



HISTORICAL ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT AUGUST 6, 2015

- Proposal:** **FREMONT POSTWAR DEVELOPMENT AND ARCHITECTURE HISTORIC CONTEXT STATEMENT: 1945-1970 – (PLN2016-00002)**
– To provide an overview of a City initiated project to develop a Historic Context Statement for architecture and development in Fremont between 1945 and 1970.
- Recommendation:** Receive presentation and provide comments to staff
- Location:** Citywide
- People:** Wayland Li, Staff Planner (510) 494-4453; wli@fremont.gov
Ingrid Rademaker, Principal Planner (510) 494-4543
Laura O’Neill, GPA Consulting, Project Consultant

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The City’s General Plan provides policy guidance for the preservation of Historic Resources (Policy 4-6.1) and an implementation measure (Implementation 4-6.1.B), which identifies the need to develop a “Mid-Century Historic Context Statement” as the basis for identifying and evaluating post-World War II structures, objects, sites, and districts for historical significance. The Historic Context Statement is a document that would identify the character defining features of architecture and development during the postwar time period (1945-1970), and establish evaluation criteria and integrity thresholds to provide a framework for evaluating resources for historic significance under the National, California and local registration programs. The Historic Context Statement would also identify potential resources from this era, and identify areas of the City where potential resources from this era are concentrated.

In May of 2015, the City entered into a contract with a historic architectural consulting firm (GPA Consulting) to assist in the preparation of the Historic Context Statement. At tonight’s meeting, staff from GPA Consulting will be delivering an informational presentation with an overview of the project, including goals, tasks, schedule, and highlights from preliminary research and field reconnaissance work that has been completed.

BACKGROUND AND PREVIOUS ACTIONS:

Significant development occurred in the City of Fremont during the mid-twentieth century as a result of the construction of the Nimitz Freeway in 1957 and development pressure from a large postwar population of young families. This is a particularly significant period in Fremont’s history because many of the City’s neighborhoods were established, and the City incorporated during this time. It is likely that historic resources relating to this significant period of local growth, as well as structures that are particularly good representatives of mid-century architecture, exist within the City, but have not yet been identified.

Implementation 4-6.1.B of the City’s General Plan identifies the need to develop a “Mid-Century Historic Context Statement” as the basis for identifying and evaluating mid-twentieth century structures, objects, sites, and districts for historical significance. The Historic Context Statement is a document that would identify the character defining features of architecture and development during this time period, and establish evaluation criteria and integrity thresholds to provide a

framework for evaluating resources for historic significance under the National, California and local registration programs.

This study is particularly important at this time because the surging economy has caused renewed development pressure on developing existing infill sites and residential alterations and expansions, which could permanently affect or erode existing resources not yet identified.

The City currently has a Historic Resources Ordinance, which requires that any building, structure or object over fifty years old be screened for potential historical significance prior to the issuance of permits for development, alteration, demolition, or relocation. The City's current initial screening process for potential historic significance of structures over 50 years old occurs on a case by case basis as development, alteration, and demolition permit applications are submitted to the City. The City then uses consultant expertise to determine whether additional historic evaluation is warranted to determine potential significance. The Historic Context Statement would provide information and data to staff, that will assist in screening for potential historic significance. This would increase the efficiency and effectiveness in the administration of the Historic Resources Ordinance, which will allow the City to focus its limited resources on evaluating the properties that truly have the potential to be historically significant.

In May of 2015, the City entered into a contract with a historic architectural consulting firm (GPA Consulting) to prepare the Historic Context Statement. The project is currently in process, with some preliminary research and field reconnaissance work already completed. GPA Consulting will be delivering a presentation to the Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB) this evening to share more information about the project, and to obtain feedback before drafting the document.

PURPOSE OF THE HISTORIC CONTEXT STATEMENT:

The primary purpose of the Historic Context Statement is to provide staff with a basis to make determinations on historic significance and integrity of postwar resources. The City currently has documentation and research to support evaluation of resources constructed prior to 1945, but lacks information and quantifiable criteria to evaluate the significance and integrity of resources built after 1945. Specific objectives of the Historic Context Statement are:

- Identify, describe and evaluate the significant character-defining elements and features of the particular forces, actions, actors and activities that shaped and began to define the community of Fremont as a place to live, work, and play in the postwar or Mid-Century period of 1945 to 1965;
- Identify post-1945 eligible Historic Resources and areas of potential historical significance to the City;
- Develop recommendation(s) for new Historic Overlay Districts (HODs) that may apply to areas with particular historical significance and existing resources, and/or Neighborhood Conservation Areas (NCAs), which may not fully meet the criteria for HOD designation, but have architectural qualities that warrant special design consideration;
- Develop standards and eligibility criteria, as well as any supporting maps, graphics, photos and other documentation, to assist staff to evaluate post-1945 potential historic resources;
- Develop recommendations for future preservation activities; and
- Develop recommendations regarding the City's process for evaluating potential historic significance of post-1945 structures.

COMPONENTS OF A HISTORIC CONTEXT STATEMENT:

The content of a Historic Context Statement is required to conform to established guidelines from the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Preservation Planning, Identification, Evaluation and Registration, the National Register Bulletin #24 – Guidelines for Local Surveys: A Basis for Preservation Planning, and the Office of Historic Preservation's instructions. These guidelines require that the document include criteria for evaluation, a historical overview of the City, and identification of themes, associated property types, and registration requirements. Additionally, the City has requested that the document provide recommendations on methods for streamlining review of postwar resources, future preservation activities, and potential new Historic Overlay Districts (HODs) that may apply to areas with particular historical significance and existing resources, and/or Neighborhood Conservation Areas (NCAs), which may not fully meet the criteria for HOD designation, but have architectural qualities that warrant special design consideration

FUTURE STEPS:

Significant data collection, research and reconnaissance activity has already been completed. Staff anticipates that GPA Consulting will be drafting the Historic Context Statement in the fall, and will be complete a draft near the end of 2015. Once the draft has been completed, staff will present the draft document to the HARB and City Council for review.

PUBLIC NOTICE AND COMMENT:

Public hearing notification is not applicable.

ENCLOSURES:

[Informational 1 Project Schedule](#)

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Receive presentation and provide comments to staff.