



COUNCIL AGENDA: 04/20/21
FILE: 21-742
ITEM: 8.1

Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR
AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Chu Chang

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: April 9, 2021

Approved

Date

04/09/21

COUNCIL DISTRICT: 6

**SUBJECT: NOMINATION OF THE ALAMEDA PARK/SCHIELE AVENUE
HISTORIC DISTRICT (HD21-001)**

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a resolution nominating the proposed Alameda Park/Schiele Avenue Historic District for designation as a local City Landmark Historic District and directing the Department of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement (PBCE) staff to initiate the required process and proceedings to establish the Historic District, including necessary outreach to community members and property owners.

OUTCOME

Adoption of the Council Resolution will initiate the process to designate the proposed Alameda Park/Schiele Avenue Historic District as a City Landmark Historic District. The proposed historic district area is composed of 132 properties, of which three are converted commercial uses on Stockton Avenue. The proposed district will extend from the southside of Pershing Avenue to the northside of Schiele Avenue, and from the houses that extend along Schiele Avenue from The Alameda to Stockton Avenue. See attached boundary map (Attachment A) and legal description (Attachment B) for the proposed Alameda Park/Schiele Avenue Historic District boundaries.

BACKGROUND

Launched in July 2000, The Strong Neighborhoods Initiative is an ongoing partnership between the San José City Council, Mayor, residents, and business owners. The City of San José, the Greater Gardner Neighborhood Advisory Committee (NAC), and the community collaboratively

developed an SNI Neighborhood Improvement Plan for Greater Gardner, which was adopted in January of 2002. Although the plan focused largely on infrastructure, public safety and community amenities, at its core it was to improve the quality of communities and neighborhoods.

Shortly after the Strong Initiative Program was initiated, a group of private residents in the Schiele Subdivision and Alameda Park residential neighborhoods together with preservation advocates began the process of engaging the surrounding community by consulting, conducting outreach, educating, engaging, and promoting the benefits of historic designation of the area. One such property owner and researcher maintained a detailed record of the private outreach done at their own personal expense and time. In the Summer of 2004, door-to-door outreach was paired with voluntary property owner meetings. The economic downturn that devastated the development industry, particularly beginning in 2007, saw resources move away from pursuing historic designations to concentrate on public safety, health, and infrastructure issues. Continued budgetary constraints and lack of staff resources prolonged the process of proceeding with historic designation of the area.

In June 2020, the Historic Landmarks Commission voted to add the Schiele and Alameda Park subdivisions to the Historic Resources Inventory (HRI). The HRI serves as a resource document which can be used as a foundation for future designation of historic landmarks and/or districts, as well as for reviewing and evaluating proposed alterations or removal of structures and proposed development on sites identified therein. Placement on the HRI included public notification to properties owners within the proposed area to be included on the HRI. Outreach was curtailed by the COVID-19 pandemic but continued into the Fall of 2020 with door-to-door outreach even during shelter in place.

Councilmember Dev Davis submitted a memorandum, dated March 17, 2021, to the March 24, 2021 meeting of the Rules and Open Government Committee. The memorandum recommended forwarding a resolution to City Council to nominate and initiate the Alameda Park/Schiele Avenue Historic District. Discussion at the Committee meeting included the process and criteria for historic district nomination which is outlined in the Municipal Code, Section 13.48.120; the desire of property owners to preserve the intact architectural integrity of their homes; and concerns related to the history of exclusionary housing practices based on racial, ethnic, religious, and socioeconomic status/identity. Following the discussion, the Committee voted to forward to City Council a recommendation to approve a resolution to nominate and initiate the process for designating the proposed Alameda Park/Schiele Avenue Historic District as a City Landmark Historic District, with direction that Planning staff coordinate with Housing staff on the history of fair housing in the area.

