



DATE: October 27, 2015

CATEGORY: Public Hearing

DEPT.: Community Development

TITLE: **771 North Rengstorff Avenue –
Immigrant House Designation**

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution Conditionally Approving a Historic Preservation Permit to Add the Structure Known as the Immigrant House, Which Will be Located at 771 North Rengstorff Avenue, to the Mountain View Register of Historic Resources, to be read in title only, further reading waived (Attachment 1 to the Council report).

BACKGROUND

Project Location

The structure known as the Immigrant House was originally located at 166 Bryant Street and was one of several outbuildings on the Charles Pearson property at 902 Villa Street (see Attachment 2—Location Maps). In 2012, a commercial development was approved by City Council on the 902 Villa Street site which necessitated the removal of all the structures on the site, including the Immigrant House. As part of this development application, it was determined that the structure would be temporarily moved to the City Municipal Operations Center (MOC) property at 231 North Whisman Road until a permanent location could be identified, where it is currently located. In 2013, City Council approved a new park site at 771 North Rengstorff Avenue and determined that this would be the new site for the Immigrant House. The structure is proposed to be moved to the park site at 771 North Rengstorff Avenue during park construction in approximately spring/summer 2016.

Project Description

The proposed Historic Preservation Permit proposes to add the Immigrant House to the Mountain View Register of Historic Resources (MVRHR).

Public Meetings and Comments

On October 14, 2015, the Zoning Administrator held a public hearing and found that the Immigrant House is eligible for listing on the MVRHR subject to the findings of approval (see Attachment 3—Findings Report) and recommended its addition to the MVRHR to the City Council. No one from the public spoke regarding this project at the public hearing and staff has received no public correspondence.

ANALYSIS

Historic Preservation Ordinance

The City's Historic Preservation Ordinance allows designation to the MVRHR upon review and approval by the City Council. A building, structure, or other improvement may be designated as a historic resource if the City Council finds that it meets one or more of the following four designation criteria:

- Criterion A: Is strongly identified with a person who, or an organization which, significantly contributed to the culture, history, or development of the City;
- Criterion B: Is the site of a significant historic event in the City's past;
- Criterion C: Embodies distinctive characteristics significant to the City in terms of a type, period, region, or method of construction or representative of the work of a master or possession of high artistic value; or
- Criterion D: Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important to the City's prehistory or history.

Historic Resource Evaluation

The City prepared a historic resource evaluation for the Immigrant House which provides a description and historic context for the structure as well as an evaluation of its eligibility for listing on the MVRHR (see Attachment 4—Historic Resource Evaluation). The evaluation determined that the Immigrant House is eligible for listing on the MVRHR under Criterion D as an example of a residence for early agricultural laborers associated with local industry.

Constructed around 1888, the Immigrant House was originally located at 166 Bryant Street. The structure is a simple two-room house measuring 14'x20'. Channel rustic

siding covers the front, while board and batten siding covers the other three sides. The house has a gable roof, a front and rear door, and four windows. Between 1888 and 1897, a rear porch was added which was later replaced with a small bathroom in the 1940s to 1950s. By approximately the late 1980s, the structure ceased use as a residence and was used as a small commercial space and was ultimately left vacant.

Resident immigrant and migrant laborers were an important element during the agricultural era in Santa Clara County and Mountain View. The building is directly associated with the orchard and canning industry that was the most important economic industry in Mountain View and the greater Santa Clara Valley from the early 1900s through the 1940s, remaining a contributor to the economy into the 1960s, due to its use as a residence for immigrant and migrant workers who likely worked at the Mountain View Fruit Exchange, the California Supply Company (also known as the Pickle Factory) located on the same block in the early 1920s, the Libby fruit cannery in Sunnyvale, as well as in orchards in Mountain View and surrounding cities.

The Immigrant House was moved from its original location at 166 Bryant Street to the current temporary location at 231 North Whisman Road. The structure will ultimately be placed in a new City park at 771 North Rengstorff Avenue where it will be used as a public display of life for early agricultural laborers.

State and National Registers

The property is currently not listed on either the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) or the California Register of Historic Resources (CRHR). The Citywide survey conducted by Carey & Company in 2008, which identified properties that are NRHP or CRHR eligible, found that the structure was not eligible for either register.

FISCAL IMPACT – None.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Deny the Resolution to allow the placement of the Immigrant House on the MVRHR.
2. Refer the project back to the Zoning Administrator for reconsideration of topics related to the historic designation of the Immigrant House.
3. Provide other direction.

PUBLIC NOTICING

The meeting agenda and Council report were posted on the City website, announced on cable television Channel 26, and all interested stakeholders were notified.

Prepared by:

Stephanie Williams
Senior Planner

Terry Blount
Assistant Community Development
Director/Planning Manager

Approved by:

Randal Tsuda
Community Development Director

Daniel H. Rich
City Manager

SW/7/CAM
818-10-27-15CR-E

- Attachments:
1. Resolution Approving the Historic Preservation Permit
 2. Location Maps
 3. Findings Report
 4. Historic Resource Evaluation