

**From:** [Jessica Tsoong](#)  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Subject:** Item #12 - Historical Resources Inventory, 4/22 PACC Meeting  
**Date:** Monday, April 22, 2024 10:24:44 AM

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Dear Honorable City Council Members,

We are writing to you as property owners at 360 Kellogg Ave who have objected to being on the City's Historical Resources Inventory regarding Item #12 - City's Historical Resources Inventory.

**We support the staff's recommendation** to add the 16 properties who have "affirmatively requested" to be on the City's Historical Resources Inventory.

**We ask the Council to provide direction to Staff on the following:**

1. Remove objecting properties from the "eligible for Historical Inventory" list.
  - o In the [staff report for HRB, April 11th 2023](#), regarding the future HRB work plan - PAMC 16.49 modifications, the HRB could discuss language needed to provide clarifications, "(a) the nominations process, to clarify: the HRB does not forward 'objections' properties to the City Council for listing on the inventory, but these objections properties do remain eligible for local listing should the owner wish to request that Council place the property on the local inventory at a later date (subject to documentation of the ongoing integrity of the resource)".
  - o As property owners we have objected to being on the Historical Inventory and therefore we do not want to remain on the "eligible for Historical Inventory" list.
  - o An "eligible for Historical Inventory" list is a new categorization that may be used to restrict owner rights in the future and could easily confuse property buyers who seek clarity and predictability in real estate processes. The "eligible" for Historical Inventory list serves no useful purpose for owners who have objected to being on the inventory list and an owner should agree in writing to remaining on the "eligible" list.
2. Update the PAMC 16.49 (Historical Ordinance) similarly to [Mt. View Ordinance](#), an application for Historical Inventory listing "will be processed only if the property owner agrees in writing to such designation".
  - o This would avoid today's lengthy process which is unwarranted, burdensome, and time consuming.
  - o Both the HRB and the Council are not overruling the property owner's objection. Of the 99 properties who responded: 84% objected (83) and 16% affirmative (16). 47 properties have not responded.
  - o For Objectors in the City's present-day Historical Inventory process it has been a stressful and agonizing 1 year so far starting with one of two community meetings to get information, followed by one of three HRB meetings based on our property grouping, then the meeting with all the Objectors, reviewing the survey

information on our property and creating a response, sending in an objection letter, some Objectors met with staff, and now we are here today.

- In the [staff report for HRB, April 11th 2023](#) mentioned earlier, regarding the future HRB work plan - PAMC 16.49 modifications, the HRB could discuss language needed to provide clarifications, the same process as today is asserted “submitting a written statement if the owner objects” and “HRB does not forward ‘objections’ properties to City Council for listing on the inventory...”.
- Requiring the owner’s agreement provides clarity and predictability for property buyers, eliminates the fear of government overreach, and addresses the concern of arbitrary and capricious interpretation of a home as historic.

Thank you so much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Jessica Tsoong

**From:** [Rebecca Leon](#)  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Cc:** [Deb](#)  
**Subject:** Historical Resources Inventory 4/22 PACC meeting item #12  
**Date:** Monday, April 22, 2024 10:24:24 AM

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SUBJECT: 4/22 PACC Meeting, Item #12 - Historical Resources Inventory

TO: [city.council@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:city.council@cityofpaloalto.org)

Honorable City Council Members,

I am writing to you on behalf of my parents who own the home at 2230 Amherst Street in Palo Alto and who have objected to being on the City's Historical Resources Inventory regarding Item #12 - City's Historical Resources Inventory.

#### **WE SUPPORT STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION**

- Add the 16 properties who have "affirmatively requested" to be on the City's Historical Resources Inventory.

#### **WE ASK THE COUNCIL TO PROVIDE DIRECTION TO STAFF**

1. **Remove objecting properties from the "eligible for Historical Inventory" list.**
  - In the [staff report for HRB, April 11th 2023](#), regarding the future HRB work plan - PAMC 16.49 modifications, the HRB could discuss language needed to provide clarifications, "(a) the nominations process, to clarify: the HRB does not forward 'objections' properties to the City Council for listing on the inventory, but these objections properties do remain eligible for local listing should the owner wish to request that Council place the property on the local inventory at a later date (subject to documentation of the ongoing integrity of the resource)".
  - As property owners we have objected to being on the Historical Inventory and therefore we do not want to remain on the "eligible for Historical Inventory" list.
  - An "eligible for Historical Inventory" list is a new categorization that may be

used to restrict owner rights in the future and could easily confuse property buyers who seek clarity and predictability in real estate processes. The “eligible” for Historical Inventory list serves no useful purpose for owners who have objected to being on the inventory list and an owner should agree in writing to remaining on the “eligible” list.

2.

**Update the PAMC 16.49 (Historical Ordinance) similarly to [Mt. View Ordinance](#), an application for Historical Inventory listing "will be processed only if the property owner agrees in writing to such designation".**

- This would avoid today’s lengthy process which is unwarranted, burdensome, and time consuming.
- Both the HRB and the Council are not overruling the property owner’s objection. Of the 99 properties who responded: 84% objected (83) and 16% affirmative (16). 47 properties have not responded.
- For Objectors in the City’s present-day Historical Inventory process it has been a stressful and agonizing 1 year so far starting with one of two community meetings to get information, followed by one of three HRB meetings based on our property grouping, then the meeting with all the Objectors, reviewing the survey information on our property and creating a response, sending in an objection letter, some Objectors met with staff, and now we are here today.
- In the [staff report for HRB, April 11th 2023](#) mentioned earlier, regarding the future HRB work plan - PAMC 16.49 modifications, the HRB could discuss language needed to provide clarifications, the same process as today is asserted “submitting a written statement if the owner objects” and “HRB does not forward ‘objections’ properties to City Council for listing on the inventory...”.
- Requiring the owner’s agreement provides clarity and predictability for property buyers, eliminates the fear of government overreach, and addresses the concern of arbitrary and capricious interpretation of a home as historic.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,  
Rebecca Leon

**From:** [Kathy Phung](#)  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Subject:** 4/22 PACC Meeting, Item #12 - Historical Resources Inventory  
**Date:** Monday, April 22, 2024 10:18:39 AM

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Honorable City Council Members,

We are writing to you as property owners at 555 Forest Ave. & 667 Channing Ave. who have objected to being on the City's Historical Resources Inventory regarding Item #12 - City's Historical Resources Inventory.

#### WE ASK THE COUNCIL TO PROVIDE DIRECTION TO STAFF

Remove objecting properties from the "eligible for Historical Inventory" list.

In the staff report for HRB, April 11th 2023, regarding the future HRB work plan - PAMC 16.49 modifications, the HRB could discuss language needed to provide clarifications, "(a) the nominations process, to clarify: the HRB does not forward 'objections' properties to the City Council for listing on the inventory, but these objections properties do remain eligible for local listing should the owner wish to request that Council place the property on the local inventory at a later date (subject to documentation of the ongoing integrity of the resource)".

As property owners we have objected to being on the Historical Inventory and therefore we do not want to remain on the "eligible for Historical Inventory" list.

An "eligible for Historical Inventory" list is a new categorization that may be used to restrict owner rights in the future and could easily confuse property buyers who seek clarity and predictability in real estate processes. The "eligible" for Historical Inventory list serves no useful purpose for owners who have objected to being on the inventory list and an owner should agree in writing to remaining on the "eligible" list.

Update the PAMC 16.49 (Historical Ordinance) similarly to Mt. View Ordinance, an application for Historical Inventory listing "will be processed only if the property owner agrees in writing to such designation".

This would avoid today's lengthy process which is unwarranted, burdensome, and time consuming.

Both the HRB and the Council are not overruling the property owner's objection. Of the 99 properties who responded: 84% objected (83) and 16% affirmative (16). 47 properties have not responded.

For Objectors in the City's present-day Historical Inventory process it has been a stressful and agonizing 1 year so far starting with one of two community meetings to get information, followed by one of three HRB meetings based on our property grouping, then the meeting with all the Objectors, reviewing the survey information on our property and creating a response, sending in an objection letter, some Objectors

met with staff, and now we are here today.

In the staff report for HRB, April 11th 2023 mentioned earlier, regarding the future HRB work plan - PAMC 16.49 modifications, the HRB could discuss language needed to provide clarifications, the same process as today is asserted "submitting a written statement if the owner objects" and "HRB does not forward 'objections' properties to City Council for listing on the inventory...".

Requiring the owner's agreement provides clarity and predictability for property buyers, eliminates the fear of government overreach, and addresses the concern of arbitrary and capricious interpretation of a home as historic.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,  
-Kathy Phung  
(408) 504-2495

**From:** [Vijay Chakravarthy](#)  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Subject:** PACC Meeting Item #12 - Historical Resources Inventory  
**Date:** Monday, April 22, 2024 9:54:52 AM

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SUBJECT: 4/22 PACC Meeting, Item #12 - Historical Resources Inventory

TO: [city.council@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:city.council@cityofpaloalto.org)

Honorable City Council Members,

My name is Vijay Chakravarthy and I am writing to you as a property owner of 546 Washington Ave who has objected to being on the City's Historical Resources Inventory regarding Item #12 - City's Historical Resources Inventory.

#### **WE SUPPORT STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION**

- Add the 16 properties who have "affirmatively requested" to be on the City's Historical Resources Inventory.

#### **WE ASK THE COUNCIL TO PROVIDE DIRECTION TO STAFF**

1. Remove objecting properties from the "eligible for Historical Inventory" list.
  - In the [staff report for HRB, April 11th 2023](#), regarding the future HRB work plan - PAMC 16.49 modifications, the HRB could discuss language needed to provide clarifications, "(a) the nominations process, to clarify: the HRB does not forward 'objections' properties to the City Council for listing on the inventory, but these objections properties do remain eligible for local listing should the owner wish to request that Council place the property on the local inventory at a later date (subject to documentation of the ongoing integrity of the resource)".
  - As property owners we have objected to being on the Historical Inventory and therefore we do not want to remain on the "eligible for Historical Inventory" list.
  - An "eligible for Historical Inventory" list is a new categorization that may be used to restrict owner rights in the future and could easily confuse property buyers who seek clarity and predictability in real estate



processes. The “eligible” for Historical Inventory list serves no useful purpose for owners who have objected to being on the inventory list and an owner should agree in writing to remaining on the “eligible” list.

o

*As a property owner, I wholly object to the existence of an eligible historical inventory list and do not want my property to be placed on this list. Placement on this list is discriminatory against homeowners and subjects us to losses in home and property values and is another example of blatant government overreach.*

2.

Update the PAMC 16.49 (Historical Ordinance) similarly to [Mt. View Ordinance](#), an application for Historical Inventory listing "will be processed only if the property owner agrees in writing to such designation".

o

This would avoid today's lengthy process which is unwarranted, burdensome, and time consuming.

o

Both the HRB and the Council are not overruling the property owner's objection. Of the 99 properties who responded: 84% objected (83) and 16% affirmative (16). 47 properties have not responded.

o

For Objectors in the City's present-day Historical Inventory process it has been a stressful and agonizing 1 year so far starting with one of two community meetings to get information, followed by one of three HRB meetings based on our property grouping, then the meeting with all the Objectors, reviewing the survey information on our property and creating a response, sending in an objection letter, some Objectors met with staff, and now we are here today.

o

In the [staff report for HRB, April 11th 2023](#) mentioned earlier, regarding the future HRB work plan - PAMC 16.49 modifications, the HRB could discuss language needed to provide clarifications, **the same process as today is asserted** "submitting a written statement if the owner objects" and "HRB does not forward 'objections' properties to City Council for listing on the inventory...".

o

Requiring the owner's agreement provides clarity and predictability for property buyers, eliminates the fear of government overreach, and addresses the concern of arbitrary and capricious interpretation of a home as historic.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Vijay Chakravarthy

Homeowner of 546 Washington Ave .

**From:** [At Amy Sung](#)  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Cc:** [Michael Dreyfus](#); [Amy Sung](#)  
**Subject:** PACC Meeting 4/22/24, Item #12 - City's Historical Resources Inventory  
**Date:** Sunday, April 21, 2024 11:21:21 PM  
**Attachments:** [Realtor Letter to PA Council 04222024.pdf](#)

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Honorable Council Members:

Attached please find a letter from 62 local real estate agents for PACC Meeting 4/22/24, Item #12 - City's Historical Resources Inventory.

Respectfully,

Michael Dreyfus and Amy Sung

To: city.council@cityofpaloalto.org

Subject: PACC Meeting 4/22/24, Item #12 - City's Historical Resources Inventory

**Statement to Eliminate Objectors From the Eligible List, Allow Nominations Only from Property Owners or Council, and Require Property Owner Agreement for Designation**

April 21, 2024

Honorable Council Members,

The following 62 members of the residential real estate community wish to address several issues regarding Item #12 – Historical Resources Inventory” for the April 22nd Council meeting. This is the third letter from the real estate community as a result of the many clients who have sought our insights regarding the implications of the City’s initiative to designate their properties as “Historical Resources Inventory”. The previous two letters are appended.

We support the staff recommendation to add 16 properties to the Historical Resources Inventory since the property owners provided their agreement with the historical designation.

