



**Historic Review
Staff Report and Recommendation for Proposed Demolition
in the Canemah Historic District
January 21, 2020**

FILE NO.: GLUA-20-00002 and HR 19-08: Historic Review

HEARING DATE: January 28, 2020
7:00 p.m. – City Hall
625 Center Street
Oregon, City, Oregon 97045

APPLICANT: Levy Moroshan
6420 SE Mabel Ave
Milwaukie, OR 97267

OWNER: Clifford Stephens
333 SE 65th Ave
Portland, OR 97215

LOCATION: 616 4th Avenue
Oregon City, OR 97045
Clackamas County Map 3-1E-01AA-25000

REQUEST: Historic Review for demolition of a noncontributing structure in the Canemah National Register District.

REVIEWER: Kelly Reid, Planner, AICP

RECOMMENDATION: Approval with Conditions

CRITERIA: Administration and Procedures are set forth in Chapter 17.50, Chapter 17.40, Historic Overlay District in Chapter 17.40 of the Oregon City Municipal Code. The City Code Book is available on-line at www.orcity.org.

Please be advised that any issue that is intended to provide a basis for appeal must be raised before the close of the hearing, in person or by letter, with sufficient specificity to afford the Historic Review Board and the parties an opportunity to respond to the issue. Failure to raise an issue with sufficient specificity will preclude any appeal on that issue. The decision of the Historic Review Board may be appealed to the City Commission by parties with standing within fourteen (14) calendar days of the notice of decision. Any appeal will be based on the record. The procedures that govern the hearing will be posted at the hearing and are found in OCMC Chapter 17.50 and ORS 197.763. A city-recognized neighborhood association requesting an appeal fee waiver pursuant to OCMC 17.50.290(C) must officially approve the

request through a vote of its general membership or board at a duly announced meeting prior to the filing of an appeal.

I. BACKGROUND:

Site and Context

The subject property is a combination of four 50x100 foot lots of records in the Canemah National Register District, located at 4th Avenue and unimproved Apperson Street. The subject property is within the Geologic Hazards Overlay District and the Willamette River Greenway overlay. The site is accessed by a gravel driveway from 4th Avenue which also serves 702 4th Avenue. The site contains a single dwelling built circa 1955, which is out of the period of significance (1850-1928). The ranch style dwelling is a single story, compact home built towards the front of the overall property.

A review of Sanborn maps beginning in 1900 demonstrates there were no structures on the property before the existing structure was built.



Vicinity Map



Site Plan

There are two contributing homes directly adjacent to the subject site, those homes are located at 702 4th avenue and 606 4th Avenue. Across the street is 707 4th Avenue which is also a contributing structure in the district. The Historic Review Board approved a new bungalow style home behind 702 4th Avenue last year which has yet to be constructed.

606 4th Avenue - Mary and Josiah Howell Residence c.1885

Statement of Significance: Mary Vance Howell was the wife of Josiah Howell, a carpenter who was born in Pennsylvania in 1821. Mary, who was 22 years younger than her husband, was born in Missouri in 1843. They had six children, one of whom, William, eventually became director of Oregon City's water works. The house is significant for its age and style, unusual in Canemah, and for its association with the Howell family. In the Canemah NR District, the building is classified as a Primary structure.

702 4th Avenue

The A.E. Davis House is a 1.5 story Vernacular style home that is eligible/contributing in the district. Built circa 1885, it has a full width original porch and porch posts, and a one-story addition at the rear. Windows are wood doublehung, many 4/4, some 1/1.



707 4th Avenue

The George and Martha Draper house, built circa 1876, is eligible/contributing in the district. Using gothic revival and vernacular styles, the house is 1.5 stories with a gable roof facing 4th Avenue and a side entry. Windows are typical wood double hung 4/4 with a 1/1 window on the south façade and a stained glass window on the west façade. Additions have been added over the years.



APPLICANT'S SUBMITTAL:

HR 19-08



Existing Conditions



Driveway from 4th Avenue

**Project Summary:**

The applicant submitted the following narrative:

My business partner and I recently purchased the property at the address above. We plan on putting it back to the original 4 lots. Currently there's a 800 sq ft house there that is on the two front lots. We'd like to take the house down to be able to utilize both those lots. The current house is extremely run down and I feel it adds nothing to the neighborhood or the style of houses around it. Plus it would need lots of work to bring it to a livable condition. We don't have drawings yet for the proposed new houses but they'll be designed to cover historical restrictions and replace the eyesore of the current house with new homes that will add value to the neighborhood.

