



CITY OF POMONA

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

DATE: January 15, 2020

TO: Historic Preservation Commission (HPC)

FROM: Planning Division

SUBJECT: MAJOR CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS (MAJCOA 11397-2019)
Major Certificate of Appropriateness (MAJCOA 11397-2019) to allow for the demolition of four (4) pre-1945 single-family residences on a property located at 961, 955, 953 and 949 E. Phillips Blvd.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) adopt the attached resolution (Attachment 1) denying Major Certificate of Appropriateness No.11397-2019 for the demolition of four (4) single-family residences located at 961, 955, 953 and 949 E. Phillips Blvd. based upon Commission findings.

PROPERTY & APPLICANT INFORMATION

Address	961, 955, 953, 949 E. Phillips Blvd.
Assessor's Parcel Number (APN)	8333-031-013
Lot Size	38,777 s.f. (.89 acres)
General Plan Land Use Designation	Residential Neighborhood
Zoning District	R-2
Historic District	None
Specific Plan	None
City Council District	3
Applicant	Yongzhi Wan
Property Owner	Yongzhi Wan

RELATED ACTIONS

Historic Preservation Commission	None
Code Enforcement	None
Planning	None

BACKGROUND

The project site is located within the R-2 Low Density Multiple Family Zone with an S-overlay. It is located north of Phillips Street, south of Grand Ave, east of Towne Ave, and west of San Antonio Ave. (Attachment 2). The four (4) single-family residences have an estimated construction date of 1910, 1923, 1925, and 1924 respectively per Los Angeles County Assessor data. The applicant intends to demolish the properties and develop a 12-unit, 2 story townhome project consisting of four triplex buildings.

On January 30, 2019, the applicant submitted an application for a Major Certificate of Appropriateness (MAJCOA 11397-2019) to request the demolition of four (4) single-family residences. On April 3, 2019, staff presented the case to the HPC with a recommendation to approve the MAJCOA and allow for the demolition of the four (4) pre-1945 single-family residences. After holding a duly noticed public hearing and hearing public testimony the Commission had a robust discussion and found that all four (4) structures did have historical significance and requested that staff return with findings for denial of the request to demolish all four residences at the June 5, 2019 HPC meeting. Subsequent to the April 3, 2019 public hearing, the applicant submitted a historic review report on May 14, 2019 as additional information from a third party peer review (Sapphos Environmental) to evaluate the historical significance of the four single-family residences on site (Attachment 3). The report concluded that the four subject residences should not be considered historical resources pursuant to Section 15064.5(a) of the CEQA Guidelines.

On June 5, 2019, at the direction of the HPC, staff brought back findings for denial of the demolition of the four pre-1945 single-family residences, with a request for additional input on the findings to deny the request. The historical report submitted on May 14, 2019, could not be considered at this meeting because the public hearing had been closed at the April 3, 2019 meeting, thus limiting the decision to facts presented during the public hearing. The Commission indicated their interest in considering this new information and moved to take the item off calendar to allow the item to be re-noticed for a new public hearing at a future date (Attachment 4).

Staff was prepared to bring the item back to HPC for their consideration at its August 7, 2019 meeting; however, on July 01, 2019, the project contractor, Jim Moran, provided staff with an email requesting that the item be taken off the August meeting agenda, stating that the applicants were not prepared to move forward at that point in time (Attachment 5). Subsequently, numerous emails were exchanged to schedule a date to discuss alternative proposals. However, on November 24, 2019 the project owner Qiuying (Laura) Liu, provided staff with an email requesting that the project be taken to the next available HPC hearing without changes to the project (Attachment 6), and on November 29, 2019, the owner submitted a revised report from Sapphos Environmental with additional information regarding the historical significance of the four homes. Subsequently, the project was scheduled for the HPC meeting of January 15, 2020.

APPLICABLE CODE SECTIONS

Per Section .5809-13(F)(8) of the City of Pomona Zoning Ordinance, “*all applications for demolition of structures built prior to 1945 submitted to the building division shall be considered by Pomona historic preservation commission for a certificate of appropriateness even if the structure is not a designated landmark.*” Furthermore, a public hearing notice was newly re-noticed since this item was taken off calendar to be re-noticed at another date. In making a determination, the Historic Preservation Commission “*shall first consider if the property would likely meet the criteria used in historic landmark designation thus deeming it of historical significance,*” and if so, “*then a structure would be denied a certificate of appropriateness for demolition unless it meets the criteria for economic hardship.*”

ANALYSIS

Historic Landmark Designation Criteria

Of the four structures located on the subject site, only two properties were identified in the City of Pomona’s 1993 Historic Resources Inventory Survey, 949 and 961 E. Phillips Blvd. The survey identified these as structures with no architectural characteristics or were altered to lose their architectural value. However, at the public hearings for this project, the HPC disagreed with this assessment and expressed numerous reasons why the structures held historical significance.