ANALYSIS

San José Municipal Code Section 13.48.020 defines a “Historic district” as a geographically definable area of urban or rural character, possessing a significant concentration of community of

site, buildings, structures, or objects unified by past events or aesthetically by plan or physical development. Existing information including background work conducted by the community about the proposed district that has been collected by staff shows the proposed area merits nomination as a City Landmark Historic District as defined by Section 13.48.020B of the City's Municipal Code. Section 13.48.120 requires that the following findings be made for designation as a City Landmark Historic District under the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance:

- a) Represents a comprehensive pattern of historic development within a geographically definable area of urban or rural character; and
- b) Possesses a significant concentration of community of site, buildings, structures, or objects (1) unified by past events, or (2) aesthetically by plan or physical development.

A Services Order was executed with local firm Archives and Architecture on June 26, 2020. Research began over the months of December 2020 and January 2021. The consultant team has described the area as an intact representation of development within the Central Planning Area just outside the boundaries of San José's original city limits within an area historically known as the Schiele Subdivision and Alameda Park. Its associated period coincides with a significant era in local San José history from the Horticultural Expansion (1870-1918) to the Interwar Period (1918-1941). In addition, the architectural styles represent the breadth and design of these historic periods and are exceptional in the City of San José, and perhaps in California. These qualities and characteristics meet the criteria for nomination and initiation of designation of a historic district as outlined above.

CONCLUSION

Preliminary work shows the proposed area meets the criteria and requirements for initiating the nomination for a historic district. The proposed Alameda Park and Schiele Avenue district presents a positive example of outreach, communication, and coordinating with City Staff to achieve a long sought-after historic preservation goal outlined in the Envision San José 2040 General Plan:

LU – 13.1 Preserve the integrity and fabric of candidate or designated Historic Districts

LU – 13.5 Evaluate areas with a concentration of historically and or/architecturally significant buildings, structures, or sites, and if qualified, preserve them through historic districts.

The next step toward initiating the process for designation of the proposed area as a City Landmark Historic District is for the City Council to adopt a resolution nominating the proposed Alameda Park/Schiele Avenue Historic District and directing the Department of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement to initiate the required process and proceedings to designate the area as a Historic District.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

After the City Council nominates the area for designation as a historic district and directs Planning staff to initiate the historic district designation process, the next step is to conduct additional public outreach on the proposed historic district. The Historic Preservation Ordinance (Municipal Code Chapter 13.48, Part 5) requires a proposed historic district to first be referred to the Historic Landmarks Commission and then to the Planning Commission for recommendations to the City Council before actual designation. The Historic Landmarks Commission, Planning Commission and subsequent City Council meetings are public hearings requiring public notice (300 feet) and publication in a newspaper of general circulation. Finally, the City Council will hold a public hearing and by written resolution approve, conditionally approve, modify and approve, or deny the designation.

CLIMATE SMART SAN JOSE

The recommendation in this memorandum has no effect on Climate Smart San José energy, water, or mobility goals. Adaptive reuse of historic buildings and historic preservation is a known green building strategy.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

There has been public outreach for the proposed Alameda Park/Schiele Avenue Historic District since the initial survey in 2004. In 2020, Planning staff coordinated with property owners, which led to the June 2020 decision by the Historic Landmarks Commission to add the Alameda Park and Schiele subdivisions to the Historic Resources Inventory.

COORDINATION

This memorandum has been coordinated with the City Attorney's Office.

HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

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CEQA

Exempt pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15262 - Feasibility and Planning Studies and 15331. Historical Resource Restoration/Rehabilitation/Formation of a Historic District is a planning overlay designation for historic preservation purposes and does not require a commitment to a course of action that will result in a physical change to the environment.

