

DESIGN REVIEW CONSULTATION

Evaluation for Consistency with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards
For the Treatment of Historic Properties

Pioneer Site Townhomes

3858 Bonde Way
Fremont, CA 94536

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Introduction

Interactive Resources, Inc. has been asked to provide historical preservation consulting services to LSA Associated, Inc. for the Centerville Pioneer Site Townhomes Project in Fremont, CA. We understand that the proposed Project is the construction of eight new three story townhouses within the historic boundary of the Centerville Pioneer Cemetery. LSA has requested that a Design Review and Secretary of the Interior's Standards Analysis of the project be prepared to assess any potential impacts of the proposed construction on the historic property. This report analyzes the project using the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties using Rehabilitation Standards one through seven, as well as nine and ten. Standard eight, which addresses potential archeological resources occurring on the project site will be analyzed in a separate report by LSA Associates, Inc.

Historical Status

The site is a Primary Historical Resource listed with the City of Fremont, (1974). At the state level, the Centerville Presbyterian Church and Cemetery was listed in the California Register of Historic Resources (CRHR) in 1976; however the 1868 wooden church burned in a fire in 1993. As the church building no longer exists, the project includes the removal of the church from the Fremont Register of Historic Resources. The remainder of the cemetery grounds; however, would remain on the Fremont Register of Historic resources. It has also been determined that the site is potentially eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. As such the property qualifies as a historic resource under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). ([cite CEQA here](#))([cite eligibility determination sources here](#)).

Brief Property History

Alameda Presbyterian Church, later known as the Centerville Presbyterian Church, acquired a 2.5acre property, including the current project site, in 1855 and constructed a small brick Gothic Revival church. In 1868, an earthquake destroyed the church; in its place, the congregation constructed a wood frame building in the same Gothic style on the original surviving foundation (figure 1.). Centerville Presbyterian's congregation moved to a larger facility in 1956; in 1993, an arson-related fire destroyed the 1868 building with the exception of the steeple. In 1994, the steeple was removed and placed in storage and the structural remains of the church were demolished.

Informal burials within the cemetery began shortly after the church was established; however, it was not until 1858 that plots were laid out and the area was officially designated as a cemetery. Grave markers predating 1855 are located within the present day cemetery, attributed to earlier burials relocated after it was formally established. Nine plots at the northern edge and along the western face of the church were covered by asphalt paving installed in 1974. In March 2016, on two separate occasions, human remains were uncovered on an adjacent construction site approximately 33 feet outside the cemetery fence line.



figure 1. Historic photograph of the wooden, 1868 Centerville Presbyterian Church that burned in 1993.

Project and Site Description

The proposed project includes construction of eight attached townhouses in two three-story buildings on 0.4 net acres of an approximately 1.5-gross-acre site within the Centerville Community Plan Area of the City of Fremont. The project site is located within the grounds of the historic Centerville Pioneer Cemetery, on vacant land that forms the southeast quadrant of the site. The adjacent cemetery grounds include burial plots, memorials consisting of stone tombstones and monuments, a storage building, several large trees, and gravel walkways and paths. The Cemetery is bound by a six foot high metal fence

The 0.4-acre area proposed for residential development is mostly paved and currently serves as a parking area. Two attached, modern era wood-frame storage sheds, installed in 1998, would be removed. It is an infill site, served by existing streets and infrastructure. With the proposed tract map, the church and cemetery grounds would be subdivided into four lots, including one for each of the two four-unit townhouse buildings, a lot for the new private street that would provide access to the garages of the eight units, and a lot for the cemetery. The existing vehicular entrance would be relocated to the north, parallel

to the cemetery facing elevations of the proposed housing. The rear of the housing units would abut the southern property line with a ten foot setback from that boundary.

The project does not contain any work to the areas of burial plots in the cemetery other than a realignment of the metal fence to create a physical and visual separation between the housing and the cemetery. In that respect, there is no work contemplated relating to the character defining features of the cultural resource itself. Rather, the project is an addition to the site that does not impinge on the above ground site elements or the sites spatial character.