Per Section .5809-13(F)(8) of the City of Pomona Zoning Ordinance, the Historic Preservation Commission shall first consider if the property would likely meet the following criteria used in historic landmark designation. Tabled below are findings provided from the Commissioners from both hearings on April 3, 2019 and June 5, 2019 (Attachment 7 & 8):

949 E. Phillips Blvd. (Structure A)

Criteria	Analysis
<i>It exemplifies or reflects special elements of the city of Pomona’s cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, architectural, or natural history;</i>	Commissioners commented that the porch, sidings, eaves underneath the roof and windows are original and stated that much of the interior of the home such as the flooring and moldings have been kept intact. Commissioners also emphasized that the structure could be contributing once the front porch was modified and that the original condition of the home reflects special elements of the city of Pomona’s aesthetic and architectural history.

<i>It embodies distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction, or is a valuable example of the use of indigenous materials or craftsmanship</i>	Chair Martin believed the home to be distinct in that the front fascia boards angled out, adding an “Asian flare” to the home. The original windows and the window to the attic also added a distinct characteristic to the style of Craftsman home. Though “not wholeheartedly craftsman,” Commissioner Gonzalez believed that the home was a transition from Victorian to Craftsman. Commissioners also noted that the home is 109 years old.
<i>It embodies elements of architectural design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship that represent a significant structural or architectural achievement or innovation;</i>	Commissioners have noted several times that the original state of the exterior and interior of the home is historically significant and holds enough craftsmanship of Craftsman Bungalow homes.
<i>It has a unique location or singular physical characteristics or is a view or vista representing an established and familiar visual feature of an neighborhood, community, or the city of Pomona</i>	Commissioner Williams stated, based on the designation criteria, that she would argue that the four buildings located on this lot make this parcel unique in that area. She further noted that the four homes on this lot makes it its own historic district.
<i>It reflects significant geographical patterns, including those associated with different eras of settlement and growth, particular transportation modes, or distinctive examples of park or community planning</i>	Commissioner Williams also thought that the movement of homes of a certain era to different places around a certain time period is part of a geographic trend.

In summary, Commissioners believed that 949 E. Phillips Blvd. was historically significant in that the home held its original style and material. The original condition of the interior and exterior of the home, and it’s potential to become a contributing structure once alterations were reversed made this home historically significant. Furthermore, Commissioner Williams clarified that this home held historical significance based on the four historical buildings locating on one lot, and the movement of these homes in 1956 held historical significance.

953 E. Phillips Blvd. (Structure B)

Criteria	Analysis
<i>It exemplifies or reflects special elements of the city of</i>	Commissioners noted the interior fireplace located within the living room to be of significance and commented that there are

<i>Pomona's cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, architectural, or natural history;</i>	images of covered wagons on the fireplace which can possibly reflect special elements of the City of Pomona's cultural, social, economic, or natural history.
<i>It embodies distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction, or is a valuable example of the use of indigenous materials or craftsmanship;</i>	Commissioners believed the home to be of Tudor architectural style, with the steeply pitched, side-gabled roof and the tall narrow multi-pane windows resembling Tudor architecture. The chimney of the home was also considered to be distinctive by the commission and most interior fixtures and kitchen to be in original condition.
<i>It has a unique location or singular physical characteristics or is a view or vista representing an established and familiar visual feature of an neighborhood, community, or the city of Pomona</i>	Commissioner Williams stated that, based on the designation criteria, she would argue that the four buildings located on this lot make this parcel unique in that area. She further noted that the four homes on this lot makes it its own historic district.
<i>It reflects significant geographical patterns, including those associated with different eras of settlement and growth, particular transportation modes, or distinctive examples of park or community planning</i>	Commissioner Williams also thought that the movement of homes of a certain era to different places around a certain time period is part of a geographic trend.

Commissioners have noted that the interior fireplace, original kitchen, and the original interior condition of the home to be of historical significance. Commissioners have noted that the features of the home such as the chimney, interior fireplace, and Tudor-type architectural style brought distinctive characteristics to this home. Furthermore, Commissioner Williams clarified that this home held historical significance based on the four historical buildings locating on one lot, and the movement of these homes in 1956 held historical significance.

955 E. Phillips Blvd. (Structure C)

Criteria	Analysis
<i>It embodies distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction, or is a valuable example of the use of indigenous materials or</i>	Commissioners stated that much of the interior of the home is kept intact and that the interior exhibits beautiful moldings. Commissioners also stated that the interior kitchen and doors seem to be of original materials as well.

