

# Agenda Report

June 6, 2016

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council  
**FROM:** Planning & Community Development Department  
**SUBJECT: APPEAL OF DESIGN COMMISSION DECISION: CONSOLIDATED DESIGN REVIEW—DEMOLITION OF HOUSE AT 180 SOUTH EUCLID AVENUE**

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the City Council:

1. Find that the demolition of 180 South Euclid Avenue is exempt from environmental review pursuant to the guidelines of the California Environmental Quality Act (Public Resources Code §21080(b)(9); Administrative Code, Title 14, Chapter 1, Class 1 §15301, Existing Facilities). This exemption applies to demolition of up to three single-family residences or small commercial structures in urbanized areas.
2. Find that no protected native, specimen, or landmark trees under the tree protection ordinance (Ch.8.52, P.M.C.) will be removed in conjunction with this application;
3. Find that the project is consistent with the purposes of design review and the Design Guidelines in the Central District Specific Plan;
4. Find that the project will not cause a significant adverse effect on a historical resource as defined in the State CEQA guidelines; and
5. Based on these findings, approve the application for consolidated design review for demolition, subject to the following conditions:

## **Conditions**

1. The existing conditions of the building exterior shall be documented in photographs as specified in the archival photographic requirements for the Planning Division, which are adapted from the Historic American Building Survey and copies of the photographs shall be submitted to the Planning Division prior to issuance of a demolition permit.
2. The applicant shall study the incorporation into any future development project on the site features on the street-facing elevation that recall the scale, covered and elevated front porch, porte cochere and former pergola of the existing house on the property. Such features need not be exact replicas of the existing

features, should be stylistically compatible with the design of the new project, and shall be subject to review and approval by the Design Commission.

### **BACKGROUND:**

On April 18, 2016 the City Council voted to continue the public hearing of an appeal of the Design Commission's decision to deny the demolition of the house located at 180 South Euclid Avenue, known as the Pinney House. The Pinney house is a Mission Revival Arts and Crafts Period Bungalow that was built in 1906 to a design by Charles W. Buchannan. The City Council voted to continue the item to allow the developer and stake holders to meet with the City Staff regarding the preservation of historically significant elements of the building as part of a new development project. The motion carried unanimously.

The applicant engaged Wheeler & Gray, Inc., structural engineers, to evaluate the structural condition of the house and Onyx Architects to evaluate the structural engineer's findings and suggest an appropriate course of action for moving forward with a new development project on the site. In order to provide sufficient space on the property for a proposed future development along with the subterranean parking required to support it, any portion of the building that would be retained would need to be moved closer to the street and the feasibility of this was also considered as part of the structural engineer and architect's review. The reports from the structural engineer and architect are in Attachment B. In summary, these reports indicate that the structural integrity of the existing front porch is poor in that there is no framing beneath the concrete porch slab. As such, it would not be possible to relocate this component of the house and substantial, if not total, reconstruction would be required. Further, much of the exterior material would require reconstruction if the building were required to be retained or relocated. The architect's report includes a conceptual drawing illustrating a possible solution for incorporating reconstructed features of the existing house as part of a future new development project, which would require design review before the Design Commission.

### **ANALYSIS:**

Staff has determined, and the majority of the members of the City Council agreed on April 18, 2016, that the building does not qualify for landmark designation and may be demolished. Therefore, this analysis is focused on the issue of whether to preserve a portion of the existing house as part of a new development.

As demonstrated by the information submitted by the applicant, significant reconstruction of existing frontage features of the house (which would include the front porch, gabled dormer, porte cochere and a missing pergola) would need to occur due to the existing poor condition of these features; therefore, it is not possible to retain, relocate and incorporate into a new project any of the existing architectural features of the front of the house. Retention or reconstruction of these features would not be

considered a historic preservation effort because the majority of the building would be demolished. Rather, this would be considered a design exercise to attempt to incorporate into a new project frontage elements that relate to the street and present a residential character and scale similar to that of the existing house. There are many ways in which this could be accomplished, from re-creation of existing frontage elements as shown in the architect's exhibit in Attachment B, to interpretation of them in the style of the future development, but careful study is needed to ensure compatibility of these features with the scale of the development that would be permitted on the site. This type of exercise is typically conducted by the Design Commission. As such, staff recommends that the City Council include a condition of demolition approval that requires the applicant to study incorporation into any future development project on the site features on the street-facing elevation that recall the scale, covered and elevated front porch, porte cochere and former pergola of the existing house on the property, subject to review and approval by the Design Commission. Staff has also recommended a condition requiring submittal of archival photo documentation of the house prior to issuance of a demolition permit.

**COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:**

The General Plan Land Use Element – Policy 8.1: “Identify and Protect Historic Resources. Identify and protect historic resources that represent significant examples of the City’s history;” Policy 8.2: “Historic Designation Support. Provide assistance and support for applicants applying for designation of a historic resource through a clear, thorough, and equitable process that identifies if monuments, individual or landmark districts, historic signs or landmark trees are eligible for designation based on adopted evaluation criteria;” and Policy 8.8: “Evolving Preservation Practices. Continue to implement practices for historic preservation consistent with community values and conformance with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, California Historical Building Code, State laws, and best practices.”

**ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:**

The demolition is exempt from environmental review pursuant to the guidelines of the California Environmental Quality Act (Public Resources Code §21080(b)(9); Administrative Code, Title 14, Chapter 1, Class 1 §15301, Existing Facilities). This exemption applies to demolition of up to three single-family residences or small commercial structures in urbanized areas.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact to the City as a result of this action.

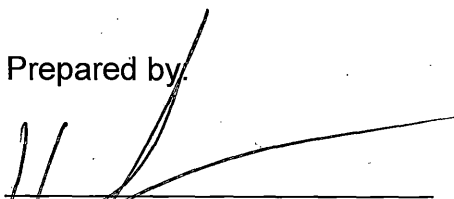
Respectfully submitted,



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DAVID M. REYES  
Interim Director of Planning & Community  
Development Department

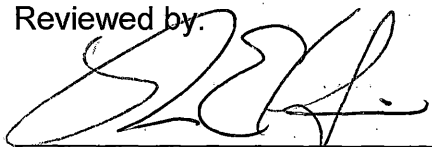
Prepared by:



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Kevin Johnson  
Senior Planner

Reviewed by:



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Leon E. White  
Principal Planner

Approved by:



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STEVE MERMELL  
Interim City Manager

Attachments (2):

Attachment A – April 18, 2016 City Council Agenda Report (Without Attachments)  
Attachment B – Structural Engineer and Architect Reports