

Zach Dahl

From: Zach Dahl
Sent: Wednesday, April 04, 2012 8:43 AM
To:
Cc:
Subject: RE: Historical Designation Question

I wanted to follow up with you regarding your question/concern about the large number of Los Altos homes that were built in the 50s/60s and how they are now potentially eligible for listing on our HRI.

While 50 years old is the first criteria for listing on the HRI, there are still two other criteria, physical integrity and significance, that need to be met. In the area of historic significance, a structure needs to be associated with an event, person/place or architecture/design. To make this determination on a given property or structure, staff and the Commission would depend on our existing historic context statement. Right now, all of the properties on the HRI contribute to one or more of the five contexts outlined in our context statement:

- Context 1: Prehistory
- Context 2: Agriculture 1850 to 1940
- Context 3: Residential Architecture 1907 to 1940
- Context 4: Institutional Development 1907 to 1940
- Context 5: Commercial Development 1907 to 1940

In order for us to even consider adding houses constructed in the 1950/1960 era, we would need to amend our context statement and add a new context (i.e. Postwar Residential Development 1945-1960, Suburban Expansion: the Ranch House 1950-1965). This context, among other things, would provide a description of the historical period, why it is important to Los Altos history, and the architectural characteristics that are important for preservation. Until we have a context developed, it would be very challenging for the City and the Historical Commission to justify designation any houses from this period as historic.

I hope this addresses your concern. I will still work with the Commission to further evaluate this issue. When we report back to Council next year, we can discuss if additional steps need to be taken to ensure that houses from this period are not considered for the HRI without first having a new context statement that is reviewed and approved by Council.

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