

**CITY OF ESCONDIDO****MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE  
ESCONDIDO HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION****December 10, 2015**

The special meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission was called to order at 3:06 p.m. by Chair Rea in City Hall's Mitchell Room, 201 North Broadway, Escondido, California.

**Commissioners present:** Chair Rea, Vice-chair Spann, Commissioner Breitenfeld, Commissioner Correll and Commissioner Danskin.

**Commissioners absent:** Commissioner Lee and Commissioner Taylor.

**Staff present:** Rozanne Cherry, Principal Planner and Paul Bingham, Assistant Planner II.

**MINUTES:**

Moved by Vice-chair Spann, seconded by Chair Rea, to approve the minutes of the October 6, 2015, meeting. Motion carried unanimously. (5-0)

**WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS:** None.

**ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:** None.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS:****1. LOCAL REGISTER – CASE No. HP 15-0004:**

**REQUEST:** Local Register and CEQA Exemption

**LOCATION:** 225 East Fourth Avenue, Southern Gateway District of the Downtown Specific Plan.

Paul Bingham, Assistant Planner, provided the staff report and background on the 1954 Methodist parsonage. Staff explained that the property missed being on the City's most recent survey by four years and is in the Southern Gateway

district's Adaptive Reuse overlay. Architect Robert McQuead described the unique floor plan which had two entrances: the front leading to the pastor's office, and one on the east side leading to the rest of the house. The new owner desired to preserve and repurpose the house to a law office, as the two houses to the east had been done. By being on the Local Register, the property could rely on the Historic Building Code and avoid installing complex ramping in front, thus retaining the parsonage's original architectural character. Staff noted that although only two were required, the property met three Local Register criteria. Staff recommended forwarding a recommendation of approval to City Council to list the property located at 225 East Fourth Avenue on the Local Register and consider the CEQA Exemption.

Chair Rea asked whether the owner was considering the Mills Act. Mr. McQuead said not at this time, but perhaps in the future. She then asked what height limits the new General Plan allowed in this block. Staff did not know specifically, but offered to research if needed.

Commissioner Danskin clarified the positive and negative implications of having a property listed on the Local Register. Staff explained that the proposed use was just the sort of thing the Adaptive Use overlay encouraged.

Vice-chair Spann felt this was a wonderful plan and expressed his support for the adaptive reuse. Commissioner Carroll agreed. Staff added that the details of the adaptive reuse request would be reviewed separately through an administrative process.

Chair Rea inquired about the existing non-appropriate vinyl windows and whether the owner planned on replacing those, especially in the front. Mr. McQuead said replacements had been done legally prior to any permit or certificate requirements. Chair Rea felt the newer windows detracted from the historic nature of the house and wanted to see them replaced with period appropriate windows as a condition of Local Register listing.

Vice-chair Spann did not feel imposing such requirements on an owner coming to the City desiring to preserve the property was fair. Commissioner Danskin concurred, saying such conditions should be left to a Mills Act contract, should they request one in the future. Chair Rea stated that now was the best opportunity to enhance the house's character and that the investment for windows just in front was not costly. At present she did not feel the house met the listing criteria.

**ACTION:**

Moved by Vice-Chair Spann, seconded by Commissioner Danskin, to approve staff's recommendation. Motion carried. Ayes: Danskin, Breitenfeld, Correll and Spann. Noes: Rea. (4-1-0)

Commissioner Danskin felt their commissioners' books should have the General Plan's additional building height information questioned by Chair Rea. He asked staff to gather that information for the Downtown Specific Plan and Old Escondido Neighborhood historic district so the Commission could better develop standards.

**CURRENT BUSINESS:****1. DESIGN REVIEW – CASE No. ADM 15-0160**

REQUEST: Reconsideration of Front Porch Enclosure at OEN Residence and Additional Request for Chimney Removal

Location: 637 South Broadway, R-1-6 zone, OEN overlay

Commissioner Breitenfeld recused herself from this item.

