



CITY OF  
**PALO  
ALTO**

**CITY OF PALO ALTO  
CITY COUNCIL  
Special Meeting  
Monday, June 17, 2024  
Council Chambers & Hybrid  
4:00 PM**

<b>Agenda Item</b>
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7. CONSENT: Approval of a Record of Land Use Action to Upgrade the Property Located at 411 Kipling Street From a Category 4 Resource on the Local Historic Inventory to a Category 2 Resource.



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**PALO  
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## City Council Staff Report

**From: City Manager**

**Report Type: CONSENT CALENDAR**

**Lead Department: Planning and Development Services**

**Meeting Date: June 17, 2024**

Report #:2404-2909

### **TITLE**

CONSENT: Approval of a Record of Land Use Action to Upgrade the Property Located at 411 Kipling Street From a Category 4 Resource on the Local Historic Inventory to a Category 2 Resource.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that Council reclassify 411 Kipling Street, an existing one-and-a-half-story residential building currently used as a commercial building located in the Downtown North neighborhood, from Historic Inventory Category 4 Resource ('Contributing Building') to a Category 2 Resource ('Major Building') as recommended by the Historic Resources Board (HRB).

### **BACKGROUND**

This report and Record of Land Use Action (Attachment B) provide background and support for the HRB's April 11, 2024, recommendation to upgrade the one-and-a-half-story building, located at 411 Kipling Street, from Historic Inventory Category 4 ('Contributing Building') to Category 2 ('Major Building'). The HRB staff report<sup>1</sup> included the consultant's assessment and inventory form. These documents are also available on the project webpage (Attachment C).

411 Kipling Street, located within the Downtown Commercial Community (CD-C) zone district with Pedestrian Combining District (P), was built in 1902 and was part of a group of early Palo Alto residences surviving the change to commercial zoning and commercial development in the vicinity. It provides a contrast to the larger commercial scale and higher density of University Avenue and sections of Lytton Avenue and Cowper Streets. The subject building was designed by George W. Mosher in Square Cottage style with stylistic elements of Colonial Revival and Queen Anne Free Classic. The building is individually listed on a local historic resources inventory as Category 4 "Contributing Building."

The building at 411 Kipling Street, built in 1902, was first evaluated and added to the local historic inventory in 1983 as a Category 4 resource for its architecture. The one-story utilitarian

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<sup>1</sup> Link to April 11, 2024 HRB staff report with consultant assessment and inventory form  
<https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/files/assets/public/v/1/agendas-minutes-reports/agendas-minutes/historic-resources-board/2024/hrb-4.11-411-kipling.pdf>

version of the four-square form has a hipped roof, clapboard exterior, small porch, modest ornamental elements include the porch columns, lentil cornices, attic dormer with diamond-pattern mullions in the windows, and wreath molding applied to the lower section of the front door. Just after World War II it served as a rooming house.

### **ANALYSIS**

On April 11, 2024, the Historic Resources Board (HRB) reviewed the applicant's proposal to reclassify the subject building from the current "Contributing Building" designation in Category 4 on the Historic Inventory to Category 2 "Major Building." The Historic Resource Board (HRB) voted unanimously to recommend that the City Council reclassify 411 Kipling Street Avenue to Category 2.

The analysis concluded that the qualities and values of 411 Kipling Street are considerably more significant than the Municipal Code's definition of the qualities of a Category 4 building. The HRB staff report included three detailed findings for the consistency of the qualities of 411 Kipling Street with the Municipal Code definition of a Category 2 building. The analysis found the building retains its historic integrity and represents outstanding and regionally important architecture consistent with the definition of a Category 2 resource in the Municipal Code Chapter 16.49.

The HRB discussed its support for the reclassification to a Category 2 resource. The applicant and the property owner participated in the review of the proposed reclassification and support this recommendation; no members of the public spoke to the item. The language of the three findings for reclassification that HRB adopted are provided in the attached draft Record of Land Use Action (Attachment B). Each of the three findings reflect the language of the Municipal Code's definition of Category 2.

### **FISCAL/RESOURCE IMPACT**

There is no significant fiscal or resource impact associated with this application. The City's consultant costs were covered by the property owner.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

As of the writing of this report, no project-related, public comments were received.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

Maintenance of historic designation of a property or reclassification of historic designation of a property is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act and CEQA Guidelines Section 21065 because it will not cause a direct change to the physical environment nor a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