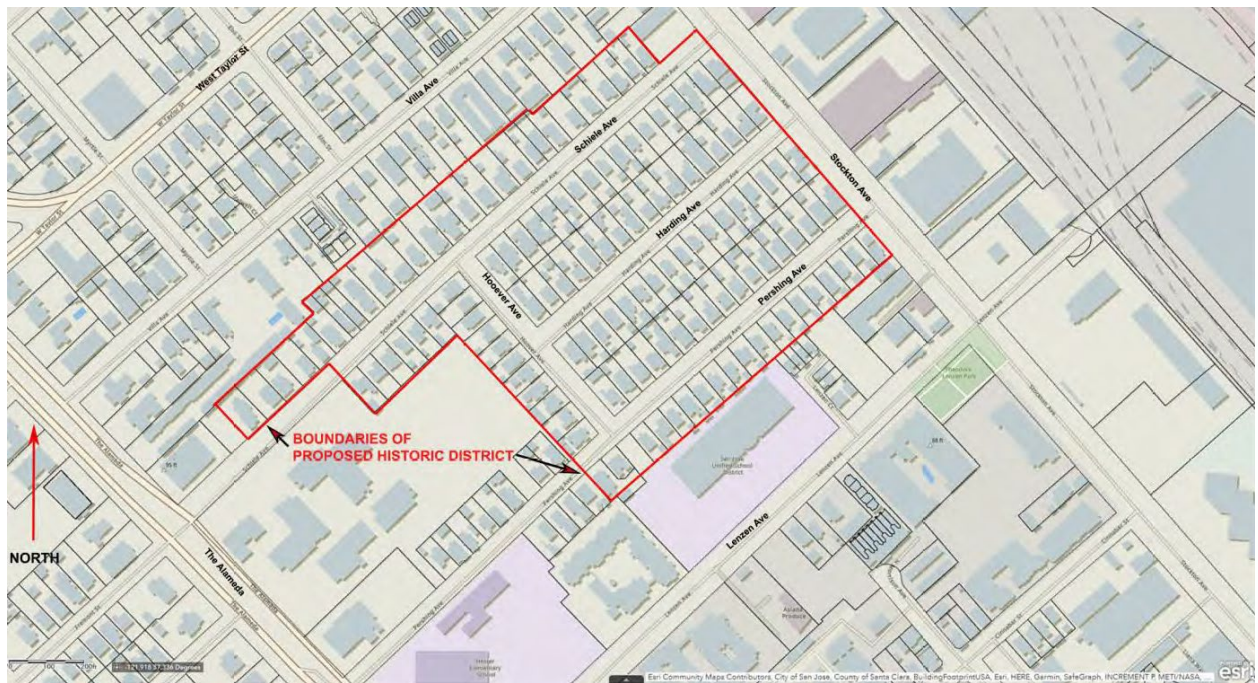
/s/

CHU CHANG, Acting Director
Planning, Building and Code Enforcement

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

Attachment A: Proposed Alameda Park/Schiele Avenue Historic District Boundary Map
Attachment B: Proposed Alameda Park/Schiele Avenue Historic District Legal Description
Attachment C: Description and Statement of Significance for the Proposed Alameda
Park/Schiele Avenue Historic District

Attachment A: District Boundary Map



Attachment B: Legal Description

All of the land within the Supplementary Map of part of the Schiele Subdivision, as recorded in Book D of Maps, Page 31 on January 26, 1889, excluding Lot 1, but including Lots 2 through 24, and a portion of Lot 25 excepting its most northeasterly 131 feet along Schiele Avenue to Stockton Avenue;

the resubdivided portion of the six Lots 40 through 45 of the Map of the Schiele Subdivision of Lots 6 and 14, Block II of the Alameda Gardens, recorded in Book D of Maps, page 31 on Oct. 10, 1888, including the southwesterly 0.09 acre portion of Lot 40, all of Lots 41, 42, 43, and the northeasterly 0.07 acre portion of Lot 45; and

all of the land within the Map of the Alameda Park in the Potrero de Santa Clara, recorded in Vol. R of Maps, Page 4 on June 5, 1922, including Lots 1 through 11 of Block 1, Lots 1 through 34 of Block 2, Lots 1 through 34 of Block 3, and Lots 1 through 20 of Block 4.