We urge the Council to direct staff to:

**1. Eliminate Objectors from the Eligible List**

The property owners have already objected to being on the Historical Inventory list and certainly do not want to remain on an “**eligible** for Historical Inventory” list. Such an “eligible” designation should not apply to Objecting property owners because it is a new categorization that causes uncertainty for real estate processes by confusing potential buyers, could restrict owner rights in the future, and there is a “taint” to “eligible status”. What does an “eligible for Historical Inventory” designation mean? The [staff report for HRB, April 11th 2023](#), regarding the future HRB work plan - PAMC 16.49 modifications, mentions that the HRB could clarify language in the nomination process, “the HRB does not forward ‘objections’ properties to the City Council for listing on the inventory, **but these objections properties do remain eligible for local listing should the owner wish to request that Council place the property on the local inventory at a later date (subject to documentation of the ongoing integrity of the resource)**”. Objectors are forfeiting any benefits by being removed from the eligible list because any Historical Inventory property candidate is subject to documentation of the integrity of the property. Simply designating a property as “eligible” could diminish its value. The City uses “eligible” status for the National Register of Historical Places (NRHP) and California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) for many purposes such as the properties required in the Historical Inventory Survey, land use, and improvements. A property buyer is unlikely to be able to distinguish between eligible for Historical Resources Inventory, HRHP or CRHR. If an eligible status for Historical Resources Inventory is to exist (the City has authority) it should be at the consent of the homeowner.

**2. Allow Nominations Only From Property Owners or Council**

[Palo Alto Ordinance 16.49.010](#) allows any individual or group to nominate your property, then reviewed by the HRB, and then reviewed by Council for the final decision. In the [Mt. View Ordinance](#), a city with high property values like Palo Alto, only the property owner or Council can nominate a property and “**an application for Historical Inventory listing "will be processed only if the property owner agrees in writing to such designation"**”. This provides clarity and predictability for property owners and the real estate process.

### 3. Require Property Owner Agreement for Designation

Both the HRB and the Council are not overruling the property owner's objection for Historical Inventory designation. Of the 99 properties who responded: 84% objected (83) and 16% affirmative (16). 47 properties have not responded. We understand many of our clients have undergone an arduous and prolonged Historical Inventory Process over the last year. This was unnecessary when the outcome of the process resulted in requiring the owner's agreement for designation. Therefore, Palo Alto's Ordinance should be updated accordingly to avoid future processes that the 83 objectors recently endured. Also in the [staff report for HRB, April 11th 2023](#) regarding the future HRB work plan - PAMC 16.49 modifications, the HRB could discuss to provide clarifications, **the same process as today is asserted** "submitting a written statement if the owner objects" and "HRB does not forward 'objections' properties to City Council for listing on the inventory...". Requiring the owner's agreement simplifies the process, provides clarity and predictability for property buyers and owners, eliminates the fear of government overreach, and addresses the concern of arbitrary and capricious interpretation of a home as historic.

The purpose of the Historical Preservation per Palo Alto's Ordinance, "(c) Stabilize and improve the economic value of certain historic structures, districts and neighborhoods" is in direct contradiction to any disruptions to the clarity and predictability that should be inherent in real estate processes that reduce property value. Therefore, we urge the Council to direct staff to: 1) eliminate objectors from the eligible list, 2) allow nominations only from property owners or council, and 3) require property owner agreement for designation.

Our previous two letters to HRB and Council members are appended.

The following 62 local real estate agents have indicated support for, and agreement with, the points raised here.

Respectfully,

Michael Dreyfus, Leannah Hunt, Jennifer Buenrostro, Sherry Bucolo, Carol Carnevale, Nicole Aron, Pat Kalish, Xin Jiang, Brian Ayer, Terri Kerwin, Greg Celotti, Katherine Celotti, Lucy Berman, Sharon Witte, Erika Ameri, Shena Hurley, Mary Gullixson, Steve Niethammer, Brian Chancellor, Laurel Robinson, Monica Corman, Lori Buecheler, Mandy Montoya, Arti Miglani, Umang Sanchorawala, Nancy Mott, Terry Rice, Adam Touni, Jennifer Pollock, Denise Simons, Mary Gilles, Julie Lau, Jenny Teng, Gloria Young, John Young, Mary Jo McCarthy, Michael Hall, Morgan Lashley, Christy Giuliani, Alan Loveless, Lynn Wilson Roberts, Annie Wilson Roberts, Leika Kejriwal, Desiree Docktor, Ashley Banks, Bob Gerlach, Brett Carviness, David Gray, Kristin Galvin, Carolyn Keddington, Courtney Charney, Omar Kinaan, Steve Pierce, Nancy Goldcamp, Jolaine Woodson, Jack Woodson, Noelle Queen, Nadr Essabhoy, Peter Carson, Harry Chang, Tom LeMieux, and Amy Sung.

Subject: An Updated Open Letter to the Palo Alto Historic Resources Board, the Palo Alto City Council and Palo Alto Homeowners

January 24, 2024

Honorable Council Members and Board Members,

The following members of the residential real estate community wish to address issues we are experiencing with Palo Alto's current historic resource practices and the current plan to shift approximately 150+ properties from being eligible for historic status to the local Palo Alto Historic Inventory. Many of us have lived in Palo Alto and have owned historic homes. Collectively, we have sold much of Palo Alto historic inventory. This letter is a result of the many clients who have sought our insights regarding the implications of the City's recent initiative to designate their properties as "Palo Alto Historic Inventory" and selling listed, eligible, and potentially eligible historic homes.

### **1. Historic status reduces a property's value**

We would like to first address the claim by some City officials and Historical Resources Board (HRB) members that assigning a property historic status doesn't devalue it, and may in fact increase its worth. Based on our extensive experience, we can categorically refute this. In Palo Alto, a historic classification can reduce a property's value by 10% to 20%. This is essentially common sense; owning property is about the rights that come with it. The more these rights are limited, the lower the property's value becomes. Historic designation constrains the alterations one can make to a property, and thus directly decreases the values of homes with that designation. Many of us can point to concrete examples where historically designated homes have sold for less than they would have without the designation. We also know from direct experience that home buyers in Palo Alto view historic homes as problematic and shy away from engaging with them. Local realtors would unanimously prefer to lift the historic designation if possible. While it's arguable that such a status preserves a property's existing condition, it must be acknowledged that this preservation comes at a considerable financial cost to the owner. The purpose of Historical Preservation per Palo Alto Ordinance 16.49.010 to "(c) Stabilize and improve the economic value of certain historic structures, districts and neighborhoods" is in direct contradiction to the reduction in property values.

### **2. There should be no "eligible" for Historic Status on the Palo Alto Inventory List**

The HRB voted (6-1) at the January 11, 2024 meeting that it would not recommend listing properties over the objections of the property owner. This is good news that properties will not be recommended to council to be placed on the inventory list over owner objections. However, the staff recommendation for the January 25<sup>th</sup> meeting to "affirm the **eligibility** [emphasis added] for local inventory listing of the properties with owners who have objected to listing on the local inventory". Such an "eligible" list should not exist because it's a new categorization that may be used to restrict owner rights, etc. For example, all properties included in the current survey are designated "eligible for the National Register of Historic Places" which the City of Palo Alto is using to determine local land use process and restrictions which are ambiguous and not transparent and to require inclusion in the present-day process for nomination to the local inventory. What does "eligible" for Palo Alto's Inventory mean? Palo Alto's Historical Preservation Ordinance is planned to be updated and those updates could have implications to an "eligible" Palo Alto Inventory list in the same way as "eligible" for the National Register has implications. If an eligible status is to exist it should also be at the consent of the home owner.

### **3. The existing historic ordinance is ambiguous and results in arbitrary and capricious interpretation**

For over two decades, Palo Alto has contended with the effects of an unofficial historic preservation policy, despite a 52% majority defeating Measure G in 2000. In the subsequent 23 years, this de facto policy has been inadvertently strengthened, by City staff and consultants, leading to the categorization of

previously unmarked homes as historic. This has bred confusion within the real estate sector due to constantly evolving interpretations and a lack of consistent procedure. The 1-4 category classification system currently in place is ineffectual. The terminology used to qualify homes is subjective and highly interpretative such as “identified with the lives of historic people” or “a type of building which was once common, but is now rare”. What makes a person historic? How rare is it, one of a kind?

#### **4. Current code statement that recommendations from historic review are “voluntary” is not true in practice**

Decisions by the Historic Review Board and staff seem capricious and lack clear directives. Although the ordinance states “Compliance of the property owner with the recommendations (HRB) shall be voluntary, not mandatory”, this does not include the direction from staff or the Architectural Review Board. We have collectively witnessed clients (and some of our personal properties) experience required compliance with review decisions to proceed through the planning process. There is a great deal of process and direction that is mandatory, not voluntary, and is instituted through the review process.

#### **5. Overreach on what qualifies as historic and the taint of “eligible” status**

There's a growing ambiguity and overreach surrounding what qualifies as historic. The City now tentatively considers any property labeled "eligible" for historic status as such, burdening homeowners with the responsibility, and expense, to prove otherwise. This involves engaging a City-appointed consultant at the owner's expense (often \$7,000 to \$10,000) and securing an affirmative ruling. This presumptive approach to historic status is not only burdensome for property owners but also disrupts the clarity and predictability that should be inherent in real estate processes. Moreover, there appears to be a conflict of interest to have the same historic consultants perform a survey to determine if properties are historic and also be hired by the City and residents to consult on historic design and preservation of properties for improvements or to pursue affirmative rulings. Each property deemed historic becomes the “Total Available Market (TAM)” of paying customers for historic consulting firms.

#### **6. Changes a current homeowner or prospective buyer can make to a home is made on an ad-hoc basis with no rules or established guidelines to follow**

There are no established rules to read to tell you what you can do with an historic home. Can you expand it, can you change the windows, can you change the floorplan, can you change the back or sides, can you add a story? Can solar panels be installed on the front of the home? Instead, you must go to the cost and expense of drawing up plans to get comments on what will or won't be allowed. Home buyers are lost and so run from buying historic homes.

At the December 14, 2023 HRB meeting, it was mentioned a subcommittee will form to discuss financial implications of historic homes. If you are interested in information from the real estate community we are available to contribute to your effort. It is time for the City to acknowledge the negative financial and procedural burden the historic system is placing on Palo Alto homeowners. The decision to declare a house “historic” should be brought out of the shadows and have a clear set of qualifications and process that requires the “informed consent” of the homeowner, not an “opt-out” that requires an objection letter.

The following 31 local real estate agents have indicated support for, and agreement with, the points raised here.

Michael Dreyfus, Lucy Berman, Leannah Hunt, Laurel Robinson, Brian Chancellor, Mary Gullixson, Brent Gullixson, Tom LeMieux, Julie Lau, Umang Sanchowala, Terri Kerwin, Monica Corman, Mandy Montoya, Morgan Lashley, Greg Celotti, Xin Jiang, Arti Miglani, Jennifer Pollock, Adam Touni, Mary Jo McCarthy, Noelle Queen, Kristin Galvin, Gloria Young, John Young David Gray, Omar Kinaan, Ashley Banks, Mary Gilles, Brian Ayer, Shena Hurley, Ryan Selby Holland.

## THE DREYFUS GROUP



Honorable Council Members and Board Members,

My name is Michael Dreyfus, and with over three decades of experience as a real estate agent, 24 years of which I've worked in Palo Alto, I've sold more than 300 homes in the area and remain a dedicated participant in its market. I lived for 15 years in a historic home in Professorville. Many community members have sought my insights regarding the implications of the City's recent initiative to designate their properties as "Palo Alto Historic Inventory."

I'd like to first address the claim by some City officials and Board members that assigning a property historic status doesn't devalue it, and may in fact increase its worth. Based on my extensive experience, I can categorically refute this. In Palo Alto, a historic classification can reduce a property's value by 10% to 20%. This is essentially common sense; owning property is about the rights that come with it. The more these rights are limited, the lower the property's value becomes. Historic designation constrains the alterations one can make to a property. For example, I handled the sale of a home in the Old Palo Alto area, where the land alone was worth \$5.5 million, but due to historic restrictions, it sold for only \$4.5 million. Local realtors would unanimously prefer to lift the historic designation if possible. While it's arguable that such a status preserves a property's existing condition, it must be acknowledged that this preservation comes at a considerable financial cost to the owner.

For over two decades, Palo Alto has contended with the effects of an unofficial historic preservation policy, despite a 52% majority defeating Measure G in 2000. In the subsequent 23 years, this de facto policy has been inadvertently strengthened, by City staff and consultants, leading to the categorization of previously unmarked homes as historic. This has bred confusion within the real estate sector due to constantly evolving rules and a lack of consistent procedure. The 1-4 classification system currently in place is ineffectual. Decisions by the Historic Review Board seem capricious and lack clear directives. I recall an incident where, during a review concerning my property in Professorville, half of the board objected to replacing windows due to their "historic" nature, while the other half insisted on new windows to distinguish the historic sections of the house. We were left without a clear verdict and eventually abandoned our renovation plans.

Furthermore, there's a growing ambiguity and overreach surrounding what qualifies as historic. The City now tentatively considers any property labeled "eligible" for historic status as such, burdening homeowners with the responsibility, and expense, to prove otherwise. This involves engaging a City-appointed consultant at the owner's expense (often \$7,000 to \$10,000) and securing an affirmative ruling. This presumptive approach to historic status is not only burdensome for property owners but also disrupts the clarity and predictability that should be inherent in real estate processes.