In 1993, the City of Fremont prepared an Initial Study (IS) prior to the demolition of the remains of the church after the fire. The IS also included recommendation for future development on the site. The core recommendation was that the new project (the program for which was unknown at the time) should reflect the architectural style of the former church building including:

- Vertical elements mirroring the former church's steeple
- New England Gothic architectural features
- A white facade

The design of the proposed residences follows the aesthetic and architectural style recommendations of the 1993 Initial Study (see figures 2 through 6 below).



figure 2. Aerial view of the site showing the project site in the southeast corner



figure 3. Site plan showing the building lot (lower left), two, four unit buildings (shaded) and the adjacent cemetery.



figure 4. View Legend. Aerial photo of the site showing camera station points and view directions for figures 5 & 6.



figure 5a. View (1) of the existing conditions looking south.



figure 5b. View (1) of the proposed project looking south.



figure 6a. View (2) of the existing conditions looking west.



figure 6b. View (2) of the proposed project looking west.

Determining Significant Effects on Historical Resources

The project has been designed to adhere with the Secretary of the Interiors Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties using the Rehabilitation Standards. It has been reviewed and evaluated in this report in accordance with the requirements of CEQA. Consistency with the *Secretary's Standards and Guidelines* is necessary for a project to receive a Class 31 categorical exemption from CEQA as specified in Section 15331 of the *CEQA Guidelines*. That section states:

“Class 31 consists of projects limited to maintenance, repair, stabilization, restoration, **rehabilitation**, preservation, conservation or reconstruction of historical resources in a manner consistent with the *Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings* (Weeks and Grimmer, 1995)”.

The CEQA Guidelines provide for various classes of categorical exemptions, including Class 31 exemptions for projects that are limited to rehabilitation of historical resources in a manner consistent with the *Secretary's Standards and Guidelines*. However, this exemption cannot be used where the proposed project may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined by the CEQA Guidelines in Section 15064.5(b).

The Guidelines state that physical demolition of a resource by definition constitutes a “substantial adverse change” and would therefore have a significant adverse effect on the resource. Furthermore, relocation or “alteration of the resource or its immediate surroundings” can also constitute a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource if it would result in “material impairment” of the resource. A project is considered to result in material impairment when it “alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics of an historical resource that convey its historical significance and that justify its inclusion” in the California Register of Historical Resources (Section 15064.5(b) (2) (A)). However, if the proposed project would not result in a “material impairment” and is found to be consistent with the *Secretary's Standards and Guidelines*, it will qualify for the Class 31 categorical exemption. It does not appear that the proposed project would result in a material impairment and the project appears to be consistent with the *Secretary's Standards and Guidelines*, as analyzed in detail below. Therefore, the proposed project would not have a significant effect on historical resources and it appears to qualify for categorical exemption Class 31.

Evaluation of Consistency with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards

In accordance with the requirements of CEQA, the proposed design is being evaluated for consistency with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings (Weeks and Grimmer, 1995).

While within the historic confines of the Centerville Pioneer Cemetery site, the proposed project would be located in the undeveloped southeast quadrant of the property. This location does not currently, nor has it historically, contained visible above ground resources such as grave stones, monuments, or grave plot curbs. There is no work associated with the grave site portion of the cemetery, and the proposed project is physically adjacent to the cemetery. In this context, the project as proposed qualifies as a rehabilitation as defined by the Secretary’s Standards and Guidelines:

“Rehabilitation is defined as the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values”.

Therefore, the relevant Standards are those for Rehabilitation, as stated and discussed below. In addition to the Standards, there are numerous guidelines that expand upon the concepts outlined in the guidelines and address specific issues that arise in rehabilitation work, including how to identify, retain, protect, preserve and repair historic building materials and features; how and when to replace them and how to design appropriate additions and alterations. These guidelines are numerous and will not all apply to a given project. They will be referenced where appropriate.

