

Attachment # 2

App #2007.09.20.3151

Application for Discretionary Review to Demolish the Existing Home and Garage
673-675 44th Avenue, San Francisco, Ca 94121

Argument for Reconsideration of the Historical Resource Evaluation & the Historical Resource Evaluation Response

As the attached chart (**Attachment #3**) shows over three quarters of the homes on Blocks 1586, 1586 & 1587 were built between 1900 and 1929. Although a few homes had been built before 1912, residential development did not start until the completion of street car service in 1912 that linked the Outer Richmond to the rest of the city by public transportation.

These homes pre-date the building boom and were part of one of the earliest neighborhoods at the outer edge of the Richmond District. The development of this neighborhood can be linked to the land development activities of Sutro family, the completion of the Geary street car line in 1912, the lending activities of the newly formed bank of Italy (later the Bank of America), and to the innovative real estate practices of the San Francisco real estate firm owned by Oscar Heyman and his family. It is Oscar Heyman who was the original owner of the single family home at 673 & 675 44th Avenue.

Accompanying the arrival of the streetcars to the Outer Richmond in 1912, a number of real estate companies actively promoted housing in the outer avenues. Many of these homes were built by the real estate companies and sold to working class families on the "pay-as-rent" plan". One of these companies, O. Heyman & Bros., is identified as the original owner of the subject property. As described in the following sources O. Heyman and Bros. was a "pioneer" in the construction of small home for working class families and in the development of "Carville" in the Outer Sunset:

In his book The Story of Bank of America (copyright 1954) James Marquis describes the role of the Heyman Brothers in the development of residential real estate in San Francisco. "In the early days of the Bank (of Italy, later the Bank of America) advances on real estate formed the bulk of the portfolio....In January, 1905, the bank made a useful connection with Jacob Heyman and Company (later O. Heyman Bros. and Heyman Brothers Incorporated), pioneer builders of small homes on the "pay-as-rent" plan. The firm (now Heyman Brothers, Inc.) has been a client of the bank to this day".

The continuing role of the Heyman brothers in the development of residential property in the western edge of the city is described in the American Bungalow 1880-1930 (copyright 1986) by Clay Lancaster. In his description of how electric street cars replaced horse drawn trolleys in San Francisco he quotes from a 1907 issue of the magazine Country Life in America that describes the origins of Carville in the Outer Sunset: "A good many (street cars) were purchased by Jacob Heyman and placed on the beach at Ocean Side where they were resold with a narrow strip of ground. Heyman retained 6 which were incorporated into a two-storied masonry structure for his own use."

The oldest houses in the neighborhood with high integrity, especially several of the craftsman homes on 44th and 45th Avenues, have the ability to evoke the Richmond District's early years. The subject property and many of the other homes built between 1900 and 1925 are survivors that have been relatively little altered, and therefore still have a high degree of integrity. Unlike the Oceanside Neighborhood (the 1200 to 1700 blocks of Avenues in the Outer Sunset) of the same era, where only ten percent of those original houses still stand Blocks 1586, 1587 and 1588, there is still an opportunity and responsibility to conserve the history and character of the neighborhood.

Almost half of the homes on these blocks were built before 1925. Many of them were two-story bungalow and craftsman style homes. On Block 1587 and the adjoining blocks to the east and west many of the homes on the west side of the street have narrow side yards that contribute to the scale of the neighborhood and allow filtered views of the ocean for homes on the east side of the streets.

These homes and the homes built through the late 1940's, form a pattern, intact from the origins of neighborhood, and shared by adjoining blocks to the east and west. The current home at 673-675 is an original part of that pattern and with its architecture relatively intact, makes a significant contribution to the overall tone and character of the street and to the pattern of open space at the center of the block.

When we walk through my neighborhood we do not see the one that is described in the Applicant's Historical Resource Evaluation (HRE) and the Planning Department's Historical Resource Evaluation Response (HRER).

Our own limited research to document the history, scale, and patterns of the neighborhood do not support the characterizations or conclusions in the HRE or HRER. Taken together the HRE and HRER completely miss the historical significance of the homes and the block and then use that inadequate analysis to justify the demolition of the existing house. To some extent that point of view is also used to support the subsequent construction of two four structures that do not acknowledge the scale of the street or the integrity of the single family residential community. These reports:

1. Failed to reveal the historical significance of the original property owner.
2. Did not place the existing home into the context of a 1920's community of craftsman and bungalow style homes.
3. Did not give adequate weight to the scale, age, and character of original homes or to preserving the integrity of the neighborhood.

Because of these deficiencies we recommend:

1. Revising the Historical Resource Evaluation to include all relevant information needed to place the Heyman home in the proper historical and cultural context.
2. Revising the Historical Resource Evaluation Response to include more complete historical data and a better understanding of the place of craftsman homes in the history and continuing character of the neighborhood.
3. Revising the Historical Resource Evaluation Response to more carefully consider the potential of the Heyman home as a historic resource meeting the criteria of California Register as:
 - a. An individual resource under Criteria B- *association with the lives of persons important in our local, regional, or national past.*
 - b. An individual resource under Criteria C- *it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region.*
4. Evaluation of the Heyman home and the surrounding neighborhood by a qualified architect or preservationist to evaluate the significance and **integrity** as a craftsman style home and community.
5. Reconsideration of the Planning Department Decision to grant an Exemption from Environmental Review

