



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR
AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Rosalynn Hughey

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: November 20, 2020

COUNCIL DISTRICT: 6

SUBJECT: CITY LANDMARK DESIGNATION (FILE NO. HL20-002) FOR “THE GEORGE A. FLEMING HOUSE” AT 1516 NEWPORT AVENUE

RECOMMENDATION

The Historic Landmarks Commission voted unanimously on November 4, 2020 to recommend that the City Council:

- a. Adopt a Resolution designating “The George A. Fleming House” located at 1516 Newport Avenue as a City Landmark of special historic, architectural, aesthetic or engineering interest, or value of a historic nature.

OUTCOME

Designation of the subject property as a City Landmark would preserve the integrity of the single-family residence and its recognized historic value, as well as ensure preservation of a unique example of the Dutch Colonial Revival architectural style in San José.

BACKGROUND

On June 2, 2020, the property owners of 1516 Newport Avenue submitted an application to nominate their single-family residence as a City Landmark. The property qualifies for City Landmark Status based on meeting the following five of the eight criteria enumerated under Section 13.48.110(H) of the San José Municipal Code as follows:

- **Criterion 1:** Its character, interest, or value as part of the local, regional, state or national history, heritage, or culture, in that the property is associated with the horticultural era in San José and is considered an excellent example of the Dutch Colonial Revival style, reflecting a period of early orchard development and Santa Clara Valley’s Period of Horticultural Expansion

from 1869 to 1918. The property is associated with early twentieth-century agriculture in San José, as it was the home of businessman and inventor, George A. Fleming.

- **Criterion 3:** Its exemplification of the cultural, economic, social, or historic heritage of the city of San José in that the property is associated with George A. Fleming, who was recognized as being the first to achieve notable success with the fruit drying industry, and received the first patent in 1887 for the State-of-the Art invention of a quick-drying fruit dryer, which had the ability to dry fruit quickly and in large quantities. This was critical for the growth of the fruit packaging industry to be able to transport in large quantities via railroads from the Santa Clara Valley to the rest of United States.
- **Criterion 4:** Its exemplification of the cultural, economic, social, or historic heritage of the city of San José, in that the George A. Fleming house was the home of a businessman and an inventor. The property is representative of the early orchard culture in Willow Glen and in San José during the period of the Horticultural Expansion from 1869 to 1918.
- **Criterion 6:** Its embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type or specimen, in that the property embodies distinguishing characteristics of the Dutch Colonial Revival style with a distinctive front-gambrel roof, a shingled upper story and a wide wraparound porch.
- **Criterion 7:** Its identification as the work of an architect or master builder whose individual work has influenced the development of the city of San José, in that the subject property contributes is the architectural work of a prominent local twentieth century master architect George W. Page, who is locally recognized as having influenced the development of San José.

On November 4, 2020, the Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC) held a Public Hearing on the proposed City Landmark Designation for “The George A. Fleming House” located at 1516 Newport Avenue. The Historic Landmarks Commission recommended approval of the City Landmark designation to the City Council.

Historic Landmarks Commission Discussion

The Commission noted that “The George A. Fleming House” is a good example of Dutch Colonial Revival style architecture. The Commissioners appreciated the research on the property’s history. They applauded the applicant for nominating their house for the Landmark designation and voted unanimously to recommend approval of the City Landmark designation of the “George A. Fleming House” to the City Council, as recommended by the Planning staff.

ANALYSIS

A complete analysis, including conformance with the General Plan and the Historic Preservation Ordinance, is contained in the attached Historic Landmarks Commission staff report.

CONCLUSION

The preservation of this house through the City Landmark designation process preserves and fosters the architectural history of the early 20th Century period in San José, more specifically, the Dutch Colonial Revival style of architecture. It also recognizes the exceptional work of master architect George W. Page. Furthermore, the designation of this site as a City Landmark will require that exterior alterations and additions to the property will be subject to review by city staff and the Historic Landmarks Commission.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW UP

If the nomination is approved, the subject site will be deemed a City Landmark. All work on the exterior of the house would require issuance of a Historic Preservation Permit/Adjustment and will need to conform to all applicable standards and guidelines.

CLIMATE SMART SAN JOSE

The recommendation in this memorandum will have no negative effect on the Climate Smart San José energy, water, or mobility goals.

POLICY ALTERNATIVES

The City Council could opt to disapprove the recommended designation of “The George A. Fleming House” as a City Landmark. If the building is not designated a City Landmark, the owners would not be required to obtain a Historic Preservation Permit to demolish or otherwise alter the building but may still be subject to CEQA review. The designation is at the request of the property owner.

PUBLIC OUTREACH/INTEREST

Staff followed the public notification requirements of Section 13.48.110 of the San José Municipal Code. A public hearing notice for the project was published in a local newspaper and posted at the site. Information about the proposed designation and the associated public hearings has been made available through the Planning Division website, and staff has been available to answer questions.

COORDINATION

This memorandum was coordinated with the City Attorney’s Office.

HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
November 20, 2020
Subject: File No. HL20-002
Page 4

CEQA

The environmental impacts of the project will not have a negative effect on the single-family residence or adjacent property or properties in that the project has been determined exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per Section 15331. The project is limited to maintenance, repair, stabilization, rehabilitation, restoration, preservation, conservation, or reconstruction of historical resources in a manner consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

/s/
ROSALYNN HUGHEY, Secretary
Historic Landmarks Commission

For questions please contact Robert Manford, Deputy Director, at robert.manford@sanjoseca.gov.

Attachment: [November 4, 2020 Historic Landmarks Commission Staff Report with Attachments](#)