<i>craftsmanship;</i>	
<i>It has a unique location or singular physical characteristics or is a view or vista representing an established and familiar visual feature of an neighborhood, community, or the city of Pomona</i>	Commissioner Williams stated that, based on the designation criteria, she would argue that the four buildings located on this lot make this parcel unique in that area. She further noted that the four homes on this lot makes it its own historic district.
<i>It reflects significant geographical patterns, including those associated with different eras of settlement and growth, particular transportation modes, or distinctive examples of park or community planning</i>	Commissioner Williams also thought that the movement of homes of a certain era to different places around a certain time period is part of a geographic trend.

955 E. Phillips Blvd. is considered to be of historical significance because much of the interior structure, finishes, and moldings that are in place. Furthermore, Commissioner Williams clarified that this home held historical significance based on the four historical buildings locating on one lot, and the movement of these homes from 1956 held historical significance.

961 E. Phillips Blvd. (Structure D)

<i>It has a unique location or singular physical characteristics or is a view or vista representing an established and familiar visual feature of an neighborhood, community, or the city of Pomona</i>	Commissioner Williams stated based on the designation criteria she would argue that four buildings located on this lot make this parcel unique in that area. She further noted that four homes on this lot makes it its own historic district.
<i>It reflects significant geographical patterns, including those associated with different eras of settlement and growth, particular transportation modes, or distinctive examples of park or community planning</i>	Commissioner Williams also thought that the movement of homes of a certain era to different places around a certain time period is part of a geographic trend.

Commissioner Williams clarified during the June 5, 2019 HPC hearing that this home held

historical significance based on the four historical buildings locating on one lot, and the movement of these homes from 1956 held historical significance.

Chair Martin stated that the move of these three homes: 955 E. Phillips (moved from 803 E. 3rd Street), 949 E. Phillips (moved from 285 S. East End), and 953 E. Phillips (moved from Monte Vista), could be related to the construction of the 10 freeway in 1957. However, staff was not able to confirm this assumption due to its distance from the freeway.

In addition, Staff reviewed the historic review report from Sapphos Environmental Inc. The report inaccurately states on page 2 of the report that the City Municipal Code (Section 5809-13) only regulates the exterior of eligible and designated historic landmarks. The current Pomona Zoning Ordinance is silent about interior evaluation and this consideration remains at the discretion of the Commission. On November 29, 2019, the applicant submitted an updated historic review report to provide additional information on the historical significance of these four homes; the report emphasized the lack of historical integrity of the four homes. The report concludes that in order for properties to be eligible for listing in the National Register, a property must also have integrity as defined in the National Register Bulletin No. 15, “the ability of a property to convey its significance,” with the following seven attributes: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Based upon these criteria, the four structures lack historical integrity. Furthermore, the report notes that the date of relocation of the three properties has no historical relevance to the construction of the 10 freeway that was opened in Pomona in 1954 (Attachment 9).

PUBLIC NOTICING

Per section .5809-13(F)(8) of the City of Pomona Zoning Ordinance, demolitions of pre-1945 structures require a thirty (30) day notice to all property owners directly adjacent to, or directly across the street prior to the date of the commission public hearing. On December 12, 2019, public hearing notice was posted at the subject site, and on December 14, 2019, public hearing notices were sent to the applicant, mailed to all owners and tenants of properties located directly adjacent to and directly across the street from the subject site, and to all local historical groups and HPC commissioners. In addition, the public hearing notice was published in the Inland Valley Daily Bulletin on December 18, 2019. As of date, Planning has received no inquiries about possible relocation of the structures.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Pursuant to the Guidelines for Implementation of the Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the proposed project meets the criteria for a Class 1, Section 15301 Categorical Exemption in that the project involves the demolition and removal of duplex or similar multifamily residential structure. In urbanized areas, this exemption applies to duplexes and similar structures where not more than six dwelling units are proposed to be demolished.

CONCLUSION

In summary, staff presents the HPC findings to deny the request to demolish the four subject residential structures based on the previous findings provided by the Commission. The Commission has found these four residences to hold historical significance and value due to their exhibit of original material, distinct interior and exterior architectural qualities. Furthermore, additional findings were provided by the Commission stating that the residences hold historical significance based on the fact that the four residences are located on one lot and the movement of these residences in 1956 hold historical geographical settlement significance.

Respectfully submitted by:

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ATTACHMENTS:

- 1) Draft HPC Resolution
- 2) Staff Report, April 3, 2019 Hearing Package
- 3) Historic Peer Review by Sapphos Environmental Inc. Dated May 9, 2019
- 4) Staff Report, June 5, 2019 Hearing Package
- 5) Email Attachment dated July 01, 2019
- 6) Email Attachment dated November 24, 2019
- 7) HPC Official Minutes for April 3, 2019
- 8) HPC Official Minutes for June 5, 2019
- 9) Revised Historic Peer Review by Sapphos Environmental Inc. Dated November 27, 2019