Detailed Discussion of the Historical Resource Evaluation & the Historical Resource Evaluation Response

Summary of the Historical Resource Evaluation & the Historical Resource Evaluation Response

Based on their observations and historical research both the Applicant's Historical Resource Evaluation (HRE) and the Planning Department's Historical Resource Evaluation Response (HRER) characterize the home and its place in the surrounding block as follows:

1. The subject home:
 - a. Has no historical or architecturally significant features
 - b. The subject home is an anomaly on the block because of its
 - Pitched roof
 - 50 ft. wide lot
 - Original design as a single family home
2. The subject neighborhood is not considered a Historic District, nor does it appear to have any association with events or people that have made a significant to San Francisco History. The two reports characterize the neighborhood as
 - a. A **complex mix** of one to three story structures (HRE).
 - b. A **mix of single and multi-family** dwellings that **date from the 19th century to contemporary** (HRE).
 - c. Having a **mixed visual character** representing a variety of styles and eras (HRER).
 - d. Homes having **varied construction dates** including buildings constructed before 1900 (HRER).
 - e. Tending to be **clad in stucco** with flat roofs and minimal ornamentation. (HRER)

Our observations of the neighborhood take issue with the HRE and HRER in the following areas:

1. **A Complex Mix:** The block is not a complex mix but instead is almost intact from its origins in the early 1900's through its build out in the 1940's & early 50's: The existing homes on the block form a pattern shared by adjoining blocks to the east and west and other blocks in the immediate area. This pattern includes:
 - a. High proportion of single family homes
 - Homes on the west side of 44th Avenue are predominantly single family (12 of the 16 homes at the upper end of the block are single family.
 - Homes at the west side of the street at the upper
 - b. Most homes (32 of 37) that front on 44th and 45th Avenues and define the character and scale of the streets were built between 1914 and 1924.

- c. On the west side of the 44th Avenue at the upper ¾ of the street homes:
 - Are predominantly two story
 - Have front yard setbacks that varied widely. With the exception of one home built in 1997, the pattern of setbacks and scale set in the 1920's remains today.
 - Have facades that are articulated by a wide variety of entry stairs, bay fronts and roof lines
 - Have varied façade designs and styles that are characteristic of the bungalow style as it developed in California in the early 20th century.
- d. Homes at north and south ends of blocks (on cross streets of Anza and Balboa) were built in the 40's and 50's.
2. **A mix of single and multi-family dwellings** that date from the 19th century to contemporary (HRE).
 - a. **A mix of single family and multi-family dwellings.** Although there is a mix the block is predominantly single family and it is this characteristic that defines its scale and social structure. The presence of multi-family homes is minimal and the three 4 unit apartment buildings are 60 years old and older. The two buildings built on the west side of 44th Avenue in 1991 and 1995 are clear disruptions to the style and integrity of the street. Building Department and Assessors records show that the buildings that front on 44th and 45th Avenue are mostly single family and include:
 - 27 single-family homes
 - 7 two-family homes
 - 3 apartment buildings (1 from 1908, 1 from 1907, and one from 1948)
 - b. **Homes from the 19th century to contemporary.** Although there is a mix the block is predominantly single family and it is this characteristic that defines its scale and social structure. Building Department and Assessors records show that the buildings that front on 44th and 45th Avenue include:
 - 27 homes built between 1907 & 1926 - 66% of total. These are clustered at the upper 80% of the hill where the views of the ocean are the best.
 - 12 homes between 1946 and 1954 . These are at clustered along the cross streets (Anza and Balboa).
 - 2 homes between 1991 and 1997. The last to be built, these homes fail to acknowledge the scale and character of the block.
 - **There are no 19th century homes on the block.**
3. **Having a mixed visual character representing a variety of styles and eras (HRER).**
 - a. The style that predominates on the west side of 44th Avenue, and the upper end on the west side of 45th Avenue, is the bungalow style mixed with several craftsman homes. While they do not all remain as originally built many are intact and the scale of the bungalow streetscape is largely retained especially at the upper end of the block.
 - b. The subject hose and at least three of the other craftsman homes on the block have been relatively little altered and retain much of their original integrity.
4. Homes having varied construction dates **including buildings constructed before 1900 (HRER). Refer to Attachment #4.**
 - a. There are **no 19th century buildings** in the 600 block of 44th Avenue.
 - b. Instead there are:
 - 27 homes built between 1907 & 1926 - 66% of total. These are clustered at the upper 80% of the hill where the views of the ocean are the best.
 - 12 homes between 1946 and 1954. These are at clustered along the cross streets (Anza and Balboa).
 - 2 homes between 1991 and 1997. The last to be built these homes fail to acknowledge the scale and character of the block.
5. The Historical Resource Evaluation:
 - a. **Incorrectly characterized the style** of the Heyman home as "semi-Edwardian" instead of Craftsman.
 - b. Does not acknowledge the presence of four other significant craftsman homes on the block.
6. The Historical Resource Evaluation Response discounts the significance of the home as a significant craftsman because of its:
 - a. Shallow roof overhangs –Instead the 18-20" overhangs are common in San Francisco for urban areas
 - b. Lack of typical triangular knee brackets or exposed roof beams – It fails to take into account three other craftsman homes on the block that lack these details.
 - c. Stucco exterior – The other craftsman home on 44th Avenue has a stucco 1st floor level. There are numerous examples of half-timber stucco craftsman homes in San Francisco and in publications.