

Staff: Kelley Saunders, Tricia Olsen HRB

Guests: 3924 Henry Street: Jill Maninge, Vonn Marie May
Bradley-Woolman, St Cecilia's Chapel: John Silber, architect;
Gary Squier, owner; Marie Lia, attorney
2535 San Marcos Avenue: Patricia Garland, owner; Soamus
Garland, architect; John Carter, architect
1217 27th Street: Tom Lewis, contractor
123 East Seaward: Alex Macedo, owner/developer;

2. Public/Staff Comment: None

3. Projects

- 3924 Henry Street: This item was considered for designation during the March HRB meeting and not designated due to a change in the original roofline. The owners, Jill and Rob Ayling and their consultant, Vonn Marie May, would like to determine what roofline changes would have to occur in order for the house to be reconsidered for designation. The modifications occurred 20 years ago when they worked on the roof in order to address, among other issues, flooding in the basement. The roofline and pedestals were modified. The applicant wants to know if they could differentiate the roof modification rather than removing to prevent flooding of the basement. The applicant provided a historic photograph of the home prior to the modifications.

Subcommittee Comment:

Boardmember Marshall asked for clarification as to how the flooding occurred. The applicant responded that water falling from the original roof line would seep into the basement. Boardmember McNeely asked if other homes have the same flooding problem. The applicant stated that they did not believe so. Boardmember Marshall felt that the original roofline may have contributed to the leaking, but was not the cause. Poor drainage at grade was likely the main issue, and that restoration of the roofline would not necessarily lead to flooding of the basement. He noted that there are other measures to

prevent water intrusion, including drains and modifications to grading and paving to direct water away from the house.

Boardmember Marshall asked if the applicant would be willing to reconstruct the parapet piers, which were removed, and the applicant indicated that they would. He also recalled that the windows at the second floor had been replaced with vinyl, and asked if that was the only other modification. Boardmember Eisenhart noted that the fascia board appears to currently hang lower than it does in the applicant's historic photograph, and may have been modified. He would like to see it restored. Boardmember Eisenhart also emphasized that it is important to restore the positive and negative spaces and massing of the home, which were character defining features, and that the applicant's historic photo should be used as the basis to restore the home. In his opinion, the roof profile, fascia edge, piers on the parapet, and the upper windows should all be restored to their original appearance.

Boardmember Marshall asked for the subcommittee's input on the color scheme. Boardmember McNeely stated that the color is not an issue to her, and wonders whether the historic photo from the 1980's reflects the historic color. She stated that the upper windows are not as much of an issue for her, and that the reconstruction of the parapet piers and recess are the most important elements to restore. Boardmember Marshall agreed with the consensus of the subcommittee and agreed that the upper windows are less of a concern. If the roofline, parapet and fascia were restored, he feels that he could support designation. The restoration of the windows would be preferred, but it is not a requirement. As to the color, he is certain that the building was a lighter color, and he would prefer to see it restored, but that the current color is not so inconsistent as to preclude designation. Boardmember Eisenhart added that the site fencing is inconsistent with the style of the house and stated that he would prefer that the owner used a low 18" stucco wall with piers. Boardmember McNeely stated that she is most concerned by the black railing near the entryway. Boardmember Marshall felt that a Prairie style railing at the entryway may obscure the entry, and that repainting the fence at the street with a darker color, perhaps a dark hunter or olive green, would reduce the fence's visual impact on the site.

The final consensus was that restoration of the upper windows and paint are a preference; and the restoration of the roofline, fascia, parapets, and piers are a priority, as is painting the perimeter fence a dark color. The project could be reviewed and approved by staff if consistent with this direction. Boardmember Marshall also stressed that the subcommittee cannot ensure that the property would be designated even if the restorations are completed.

- Bradley-Woolman, St Cecilia's Chapel, Historic Site #308, 1620 Sixth Avenue: The Subcommittee has reviewed the project, which proposes adaptive reuse of the chapel as well as new construction, on two previous occasions. At the last meeting, DAS asked that the applicant explore options for retaining the chapel as a whole space, as opposed to dividing it for multiple tenants. Two main changes have occurred since the prior review. The applicant surveyed the site and found that the footprint is actually a little longer than they thought, so that has been corrected on the drawings. In addition, they are no longer

proposing to divide the nave, and are preserving it as a whole, unbroken space, to be improved by a future tenant at a future date. The primary elevation on 6th Avenue proposed to retain the chapel in its entirety, and that has not changed. The freeway elevation has not changed. Small portions of the original structure are impacted by the new construction on the south elevation and they are no longer proposing adding a porch, doors, or windows on the south façade. Some seismic reinforcement will occur. The chapel is in good shape, and will require minimal repair.

Subcommittee Comment:

Boardmember Marshall noted that it appears that the chapel will be minimally impacted, and asked the applicant if there would be any initial repair/restorations. They indicated that the roof may need repair, and they will use the existing historic tiles. Also, the lower roof would be restored with new mission tile to match the historic upper roof. Boardmember Marshall was encouraged to see that the nave is now being preserved. He encouraged the applicant to restore the interior shell, especially the vandalized woodwork and finishes, and not leave the restoration and improvements to a future tenant to ensure that it is done correctly and is consistent with the Standards. He also stated that the modifications to the south façade should be understated, simple and differentiated. Boardmembers McNeely and Eisenhart agreed. Boardmember Eisenhart requested a copy of the as-built floor plans for the designation file.

- 2535 San Marcos Avenue: The owner is proposing a two-story addition to the rear of this historically-designated house. DAS reviewed this project at their June meeting and asked the applicant to return with elevations and floor plans. John Carter, the project architect, and Tricia Garland, the owner, addressed the subcommittee's prior direction. Since last reviewed, the balcony has been set back, lowered 2-feet and the railing modified to a horizontal wood railing; the parapet crenellation has been removed from the new construction; the windows have been slightly recessed and simplified to a single pane to differentiate; a trellis "eyebrow" has been added above the windows at the second floor deck; and the chimney is being extended to meet code.

Subcommittee Comment:

Boardmember Eisenhart felt that there were too many planes and volumes, and asked that the chimney be brought flush with the wall. Boardmember Marshall asked if the height was necessary, and noted that the second floor is taller than the first. The applicant noted that the prior addition had been built with a gap between the first floor roof and the second floor addition, increasing the height. Boardmember Eisenhart questioned how much massing could be added before it begins to overwhelm the historic structure. Boardmember Marshall noted that the rendering helped to provide perspective as to the visual impact. Boardmember McNeely asked how much additional square footage is being added to the second floor. The applicant stated that approximately 800 square feet is being added. Boardmember Eisenhart stated that despite increasing the setback of the deck, he doesn't support a deck on the main street facade. Boardmember Marshall agreed that the deck should be removed from the main façade if at all visible from the public-

right-of way. However, if additional renderings show that the deck and railing are not visible to the public, he'd support the deck addition. He also agreed that the chimney should be brought flush with the wall, and felt that the "eye-brow" or trellis above the new windows was overly busy and should be removed. The applicants agreed to remove the trellis. In addition, the ceilings should be kept to 8' to reduce the overall height of the structure. As an alternative, the ceiling could be reduced to 8.5' and the parapet could be trimmed down six inches, reducing the overall height by one foot. McNeely felt comfortable with the height as proposed.

The final consensus was that height is not the main issue. The deck should be removed, but may be kept if not at all visible from the right-of-way, but only with additional review by DAS of renderings. If the deck is kept, the railing should be returned to a low stucco wall, the wood railing is too busy. The chimney should also be brought flush with the wall, to simplify the overall composition.