It is time for the City to acknowledge the negative financial and procedural burden the historic system is placing on Palo Alto homeowners. The decision to declare a house "historic" should be brought out of the shadows and have a clear set of qualifications and process that requires the informed consent of the homeowner.

Michael Dreyfus

The following local real estate agents have indicated support for, and agreement with, the points I have raised here.

Mary Gullixson, Compass Realty  
Sherry Bucolo, Compass Realty  
Umang Sanchorawala, Compass Realty  
Monica Corman, Compass Realty  
Noelle Queen, Golden Gate Sotheby's International Realty  
John Young, Golden Gate Sotheby's International Realty  
Mary Gilles, Golden Gate Sotheby's International Realty  
Omar Kinaan, Golden Gate Sotheby's International Realty  
Shena Hurley, Golden Gate Sotheby's International Realty  
Mary Jo McCarthy, Golden Gate Sotheby's International Realty  
David Gray, Golden Gate Sotheby's International Realty

**Michael Dreyfus, Broker Associate**

**Golden Gate Sotheby's International Realty**

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**From:** [Lian Bi](#)  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Subject:** 4/22 PACC Meeting, Item #12 - Historical Resources Inventory  
**Date:** Sunday, April 21, 2024 11:10:33 PM

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Honorable City Council Members,

We are writing to you as property owners at 380 Coleridge Ave, Palo Alto who have objected to being on the City's Historical Resources Inventory regarding Item #12 - City's Historical Resources Inventory.

#### **WE SUPPORT STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION**

- Add the 16 properties who have "affirmatively requested" to be on the City's Historical Resources Inventory.

#### **WE ASK THE COUNCIL TO PROVIDE DIRECTION TO STAFF**

1. Remove objecting properties from the "eligible for Historical Inventory" list.
  - In the [staff report for HRB, April 11th 2023](#), regarding the future HRB work plan - PAMC 16.49 modifications, the HRB could discuss language needed to provide clarifications, "(a) the nominations process, to clarify: the HRB does not forward 'objections' properties to the City Council for listing on the inventory, but these objections properties do remain eligible for local listing should the owner wish to request that Council place the property on the local inventory at a later date (subject to documentation of the ongoing integrity of the resource)".
  - As property owners we have objected to being on the Historical Inventory and therefore we do not want to remain on the "eligible for Historical Inventory" list.
  - An "eligible for Historical Inventory" list is a new categorization that may be used to restrict owner rights in the future and could easily confuse property buyers who seek clarity and predictability in real estate processes. The "eligible" for Historical Inventory list serves no useful purpose for owners who have objected to being on the inventory list and an owner should agree in writing to remaining on the "eligible" list.
2. Update the PAMC 16.49 (Historical Ordinance) similarly to [Mt. View Ordinance](#), an application for Historical Inventory listing "will be processed only if the property owner agrees in writing to such designation".
  - This would avoid today's lengthy process which is unwarranted, burdensome, and time consuming.
  - Both the HRB and the Council are not overruling the property owner's objection. Of the 99 properties who responded: 84% objected (83) and 16% affirmative (16). 47 properties have not responded.
  - For Objectors in the City's present-day Historical Inventory process it has been

a stressful and agonizing 1 year so far starting with one of two community meetings to get information, followed by one of three HRB meetings based on our property grouping, then the meeting with all the Objectors, reviewing the survey information on our property and creating a response, sending in an objection letter, some Objectors met with staff, and now we are here today.

- In the [staff report for HRB, April 11th 2023](#) mentioned earlier, regarding the future HRB work plan - PAMC 16.49 modifications, the HRB could discuss language needed to provide clarifications, the same process as today is asserted “submitting a written statement if the owner objects” and “HRB does not forward ‘objections’ properties to City Council for listing on the inventory...”.
- Requiring the owner’s agreement provides clarity and predictability for property buyers, eliminates the fear of government overreach, and addresses the concern of arbitrary and capricious interpretation of a home as historic.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully

Lian Bi

**From:** [geetha srikantan](#)  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Cc:** [geetha srikantan](#); [geetha srikantan](#)  
**Subject:** City Council - City's Historical Resources Inventory - homeowner inputs  
**Date:** Sunday, April 21, 2024 9:52:37 PM

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Honorable City Council Members,

I am writing to you as property owner at 385 Waverley Street, Palo Alto, CA 94301, who has objected to being on the City's Historical Resources Inventory regarding Item #12 - City's Historical Resources Inventory.

#### **I SUPPORT STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION**

- Add the 16 properties who have "affirmatively requested" to be on the City's Historical Resources Inventory.

#### **I ASK THE COUNCIL TO PROVIDE DIRECTION TO STAFF**

1. Remove objecting properties from the "eligible for Historical Inventory" list.
  - In the [staff report for HRB, April 11th 2023](#), regarding the future HRB work plan - PAMC 16.49 modifications, the HRB could discuss language needed to provide clarifications, "(a) the nominations process, to clarify: the HRB does not forward 'objections' properties to the City Council for listing on the inventory, but these objections properties do remain eligible for local listing should the owner wish to request that Council place the property on the local inventory at a later date (subject to documentation of the ongoing integrity of the resource)".
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2.

**Update the PAMC 16.49 (Historical Ordinance) similarly to [Mt. View Ordinance](#), an application for Historical Inventory listing "will be processed only if the property owner agrees in writing to such designation".**

- This would avoid today's lengthy process which is unwarranted, burdensome, and time consuming.
- Both the HRB and the Council are not overruling the property owner's objection. Of the 99 properties who responded: 84% objected (83) and 16% affirmative (16). 47 properties have not responded.
- **For Objectors in the City's present-day Historical Inventory process it has been a stressful and agonizing 1 year so far starting with one of two community meetings to get information, followed by one of three HRB meetings based on our property grouping, then the meeting with all the Objectors, reviewing the survey information on our property and creating a response, sending in an objection letter, some Objectors met with staff, and now we are here today.**
- In the [staff report for HRB, April 11th 2023](#) mentioned earlier, regarding the future HRB work plan - PAMC 16.49 modifications, the HRB could discuss language needed to provide clarifications, the same process as today is asserted "submitting a written statement if the owner objects" and "HRB does not forward 'objections' properties to City Council for listing on the inventory...".
- **Requiring the owner's agreement provides clarity and predictability for property buyers, eliminates the fear of government overreach, and addresses the concern of arbitrary and capricious interpretation of a home as historic.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,  
Dr Geetha Srikantan

**From:** [Daniel Marshall](#)  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Subject:** 4/22 PACC Meeting #12- Histoical Resources Inventory  
**Date:** Sunday, April 21, 2024 8:23:01 PM  
**Attachments:** [letter to the city.pdf](#)

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Honorable City Council Members

Please see the attached letter sent in support of removing our names and "eligible" designation for our home at 538 Churchill Ave, Palo Alto, CA 94301 from the Historical Resources Inventory.

Thank you for your time.

Dan & Ana Marshall  
650 -269 2862

## Honorable City Council Members,

**Subject:** 4/22 PACC Meeting, Item #12 - Historical Resources Inventory

My wife and I are writing to you as property owners at 538 Churchill Avenue. We have objected to being on the City's Historical Resources Inventory regarding Item #12 - City's Historical Resources Inventory.

### WE SUPPORT STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION

- Add the 16 properties who have "affirmatively requested" to be on the City's Historical Resources Inventory.

### WE ASK THE COUNCIL TO PROVIDE DIRECTION TO STAFF

1. **Remove objecting properties from the "eligible for Historical Inventory" list.**
  - In the [staff report for HRB, April 11th 2023](#), regarding the future HRB work plan - PAMC 16.49 modifications, the HRB could discuss language needed to provide clarifications, "(a) the nominations process, to clarify: the HRB does not forward 'objections' properties to the City Council for listing on the inventory, **but these objection properties do remain eligible for local listing should the owner wish to request that Council place the property on the local inventory at a later date** (subject to documentation of the ongoing integrity of the resource)".
  - As property owners we have objected to being on the Historical Inventory and therefore we do not want to remain on the "eligible for Historical Inventory" list.
  - The "eligible" for Historical Inventory list serves no useful purpose for owners who have objected to being on the inventory list and an owner should agree in writing to remaining on the "eligible" list. In fact, the "**eligible** for Historical Inventory" list is likely to result in confusion by property buyers and restrict owners rights.
2. **Update the PAMC 16.49 (Historical Ordinance) similarly to [Mt. View Ordinance](#), an application for Historical Inventory listing "will be processed only if the property owner agrees in writing to such designation".**
  - This would avoid today's lengthy process which is unwarranted, burdensome, and time consuming.
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- **Requiring the owner’s agreement** provides clarity and predictability for property buyers, eliminates the fear of government overreach, and addresses the concern of arbitrary and capricious interpretation of a home as historic.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Daniel and Ana Marshall  
538 Churchill Ave  
Palo Alto, Ca 94301

**From:** [John Kelley](#)  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Subject:** PA-POLI-letter to PACC re Historic Designations 2024-04-21  
**Date:** Sunday, April 21, 2024 7:11:27 PM  
**Attachments:** [PA-POLI-letter to PACC re Historic Designations 2024-04-21.pdf](#)

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TO: Palo Alto City Council (City Council)  
RE: Recommendations re Agenda Item #12, "Addition of 16 properties to the City's Historic Resources Inventory based on Owner interest. [etc.]" and Comments re  
Staff Report [2402-2684](#) (Staff Report)  
DATE: April 20, 2024  
FROM: John Kelley

## RECOMMENDATION

City Staff recommendation no. 1, adding properties to the City's Historic Resources Inventory based on the expressed written consent of their respective owners, is not objectionable, although it would be reasonable to ask additional questions regarding any such designation of (a) the Cistern and Pump House or (b) 201 Alma Street.

Reject City Staff recommendation no. 2, and, instead, direct City Staff:

- - to provide a draft ordinance to the City Council within 30 days:
    - to amend the current historic ordinance to require prior, express, written owner consent before listing any property on any Palo Alto "eligible for inventory" list or historic inventory; and
    - to remove any properties currently listed on any such "eligible for inventory" list or inventory for which such express, written owner consent has not previously been obtained;
- to provide to the City Council within 30 days at least a rough (+/- 10%) estimate of the amount of City Staff and consultant time and equivalent cost spent to date on obtaining the expressions of owner interest for the



16 properties being considered; and

- to postpone any further consideration of any “eligible for inventory” listings or historic designations until further requested by the City Council.

Please see the attached letter for additional details.

TO: Palo Alto City Council (City Council)  
RE: Recommendations re Agenda Item #12, "Addition of 16 properties to the City's Historic Resources Inventory based on Owner interest. [etc.]" and Comments re Staff Report [2402-2684](#) (Staff Report)  
DATE: April 20, 2024  
FROM: John Kelley

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  - to remove any properties currently listed on any such "eligible for inventory" list or inventory for which such express, written owner consent has not previously been obtained;
- to provide to the City Council within 30 days at least a rough (+/- 10%) estimate of the amount of City Staff and consultant time and equivalent cost spent to date on obtaining the expressions of owner interest for the 16 properties being considered; and
- to postpone any further consideration of any "eligible for inventory" listings or historic designations until further requested by the City Council.

## DISCUSSION

### 1. Underlying Principles

The City has spent considerable time, and likely a significant amount of scarce City Staff resources, pursuing poorly considered policies that do not reflect Palo Alto's widely shared values. Rather than deciding in advance whether a given structure may or may not have some historic value, since Palo Alto offers homeowners and others relatively few incentives for historic designations of their properties, the City should reverse its default assumptions. A more sensible policy going forward would be to say, simply and clearly, that no property will be listed on any Palo Alto historic inventory without the prior, express, written consent of the homeowner or other property owner.

## **2. Specific Designations Being Considered**

Based upon the Staff Report's statement that "eleven property owners have affirmatively requested their [respective] propert[ies] be listed on the City's historic resources inventory," Staff Report: 2, there is little basis for objecting to the designations of the privately owned properties numbered 1-13. Staff Report: 3-6. It appears, however, that nearly all of these properties have been identified as Category 2 resources.

Municipally owned properties numbered 1-3 "were reviewed by staff from Administrative Services, Community Services, and Utilities prior to the HRB nominations hearings; staff did not identify any impediments to City operations or uses." Staff Report: 7. Given the critical importance of past, present, and future water facilities to our community, particularly with regard to emergency preparedness, one might well ask whether, in the case of municipally owned properties numbered 1-2, (a) any emergency preparedness personnel or (b) any S/CAP personnel were asked whether they might see any benefits in deferring or rejecting any such historic designations. Emergency preparedness and sustainability lenses ought to be focused on proposed historic designations of city property, if reasonably detailed such evaluations have not occurred already.

## **3. Future Action**

City Staff has recommended that the City Council:

Direct staff to continue outreach to eligible property owners among the properties discussed in this report and to place future additions to the Historic Resources Inventory with expressed owner interest on the Consent Calendar.

Staff Report: 1. Following this recommendation would be a poor use of scarce city resources. More fundamentally, Palo Alto can do far better by its homeowners.

On multiple occasions — both this year and during preceding years — and as recently as April 15th — the City Council has been told, when requesting that City Planning and Development Services (PDS) staff provide information or take certain actions, in effect, that such staff do not have sufficient time to do so, because such staff are already actively engaged in completing other actions that the City Council has previously directed.