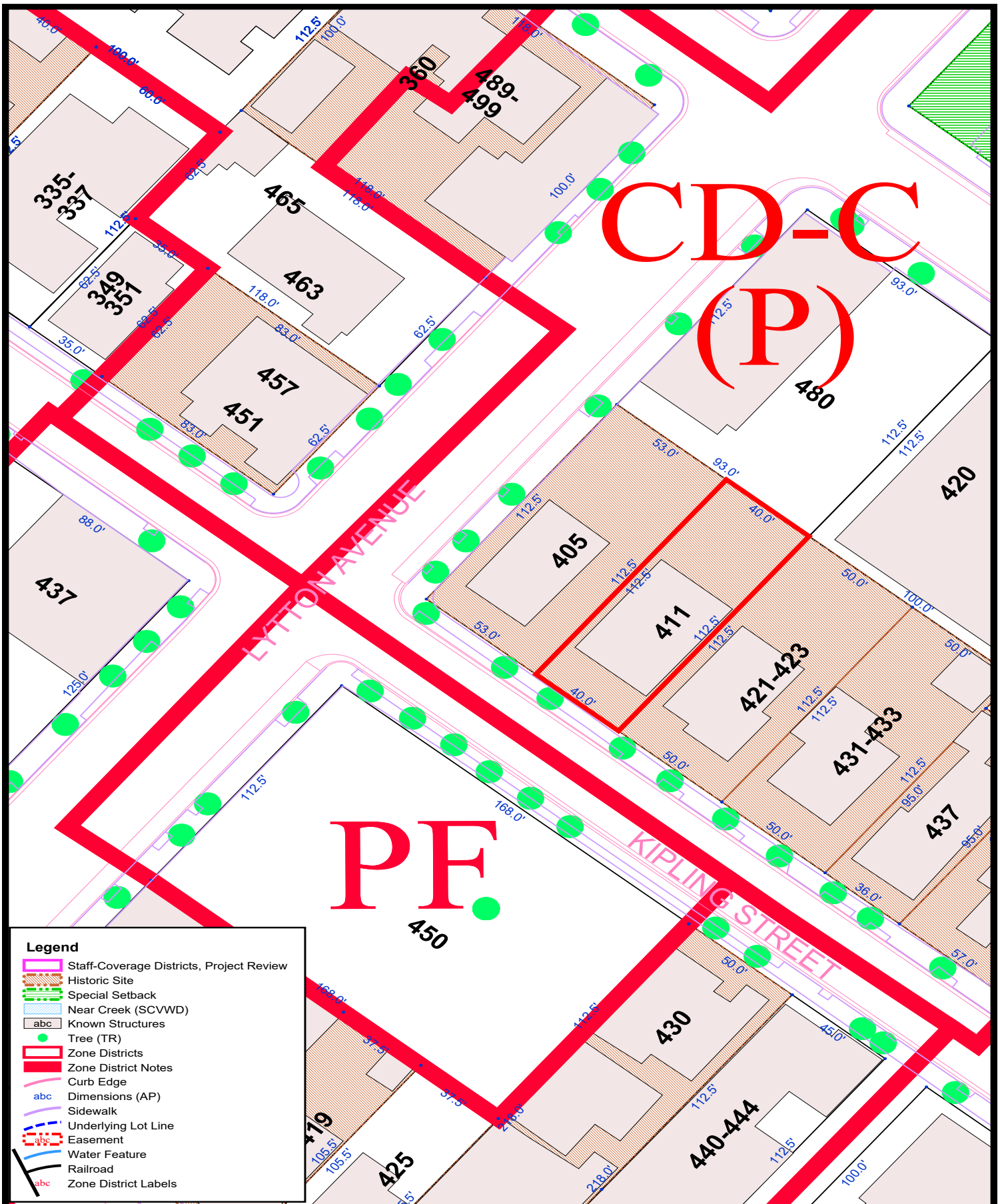
Attachment A: Location Map

Attachment B: Draft Record of Land Use Action

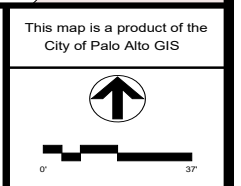
Attachment C: Project Webpage with Plan Set

### **APPROVED BY:**

Jonathan Lait, Planning and Development Services Director



ATTACHMENT A  
Location Map  
411 Kipling St



## APPROVAL NO. 2024-\_\_\_\_\_

**RECORD OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PALO ALTO LAND USE APPROVAL FOR 411 KIPLING STREET:  
HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY CATEGORY 4 TO CATEGORY 2 UPGRADE (24PLN-00032)**

On June 17, 2024, the Council held a duly noticed public hearing and, after considering all of the evidence presented, approved the property owner's request to reclassify the commercial building at 411 Kipling Street currently a Local Category 4 Historic Resource. The Council approved the Historic Resources Board (HRB) recommendation to an upgraded level, Category 2 Historic Resource on the City of Palo Alto Historic Resources Inventory. In approving the application, the Council make the following findings, determination, and declarations:

SECTION 1.      Background.

