

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 11:39:54 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.

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
[REDACTED]

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/v/1/city-clerk/ordinances/ordinances-1909-to-present/ordinances-by-number/ord-4571.pdf>

1. Increase FAR to 500 ft.² from 250 ft.² (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.² However, there is no public record and justification as to why this reduction from 500 ft.² 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.²

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.

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



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 3:10:13 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

From: Alan Cooper [REDACTED] >
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 <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Historic designations - "keep the ball rolling"

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PA Ordinance 4571 Section 3:

<image002.jpg>

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<image003.jpg>

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Thank you,

Alan Cooper



From: [Jackie Lin](#)
To: [French, Amy](#); [Historic Resources Board](#); [Council, City](#)
Subject: Historic Resources Inventory(212 Emerson Street in Palo Alto)
Date: Tuesday, April 23, 2024 7:02:10 AM
Attachments: [Historic Resources Inventory\(212 Emerson Street in Palo Alto\).pdf](#)

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Good Morning,

I have attached my objection letter regarding the City's Historical Resources Inventory.

Thank you.

Kind Regards,

Jackie C Lin

Date: April 21, 2024

To: Amy French - Chief Planning Official/HRB Staff Liaison
HRB – City of Palo Alto
Palo Alto City Council Members

Re: Historic Resources Inventory Nomination Notice
212 Emerson Street in Palo Alto

Dear Sirs,

Thank you for your certified letter received middle of April, 2024.

Please be advised that I OBJECT to being on the City's Historical Resources Inventory.
Please remove the aforementioned property from your eligible listing.

Kindly 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".

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Jackie C. Lin
212 Emerson Street
Palo Alto, CA 94301


Jackie C Lin