If our community's government is constrained by limited staff resources — from, for example, doing all that it could either (a) to promote actual housing production, or (b) to submit a Housing Element to HCD that is most likely to result in HCD certification — then there are better uses of PDS staff's time and energy than "continu[ing] outreach to eligible property owners among the properties discussed in this report and [placing]

future additions to the Historic Resources Inventory with expressed owner interest on the Consent Calendar.” Staff Report: 1.

Even apart from making better policy choices (discussed next below), pragmatic considerations require a different approach. Current processes are yielding scant public benefits. While it is not known with certainty the amount of City Staff and consultant time and equivalent cost spent to date on obtaining the expressions of owner interest for the 16 properties being considered at present, both are likely considerable. And thinking that additional time and energy will have a lower marginal cost is not sensible. The original list of 167 properties has been picked over, with an overall yield to date of less than 10%. Nearly all of the privately owned properties for which owner consent has been obtained are not Category 1 resources. Future endeavors based on existing policies are likely to yield even less and to be of lower value.

A far better approach would be to listen to the community. Years ago, a plebiscite demonstrated that a prior council’s actions regarding historic designations did not reflect Palo Alto’s values. One would hope that the reactions of numerous homeowners, especially over the past year, would be sufficient to demonstrate that the current approach also fails to reflect actual community values.

A recent article, Gennady Sheyner, [“Bowing to backlash, Palo Alto curbs plans for ‘historic’ designations City planners recommend advancing just 16 properties to local Historic Resources Inventory,”](#) *Palo Alto Online*, April 17, 2024, summarized the strong concerns of many Palo Altans:

[After] a year of heated hearings in which dozens of residents pushed back against proposals to list their properties on the local Historic Resources Inventory. While the designation carries some clout for local history buffs (Caroline Willis, a member of the city’s Historic Resources Board, was pleased to see her home added to the list), critics contend that it would bring down their property values and complicate any future plans to renovate or redevelop their properties.

Let’s not beat the historic bushes again, and let’s avoid these problems in the future. Instead of adopting staff recommendation no. 2 (Staff Report: 1), a sounder public policy approach, one that acknowledges the concerns of homeowners, and one that would far better reflect community values, would be to direct City Staff:

- to provide a draft ordinance to the City Council within 30 days:
  - to amend the current historic ordinance to require prior, express, written owner consent before listing any property on any Palo Alto “eligible for inventory” list or historic inventory; and
  - to remove any properties currently listed on any such “eligible for inventory” list or inventory for which such express, written owner consent has not previously been obtained;

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- to provide to the City Council within 30 days at least a rough (+/- 10%) estimate of the amount of City Staff and consultant time and equivalent cost spent to date on obtaining the expressions of owner interest for the 16 properties being considered; and
- to postpone any further consideration of any “eligible for inventory” listings or historic designations until further requested by the City Council.

**From:** [Gallagher, Thomas F \(tfg\)](#)  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Cc:** [Darlene Yaplee](#)  
**Subject:** council meeting  
**Date:** Sunday, April 21, 2024 6:54:10 PM

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Honorable City Council Members,

W

I am writing to you as a property owner at 1011 Fulton St. who has objected to being on the City's Historical Resources Inventory regarding Item #12 - City's Historical Resources Inventory.

#### **I SUPPORT STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION**

- Add the 16 properties who have "affirmatively requested" to be on the City's Historical Resources Inventory.

#### **I ASK THE COUNCIL TO PROVIDE DIRECTION TO STAFF**

1. Remove objecting properties from the "eligible for Historical Inventory" list.
  - In the [staff report for HRB, April 11th 2023](#), regarding the future HRB work plan - PAMC 16.49 modifications, the HRB could discuss language needed to provide clarifications, "(a) the nominations process, to clarify: the HRB does not forward 'objections' properties to the City Council for listing on the inventory, but these objections properties do remain eligible for local listing should the owner wish to request that Council place the property on the local inventory at a later date (subject to documentation of the ongoing integrity of the resource)".
  - As property owners we have objected to being on the Historical Inventory and therefore we do not want to remain on the "eligible for Historical Inventory" list.
  - An "eligible for Historical Inventory" list is a new categorization that may be used to restrict owner rights in the future and could easily confuse property buyers who seek clarity and predictability in real estate processes. The "eligible" for Historical Inventory list serves no useful purpose for owners who have objected to being on the inventory list and an owner should agree in writing to remaining on the "eligible" list.
2. Update the PAMC 16.49 (Historical Ordinance) similarly to [Mt. View Ordinance](#), an application for Historical Inventory listing "will be processed only if the property owner agrees in writing to such designation".
  - This would avoid today's lengthy process which is unwarranted, burdensome, and time consuming.
  - Both the HRB and the Council are not overruling the property owner's objection. Of the 99 properties who responded: 84% objected (83) and 16% affirmative (16). 47 properties have not responded.
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then the meeting with all the Objectors, reviewing the survey information on our property and creating a response, sending in an objection letter, some Objectors met with staff, and now we are here today.

- In the [staff report for HRB, April 11th 2023](#) mentioned earlier, regarding the future HRB work plan - PAMC 16.49 modifications, the HRB could discuss language needed to provide clarifications, the same process as today is asserted “submitting a written statement if the owner objects” and “HRB does not forward ‘objections’ properties to City Council for listing on the inventory...”.
- Requiring the owner’s agreement provides clarity and predictability for property buyers, eliminates the fear of government overreach, and addresses the concern of arbitrary and capricious interpretation of a home as historic.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Thomas F. Gallagher

**From:** [Sheila Kothari](#)  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Cc:** [Ketan Kothari](#)  
**Subject:** 4/22 PACC Meeting, Item #12 - Historical Resources Inventory  
**Date:** Sunday, April 21, 2024 5:23:27 PM

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Honorable City Council Members,

We are writing to you as property owners at 2025 Columbia Street who have objected to being on the City's Historical Resources Inventory regarding Item #12 - City's Historical Resources Inventory.

### **WE SUPPORT STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION**

- Add the 16 properties who have "affirmatively requested" to be on the City's Historical Resources Inventory.

### **WE ASK THE COUNCIL TO PROVIDE DIRECTION TO STAFF**

1. Remove objecting properties from the "eligible for Historical Inventory" list.
  - In the [staff report for HRB, April 11th 2023](#), regarding the future HRB work plan - PAMC 16.49 modifications, the HRB could discuss language needed to provide clarifications, "(a) the nominations process, to clarify: the HRB does not forward 'objections' properties to the City Council for listing on the inventory, but these objections properties do remain eligible for local listing should the owner wish to request that Council place the property on the local inventory at a later date (subject to documentation of the ongoing integrity of the resource)".
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  - Both the HRB and the Council are not overruling the property owner's objection. Of the 99 properties who responded: 84% objected (83) and 16% affirmative (16). 47



properties have not responded.

- **For Objectors in the City's present-day Historical Inventory process it has been a stressful and agonizing 1 year so far starting with one of two community meetings to get information, followed by one of three HRB meetings based on our property grouping, then the meeting with all the Objectors, reviewing the survey information on our property and creating a response, sending in an objection letter, some Objectors met with staff, and now we are here today.**
- **In the [staff report for HRB, April 11th 2023](#) mentioned earlier, regarding the future HRB work plan - PAMC 16.49 modifications, the HRB could discuss language needed to provide clarifications, the same process as today is asserted "submitting a written statement if the owner objects" and "HRB does not forward 'objections' properties to City Council for listing on the inventory..."**
- **Requiring the owner's agreement provides clarity and predictability for property buyers, eliminates the fear of government overreach, and addresses the concern of arbitrary and capricious interpretation of a home as historic.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,  
Sheila & Ketan Kothari

**From:** [John Bard](#)  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Cc:** [Maureen W Bard](#)  
**Subject:** 4/22 PACC Meeting, Item #12 - Historical Resources Inventory  
**Date:** Sunday, April 21, 2024 3:29:53 PM  
**Attachments:** [johnbard.vcf](#)

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Honorable City Council Members,

We are writing to you as property owners at 947 Waverley Street who have objected to being on the City's Historical Resources Inventory regarding Item #12 - City's Historical Resources Inventory. We have attended numerous HRB meetings over the past year to ensure that the review process and final recommendation considered and reflected our objection to the designation of our property to the historic resources list.

**We support the HRB staff's recommendation** to add the 16 properties who have "affirmatively requested" to be on the City's Historical Resources Inventory.

**We ask the Council to direct the HRB to update the PAMC 16.49 (Historical Ordinance)** similarly to the [Mt. View Ordinance](#), to clarify that an application for Historical Inventory listing "will be processed only if the property owner agrees in writing to such designation".

- This would avoid today's lengthy process which is unwarranted, burdensome, and time consuming.
- Both the HRB and the Council are not overruling the property owner's objection. Of the 99 properties who responded: 84% objected (83) and 16% affirmative (16). 47 properties have not responded.
- For Objectors in the City's present-day Historical Inventory process it has been a stressful and agonizing 1 year so far starting with one of two community meetings to get information, followed by one of three HRB meetings based on our property grouping, then the meeting with all the Objectors, reviewing the survey information on our property and creating a response, sending in an objection letter, some Objectors met with staff, and now we are here today.
- In the [staff report for HRB, April 11th 2023](#), regarding the future HRB work plan - PAMC 16.49 modifications, the HRB should update the language to formalize **the same process that evolved for today's recommendation**, "allowing a written statement if the owner objects" and "HRB does not forward objecting properties to City Council for listing on the inventory...".
-

Requiring the owner's agreement provides clarity and predictability for property buyers, eliminates the fear of government overreach, and addresses the concern of arbitrary and capricious interpretation of a home as historic.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

John and Maureen Bard

947 Waverley Street, 94301

[johnbard@comcast.net](mailto:johnbard@comcast.net)

[mwestenberger@gmail.com](mailto:mwestenberger@gmail.com)

650-906-4183

**From:** [Alana Karen](#)  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Cc:** [Michael Popek](#)  
**Subject:** 4/22 PACC Meeting, Item #12 - Historical Resources Inventory  
**Date:** Sunday, April 21, 2024 2:51:46 PM

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Honorable City Council Members,

We are writing to you as property owners at 959 Waverley St who have objected to being on the City's Historical Resources Inventory regarding Item #12 - City's Historical Resources Inventory.

#### **WE SUPPORT STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION**

- Add the 16 properties who have "affirmatively requested" to be on the City's Historical Resources Inventory.

#### **WE ASK THE COUNCIL TO PROVIDE DIRECTION TO STAFF**

**1. Remove objecting properties from the "eligible for Historical Inventory" list.**

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- Requiring the owner’s agreement provides clarity and predictability for property buyers, eliminates the fear of government overreach, and addresses the concern of arbitrary and capricious interpretation of a home as historic.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

With thanks,

Alana Karen and Mike Popek

**From:** [Lydia Callaghan](#)  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Subject:** 4/22 PACC Meeting, Item #12 - Historical Resources Inventory  
**Date:** Sunday, April 21, 2024 10:44:59 AM

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Honorable City Council Members,

We are writing to you as property owners at 855 Hamilton Avenue who have objected to being on the City's Historical Resources Inventory regarding Item #12 - City's Historical Resources Inventory.

### **WE SUPPORT STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION**

- Add the 16 properties who have "affirmatively requested" to be on the City's Historical Resources Inventory.

### **WE ASK THE COUNCIL TO PROVIDE DIRECTION TO STAFF**

- 1. Remove objecting properties from the "eligible for Historical Inventory" list.**
  - In the [staff report for HRB, April 11th 2023](#), regarding the future HRB work plan - PAMC 16.49 modifications, the HRB could discuss language needed to provide clarifications, "(a) the nominations process, to clarify: the HRB does not forward 'objections' properties to the City Council for listing on the inventory, but these objections properties do remain eligible for local listing should the owner wish to request that Council place the property on the local inventory at a later date (subject to documentation of the ongoing integrity of the resource)".
  - As property owners we have objected to being on the Historical Inventory and therefore we do not want to remain on the "eligible for Historical Inventory" list.
  - An "eligible for Historical Inventory" list is a new categorization that may be used to restrict owner rights in the future and could easily confuse property buyers who seek clarity and predictability in real estate processes. The "eligible" for Historical Inventory list serves no useful purpose for owners who have objected to being on the inventory list and an owner should agree in writing to remaining on the "eligible" list.
- 2. Update the PAMC 16.49 (Historical Ordinance) similarly to [Mt. View Ordinance](#), an application for Historical Inventory listing "will be processed only if the property owner agrees in writing to such designation".**
  - This would avoid today's lengthy process which is unwarranted, burdensome, and time consuming.
  - Both the HRB and the Council are not overruling the property owner's objection. Of the 99 properties who responded: 84% objected (83) and 16% affirmative (16). 47 properties have not responded.
  - For Objectors in the City's present-day Historical Inventory process it has been a stressful and agonizing 1 year so far starting with one of two community meetings to get information, followed by one of three HRB meetings based on our property grouping, then the meeting with all the Objectors, reviewing the survey information on our property and creating a response, sending in an objection

letter, some Objectors met with staff, and now we are here today.