Paul Bingham, Assistant Planner, provided the staff report and reminded the Commission of their action on this Code Enforcement case at their previous meeting denying the front porch enclosure and their motion to return it to its original condition. The applicant was now requesting the porch enclosure be set back, effectively reducing it by half, but not eliminating it altogether. In addition, the applicant now requested they be allowed to remove the 1930's era chimney.

**Larry Pappas, Applicant, 637 South Broadway, Escondido,** described the unreinforced brick chimney as irreparable and leaning 5-6 degrees away from the house. Because the owner had no use for a fireplace, the owners were desirous to remove it and fill in the wall opening with matching siding.

Staff clarified that the porch enclosure had been done to allow interior access to an older room addition which only had access from the front porch. The applicant had not produced any engineer's report, estimate or clear photos of the chimney requested for removal. Staff recommended denial of the current proposal, suggesting an interior solution providing an access door be explored as well as consulting other professionals regarding options for the chimney.

Commissioner Danskin questioned the applicant's drawings and felt they were incomplete as they did not show the entire floor plan. He clarified that the old front room addition was less than eight-feet wide, the new proposed porch enclosure would create a space less than four-feet wide, the porch railing would be restored and the enclosure would not have a window. He said he understood why they were not in favor of carving up the interior to accommodate a hall and more doorways.

Chair Rea felt the revised plans still did not meet the Secretary of Interior standards.

Commissioner Correll said the enclosure solution did not look right. Vice-chair Spann concurred and said it should be returned to its original condition and another bedroom access solution found.

Mr. Pappas offered to restore the porch if they could remove the chimney.

Vice-chair Spann questioned the cost associated with rebuilding the brick chimney.

Commissioner Danskin felt the cost of removing the chimney and doing the floor, wall and finish work to properly patch it would be very costly. He believed the remedy should be what would have been done historically, adding that the chimney was an iconic feature of the house. He stated that if the chimney was leaning, then it was likely the foundation that was failing and suggested stabilizing options should be investigated.

Vice-chair Spann said rebuilding the chimney would likely need to use new brick and wanted to see more research on costs and options.

Chair Rea recalled three other chimneys in the historic district rebuilt using newer brick. She did not have a problem with that and stated that a fireplace always enhanced resale value.

#### **ACTION:**

Moved by Chair Rea to approve staff's recommendation but with the applicant first submitting chimney work estimates to rebuild and repair or remove and patch. Motion did not carry for lack of a second.

Commissioner Danskin felt that solutions for the porch and the chimney should each be considered on their own merits. The commissioners then discussed various solutions for replacing the chimney.

**ACTION:**

Moved by Chair Rea to deny the proposed porch addition, replace the windows removed with period-appropriate wood framed windows and to submit three estimates for each of the chimney options discussed. Motion did not carry for lack of a second.

Mr. Pappas clarified that they had received some estimates, including \$19,000 to repair the existing chimney and \$4000 to build a prefab chimney. Discussion ensued regarding the appropriateness of prefab chimneys.

**ACTION:**

Moved by Vice-chair Spann, seconded by Chair Rea, to return the porch to its original condition and to replace the existing chimney with a prefab product covered in brick veneer all subject to staff review. Motion carried. Ayes: Rea, Danskin, Correll, and Spann. Noes: None. Abstained: Brietenfeld. (4-0-1)

**2. DISCUSSION OF ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2015 AND GOALS, TASKS & IDEAS FOR 2016**

- a. Staff enumerated some of the HPC's achievements in the 2014-2015 reporting year of California Local Governments (CLGs):
  1. Council agreeing with HPC to waive City fees for historic properties
  2. Discussions with newly proposed West Hillside Neighborhood Group
  3. Production of a new 4-page color Mills Act brochure
  4. Mills Act letters issued, properties visited and owners educated
  5. One Mills Act approved in the 2014-2015 reporting period
  6. Three Mills Acts and two Local Register approvals for 2015-2016
  7. Work on the update of the Historic Guidelines
  8. Fourteen Design Review cases seen in the 2014-2015 reporting period
  9. Already five Design Review cases seen in the 2015-2016 period
  10. All commissioners received training to meet annual CLG requirement
  11. Awards in 2015 given to owners of historic Adobes, including Hacienda de Vega, The Castle and the Weir Brothers.
- b. The Commission discussed goals for the upcoming year, other past awards given, including to historic signs, and for different facets related to the Secretary of Interior Standards. The Commission also agreed to give awards in 2016 for the most intact block with historic character.

