



HISTORICAL COMMISSION MINUTES

7:00 p.m., Monday, August 27, 2007
Los Altos Community Meeting Chambers
One North San Antonio Road, Los Altos, California 94022

CALL TO ORDER: Chair H. GIRDLEY called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Chair H. GIRDLEY, Commissioners DREWES, K. GIRDLEY, MARFATIA, and BAKER.

Staff: Senior Planner KORNFELD and Associate Planner DAHL

MINUTES: Commissioner DREWES moved approval of the July 25, 2007 Minutes, seconded by Commissioner MARFATIA, motion passed 5-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT: none.

DISCUSSION AND PUBLIC INTEREST ITEMS:

133 W. Edith Avenue Porch Addition – The Commission considered owner David Ogilvie's request to recognize the as-built front porch addition to the historically significant structure. Commissioner DREWES expressed support for quality of construction and fact that posts match existing, but expressed concern about overall design and shallow roof pitch. Commissioner MARFATIA expressed concern that porch was already built, created a false façade and didn't match the pitch of existing roof. Chair H. GIRDLEY expressed concern about losing architectural integrity of the historic structure, that this was adding a front porch to an existing front porch and suggested having an architect address the porch and provide alternatives. It was noted that the existing front porch had been enclosed with a front door without review by the Historical Commission.

Commissioner K. GIRDLEY moved to recommend denial of the application and remove the front porch, which failed for lack of a second.

Commissioners discussed looking at other options and the fact that the addition may devalue the historical nature of the house.

Commissioner K. GIRDLEY moved again to recommend denial of the application and remove the front porch, which was seconded by Commissioner DREWES.
Motion failed 2-3 (H. GIRDLEY, MARFATIA, and BAKER opposed).

Chair H. GIRDLEY moved to continue the item and recommended that an architect evaluate the design and provide an alternative that is more in-keeping with the historical nature of the house, which was seconded by Commissioner MARFATIA.
Motion passed 5-0.

980 Covington Road Detached Garage Addition – The Commission considered designer Walter Chapman’s request to construct a detached accessory garage on a landmark eligible property. Mr. Chapman noted that the owner may not want to pursue the decorative open railing on the garage in order to avoid the need for a variance approval. Chair H. GIRDLEY felt that the decorative open railing was an important feature of the project. Commissioner MARFATIA expressed a desire to remove the decorative open railing as it would create an historical detail that was out of context, wanted to see a landscape plan included with the project and wanted to see plans for maintenance of the existing historic Tank House.

Commissioner BAKER moved to approve the project with or without the decorative open railing, which was seconded by Commissioner DREWES.
Motion failed 2-3 (H. GIRDLEY, MARFATIA, and K. GIRDLEY opposed).

Commissioner MARFATIA moved to approve project without the decorative open railing, with a condition that the owner maintain or install new landscaping to buffer the view of the detached garage from Covington Road as much as possible and a recommendation that the historic Tank House be maintained and restored as much as possible, which was seconded by Commissioner K. GIRDLEY.
Motion passed 5-0.

500 University Avenue Remodel and Addition – The Commission considered designer Walter Chapman’s request to remodel and add 457 square feet to an existing historic landmark residence. Mr. Chapman presented an alternative design that emphasized removal of the more modern additions and materials and replacement of them with materials and design elements consistent with the original 1910 design style. The Commissioners expressed general support for the alternative design and the goal of refurbishing the structure with historically consistent elements and details. Commissioner MARFATIA opposed adding smaller gables to the structure because it would deemphasize the original massing of the main gables.

Commissioner K. GIRDLEY moved to approve the project with the alternative design, which was seconded by Commissioner BAKER.
Motion passed 4-1 (MARFATIA opposed).

Commissioner MARFATIA moved to amend the motion to include a condition requiring project to include shop drawings, specific material details of the architectural elements to be used and color samples, which was seconded by Commissioner DREWES.
Motion passed 5-0.

Community Picnic Planning – Commissioners MARFATIA and BAKER presented the “Los Altos History” pins, the historical building placards and other signup materials for the history hunt.

Historic Resources Inventory – The Commission discussed the status of the windshield survey. Chair H. GIRDLEY and Commissioners MARFATIA, BAKER and DREWES have completed the survey pending getting the photographs in order. Next phase would be to review and rank each property and identify if that structure/property has historic value. At the Commission’s request, staff agreed to work on expanding the list of potentially historic properties by researching Assessor and permit records and identifying an original date of construction.

Historic Preservation Awards – Chair H. GIRDLEY deferred this item to the September Historical Commission meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Senior Planner KORNFIELD presented Associate Planner DAHL as the new Staff Liaison to the Historical Commission.

COMMISSION REPORTS AND DIRECTION ON FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS: None.

ADJOURNMENT:

Chair H. GIRDLEY adjourned the meeting at 9:35 PM.

David Kornfield, AICP
Staff Liaison to the Historical Commission