- In the [staff report for HRB, April 11th 2023](#) mentioned earlier, regarding the future HRB work plan - PAMC 16.49 modifications, the HRB could discuss language needed to provide clarifications, the same process as today is asserted “submitting a written statement if the owner objects” and “HRB does not forward ‘objections’ properties to City Council for listing on the inventory...”.
- Requiring the owner’s agreement provides clarity and predictability for property buyers, eliminates the fear of government overreach, and addresses the concern of arbitrary and capricious interpretation of a home as historic.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,  
Lydia Callaghan

Lydia Callaghan  
Pronouns: she, her  
917/887-3995

**From:** [Mala Narasimharajan](#)  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Subject:** Eligible Historical Inventory List - Objection Letter and Updating PA Historical ordinance  
**Date:** Sunday, April 21, 2024 10:29:52 AM  
**Attachments:** [MalaNarasimharajan\\_546WashingtonAve SUBJECT 4 22 PACC Meeting, Item #12 - Historical Resources Inventory \(1\).pdf](#)

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Dear City Council Members,  
Attached you will find my objection letter and support for updating the PA Historical Ordinance to be in line with its neighboring city (Mt View). I am submitting this letter for your review and inclusion.

Regards,  
Mala Narasimharajan  
Owner of 546 Washington Ave



SUBJECT: 4/22 PACC Meeting, Item #12 - Historical Resources Inventory

TO: [city.council@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:city.council@cityofpaloalto.org)

Honorable City Council Members,

My name is Mala Narasimharajan and I am writing to you as a property owner of 546 Washington Ave who has objected to being on the City's Historical Resources Inventory regarding Item #12 - City's Historical Resources Inventory.

#### **WE SUPPORT STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION**

- Add the 16 properties who have "affirmatively requested" to be on the City's Historical Resources Inventory.

#### **WE ASK THE COUNCIL TO PROVIDE DIRECTION TO STAFF**

**1. Remove objecting properties from the "eligible for Historical Inventory" list.**

- In the [staff report for HRB, April 11th 2023](#), regarding the future HRB work plan - PAMC 16.49 modifications, the HRB could discuss language needed to provide clarifications, "(a) the nominations process, to clarify: the HRB does not forward 'objections' properties to the City Council for listing on the inventory, **but these objections properties do remain eligible for local listing should the owner wish to request that Council place the property on the local inventory at a later date** (subject to documentation of the ongoing integrity of the resource)".
- As property owners we have objected to being on the Historical Inventory and therefore we do not want to remain on the "**eligible** for Historical Inventory" list.
- An "**eligible** for Historical Inventory" list is a new categorization that may be used to restrict owner rights in the future and could easily confuse property buyers who seek clarity and predictability in real estate processes. The "eligible" for Historical Inventory list serves no useful purpose for owners who have objected to being on the inventory list and an owner should agree in writing to remaining on the "eligible" list.
- *As a property owner, I wholly object to the existence of an eligible historical inventory list and do not want my property to be placed on this list. Placement on this list is discriminatory against homeowners and subjects us to losses in home and property values and is another example of blatant government overreach.*

**2. Update the PAMC 16.49 (Historical Ordinance) similarly to [Mt. View Ordinance](#), an application for Historical Inventory listing "will be processed only if the property owner agrees in writing to such designation".**

- This would avoid today's lengthy process which is unwarranted, burdensome, and time consuming.
- Both the HRB and the Council are not overruling the property owner's objection. Of the 99 properties who responded: 84% objected (83) and 16% affirmative (16). 47 properties have not responded.

- For Objectors in the City's present-day Historical Inventory process it has been a stressful and agonizing 1 year so far starting with one of two community meetings to get information, followed by one of three HRB meetings based on our property grouping, then the meeting with all the Objectors, reviewing the survey information on our property and creating a response, sending in an objection letter, some Objectors met with staff, and now we are here today.
- In the [staff report for HRB, April 11th 2023](#) mentioned earlier, regarding the future HRB work plan - PAMC 16.49 modifications, the HRB could discuss language needed to provide clarifications, **the same process as today is asserted** "submitting a written statement if the owner objects" and "HRB does not forward 'objections' properties to City Council for listing on the inventory...".
- Requiring the owner's agreement provides clarity and predictability for property buyers, eliminates the fear of government overreach, and addresses the concern of arbitrary and capricious interpretation of a home as historic.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mala Narasimharajan

Homeowner of 546 Washington Ave .

**From:** [jerry.smith@sonic.net](mailto:jerry.smith@sonic.net)  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Subject:** 4/22 PACC Meeting, Item #12 - Historical Resources Inventory  
**Date:** Saturday, April 20, 2024 6:17:12 PM

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Honorable City Council Members,

We are writing to you as property owners at 162 Bryant St. who have objected to being on the City's Historical Resources Inventory regarding Item #12 - City's Historical Resources Inventory.

#### **WE SUPPORT STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION**

- Add the 16 properties who have "affirmatively requested" to be on the City's Historical Resources Inventory.

#### **WE ASK THE COUNCIL TO PROVIDE DIRECTION TO STAFF**

- 1. Remove objecting properties from the "eligible for Historical Inventory" list.**
  - In the [staff report for HRB, April 11th 2023](#), regarding the future HRB work plan - PAMC 16.49 modifications, the HRB could discuss language needed to provide clarifications, "(a) the nominations process, to clarify: the HRB does not forward 'objections' properties to the City Council for listing on the inventory, **but these objections properties do remain eligible for local listing should the owner wish to request that Council place the property on the local inventory at a later date** (subject to documentation of the ongoing integrity of the resource)".
  - As property owners we have objected to being on the Historical Inventory and therefore we do not want to remain on the "eligible for Historical Inventory" list.
  - An "eligible for Historical Inventory" list is a new categorization that may be used to restrict owner rights in the future and could easily confuse property buyers who seek clarity and predictability in real estate processes. The "eligible" for Historical Inventory list serves no useful purpose for owners who have objected to being on the inventory list and an owner should agree in writing to remaining on the "eligible" list.
- 2. Update the PAMC 16.49 (Historical Ordinance) similarly to [Mt. View Ordinance](#), an application for Historical Inventory listing "will be processed only if the property owner agrees in writing to such designation".**
  - This would avoid today's lengthy process which is unwarranted, burdensome, and time consuming.
  - Both the HRB and the Council are not overruling the property owner's objection. Of the 99 properties who responded: 84% objected (83) and 16% affirmative (16). 47 properties have

not responded.

- For Objectors in the City's present-day Historical Inventory process it has been a stressful and agonizing 1 year so far starting with one of two community meetings to get information, followed by one of three HRB meetings based on our property grouping, then the meeting with all the Objectors, reviewing the survey information on our property and creating a response, sending in an objection letter, some Objectors met with staff, and now we are here today.
- In the [staff report for HRB, April 11th 2023](#) mentioned earlier, regarding the future HRB work plan - PAMC 16.49 modifications, the HRB could discuss language needed to provide clarifications, **the same process as today is asserted** "submitting a written statement if the owner objects" and "HRB does not forward 'objections' properties to City Council for listing on the inventory...".
- Requiring the owner's agreement provides clarity and predictability for property buyers, eliminates the fear of government overreach, and addresses the concern of arbitrary and capricious interpretation of a home as historic.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,  
Jerry Smith

**From:** [Darlene Yaplee](#)  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Cc:** [Darlene E. Yaplee](#); [Don](#)  
**Subject:** PACC Mtg 4/22/24, Item #12 - Historical Resources Inventory  
**Date:** Saturday, April 20, 2024 5:22:02 PM  
**Attachments:** [Realtor\\_PAHistoricFinal\\_01242024.pdf](#)  
[MichaelDreyfushistoric.pdf](#)

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Honorable Council Members,

We are property owners at 845 Waverley Street.

Thank you for honoring the objections of 83 property owners (including us) to be placed on the Historical Resources Inventory. Of the 99 property owners who responded: 84% objected (83) and 16% agreed to historic status for their property (16). To date, 47 other properties have not responded.

We support Staff's recommendation to add the 16 properties who have "affirmatively requested" to be on the City's Historical Resources Inventory.

**Additionally, we ask Council to direct staff to:**

- **#1 Remove objecting properties from the "Eligible for Historical Inventory" list.** Just being on the list could compromise the value of our property, especially since there are two other "eligible" lists that the City uses to restrict changes to historical properties - eligible for National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and eligible for California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR). Unlike the other two lists, the City has the authority to remove properties from its eligible Historical Inventory list.
- **#2 Update the City Ordinance to reflect Monday's outcome from Council, HRB, and Staff that all applications for historical listing will be processed only if the property owner agrees in writing to such designation.** We nor anyone else should go through this same burdensome and resource consuming process again, especially since the Council, HRB, and Staff are not overruling the objections by owners to be listed on the Inventory list.

We have provided additional background on our two requests below and attached the two previous letters from the Palo Alto Realtor Community including "In Palo Alto, a historic classification can reduce a property's value by 10-20%".

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,  
Darlene Yaplee and Don Jackson

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## BACKGROUND

### #1 Remove objecting properties from the “eligible for Historical Inventory” list.

- In the [staff report for HRB, April 11th 2023](#), regarding the future HRB work plan - PAMC 16.49 modifications, the HRB could discuss language needed to provide clarifications, “(a) the nominations process, to clarify: the HRB does not forward ‘objections’ properties to the City Council for listing on the inventory, **but these objections properties do remain eligible for local listing should the owner wish to request that Council place the property on the local inventory at a later date** (subject to documentation of the ongoing integrity of the resource)”
- As property owners we have objected to being on the Historical Inventory and therefore we do not want to remain on the “**eligible** for Historical Inventory” list.
- An “**eligible** for Historical Inventory” list is a new categorization that may in itself compromise the value of our property, be used to restrict owner rights in the future, and could easily confuse property buyers who seek clarity and predictability in real estate processes. The “eligible” for Historical Inventory list serves no useful purpose for owners who have objected to being on the inventory list and an owner should agree in writing to remaining on the “eligible” list.
- Being on the “eligible” list is not a benefit unless it is something you desire. Furthermore, all properties will be subject to documentation for the ongoing/current integrity of the resource whether or not the property is on the “eligible” list.
- All the properties that were surveyed are already on two other “eligible” lists that the City uses to restrict historical properties - eligible for National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and eligible for California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR). We don’t need a third “eligible” list with its unclear meaning and likely misinterpretation.

### #2 Update the PAMC 16.49 (Historical Ordinance) to align with what is practiced in this current process and similarly to [Mt. View Ordinance](#), an application for Historical Inventory listing “will be processed only if the property owner agrees in writing to such designation”.

- This would avoid today’s lengthy process which is unwarranted, burdensome, and time consuming.
- For Objectors in the City’s present-day Historical Inventory process it has been a stressful and agonizing 1 year so far starting with one of two community meetings to get information, followed by one of three HRB meetings based on our property grouping, then the meeting

with all the Objectors, reviewing the survey information on our property and creating a response, sending in an objection letter, some Objectors met with staff, and now we are here today.

- Both the HRB and the Council are not overruling the property owner's objection. Of the 99 properties who responded: 84% objected (83) and 16% affirmative (16). 47 properties have not responded.
- In the [staff report for HRB, April 11th 2023](#) mentioned earlier, regarding the future HRB work plan - PAMC 16.49 modifications, the HRB could discuss language needed to provide clarifications, **the same process as today is asserted** "submitting a written statement if the owner objects" and "HRB does not forward 'objections' properties to City Council for listing on the inventory...".
- Requiring the owner's agreement provides clarity and predictability for property buyers, eliminates the fear of government overreach, and addresses the concern of arbitrary and capricious interpretation of a home as historic.

Subject: An Updated Open Letter to the Palo Alto Historic Resources Board, the Palo Alto City Council and Palo Alto Homeowners

January 24, 2024

Honorable Council Members and Board Members,

The following members of the residential real estate community wish to address issues we are experiencing with Palo Alto's current historic resource practices and the current plan to shift approximately 150+ properties from being eligible for historic status to the local Palo Alto Historic Inventory. Many of us have lived in Palo Alto and have owned historic homes. Collectively, we have sold much of Palo Alto historic inventory. This letter is a result of the many clients who have sought our insights regarding the implications of the City's recent initiative to designate their properties as "Palo Alto Historic Inventory" and selling listed, eligible, and potentially eligible historic homes.

### **1. Historic status reduces a property's value**

We would like to first address the claim by some City officials and Historical Resources Board (HRB) members that assigning a property historic status doesn't devalue it, and may in fact increase its worth. Based on our extensive experience, we can categorically refute this. In Palo Alto, a historic classification can reduce a property's value by 10% to 20%. This is essentially common sense; owning property is about the rights that come with it. The more these rights are limited, the lower the property's value becomes. Historic designation constrains the alterations one can make to a property, and thus directly decreases the values of homes with that designation. Many of us can point to concrete examples where historically designated homes have sold for less than they would have without the designation. We also know from direct experience that home buyers in Palo Alto view historic homes as problematic and shy away from engaging with them. Local realtors would unanimously prefer to lift the historic designation if possible. While it's arguable that such a status preserves a property's existing condition, it must be acknowledged that this preservation comes at a considerable financial cost to the owner. The purpose of Historical Preservation per Palo Alto Ordinance 16.49.010 to "(c) Stabilize and improve the economic value of certain historic structures, districts and neighborhoods" is in direct contradiction to the reduction in property values.