Prepared by Franklin Maggi, Archives and Architecture, March 24, 2021

Attachment C:

Statement of Significance

The proposed Schiele Subdivision/Alameda Park City Landmark Historic District is important as an intact representation of development within the Central Planning Area just outside the boundaries of San Jose's Original City limits. The subdivisions were constructed during the periods of Horticultural Expansion (1870-1918) and Interwar (1918-1945). The neighborhood was not annexed into the City of San Jose until 1925 by which time development of both subdivisions was nearly complete. Its period of significance, 1888 to the start of World War II, coincides with the phenomenal population growth in Santa Clara County related to agriculture and its renown worldwide during this period for its orchard products.

The subdivisions are located just off The Alameda, "...San Jose's Magnificent Boulevard. Conceded by many to be one of California's Finest Driveways" as noted in the Alameda Park sales brochure of 1922. The Alameda had been home to prestigious residents since the mid-1800s. Large residential properties within this portion of the now Central Planning Area began to be sold and subdivided into tracts with affordable lots, and their popularity was largely based on their adjacency to this prestigious, historic boulevard.

The location provided easy access to public transportation into Downtown San José and neighboring Santa Clara. A horse-railroad had been operating along The Alameda between Santa Clara and San José since 1868 and was converted to electric streetcars near the end of the 1880 around the time of the opening of the Schiele Subdivision, a point repeatedly made in sales pitches. Streetcar transportation continued along The Alameda until 1938 when automobiles finally eclipsed the system. The subdivisions were also an easy walking distance from the fruit canning companies and other industrial uses on Stockton Avenue, the Fredericksberg Brewery on Julian Street, and College of the Pacific.

Charles M. Schiele appears to have been one of the first to see the financial advantages of offering opportunities to live within the prestigious locale of The Alameda at more affordable prices. He developed two other subdivisions off The Alameda: Schiele Subdivision No. 2 at Magnolia Avenue, and its adjacent Schiele Subdivision No. 4 (Phelan Tract) at Hester and Shasta Avenues. The Schiele Subdivision was considered first-class, developed with every modern improvement—stone sidewalks, gas and water pipes and shade trees of fine varieties planted between the sidewalks and streets.

By the 1920s, when Anthony Maderis developed Alameda Park, The Alameda was still a prestigious residence district. Like Charles Schiele, he was a first-generation immigrant who saw opportunities to build success in real estate.

The vision and plans put into motion by those involved in these residential developments ensured the survival of their subdivisions into the twenty-first century with only limited deviation from the historical look and feel of their original periods of development. It includes excellent examples of Victorian, Arts and Crafts and California Revival architecture. Alameda Park in particular is a snapshot of a classic Craftsman and California Revival architecture neighborhood, such as featured in *Sunset* magazine in the 1920s.

Findings and Applicable Criteria for Designation

The properties within the Schiele Subdivision/Alameda Park residential neighborhood constitutes a landmark eligible historic district that meets the criteria for such designation as defined within the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance Chapter 13.48.110 and the Envision San José 2040 General Plan based on the following findings:

- its representation of a comprehensive pattern of historic development within an area historically known as the Schiele Subdivision and Alameda Park to the west of San Jose's Original City;
- its association with residential development during the period 1888-1941; and
- its embodiment, within the boundaries of the neighborhood, of architectural styles that represent the breadth of design of the associated historic periods.

Although there are some properties within the proposed historic district that do not contribute to the historic fabric of the neighborhood, as noted earlier, the neighborhood possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The neighborhood today maintains a fairly high level of physical integrity to its evolution.

The Schiele Subdivision/Alameda Park historic residential neighborhood as a place, presents a unique and distinct experience of the physical and visual aspects of the neighborhood life and has remained so since the historic period during which it was developed.