1217 27th Street: The owner is requesting input from DAS regarding the recent restoration of the porch and its consistency with the Standards in order to preserve the option of designating the 1911 cottage at a future date. The applicant has a 1958 historic photograph of the house and photos documenting the removal of the non-historic porch. The construction of the new porch was completed with the assistance of Bruce Coons from SOHO. The porch was constructed with vertical grain wood and has been primed, but not yet painted.

Subcommittee Comment:

Boardmember Marshall asked if there were any Sanborn maps to indicate the existence of an original porch or if anyone knows what was originally there. There is no evidence to indicate what was there at the period of construction. The applicant is working with Mr. Coons on appropriate paint colors. Boardmember Marshall said that he felt the porch would work well once painted to blend with the house, but asked what would be done to conceal the prominent crawl space under the porch. The applicant intends to finish the foundation and crawl space with wood skirting and landscaping. Boardmember Marshall was comfortable with the porch reconstruction given the limited historical evidence, and feels that it would not preclude designation. The other subcommittee members concurred.

- 123 East Seaward: This site was designated at the June hearing under HRB Criterion A for its association with the Little Landers Colony and HRB Criterion C as a good example of Vernacular Craftsman architecture. The designation was initiated as a result of a permit application to demolish the resource to accommodate a new townhouse development. The applicant wishes to discuss the condition of the resource and the feasibility of incorporating it into the project. The contractor noted the following structural issues and concerns: the fireplace is a hand-laid brick fireplace with no structural flue on a small concrete foundation that is over 30' tall, and appears to be unsafe; a second chimney has been partially removed and stops at the roof framing; the second story addition at the rear is not original; some portions of the house have structural deflection; some of the windows have been replaced; and the siding is

deteriorated in spots. The applicant is concerned that restoration of the house, coupled with the potential loss of units in order to retain the resource, will render their project economically infeasible. The project started as 24 townhouse units, which was reduced to 22, then 21 and they are concerned that maintaining the resource, which is located in the location of a proposed driveway, would reduce the project by an additional 4 units.

Subcommittee Comment:

Boardmember Marshall noted that the problems noted by the contractor are fairly typical for older homes. Restoration is preferred, but not a requirement, only retention of the resource. The development could build around the resource and leave it as is. In looking at their options, the applicants are concerned that the house may not be stable enough to be relocated. Boardmember Marshall stated that due to its significance for its location, relocation probably wouldn't be appropriate or consistent with the Standards. However, wood-framed buildings with crawl spaces are the easiest and least expensive type of structure to move.

Boardmember Marshall asked if there was an option for alternative access to the site other than the proposed driveway in the current location of the resource, to which the applicant responded that there is not another option without losing units. Boardmember Marshall stated that the resource could be retained without losing units by eliminating some garages and adding additional surface parking. In addition, the resource could be incorporated into the project as two smaller units. The resource is approximately 2500 square feet and the proposed units are approximately 1700 square feet.

The applicant was concerned with bringing it up to code and with their ability to sell the resource as a unit. Boardmember Marshall stated that it would not need to be brought up to code unless the use were changed, and noted that historic portions of development projects are often the first to sell. Boardmember Eisenhart felt that the resource could be retained with additional site planning and suggested that it be moved slightly north of its present location, replacing two lost units with the resource rehabilitated to provide two units. In addition, the applicant could incorporate new construction at the rear of the resource. The subcommittee agreed that relocation slightly north would be consistent with the Standards, provided that the orientation of the building doesn't change. If the resource were relocated, the applicant could utilize turf-block adjacent to the house at the proposed driveway, which would provide landscaping space (incorporating the agricultural significance) while still providing vehicle access. Primary resident access could be taken off of Beyer Boulevard. Boardmember McNeely added that it would be nice if the house could be used as common area for the townhouse development. Boardmember Marshall stated that relocation of the house within the lot should not be as costly as other relocations.

4. Adjourned at 4:43

The next DAS Meeting is scheduled for August 1, 2007 at 3:00 p.m.

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