### **2. There should be no "eligible" for Historic Status on the Palo Alto Inventory List**

The HRB voted (6-1) at the January 11, 2024 meeting that it would not recommend listing properties over the objections of the property owner. This is good news that properties will not be recommended to council to be placed on the inventory list over owner objections. However, the staff recommendation for the January 25<sup>th</sup> meeting to "affirm the **eligibility** [emphasis added] for local inventory listing of the properties with owners who have objected to listing on the local inventory". Such an "eligible" list should not exist because it's a new categorization that may be used to restrict owner rights, etc. For example, all properties included in the current survey are designated "eligible for the National Register of Historic Places" which the City of Palo Alto is using to determine local land use process and restrictions which are ambiguous and not transparent and to require inclusion in the present-day process for nomination to the local inventory. What does "eligible" for Palo Alto's Inventory mean? Palo Alto's Historical Preservation Ordinance is planned to be updated and those updates could have implications to an "eligible" Palo Alto Inventory list in the same way as "eligible" for the National Register has implications. If an eligible status is to exist it should also be at the consent of the home owner.

### **3. The existing historic ordinance is ambiguous and results in arbitrary and capricious interpretation**

For over two decades, Palo Alto has contended with the effects of an unofficial historic preservation policy, despite a 52% majority defeating Measure G in 2000. In the subsequent 23 years, this de facto policy has been inadvertently strengthened, by City staff and consultants, leading to the categorization of



previously unmarked homes as historic. This has bred confusion within the real estate sector due to constantly evolving interpretations and a lack of consistent procedure. The 1-4 category classification system currently in place is ineffectual. The terminology used to qualify homes is subjective and highly interpretative such as “identified with the lives of historic people” or “a type of building which was once common, but is now rare”. What makes a person historic? How rare is it, one of a kind?

#### **4. Current code statement that recommendations from historic review are “voluntary” is not true in practice**

Decisions by the Historic Review Board and staff seem capricious and lack clear directives. Although the ordinance states “Compliance of the property owner with the recommendations (HRB) shall be voluntary, not mandatory”, this does not include the direction from staff or the Architectural Review Board. We have collectively witnessed clients (and some of our personal properties) experience required compliance with review decisions to proceed through the planning process. There is a great deal of process and direction that is mandatory, not voluntary, and is instituted through the review process.

#### **5. Overreach on what qualifies as historic and the taint of “eligible” status**

There's a growing ambiguity and overreach surrounding what qualifies as historic. The City now tentatively considers any property labeled "eligible" for historic status as such, burdening homeowners with the responsibility, and expense, to prove otherwise. This involves engaging a City-appointed consultant at the owner's expense (often \$7,000 to \$10,000) and securing an affirmative ruling. This presumptive approach to historic status is not only burdensome for property owners but also disrupts the clarity and predictability that should be inherent in real estate processes. Moreover, there appears to be a conflict of interest to have the same historic consultants perform a survey to determine if properties are historic and also be hired by the City and residents to consult on historic design and preservation of properties for improvements or to pursue affirmative rulings. Each property deemed historic becomes the “Total Available Market (TAM)” of paying customers for historic consulting firms.

#### **6. Changes a current homeowner or prospective buyer can make to a home is made on an ad-hoc basis with no rules or established guidelines to follow**

There are no established rules to read to tell you what you can do with an historic home. Can you expand it, can you change the windows, can you change the floorplan, can you change the back or sides, can you add a story? Can solar panels be installed on the front of the home? Instead, you must go to the cost and expense of drawing up plans to get comments on what will or won't be allowed. Home buyers are lost and so run from buying historic homes.

At the December 14, 2023 HRB meeting, it was mentioned a subcommittee will form to discuss financial implications of historic homes. If you are interested in information from the real estate community we are available to contribute to your effort. It is time for the City to acknowledge the negative financial and procedural burden the historic system is placing on Palo Alto homeowners. The decision to declare a house “historic” should be brought out of the shadows and have a clear set of qualifications and process that requires the “informed consent” of the homeowner, not an “opt-out” that requires an objection letter.

The following 31 local real estate agents have indicated support for, and agreement with, the points raised here.

Michael Dreyfus, Lucy Berman, Leannah Hunt, Laurel Robinson, Brian Chancellor, Mary Gullixson, Brent Gullixson, Tom LeMieux, Julie Lau, Umang Sanchorawala, Terri Kerwin, Monica Corman, Mandy Montoya, Morgan Lashley, Greg Celotti, Xin Jiang, Arti Miglani, Jennifer Pollock, Adam Touni, Mary Jo McCarthy, Noelle Queen, Kristin Galvin, Gloria Young, John Young David Gray, Omar Kinaan, Ashley Banks, Mary Gilles, Brian Ayer, Shena Hurley, Ryan Selby Hollland.

## THE DREYFUS GROUP



Honorable Council Members and Board Members,

My name is Michael Dreyfus, and with over three decades of experience as a real estate agent, 24 years of which I've worked in Palo Alto, I've sold more than 300 homes in the area and remain a dedicated participant in its market. I lived for 15 years in a historic home in Professorville. Many community members have sought my insights regarding the implications of the City's recent initiative to designate their properties as "Palo Alto Historic Inventory."

I'd like to first address the claim by some City officials and Board members that assigning a property historic status doesn't devalue it, and may in fact increase its worth. Based on my extensive experience, I can categorically refute this. In Palo Alto, a historic classification can reduce a property's value by 10% to 20%. This is essentially common sense; owning property is about the rights that come with it. The more these rights are limited, the lower the property's value becomes. Historic designation constrains the alterations one can make to a property. For example, I handled the sale of a home in the Old Palo Alto area, where the land alone was worth \$5.5 million, but due to historic restrictions, it sold for only \$4.5 million. Local realtors would unanimously prefer to lift the historic designation if possible. While it's arguable that such a status preserves a property's existing condition, it must be acknowledged that this preservation comes at a considerable financial cost to the owner.

For over two decades, Palo Alto has contended with the effects of an unofficial historic preservation policy, despite a 52% majority defeating Measure G in 2000. In the subsequent 23 years, this de facto policy has been inadvertently strengthened, by City staff and consultants, leading to the categorization of previously unmarked homes as historic. This has bred confusion within the real estate sector due to constantly evolving rules and a lack of consistent procedure. The 1-4 classification system currently in place is ineffectual. Decisions by the Historic Review Board seem capricious and lack clear directives. I recall an incident where, during a review concerning my property in Professorville, half of the board objected to replacing windows due to their "historic" nature, while the other half insisted on new windows to distinguish the historic sections of the house. We were left without a clear verdict and eventually abandoned our renovation plans.

Furthermore, there's a growing ambiguity and overreach surrounding what qualifies as historic. The City now tentatively considers any property labeled "eligible" for historic status as such, burdening homeowners with the responsibility, and expense, to prove otherwise. This involves engaging a City-appointed consultant at the owner's expense (often \$7,000 to \$10,000) and securing an affirmative ruling. This presumptive approach to historic status is not only burdensome for property owners but also disrupts the clarity and predictability that should be inherent in real estate processes.

It is time for the City to acknowledge the negative financial and procedural burden the historic system is placing on Palo Alto homeowners. The decision to declare a house "historic" should be brought out of the shadows and have a clear set of qualifications and process that requires the informed consent of the homeowner.

Michael Dreyfus

The following local real estate agents have indicated support for, and agreement with, the points I have raised here.

Mary Gullixson, Compass Realty  
Sherry Bucolo, Compass Realty  
Umang Sanchorawala, Compass Realty  
Monica Corman, Compass Realty  
Noelle Queen, Golden Gate Sotheby's International Realty  
John Young, Golden Gate Sotheby's International Realty  
Mary Gilles, Golden Gate Sotheby's International Realty  
Omar Kinaan, Golden Gate Sotheby's International Realty  
Shena Hurley, Golden Gate Sotheby's International Realty  
Mary Jo McCarthy, Golden Gate Sotheby's International Realty  
David Gray, Golden Gate Sotheby's International Realty

**Michael Dreyfus, Broker Associate**

**Golden Gate Sotheby's International Realty**

650.704.7928 | m.dreyfus@ggsir.com | License No. 01121795

**From:** [Tony Svensson](#)  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Cc:** [Sharon Svensson](#)  
**Subject:** PACC Meeting, 22 April 2024, Item #12 - Historical Resources Inventory  
**Date:** Saturday, April 20, 2024 6:38:32 AM

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Honorable City Council Members:

Since 1990, we are the 2264 Bowdoin Street property owners and have objected to being on the City's Historical Resources Inventory regarding Item #12 - City's Historical Resources Inventory. We continue to object.

- Remove objecting properties from the Eligible for Historical Inventory list.
- Edit and/or add clarifying language so that all applications for historical listing will be processed only if the property owner agrees in writing to such designation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Regards,  
Sharon and & Tony Svensson  
2264 Bowdoin Street  
Palo Alto, CA 94306

**From:** [ANDY CHOU](#)  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Subject:** 4/22 PACC Meeting, Item #12 - Historical Resources Inventory  
**Date:** Friday, April 19, 2024 6:34:09 PM

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We are writing to you as property owners at **326 Waverley St** who have objected to being on the City's Historical Resources Inventory regarding Item #12 - City's Historical Resources Inventory.

### **WE SUPPORT STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION**

- Add the 16 properties who have "affirmatively requested" to be on the City's Historical Resources Inventory.

### **WE ASK THE COUNCIL TO PROVIDE DIRECTION TO STAFF**

- 1. Remove objecting properties from the "eligible for Historical Inventory" list.**
  - In the [staff report for HRB, April 11th 2023](#), regarding the future HRB work plan - PAMC 16.49 modifications, the HRB could discuss language needed to provide clarifications, "(a) the nominations process, to clarify: the HRB does not forward 'objections' properties to the City Council for listing on the inventory, but these objections properties do remain eligible for local listing should the owner wish to request that Council place the property on the local inventory at a later date (subject to documentation of the ongoing integrity of the resource)".
  - As property owners we have objected to being on the Historical Inventory and therefore we do not want to remain on the "eligible for Historical Inventory" list.
  - An "eligible for Historical Inventory" list is a new categorization that may be used to restrict owner rights in the future and could easily confuse property buyers who seek clarity and predictability in real estate processes. The "eligible" for Historical Inventory list serves no useful purpose for owners who have objected to being on the inventory list and an owner should agree in writing to remaining on the "eligible" list.
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letter, some Objectors met with staff, and now we are here today.

- In the [staff report for HRB, April 11th 2023](#) mentioned earlier, regarding the future HRB work plan - PAMC 16.49 modifications, the HRB could discuss language needed to provide clarifications, the same process as today is asserted “submitting a written statement if the owner objects” and “HRB does not forward ‘objections’ properties to City Council for listing on the inventory...”.
- Requiring the owner’s agreement provides clarity and predictability for property buyers, eliminates the fear of government overreach, and addresses the concern of arbitrary and capricious interpretation of a home as historic.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Regards,  
Andy

**From:** [Fan Yang](#)  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Subject:** 4/22 PACC Meeting, Item #12 - Historical Resources Inventory  
**Date:** Friday, April 19, 2024 5:32:24 PM

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Honorable City Council Members,

We are writing to you as property owners at 755 Hamilton Ave who have objected to being on the City's Historical Resources Inventory regarding Item #12 - City's Historical Resources Inventory.

### **WE SUPPORT STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION**

- Add the 16 properties who have "affirmatively requested" to be on the City's Historical Resources Inventory.

### **WE ASK THE COUNCIL TO PROVIDE DIRECTION TO STAFF**

- 1. Remove objecting properties from the "eligible for Historical Inventory" list.**
  - In the [staff report for HRB, April 11th 2023](#), regarding the future HRB work plan - PAMC 16.49 modifications, the HRB could discuss language needed to provide clarifications, "(a) the nominations process, to clarify: the HRB does not forward 'objections' properties to the City Council for listing on the inventory, but these objections properties do remain eligible for local listing should the owner wish to request that Council place the property on the local inventory at a later date (subject to documentation of the ongoing integrity of the resource)".
  - As property owners we have objected to being on the Historical Inventory and therefore we do not want to remain on the "eligible for Historical Inventory" list.
  - An "eligible for Historical Inventory" list is a new categorization that may be used to restrict owner rights in the future and could easily confuse property buyers who seek clarity and predictability in real estate processes. The "eligible" for Historical Inventory list serves no useful purpose for owners who have objected to being on the inventory list and an owner should agree in writing to remaining on the "eligible" list.
- 2. Update the PAMC 16.49 (Historical Ordinance) similarly to [Mt. View Ordinance](#), an application for Historical Inventory listing "will be processed only if the property owner agrees in writing to such designation".**
  - This would avoid today's lengthy process which is unwarranted, burdensome, and time consuming.
  - Both the HRB and the Council are not overruling the property owner's objection. Of the 99 properties who responded: 84% objected (83) and 16% affirmative (16). 47 properties have not responded.
  - For Objectors in the City's present-day Historical Inventory process it has been a stressful and agonizing 1 year so far starting with one of two community meetings to get information, followed by one of three HRB meetings based on our property grouping, then the meeting with all the Objectors, reviewing the survey

information on our property and creating a response, sending in an objection letter, some Objectors met with staff, and now we are here today.