- A. On February 6, 2024, the property owner contacted staff to request a reclassification of a one-story commercial building at 411 Kipling Street, designed by George W. Mosher in the Square Cottage style with stylistic elements of Colonial Revival and Queen Anne Free Classic style, completed in 1902 from a 'Contributing Building' Category 4 resource to a 'Major Building' Category 2 resource on the Palo Alto Historic Inventory. With the owner's request and funding, staff obtained a historic resource evaluation from the City's consultant, Page & Turnbull, including an integrity evaluation to understand building's eligibility for a classification upgrade. The historic resource evaluation supports a classification upgrade to a Category 2 historic resource. The consultant describes the building's eligibility in a report dated November 21, 2023, noting its eligibility under local criteria 2, 5, and 6:
- **Criterion 2** (The structure or is particularly representative of an architectural style or way of life important to the city, state or nation)  
411 Kipling Street is an excellent extant example of the Square Cottage house type in Palo Alto's Downtown North neighborhood. The Square Cottage is a Palo Alto residential house type that mixed familiar forms and finishes of the Colonial Revival, Queen Anne Free Classic, and sometimes Craftsman styles in later examples. The subject building is an early extant example of this important building type and is also a unique variation featuring a hipped roof, simple Tuscan columns, and a flat front façade, instead of the more common cross-gabled roof and projecting bay window.
  - **Criterion 5** (The architect or building was important)  
George W. Mosher was a builder of merit who made important contributions to the early built environment of Palo Alto. While Mosher's works are considered more modest in size and design compared with other architect-designed residences from the same period, he built and designed numerous "Square Cottage" house types and was the builder for several larger high style residences in Palo Alto. The subject building is an important extant example of George W. Mosher's contributions to the high-quality housing stock built in Palo Alto's early period of development.
  - **Criterion 6** (The structure or site contains elements demonstrating outstanding attention to architectural design, detail, materials or craftsmanship)  
411 Kipling Street showcases the high level of craftsmanship and architectural design implemented by builder-of-merit George W. Mosher. Elements of the façade that meet the

definition of Criterion 6 include original wood windows with one-over-one double-hung sashes, ogee lugs, and cottage windows with diamond mullions, along with shiplap siding and cornice with dentil molding.

1. On April 11, 2024, the HRB received a staff report (ID #2403-2766), conducted a public hearing, and concurred with the consultant's evaluation regarding the building's eligibility for category upgrade from the current local historic inventory Category 4 to Category 2.

SECTION 2. Environmental Review. The project is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), as it is not a project under CEQA Guidelines per Section 21065.

SECTION 3. Designation Findings.

- A. The following criteria, as specified in Municipal Code Section 16.49.040 (b), shall be used as criteria for designating historic structures/sites to the historic inventory:
  1. The structure or site is identified with the lives of historic people or with important events in the city, state or nation;
  2. The structure or site is particularly representative of an architectural style or way of life important to the city, state or nation;
  3. The structure or site is an example of a type of building which was once common, but is now rare;
  4. The structure or site is connected with a business or use which was once common, but is now rare;
  5. The architect or building was important;
  6. The structure or site contains elements demonstrating outstanding attention to architectural design, detail, materials or craftsmanship.

The building at 411 Kipling Street met many of the above criteria when it was first listed on Palo Alto's Historic Resource Inventory in 1983. With the historic assessment in 2023, the building's status as a historic resource has remained per Page & Turnbull's conclusion.

- B. The definition of Category 2 in Municipal Code Section 16.49.020 (b) must be met to allow the upgrade to the structure's category designation:

Category 2 Definition: "Major building" means any building or group of buildings of major regional importance, meritorious works of the best architects or an outstanding example of an architectural style or the stylistic development of architecture in the state or region. A major building may have some exterior modifications, but the original character is retained. The applicant requested and the consultant found Category 2 appropriate for this building.

Page & Turnbull historic consultant supported applicant's request. The City's consultant found the building at 411 Kipling Street meets the Palo Alto Inventory Category 2 Definition. The integrity evaluation found that the building at 411 Kipling Street retains all seven aspects of integrity (location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association). The minor exterior modifications cited in the consultant's report have not caused the building to lose its original character.

National Register of Historic Places and California Register of Historical Resources listing: 411 Kipling Street is currently listed in the City of Palo Alto Historic Inventory as a Category 4: "Contributing Building." It was surveyed for the Historic Resources Inventory and added to the local register in 1983.

SECTION 4.     Category Upgrade Approved.   The City Council approves the property owner's request for re-classification of 411 Kipling Street to a Category 2 historic resource on the City's Historic Resources Inventory.

PASSED:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTENTIONS:

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director of Planning and  
Development Services

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy City Attorney

## **Attachment C**

### **Direct Link to Project Webpage:**

<https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/Departments/Planning-Development-Services/Current-Planning/Projects/411-Kipling-Street>