



CITY OF POMONA

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

COMMISSION REPORT

DATE: January 16, 2019

TO: Historic Preservation Commission (HPC)

FROM: Development Services Department, Planning Division

SUBJECT: ITEM G-1

CONSIDERATION OF THE DISPOSITION OF THE POMONA CITY STABLES BUILDING, LOCATED AT 636 WEST MONTEREY AVENUE. APPLICANT AND PROPERTY OWNER: CITY OF POMONA, PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT (CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT 1)

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission discuss and consider various options for the disposition of the City Stables Building and provide a recommendation for the City Council's consideration.

BACKGROUND

The building is a two-and-a-half story, unreinforced brick structure on concrete footings. The building measures 98 feet long x 44 feet wide, built of approximately 180,000 bricks laid in three courses. The walls are eighteen inches thick and the roof consists of asphalt shingles.

Located in the City's Monterey Street Yards (Attachment 1), the City Stables building is the old brick structure that is visible above the White Avenue underpass. The 1994 Downtown Pomona Specific Plan designated the City Stables building as a City of Pomona Landmark Structure, but the 1995 adoption of the current Historic Preservation Ordinance deleted all previously approved City monuments. On April 8, 2003, the Historical Society of Pomona Valley submitted an application nominating the City Stables building as a Single Historic Landmark. On May 12, 2003, the City Council, acting as the property owner, consented to scheduling the Society's application for public hearing before the Historic Preservation Commission. That hearing took place on July 2, 2003 and the Commission recommended that the City Council approve the designation. City Council designated the City Stables building on August 4, 2003. The building was listed on the National Register (NR) on October 6, 2004.

ANALYSIS

Use and Condition at the Time of Designation

The building was condemned in the 1970s and has remained unused since that time. Although the building was in a dilapidated condition when it was listed as a Single Historic Landmark, it was anticipated that a listing would facilitate grant funding. This funding never materialized. The NR nomination documented various problems: the stairs to the second story of the building “are in such a condition that they could be very dangerous to travel. The exterior walls of the stable have several very distinct shift cracks, due to creep, stress and pressure from earthquakes. Severe wall damage is evident on the northwest side where many bricks have fallen or been removed.” Further, at least 70% of the roof was missing to the degree that the sky was clearly visible. The nomination also indicated the floor of the second story and ceiling of the first floor were “highly deteriorated and in considerable danger of caving in.” As a result of the fiscal state of the City, there has not been funding to perform repairs for a building that was not utilized for City purposes and is not open to the public.

On February 8, 2017, the stable suffered a further collapse of the roof and walls due to a combination of factors including excessive rain, clogged roof drains, vibrations from the nearby railroad tracks, and the general state of decay of the building. A short time later, the stable suffered another significant structural failure. Currently, the stable is being stabilized with the use of bracing apparatus (Attachment 2). For the time being, this bracing is performing its function however, over time, as pressures of the collapsed portion of the building remain and deterioration continues, the possibility of a further collapse cannot be ruled out. Should this occur during the workday, there is a possibility of City Staff being injured by debris.

It should be noted that the Monterey Street Yards are used intensively by the Public Works and Utilities Services Departments. These departments had concerns regarding the City Stables building nomination including: compelling safety issues and risks regarding the un-reinforced masonry structure, that the building has long been vacant and unused and that there are currently neither plans nor budget for the renovation and reuse of the building, and that the location of the building diminishes adaptive reuse opportunities for public purposes.

Historic Significance of the City Stables

The Pomona City Stables is a two-and-one-half story brick building constructed in 1909. Originally housing up to 26 horses serving the City, the Stables soon fell into disuse as the animals were displaced by trucks, tractors, and other motorized equipment. The signs on the building were finally repainted in 1937 to read "Pomona City Yards" instead of "Pomona City Stables". The building was used as a warehouse for materials, tools, and emergency equipment and as overflow offices. The building is currently structurally unsafe, vacant and unused.

The architectural style of the City Stables building is described as Italianate Vernacular. The most distinctive and noticeable features of the building are the two ventilation cupolas, the corbie-stepped gable ends, and the arched window openings. Each of the four facades has a second-floor hay-loading door. Several ornate iron beam anchors are located on the exterior walls of the building.

In addition to its architectural features, the City Stables building is a reminder of those long-gone days before motor power replaced muscle power. Horses and mules once served as draft and transportation animals for nearly every City function, and their care was a necessary element in providing City services.

The City Stables building remains on its original site, but the site has changed significantly. Before the White Avenue underpass was completed in 1960, the City Stables building fronted directly on White Avenue and was highly visible from the street. The public's view of the building is now significantly screened by the underpass landscaping and the grade differential. The building is located within the City Yards in an area inaccessible to the public.

DISCUSSION

On March 5, 2018, the City Council approved the creation of the new “City Stable Facility” project in the City’s Capital Improvement Program, and funded it with \$949,380 of insurance monies. The City Council also directed Staff to review project options with the Historic Preservation Commission and Parks and Recreation Commission, and return to City Council with recommendations.

Parks & Recreation Commission

This issue was taken to the Parks and Recreation Commission for advisory review on April 19, 2018. Their direction was to salvage building materials, cost permitting, and spend remaining project funds, if any, on other historical site improvements in the City, as recommended by the Historic Preservation Commission.

Historic Designation and Environmental Review Requirements

The recommendation of the Parks and Recreation Commission was removal of the structure with some level of salvage, cost permitting. Even with salvage possibilities, the removal of the structure triggers Environmental Review due to its historic designation as a landmark. The cost for the required environmental process ranges from \$80,000 to \$100,000, and will take approximately 6 months to a year to complete. After the recommendation of the Parks and Recreation Commission, City Staff worked with the State requesting the historic designation be removed. This request, if granted, would have enabled the City to utilize more of the insurance proceeds for the City’s public historic buildings that have significant maintenance needs. Unfortunately, after review of the documents and photos, and several conversations, the request was denied. As a result, an Environmental Review must be completed. In order to process the appropriate environmental report, Staff needs to provide the consultant with the project details to ensure the impacts are discussed and addressed.

Rough Cost Estimates

To provide the Commission and the City Council with more robust information to evaluate, a more detailed list of 11 different options has been prepared by Staff for consideration. Options range from preservation and reconstruction to removal and preservation of salvageable materials. Further, the City recently consulted with Cumming Construction Management, Inc. to provide

approximate costs for each of the 11 options (Attachment 3). For a standard demolition, with no preservation of materials (Option 3.0), the estimated cost is \$309,927 (not including the additional \$80k-\$100k for the environmental process). The estimated salvage costs range from \$5,679 for the removal and preservation of each exterior window (Option 9.1) to \$5,112,440 for the preservation and reconstruction of the building in place, including improvements to make the space usable for office/storage (Option 2.0). These estimated costs include costs for environmental remediation for the applicable options.

Also included in Attachment 3 are detailed cost breakdowns for each option that include key assumptions and exclusions.

CONCLUSION

The City Stables building has long been identified as a dangerous building. Financial constraints prevented the City from adequately maintaining it over time. The location of the building limits its visibility, access, and thus, value to the public. The Historic Preservation Commission's recommendation on the disposition of the City Stables, including information from the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting, will be brought to City Council at one of their forthcoming meetings in February. The appropriate environmental documentation will be processed based on City Council's decision.

Respectfully Prepared and Submitted By,

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ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1 – Aerial Photo of the Project Site
Attachment 2 – Photographs of Project Site
Attachment 3 – List of Options with Rough Cost Estimates