- o In the [staff report for HRB, April 11th 2023](#) mentioned earlier, regarding the future HRB work plan - PAMC 16.49 modifications, the HRB could discuss language needed to provide clarifications, the same process as today is asserted “submitting a written statement if the owner objects” and “HRB does not forward ‘objections’ properties to City Council for listing on the inventory...”.
- o Requiring the owner’s agreement provides clarity and predictability for property buyers, eliminates the fear of government overreach, and addresses the concern of arbitrary and capricious interpretation of a home as historic.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,  
Fan Yang

--  
Fan Yang

**From:** [Daniel](#)  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Date:** Friday, April 19, 2024 5:04:21 PM

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Honorable City Council Members,

I'm writing to you as property owner at **643 College Avenue** who has objected to being on the City's Historical Resources Inventory regarding Item #12 - City's Historical Resources Inventory.

#### **WE SUPPORT STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION**

- Add the 16 properties who have "affirmatively requested" to be on the City's Historical Resources Inventory.

#### **WE ASK THE COUNCIL TO PROVIDE DIRECTION TO STAFF**

1. Remove objecting properties from the "eligible for Historical Inventory" list.
  - In the [staff report for HRB, April 11th 2023](#), regarding the future HRB work plan - PAMC 16.49 modifications, the HRB could discuss language needed to provide clarifications, "(a) the nominations process, to clarify: the HRB does not forward 'objections' properties to the City Council for listing on the inventory, but these objections properties do remain eligible for local listing should the owner wish to request that Council place the property on the local inventory at a later date (subject to documentation of the ongoing integrity of the resource)".
  - As property owners we have objected to being on the Historical Inventory and therefore we do not want to remain on the "eligible for Historical Inventory" list.
  - An "eligible for Historical Inventory" list is a new categorization that may be used to restrict owner rights in the future and could easily confuse property buyers who seek clarity and predictability in real estate processes. The "eligible" for Historical Inventory list serves no useful purpose for owners who have objected to being on the inventory list and an owner should agree in writing to remaining on the "eligible" list.
2. Update the PAMC 16.49 (Historical Ordinance) similarly to [Mt. View Ordinance](#), an application for Historical Inventory listing "will be processed only if the property owner agrees in writing to such designation".
  -



This would avoid today's lengthy process which is unwarranted, burdensome, and time consuming.

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- **In the [staff report for HRB, April 11th 2023](#) mentioned earlier, regarding the future HRB work plan - PAMC 16.49 modifications, the HRB could discuss language needed to provide clarifications, the same process as today is asserted "submitting a written statement if the owner objects" and "HRB does not forward 'objections' properties to City Council for listing on the inventory..."**
- **Requiring the owner's agreement provides clarity and predictability for property buyers, eliminates the fear of government overreach, and addresses the concern of arbitrary and capricious interpretation of a home as historic.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

**Daniel Robertson**

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Gautam Srivastava](#)  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Subject:** 4/22 PACC Meeting, Item #12 - Historical Resources Inventory  
**Date:** Friday, April 19, 2024 8:20:04 AM

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Honorable City Council Members,

I am writing to you as property owners at 545 Chaucer St. who has objected to being on the City's Historical Resources Inventory regarding Item #12 - City's Historical Resources Inventory.

#### **I SUPPORT STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION**

- Add the 16 properties who have "affirmatively requested" to be on the City's Historical Resources Inventory.

#### **I ASK THE COUNCIL TO PROVIDE DIRECTION TO STAFF**

1.
  - Remove objecting properties from the "eligible for Historical Inventory" list.
  - In the [staff report for HRB, April 11th 2023](#), regarding the future HRB work plan - PAMC 16.49 modifications, the HRB could discuss language needed to provide clarifications, "(a) the nominations process, to clarify: the HRB does not forward 'objections' properties to the City Council for listing on the inventory, but these objections properties do remain eligible for local listing should the owner wish to request that Council place the property on the local inventory at a later date (subject to documentation of the ongoing integrity of the resource)".
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2.
  - Update the PAMC 16.49 (Historical Ordinance) similarly to [Mt. View Ordinance](#), an application for Historical Inventory listing "will be processed only if the property owner agrees in writing to such designation".
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- Both the HRB and the Council are not overruling the property owner's objection. Of the 99 properties who responded: 84% objected (83) and 16% affirmative (16). 47 properties have not responded.
- **For Objectors in the City's present-day Historical Inventory process it has been a stressful and agonizing 1 year so far starting with one of two community meetings to get information, followed by one of three HRB meetings based on our property grouping, then the meeting with all the Objectors, reviewing the survey information on our property and creating a response, sending in an objection letter, some Objectors met with staff, and now we are here today.**
- **In the [staff report for HRB, April 11th 2023](#) mentioned earlier, regarding the future HRB work plan - PAMC 16.49 modifications, the HRB could discuss language needed to provide clarifications, the same process as today is asserted "submitting a written statement if the owner objects" and "HRB does not forward 'objections' properties to City Council for listing on the inventory..."**
- **Requiring the owner's agreement provides clarity and predictability for property buyers, eliminates the fear of government overreach, and addresses the concern of arbitrary and capricious interpretation of a home as historic.**

Furthermore, it is important that the city council realize that by not restricting this process, you have taxed property owners, residents, your voters with extraordinary effort on an issue that doesn't matter at all to the real problems in the city around flooding, homelessness, and traffic, for example. Why you cannot better manage the business of the city, has not gone unnoticed by voters. It seems you prioritize running for Congress above doing real work in the city, and none of you seem to mind that we have to write letters and wade through a (bureaucratic) city staff in service of the HRB (vs. in service of residents), and fight for every inch of reasonableness, simply to forestall an issue, that in 2024, doesn't matter at all. What a waste.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Gautam Srivastava

**From:** [Alan Cooper](#)  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Cc:** [Historic Resources Board](#); [French, Amy](#); [Alan Cooper](#)  
**Subject:** CLARIFICATION: Historic designations - "keep the ball rolling"  
**Date:** Thursday, April 18, 2024 3:10:24 PM

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Dear City Council,

I want to clarify the recommendation in my email to you earlier today (see below) I want to see as many houses as possible on the local historic register, certainly more than the 16 that are being put forward now. Hence, I am ok with the current staff recommendation if it does not restrict houses, such as mine, from being put forward in the future. We need more incentives to make this possible.

Thank you,

Alan Cooper

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**From:** Alan Cooper <akcooper@pacbell.net>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 18, 2024 11:37 AM  
**To:** Council, City <city.council@cityofpaloalto.org>  
**Cc:** Historic Resources Board <hrb@CityofPaloAlto.org>; French, Amy <Amy.French@CityofPaloAlto.org>; Alan Cooper <akcooper@pacbell.net>  
**Subject:** Historic designations - "keep the ball rolling"

---

Dear City Council,

I am writing to ask that **you NOT adopt the current staff recommendation** on designating only a few (16 out of 147) houses as historic properties to go on the local historic register.

I am one of many other homeowners who would put our historic homes on the Palo Alto register, if the city offered additional incentives (see below)\*.

**There is a better solution than staff now offers** and would get more homes on the register. That solution is to direct the Historic Resources Board (HRB) to do a year-long in-depth study of incentives (e.g. financial, zoning, community-building, etc.) that would entice homeowners to historic designations.

The City provided hundreds of thousands of dollars over the past year to an outside contractor for this Palo Alto project. Yet, the city never tasked the HRB to do the work that was really needed to educate and incentivize historic-home owners.

I am willing to put my home on the local register, if there are better incentives. **Please task the HRB to investigate incentives.**

Thank You!

Alan Cooper  
270 Kellogg Ave  
Potential Category 1 house

\* please see my 1/21/24 letter to the HRB (below) which was discussed extensively at a 2/25/24 HRB community meeting.

Date: 1/21/24

To: Historic Resources Board members,

Cc: Palo Alto City Council,

**I ask the HRB to consider 6 new incentives** for listing historic homes on the Palo Alto historic register. To assure that the City and historic-home owners are treated equitably in achieving community historic-preservation goals, more incentives than now exist should be implemented and promoted.

**Incentives 1 and 2:** these resurrect prior historic preservation incentives that were formally approved by City Council in 1999.

**Incentives 3 to 6:** these are new ideas to align City historic incentives with contemporary incentives by other civic organizations.

The following two historic preservation incentives were part of the prior Palo Alto Ordinance 4571 that was approved on June 28, 1999.

<https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/files/assets/public/v1/city-clerk/ordinances/ordinances-1909-to-present/ordinances-by-number/ord-4571.pdf>

**1. Increase FAR to 500 ft.<sup>2</sup> from 250 ft.<sup>2</sup> (ie. Today)** - when Ordinance 4571 was later rescinded and revamped to the current Ordinance, the number of square feet allowed was reduced to 250 ft.<sup>2</sup> However, there is no public record and justification as to why this reduction from 500 ft.<sup>2</sup> was made.

PA Ordinance 4571 Section 3:

<image002.jpg>

As a greater economic incentive to list homes on the PA register, why not raise the square footage allowed back to 500 ft.<sup>2</sup>

**2. Reinstate the HRB resident advocate** - Section 10 of Ordinance 4571 appointed one member of the HRB "... To represent and further the interests of persons, having an economic interest in real property... eligible for inclusion on the Palo Alto Register." Alternatively, this function might be done by a city planner dedicated exclusively to educating and helping the public with historic preservation issues.

<image003.jpg>

**3. Eliminate costs to an owner for listing their home/building on the historic register** - encourage owners of historic homes/buildings to list their homes on the register by having the city, absorb the costs for evaluation and approval of the home/building being listed. For the owners that have filed objections to their house/building being listed this year, allow them to remove the objection and list their property at no cost.

**4. Provide civic recognition for owners of historic homes/buildings** - civic recognition is a fundamental tenet of charitable and volunteer organizations. Recognition could include such things as an honor roll plaque/wall (eg PA Anniversary Wall), annual invited social function (eg. PAST functions), City-hosted events at a historic home/building. All of these would be paid for by the City in acknowledgment of the help/participation of historic property owners.

**5. Eliminate administrative, permitting and inspection fees for historic preservation work requested by the HRB** - work that is suggested/required to the exterior of a building to continue to make Palo Alto a beautiful place to live, should be supported in part by the City. Eliminating fees is a straightforward way to do this. For work that is not historic preservation as determined by the HRB, such as interior work, usual City fees would apply.

**6. Provide listed-historic property owners with educational opportunities** - for these property owners, provide a free membership in the California Preservation Foundation (<https://californiapreservation.org/>). As members, they can sign up for lectures and seminars on historic preservation.

The objectives of these incentives are to encourage more historic-property owners to join the Palo Alto Historic Register AND to engage the

city more actively in equitably augmenting the Register.

I hope that the HRB and City Council will look favorably on implementing these and other new historic preservation incentives!

Thank you,

Alan Cooper  
270 Kellogg Ave

**From:** [Alan Cooper](#)  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Cc:** [Historic Resources Board](#); [French, Amy](#); [Alan Cooper](#)  
**Subject:** Historic designations - "keep the ball rolling"  
**Date:** Thursday, April 18, 2024 11:39:25 AM

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Dear City Council,

I am writing to ask that **you NOT adopt the current staff recommendation** on designating only a few (16 out of 147) houses as historic properties to go on the local historic register.

I am one of many other homeowners who would put our historic homes on the Palo Alto register, if the city offered additional incentives (see below)\*.

**There is a better solution than staff now offers** and would get more homes on the register. That solution is to direct the Historic Resources Board (HRB) to do a year-long in-depth study of incentives (e.g. financial, zoning, community-building, etc.) that would entice homeowners to historic designations.

The City provided hundreds of thousands of dollars over the past year to an outside contractor for this Palo Alto project. Yet, the city never tasked the HRB to do the work that was really needed to educate and incentivize historic-home owners.

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Thank You!

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270 Kellogg Ave  
Potential Category 1 house

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To: Historic Resources Board members,

Cc: Palo Alto City Council,

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**1. Increase FAR to 500 ft.<sup>2</sup> from 250 ft.<sup>2</sup> (ie. Today)** - when Ordinance 4571 was later rescinded and revamped to the current Ordinance, the number of square feet allowed was reduced to 250 ft.<sup>2</sup> However, there is no public record and justification as to why this reduction from 500 ft.<sup>2</sup> was made.

PA Ordinance 4571 Section 3:

**18.18.040 Increased Floor Area Ratio.**

The permitted floor area ratio for a Protected Historic Resource shall be increased over that otherwise allowed for a parcel of the particular size and district by the lesser of fifteen percent (15%) or five hundred (500) square feet. Provided, the maximum allowable house size shall be six thousand (6000) square feet.

As a greater economic incentive to list homes on the PA register, why not raise the square footage allowed back to 500 ft.<sup>2</sup>

**2. Reinstate the HRB resident advocate** - Section 10 of Ordinance 4571 appointed one member of the HRB "... To represent and further the interests of persons, having an economic interest in real property... eligible for inclusion on the Palo Alto Register." Alternatively, this function might be done by a city planner dedicated exclusively to educating and helping the public with historic preservation issues.

**SECTION 10.** For the purposes of section 18703.3 of Title 2 of the California Code of Regulations (Fair Political Practices Commission Regulations), it is hereby found and declared that the member of the historic resources board who must be an owner or occupant of a structure on the Palo Alto Register is appointed to represent and further the interests of persons having an economic interest in real property included on or potentially eligible for inclusion on the Palo Alto Register.