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.

Comment: The proposed housing project is an addition to be constructed on an undeveloped section of the larger cemetery site. Because the portion of the cemetery historically used for burial is not part of the adjacent construction, the historic use will remain. The defining site characteristics of the grave markers and monuments will be unchanged. The plant materials within the lot used for burials will remain unchanged. The views across the site and circulation through the site will be only minimally changed with a planted fence between the housing boundaries and cemetery.

2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.

Comment: There is no work associated with the housing construction that intrudes on the character defining elements that form the cemetery. There being no invasive activity on the portion of the site devoted to burials, the historic character of the property would be retained. The project activity is adjacent to and separated from the cemetery; therefore, no historic materials will be removed nor will features be altered. The space that defines the grave site portion of the cemetery will remain open with unimpeded views across the site.

3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.

Comment: No conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings will be used in the proposed housing project, and because no work will occur in the portion of the site containing graves, the site will retain the physical record of its time place and use.

4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.

Comment: Because the limits of the proposed housing project do not trespass on the boundary of the grave sites, the natural changes, including additional burials and plantings, that have occurred over time will be preserved.

5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.

Comment: No work is planned for the grave site portion of the cemetery. The absence of construction activity will preserve the primary character defining features, finishes and construction techniques.

6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.

Comment: The only new feature is a planted fence at the housing boundary that will match the existing fence surrounding the site. No restoration or rehabilitation work is planned for the grave site portion of the cemetery in association with the proposed project.

7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.

Comment: No chemical or harsh treatments are proposed. Because there is not work planned for the burial portion of the cemetery, no stones or markers will be touched as part of the project. Standard Number Seven does not apply to this analysis.

8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.

Comment: The presence of significant archeological resources at the project site is addressed in a separate report by LSA Associates, Inc.

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

Comment: As stated in the commentary on Standard Six, above, the only new feature is a planted fence at the housing boundary that will match the existing fence surrounding the site. It will be of similar design, but differentiated in that it will be planted to create a visual barrier between the cemetery the housing.

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

Comment: No work is planned for the section of the site containing cultural resources related to burial. The new housing project will occur on a portion of the site that has historically been undeveloped and separate from the graveyard. If the housing development were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the property and its environment would remain unchanged.

Evaluation Summary/Conclusion

Based on the above analysis, the proposed design appears to be consistent with the Secretary *of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties – Rehabilitation Treatment*. (Weeks and Grimmer, 1995); therefore may be considered Categorical Exempt under the definition of the Class 31 exemption.

References

Alice Carey Architects, San Francisco, California

Alice Ross Carey

1988 California Department of Transportation / California Department of Parks and Recreation Evaluation Forms: Centerville Presbyterian Church Cemetery, Fremont, California.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

2017 Statutes and Guidelines

City of Fremont

1990 Fremont Municipal Code Historical Resources Ordinance. On File, City of Fremont Planning Division-Community Development, Fremont, California.

1994 Initial Study/Negative Declaration Centerville Presbyterian Church. On File, City of Fremont Planning Division-Community Development, Fremont, California.

1998 Centerville Redevelopment Plan Environmental Impact Report. On File, City of Fremont Planning Division-Community Development, Fremont, California.

2009 Merged Redevelopment Plan Project Area Plan Amendment Supplemental Environmental Impact Report. On File, City of Fremont Planning Division-Community Development, Fremont, California. Holmes.

2017 Community Development, Planning Division Bill Roth, Associate Planner, Project Description.

Dahlin Group

2017 Project design drawings, photography, and renderings.

LSA Associates, Inc.

2017 Cultural Resources Study for the Centerville Pioneer Site Townhomes Project, Fremont, Alameda County, California

U.S. Department of the Interior / National Park Service

Kay D. Weeks and Anne E. Grimmer

1995 The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties