



HISTORICAL COMMISSION MINUTES

7:00 p.m., Monday, June 23, 2003
Los Altos Community Meeting Chambers, City Hall
One North San Antonio Road, Los Altos, California 94022

CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Carpenter; Vice-Chair Hull; Commissioners; Drewes, Foerster, Humphries, and Schink. Absent: Commissioner Dai, Liaison Crawford.

MINUTES

Chair Carpenter noted some formatting revisions to be submitted to Liaison Crawford for the minutes of May 29, 2003 meeting. Commissioner Hull moved approval of the revised minutes, seconded by Commissioner Drewes. Passed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None. (Three members of the public present at start of meeting.)

DISCUSSION/ACTIONS ITEMS

1. 184 Marvin – A. Commissioner Drewes gave a short overview of his efforts to find a buyer or buyers for the property including contacting preservation organizations and individuals, including Mr. Miltiades Mandros, architectural designer and Neutra expert. He expressed concern with his lack of finding a buyer for the property or the structures. Vice-Chair Hull added details of his efforts to find another location for the structures including conversations with Dave Brees and James Walgren regarding moving the structures to Redwood Grove or Lincoln Park. Hull also mentioned his interest in moving the smaller of the two structures to his property to serve as a studio. He stated that initial research on moving costs indicated a range of \$10,000 to \$30,000 depending on the structures' condition at the time of the move and how far they needed to be moved. Robert Morton, real estate agent for the owner (also present), and Miltiades Mandros were introduced and spoke individually about the property. Mr. Morton said he met with two potential buyers. One thought the property was ready to move into, not under review for preservation or demolition. Mr. Mandros spoke about his connection with Dion Neutra and his preservation interests and efforts in Neutra structures. He stated the front structure of the two was closest to original and could be restored and/or moved to another location, perhaps public property, and used for some other purpose. He said that he had visited

the property and the second structure at the back of the property had been remodeled significantly adversely affecting its historic value. The owner stated he would give away the front structure but not the second "studio" structure at the back of the property. He intended to keep that structure because it has "grandfathered" set back variances. He stated he had spent money repairing and upgrading it and felt it would add value to the property as a secondary structure. A discussion followed among the commissioners about continuing the search for a buyer of the front structure and included the historic status of the structures revolving around the remodeling of the smaller structure at the back of the property and the effect on the front structure if moved to another location. Discussion continued with the owner and Mr. Morton regarding the historic inventory's rating of the property, how it did not prevent demolition, but served as a recommendation for preservation since the structures were not landmarks. Mr. Morton had thought they were landmarked, possible demolition of the structures and what the permitting process would be, how it would allow time to act and the need to remove any hindrance to selling the property. Commissioner Foerster made a motion to approve the demolition of the larger structure after sale if no buyer is found to move the structure. Commissioner Humphries seconded the motion. Approved.

B. Chair Carpenter then opened discussion regarding the commission recommending to Council that they take action to assist in relocating the larger structure. Possibly getting the City to offer funding for purchasing the structure or volunteers to organize a group to raise the money necessary to purchase and move the structure. Vice-Chair Hull made a motion that the Historical Commission request the City to consider offering a piece of property that could be occupied by the Neutra structure, such as Lincoln Park or a section of the orchard surrounding the Civic Center. Added to the motion was the proviso that the City would not be held responsible for any cost associated with moving, installing and restoring the structure. Commissioner Drewes seconded. Approved with one abstention from commissioner Humphries because she had not seen the structures. Several commissioners expressed interest in touring the structures -- agreed to by the owner. Chair Carpenter requested a subcommittee go and visit the structures. Time to be arranged. Further discussion on who to contact to be part of the group to help fund this effort, such as architectural schools, organizations and individuals. The possible uses of the structure were discussed as well with no single use identified or suggested. Commissioner Drewes and Vice-Chair Hull felt they had more to work with as they continue to seek interested parties.

2. 96 Los Altos Avenue – Vice-Chair Hull took the commission through the Kalman rating of the structure, which contained two value weightings. Hull felt that the amount of information provided on the Primary Record, structure photograph, Structure and Object Record with vicinity map and completed Continuation Sheet and the condition of the home at this time, the structure would rate between 74 and 78 depending on how specific values were assigned. Item D - Construction, under Architecture, could be rated 4 or 8 depending on how the commission felt about the condition and uniqueness of the construction. Chair Carpenter felt it could rate at the higher value. Commissioner Foerster asked about the ratings for Person and Event under History wondering if this should be rated high. Vice-Chair Hull explained how this had value related to both Person and Event because of what we know of the Scharman family, their

donation of the olive trees that stand in front of the Lucy Stern Community Center, Leon Scharman's involvement with the establishment of the Palo Alto Art Club, now the Palo Alto Art League, his summer work at the Los Altos Country Club, and his marriage to Dorothy Gray, daughter of the first President of the Club, amongst other items. Hull felt these could be interpreted as important in assigning a high rating to Person and Event in the scale. Commissioner Foerster moved to accept the Kalman scale rating of 78. Commissioner Drewes seconded. Approved. Commissioner Foerster amended his motion to include the Primary Record and be added to the HRI. Amendment accepted.

3. Chairperson's Report

- a. The final Council meeting rotation schedule was presented. Chair Carpenter had all commissioners review and agree to it. There was some discussion of who attended when. The schedule was then forwarded to Carol Scharz, City Clerk.
- b. 2003-04 and 2004-05 Budget was approved by Council at \$4200 per fiscal year, the requested \$4600 to cover anticipated FileMaker costs was not accepted. Chair Carpenter felt this was not a problem as the costs have been lower than expected.
- c. Historical Preservation Ordinance Designation Levels. James Walgren, Community Development Director, is redrafting and hopes to have it for the commission's approval at end of July and then review it with Planning in August to put before Council in September.

4. Commission Discussion and Reports

- a. Final Planning Department Handout. Commissioner Humphries presented final handout. Vice-Chair Hull moved that the Commission accept the handout as drafted. Commissioner Foerster seconded. Approved. The handout will be forwarded to James Walgren for final approval and distribution.
- b. Potential Landmarks. Commissioner Foerster presented several properties interested in becoming landmarks. 220 University is interested in acting now. Some were hesitant to act presently since they planned to do work on the structures before applying for landmark status. These included 965 Berry, 980 Covington and 452 University. The two churches at 461 Orange and 473 Lincoln respectfully declined although they intend to preserve the structures. 6 Cypress still has not responded. Foerster moved that 220 University be recommended to City Council for landmark status and be considered for Mills Act. Vice-Chair Hull seconded. Approved. Foerster stated he would keep trying on 6 Cypress.
- c. Properties under Review: (Sub-committee of Drewes, Hull, Schink)
 - i. 191 S. Gordon. Commissioner Drewes reported on evaluation of property with commissioner Schink. They believed, from preliminary review, it could rate around 78 on the Kalman scale. Vice-Chair Hull recommended the sub-committee start with preparing the Primary Record and Continuation Sheet first then use them to define the rating. Commissioner Schink pointed out that the new commissioners needed training on the process, which would make evaluation easier. There was a discussion about how to do this and Vice-Chair

Hull stated the sub-committee should get together with blank forms and rough out the forms with known data, then bring that back to the Commission to establish the Kalman rating for the structure. Chair Carpenter asked Hull to work with the sub-committee since he was the only member of the current Commission who had completed a Primary Record and other rating documents.

- ii. 950 San Antonio Road. This is the childhood home of Commissioner Schink and was one of the properties on former commissioner McDonald's list of structures to be considered. It was decided that this would be the best place to start as a training exercise for the sub-committee since commissioner Schink could easily provide the necessary information for completing the HRI records.

It was decided to push out presenting the work of the sub-committee to the August meeting in order to allow for summer vacation schedules.

- d. Status of Site Surveys of Rated Properties with No Primary Records and Rating Properties with Primary Records but no Rating
 - i. 1377 Grant (rated 65)/ 1585 Grant Road (no rating) Vice-Chair Hull reported on his site survey, noting there is no 1377 on Grant but that it was likely confused with the original address of 4377 Grant Road established sometime in the 1920s when the area was unincorporated county land. Upon reviewing images from the HRI photo records, the structure labeled as 1377 Grant was identified as the same structure photographed by Hull at 1585 Grant Road. It was easily determined that 1377 and 1585 were, indeed, the same structure. Vice-Chair Hull moved that the records for 1377 and 1585 be merged into one record for 1585 Grant Road – Casa de Robles – with a rating of 65 and a notation regarding the original address of 4377 in the record. Commissioner Drewes seconded. Approved.
 - ii. 330 Concord (rated 41). Vice-Chair Hull reported on his site survey, noting there is no 330 Concord but there is a 1330 Concord, which he photographed. Commissioner Foerster once lived in the area and explained that this was county land with three-digit addresses changed to four-digit addresses when the area was annexed into Los Altos. No one knew why the Primary Record and photographs were missing and yet the property was rated 41. Vice-Chair Hull said this would be put on the list of properties to be evaluated for future HRI addition.
 - iii. 1475 Oakhurst (rated 44). Vice-Chair Hull reported on his site survey, showing the photographs of the structure. It was noted that Virginia Roberts had lived there until 2000. Hull stated he would interview Mrs. Roberts to learn more of the home and family history to begin the process of creating the Primary Record. There was a discussion of who should continue due diligence on this. Commissioner Foerster said he would talk with Ms. Roberts and report on what he discovered.
- e. Review Process for Updating the HRI. There was a short discussion of the properties to be considered with Vice-Chair Hull recommending Ranch homes of the '50s be put on hold until the Commission can review older structures and those of greater historic

significance such as barns and tank houses. Commissioner Foerster suggested that the homes of the '50s be of a lower priority and a list formalized for prioritizing. Vice-Chair Hull said he would collect and formalize a list of properties to be presented at the July meeting. The Commission will review and prioritize the properties to be evaluated and considered for inclusion in the HRI.

5. Incorporation Video Status. Commissioner Foerster presented the completed video. It was decided to officially thank Chris Johnson, who did the video at no charge. Chair Carpenter will send him a formal thank you. Carpenter will also contact Carol Scharz to see how she wants to have this presented to the City.
6. Policy Change to Appoint Subcommittee to Review All Homes over 50 Years Old. Chair Carpenter presented issues brought up by James Walgren regarding how to handle the review of buildings 50 years or older. After a short discussion it was decided to table further discussion until the July meeting when Commissioner Dai would be present.

HISTORY MUSEUM REPORT/STAFF REPORT

None

WRITTEN CORRESPONDENCE

None

OTHER MATTERS/NEW BUSINESS

None

Future Agenda Items. 50's Ranch Houses Identification Document Status. It was decided to review this in six months, 2004, after the study session.

ADJOURNMENT

Vice-Chair Hull moved to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Drewes.
Approved. The Commission adjourned at 10:45 p.m.

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