- c. Chair Rea reported on her recent meeting with the History Center's new director Stacey Ellis. Four entities were identified that influence preservation in the City: the HPC, the History Center, the Pioneer Room and the Old Escondido Neighborhood (OEN) group. She suggested a meeting with all of these groups where each would bring a 1- to 5-year plan. Items for inclusion suggested by the Commission were:

1. Completing the update of the City's Historic Mid-Century Guidelines
2. Updating the City's Historic Survey
3. Increasing Mills Act visits
4. Refining our process for Design Review

Staff and the Commission discussed a recent California Preservation Foundation (CPF) webinar now available for viewing free on You-Tube. It introduced the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS), which was a database many California cities were using to upload and maintain their local historical survey data. Staff was asked to send a link for this webinar to the HPC members and also the other three entities discussed earlier. It was agreed that staff would also add an agenda item each meeting to discuss HPC's 5-year plan and provide updates.

### **3. DISCUSSION OF ALLEY FENCING**

Vice-chair Spann asked if HPC Design Review and/or a Certificate of Appropriateness (CofA) were currently required for the replacement of an old wooden fence with a new wooden fence in a historic district. Discussion ensued regarding permanent versus non-permanent structures. It was determined that normally staff review was sufficient for fences and that a CofA would be required. The Commission asked staff to clarify this with Planning counter staff.

### **4. AD HOC WORK GROUP REPORT ON UPDATING THE CITY'S HISTORIC GUIDELINES**

Chair Rea provided a report on the progress in updating the City's Historic Guidelines to include Mid-Century structures. She had discovered a similar and very well crafted document from Ft. Lauderdale, FL and suggested contacting them and using portions of it in our update. She also suggested updating all of our current document, not just adding a Mid-Century section, so that handouts of portions of the document would be possible. Commissioner Danskin concurred, saying that the information should be more accessible. As an example, he stated

someone wanting to reroof their historic house could not currently turn to a specific reroof section.

#### **5. AD HOC WORK GROUP REPORT ON MILLS ACT PROPERTIES**

Chair Rea reported on two Mills Act properties recently visited where the new checklist form was used, saying it was very effective. At 2031 East Mission Avenue they had found vinyl window replacements, but reported that the new owner was desirous to make changes. The Ad Hoc Work Group provided Staff with copies of both checklist forms.

Chair Rea said that the OEN group needed a dozen Mills Act brochures. Staff agreed to supply those and also agreed to prepare eight second notice letters for those who did not respond the first time to arrange Mills Act visits.

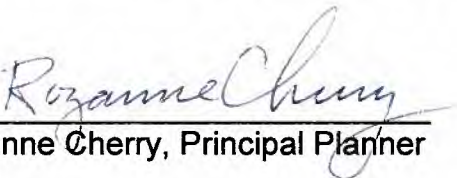
**ORAL COMMUNICATIONS** – None.

#### **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:**

Commissioner Breitenfeld noted that recent realtor listings she had seen included inappropriate suggestions as to what could be done to historic properties in the OEN. Commissioners noted that SOHO provided a workshop for realtors discussing such issues, but that many were reluctant to take it because of current disclosure laws.

#### **ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:18 p.m. The next regular meeting was scheduled for February 2, 2015 at 3:00 p.m.

  
Rozanne Cherry, Principal Planner

  
Ty Paulson, Minutes Clerk