

HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE (DRC) MEETING

Thursday April 17, 2025

Action Minutes

ROLL CALL

Present: Chairman Boehm, Vice Chairman Royer and Commissioner Camuso

Meeting called to order at 11:00 a.m.

AGENDA

Meeting Goal: Discuss preliminary project design and provide comments to staff and applicants.

Proposed Projects for Review:

1. **HP25-001 and H25-005:** Historic Preservation Permit and Site Development Permit applications to allow the construction of a two-story, six-unit multifamily building on a vacant, approximately 0.16-gross-acre lot located at 445 North Sixth Street within the Hensley City Landmark District.

PROJECT MANAGER, JASON LEE

Attachments:

1. [Architectural Plan Set](#)
2. [Draft Secretary of the Interior's Standards Compatibility Report](#)
3. [Your Old House: Guide for Preserving San Jose Homes \(Chapter 5 All Projects and Chapter 6 Infill and Alterations to Non-Historic Houses\)](#)

Chairman Boehm called the meeting to order, the meeting began with participant introductions.

Dana Peak Edwards, Historic Preservation Officer, provided a brief overview of the project description, the two applications under review, and the development review criteria.

Danny Nguyen Pham, ALDN Ventures, LLC (applicant), provided a project overview in a PowerPoint presentation. He noted that the proposed project is a six-unit building on a vacant lot in the Hensley City Landmark District. Mr. Nguyen explained that the design has involved significantly since the Preliminary Review Application was submitted in August 2024. He highlighted project design elements including horizontal siding, stucco, dormer windows, aluminum windows, and a shingle gabled roof. Mr. Nguyen shared images of existing adjacent

buildings in the historic district to demonstrate design compatibility. Historic resources consultant, Bonnie Bamburg added that the adjacent box car style apartment building to the north is a non-conforming building in the historic district due to its later date of construction, and that it is a typical two-story block-like building of its time. She noted that character-defining features of the historic district include a setback from the sidewalk, a front-facing entry with a porch, rounded corners on larger two-story buildings, and gable roofs. Ms. Bamburg added that the goal of the project design is to be respectful and compatible, but not to copy the historic buildings within the Hensley City Landmark District.

Chairman Boehm called for Commissioner questions.

Chairman Boehm inquired about the front setback of the proposed building and staff responded that the plans show the setback is 14-feet, 8 inches.

Commissioner Camuso inquired where the garbage containers for the building would be placed. Mr. Nguyen responded that the containers would be stored at the rear of the building and rolled out to the street for collection. Staff inquired whether garbage collection would entail individual containers or a dumpster. Mr. Nguyen responded that there would be one dumpster. Chairman Boehm inquired if the dumpster would be covered and Mr. Nguyen responded that there are no plans to do so.

Vice Chairman Royer inquired how the site is accessed. Mr. Nguyen responded that access is provided from North 5th Street.

Chairman Boehm commented that he would prefer a single window in the front dormer as opposed to the three windows. He inquired what type of plants would be planted in the front setback area. Mr. Nguyen responded that the proposed landscaping plan includes two smaller trees, a Manzanita and Dark Shadows tea tree. He clarified that these trees would not be located in the public right-of-way, which is regulated by the Department of Transportation. Chairman Boehm inquired if there would be a fence in the front setback area. Mr. Nguyen responded that no front fence is proposed. Chairman Boehm inquired about the proposed roofing material and Mr. Nguyen responded that the material is composition shingle. Chairman Boehm recommended the addition of an accent color on the building. Commissioner Camuso seconded this and recommended using colors other than gray and black.

Vice Chairman Royer appreciated the articulation and roof line of the building. She noted that the porch supports looked thin and should be more substantial in appearance. Chairman Boehm inquired about the depth of the front porch. Mr. Nguyen responded that the depth of the porch is approximately two feet. Chairman Boehm recommended extending the porch.

Chairman Boehm inquired about the location of on-site parking. Mr. Nguyen responded that the parking is located in the rear. Vice Chairman Royer inquired how many parking spaces are provided and Mr. Nguyen responded that there are three parking spaces at the rear of the site. Staff added that the City no longer has any minimum parking requirements.

Chairman Boehm inquired if Mr. Nguyen has contacted any neighbors about the project. The applicant responded that he spoke with the neighbors on both sides and that they are supportive overall. Ms. Peak Edwards added that an on-site sign is posted on the project frontage to inform neighbors about the project.

Ms. Peak Edwards inquired if commissioners had any recommendations on the proposed picture windows on the front and side façades of the building, noting that more traditional windows like paired double-hung windows would be more appropriate. She also requested that the applicant consider reducing the number of windows in the front dormer. Ms. Peak Edwards noted that a comment was received by the City about the exposure of the stairwell on the front façade. Chairman Boehm inquired whether there is a landing and where the stairs ended. Mr. Nguyen offered to extend

the wall to cover the front-facing stairwell. Vice Chairman Royer added that a door may be a better option from a security standpoint.

*Ben Leech, Preservation Action Council San Jose (PAC*SJ), commented that he agreed with many of the comments previously expressed. He asked if the applicant would consider bringing the kitchen bay window all the way to the ground. Mr. Leech commented that the porch could be more visually interesting and functional if it were extended out. He added that the porch fascia seems wide and recommended reducing the distance between the porch and roof. Mr. Leech inquired where the utility meters would be located. Mr. Nguyen responded that the utility meters are expected to be installed in the front room to the south of the porch.*

Alec Atienza, Supervising Planner, shared an image of the design that was proposed as part of a Preliminary Review application submitted in August 2024. Chairman Boehm commented that he appreciated the design overall and liked the bay window, stairs going into the building instead of exposed stairs on the exterior side, and the use of composite paneling and stucco.

Mr. Nguyen inquired about placing a gate in front of the stairs. Vice Chairman inquired if there was any hesitation about having a door in that location and Mr. Nguyen commented that he would consider placing a door in the front. Vice Chairman Royer expressed appreciation for the layout of the units.

Ms. Peak Edwards inquired about the sliding glass doors on the ground floor units. Mr. Nguyen responded that the north side of the building has sliding glass doors to provide access to small private open space areas. Mr. Atienza noted that the Fire Department may have access requirements preventing fencing.

Mr. Nguyen summarized the comments made about the project design:

- 1) Reduce the number of windows in front roof dormer;*
- 2) Increase the visual weight of the porch posts;*
- 3) Increase the depth of the porch;*
- 4) Reduce the visibility of the front stairwell;*
- 5) Extend the kitchen bay window to the ground;*
- 6) Reduce the width of the front porch fascia (between the porch supports and eaves) and integrate the porch into the roof design;*
- 7) Change picture windows to more traditional window design and proportions;*
- 8) Explore the possibility of providing fencing in the side setback area; and*
- 9) Use accent colors on the building.*

Commissioner Camuso stated that overall, the project is very nice and a good addition to the neighborhood.

Meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m