**3. Eliminate costs to an owner for listing their home/building on the historic register** - encourage owners of historic homes/buildings to list their homes on the register by having the city, absorb the costs for evaluation and approval of the home/building being listed. For the owners that have filed objections to their house/building being listed this year, allow them to remove the objection and list their property at no cost.

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The objectives of these incentives are to encourage more historic-property owners to join the Palo Alto Historic Register AND to engage the city more actively in equitably augmenting the Register.

I hope that the HRB and City Council will look favorably on implementing these and other new historic preservation incentives!

Thank you,

Alan Cooper  
270 Kellogg Ave

**From:** [Carmen Stuhlmuller](#)  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Cc:** [Darlene Yaplee](#)  
**Subject:** request to council  
**Date:** Wednesday, April 17, 2024 12:34:45 PM

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Honorable City Council Members,

We are writing to you as property owners at [insert your address] who have objected to being on the City's Historical Resources Inventory regarding Item #12 - City's Historical Resources Inventory.

CONFIRMING 2005COWPER ST OBJECTS TO BEING INCLUDED IN THE HISTORICAL REGISTRY AND YOU RECEIVED OUR LETTER OF OBJECTION per Amy French's email 4/8/24

### **WE SUPPORT STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION**

- Add the 16 properties who have "affirmatively requested" to be on the City's Historical Resources Inventory.

### **WE ASK THE COUNCIL TO PROVIDE DIRECTION TO STAFF**

#### **1. Remove objecting properties from the "eligible for Historical Inventory" list.**

- In the [staff report for HRB, April 11th 2023](#), regarding the future HRB work plan - PAMC 16.49 modifications, the HRB could discuss language needed to provide clarifications, "(a) the nominations process, to clarify: the HRB does not forward 'objections' properties to the City Council for listing on the inventory, **but these objections properties do remain eligible for local listing should the owner wish to request that Council place the property on the local inventory at a later date** (subject to documentation of the ongoing integrity of the resource)".
- As property owners we have objected to being on the Historical Inventory and therefore we do not want to remain on the "**eligible** for Historical Inventory" list.
- An "**eligible** for Historical Inventory" list is a new categorization that may be used to restrict owner rights in the future and could easily confuse property buyers who seek clarity and predictability in real estate processes. The "eligible" for Historical Inventory list serves no useful purpose for owners who have objected to being on the inventory list and an owner should agree in writing to remaining on the "eligible" list.

2. **Update the PAMC 16.49 (Historical Ordinance) similarly to [Mt. View Ordinance](#), an application for Historical Inventory listing "will be processed only if the property owner agrees in writing to such designation".**

- This would avoid today's lengthy process which is unwarranted, burdensome, and time consuming.
- Both the HRB and the Council are not overruling the property owner's objection. Of the 99 properties who responded: 84% objected (83) and 16% affirmative (16). 47 properties have not responded.
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- Requiring the owner's agreement provides clarity and predictability for property buyers, eliminates the fear of government overreach, and addresses the concern of arbitrary and capricious interpretation of a home as historic.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,  
Carmen and Roger Stuhlmuller  
2005 Cowper St

**From:** [Marie-Jo Fremont](#)  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Subject:** 4/22 City Council Meeting - Agenda Item 12 - Historical Resources Inventory  
**Date:** Wednesday, April 17, 2024 10:56:57 AM

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Palo Alto City Council Members,

I have Palo Alto friends who are concerned about having their properties being designated as historical. I am not in this situation. However, as a Palo Alto resident, I wondered about what I would do if my property became a candidate for historical properties.

The City should not add properties to the Palo Alto historical inventory without the owner's consent. A historical designation comes at a considerable cost to the owner and includes restrictions on improvements either by the owner or future buyers, which may result in a reduced property value.

Therefore, before designating a property as historical, the City should formally seek the owner's agreement.

I urge the City Council to take immediate action to:

- 1) Remove properties from the "eligible for historical inventory list" if owners have objected to having their property classified as historical. Being on an "eligible list" could still have negative implications on the sale of a property.
- 2) Modify the Palo Alto ordinance to ensure that historical property designations occur only after property owners provide their consent in writing. Property owners should not have to object to a historical property designation. In other words, the default should be that the owners' consent is required before any historical eligibility starts. My friends have gone through a painful year-long process only to have the Historic Resources Board and Council decide at the very end not to override the wishes of the property owners who objected. Given this decision and to save everyone time and worries, the current ordinance should be revised to ensure that property owners have provided their consent in writing before any property can become eligible and then be designated as a historical property.

Thank you for considering my input.

Best regards,

Marie-Jo Fremont

**From:** [Hal Prince](#)  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Subject:** 4/22 PACC Meeting, Item #12 - Historical Resources Inventory  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 16, 2024 2:38:09 PM

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City Council,

Re agenda item #12 (Historical Resources Inventory):

1) We appreciate the fact that our property (211 Middlefield Rd) is NOT on the recommended list, because of our objection.

2) We are concerned that any list of properties "eligible for inclusion" could result in some differential treatment in the future. Therefore, we request that the council and the HRB NOT keep such a list.

Sincerely,

Hal Prince and Carolyn Godfrey

**From:** [Katherine Clark](#)  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Cc:** [Larry Clark](#)  
**Subject:** 4/22 PACC Meeting, Item #12 - Historical Resources Inventory  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 16, 2024 1:50:10 PM  
**Attachments:** [Letter to PA dated 4.16.2024 re 555 Center.docx](#)

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Please see letter of today's date attached.

Thank you.

Katherine Clark

Lawrence & Katherine Clark  
555 Center Drive  
Palo Alto, CA 94301

April 16, 2024

TO: [city.council@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:city.council@cityofpaloalto.org)

SUBJECT: 4/22 PACC Meeting, Item #12 - Historical Resources Inventory

Honorable City Council Members,

We are writing to you as trustee-owners of 555 Center Drive who have objected to being on the City's Historical Resources Inventory regarding Item #12 - City's Historical Resources Inventory.

**WE SUPPORT STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION**

- To add the 16 properties who have "affirmatively requested" to be on the City's Historical Resources Inventory.

**WE ASK THE COUNCIL TO PROVIDE DIRECTION TO STAFF**

1. **Remove objecting properties from the "eligible for Historical Inventory" list.**
  - In the [staff report for HRB, April 11th 2023](#), regarding the future HRB work plan - PAMC 16.49 modifications, the HRB could discuss language needed to provide clarifications, "(a) the nominations process, to clarify: the HRB does not forward 'objections' properties to the City Council for listing on the inventory, **but these objections properties do remain eligible for local listing should the owner wish to request that Council place the property on the local inventory at a later date** (subject to documentation of the ongoing integrity of the resource)".
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2. **Update the PAMC 16.49 (Historical Ordinance) similarly to [Mt. View Ordinance](#), an application for Historical Inventory listing "will be processed only if the property owner agrees in writing to such designation".**



- This would avoid today's lengthy process which is unwarranted, burdensome, and time consuming.
- Both the HRB and the Council are not overruling the property owner's objection. Of the 99 properties who responded: 84% objected (83) and 16% affirmative (16). 47 properties have not responded.
- For Objectors in the City's present-day Historical Inventory process it has been a stressful and agonizing 1 year so far starting with one of two community meetings to get information, followed by one of three HRB meetings based on our property grouping, then the meeting with all the Objectors, reviewing the survey information on our property and creating a response, sending in an objection letter, some Objectors met with staff, and now we are here today.
- In the [staff report for HRB, April 11th 2023](#) mentioned earlier, regarding the future HRB work plan - PAMC 16.49 modifications, the HRB could discuss language needed to provide clarifications, **the same process as today is asserted** "submitting a written statement if the owner objects" and "HRB does not forward 'objections' properties to City Council for listing on the inventory...".
- Requiring the owner's agreement provides clarity and predictability for property buyers, eliminates the fear of government overreach, and addresses the concern of arbitrary and capricious interpretation of a home as historic.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Katherine S. Clark ( [kclark@clarklaw.com](mailto:kclark@clarklaw.com) )

Lawrence M. Clark ( [lclark@creditcorp.com](mailto:lclark@creditcorp.com) )

**From:** [Gretchen Harding](#)  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Subject:** 4/22 PACC Meeting, Item #12 - Historical Resources Inventory  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 16, 2024 1:35:29 PM

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Honorable City Council Members,

We are writing to you as **property owners at 336 Byron Street who have objected to being on the City's Historical Resources Inventory** regarding Item #12 - City's Historical Resources Inventory.

#### **WE SUPPORT STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION**

- Add the 16 properties who have "affirmatively requested" to be on the City's Historical Resources Inventory.

#### **WE ASK THE COUNCIL TO PROVIDE DIRECTION TO STAFF**

**1.**

**Remove objecting properties from the "eligible for Historical Inventory" list.**

o

In the [staff report for HRB, April 11th 2023](#), regarding the future HRB work plan - PAMC 16.49 modifications, the HRB could discuss language needed to provide clarifications, "(a) the nominations process, to clarify: the HRB does not forward 'objections' properties to the City Council for listing on the inventory, but these objections properties do remain eligible for local listing should the owner wish to request that Council place the property on the local inventory at a later date (subject to documentation of the ongoing integrity of the resource)".

o

As property owners we have objected to being on the Historical Inventory and therefore we do not want to remain on the "eligible for Historical Inventory" list.

o

An "eligible for Historical Inventory" list is a new categorization that may be used to restrict owner rights in the future and could easily confuse property buyers who seek clarity and predictability in real estate processes. The "eligible" for Historical Inventory list serves no useful purpose for owners who have objected to being on the inventory list and an owner should agree in writing to remaining on the "eligible" list.

2.

**Update the PAMC 16.49 (Historical Ordinance) similarly to [Mt. View Ordinance](#), an application for Historical Inventory listing "will be processed only if the property owner agrees in writing to such designation".**

- This would avoid today's lengthy process which is unwarranted, burdensome, and time consuming.
- Both the HRB and the Council are not overruling the property owner's objection. Of the 99 properties who responded: 84% objected (83) and 16% affirmative (16). 47 properties have not responded.
- **For Objectors in the City's present-day Historical Inventory process it has been a stressful and agonizing 1 year so far starting with one of two community meetings to get information, followed by one of three HRB meetings based on our property grouping, then the meeting with all the Objectors, reviewing the survey information on our property and creating a response, sending in an objection letter, some Objectors met with staff, and now we are here today.**
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- **Requiring the owner's agreement provides clarity and predictability for property buyers, eliminates the fear of government overreach, and addresses the concern of arbitrary and capricious interpretation of a home as historic.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,  
Gretchen and Mike Harding

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Gretchen Harding  
c:) 650-296-1322

**From:** [Steven Chanin](#)  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Subject:** 4/22 PACC Meeting, Item #12 - Historical Resources Inventory  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 16, 2024 12:59:18 PM

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Honorable City Council Members,

I'm a Palo Alto resident (857 Waverley St) who has friends who are concerned about having their homes designated as historical resources.

It doesn't seem fair to me for the City to designate privately-owned homes as historical resources without the consent of the owners. That designation imposes significant limitations on the improvements they (or future buyers) would be able to make and impairs the value of the home as a result.

Preserving older homes owned by residents who agree to that designation sounds totally fine.

As I understand the issue, the next steps that I would hope the council takes are:

- 1) Add the sixteen properties to the City's Historical Resources Inventory whose owners have "affirmatively requested" that designation.
- 2) Remove properties from the "eligible for Historical Inventory" list whose owners have declined the designation (simply being on that list could impair the resale value of those homes).
- 3) Continue outreach to the homeowners on the "eligible for Historical Inventory" list who have not responded to the city's requests on the issue, seeking one of the two outcomes above.
- 4) Create a new application for homeowners who wish to be on the "eligible for Historical Inventory" list, so future buyers of these (and other) homes might consider being included in the City's Historical Resources Inventory (opt-in, rather than opt-out).

Thanks for your time & effort on this issue.

Thanks,  
Steve

---

Steven Chanin  
[steven\\_chanin@alum.mit.edu](mailto:steven_chanin@alum.mit.edu)  
857 Waverley St  
Palo Alto, CA 94301  
(415) 377-7503



**From:** [George Jaquette](#)  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Subject:** Historical Resources Inventory input (4/22 City Council Meeting, item 12)  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 16, 2024 12:44:25 PM

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Honorable City Council Members,

I would like to share my input with the Council concerning the City's Historical Resources Inventory review process, as it has affected a few close friends quite adversely. It is to me quite an over-reach for the City to designate privately-owned homes as historical resources, since that designation comes with considerable limitations on improvements to those properties and consequently impairs the value of those homes. The quest to preserve older properties should focus on those homeowners who are seeking the designation, and should not create expense or burden for those who have expressly declined the city's proposed designation.

My recommendations:

1. Add the sixteen properties to the City's Historical Resources Inventory whose owners have "affirmatively requested" that designation;
2. Remove properties from the "eligible for Historical Inventory" list whose owners have declined the designation (simply being on that list could impair the resale value of those homes);
3. Continue outreach to the homeowners on the "eligible for Historical Inventory" list who have not responded to the city's requests on the issue, seeking one of the two outcomes above;
4. Create a new application for homeowners who wish to be on the "eligible for Historical Inventory" list, so future buyers of these (and other) homes might consider being included in the City's Historical Resources Inventory (opt-in, rather than opt-out).

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

George Jaquette

Palo Alto resident, parent, volunteer

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*"Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work."*  
Thomas Edison