Zoning:

The property is zoned R-6 Single-Family Dwelling District and Low Density Residential in the Comprehensive Plan. The property is also located within the Willamette River Greenway and Geologic Hazard overlay districts.

Notice and Public Comment:

No public comments were received.

Staff Analysis Executive Summary:

The applicant has proposed demolition of an 800 square-foot ranch style home, which was built circa 1950. The home has no significance for the original nomination of the Canemah district. In 1977, when the district was created, this home was less than 50 years old and was not discussed in the nomination

document, other than an indication that it is compatible. The Canemah National Register nomination states "There are some small residences or structures of post 1928 construction and style scattered through the district. Some are compatible with the district, while some are less so."

While the simple design and modest size of the home is compatible with the district, the condition of the home is poor and does not accentuate the district or complement the neighboring contributing structures. A renovation of the home could be appropriate, but the loss of the structure will not impact the character or significance of the national register district.

The Board may want to consider a condition of approval for deconstruction, as has been required in other demolition proposals. Future construction on the property is required to undergo Historic review.

CODE RESPONSES:

17.40.070 - Demolition and moving.

A. If an application is made for a building or moving permit to demolish or move all or part of a structure which is a landmark or which is located in a conservation district or an historic district, the building inspector shall, within seven days, transmit to the historic review board a copy of the transaction.

B. The historic review board shall hold a public hearing within forty-five days of application pursuant to the procedures in Chapter 17.50. C. In determining the appropriateness of the demolition or moving as proposed in an application for a building or moving permit, the board shall consider the following:

1. All plans, drawings and photographs as may be submitted by the applicant;

Finding: Complies as Proposed. The applicant submitted a site plan along with three photos of the exterior of the home.

2. Information presented to a public hearing held concerning the proposed work;

Finding: The Board will consider all information presented at the public hearing.

3. The city comprehensive plan;

Section 5

Open Spaces, Scenic and Historic Areas, and Natural Resources

Canemah is an important example of a relatively intact riverboat town with architectural resources dating from the 1860s. Having evolved from a community for the elite of the riverboat industry to a workers' community, Canemah retains essentially the same sense of place it had in the latter half of the 19th century. Situated above the Falls of the Willamette, it was an important portage town and the major shipbuilding center on the upper Willamette River. Canemah was listed as a Historic District in the National Register of Historic Places in 1977.

Policy 5.3.8

Preserve and accentuate historic resources as part of an urban environment that is being reshaped by new development projects.

Finding: Complies as Proposed.

The period of significance for Canemah is 1850-1928. Homes built after this period are not considered significant, but can be considered compatible or incompatible. This home was described as compatible in the 1978 nomination.

While the simple design and modest size of the home is compatible with the district, the condition of the home is poor and does not accentuate the district or complement the neighboring contributing structures. A renovation of the home could be appropriate, but the loss of the structure will not impact the character or significance of the national register district.

4. *The purpose of this section as set forth in Section 17.40.010;*

The purpose of the district is

- A. *Effect and accomplish the protection, enhancement and perpetuation of such improvements and of districts which represent or reflect elements of the city's cultural, social, economic, political and architectural history;*
- B. *Safeguard the city's historic, aesthetic and cultural heritage as embodied and reflected in such improvements and districts;*
- C. *Complement any National Register Historic districts designated in the city;*
- D. *Stabilize and improve property values in such districts;*
- E. *Foster civic pride in the beauty and noble accomplishments of the past;*
- F. *Protect and enhance the city's attractions to tourists and visitors and the support and stimulus to business and industry thereby provided;*
- G. *Strengthen the economy of the city;*
- H. *Promote the use of historic districts and landmarks for the education, pleasure, energy conservation, housing and public welfare of the city; and*
- I. *Carry out the provisions of LCDC Goal 5.*

Finding: Complies as Proposed.

The applicant states "The current house on the property doesn't add anything to the neighborhood and is in a state of disrepair. The new homes we would build would be more in line with the historical homes surrounding it." Staff concurs that the existing structure does not complement or enhance the district. Future new construction is subject to Historic Review Board approval.

5. *The criteria used in the original designation of the landmark or district in which the property under consideration is situated;*

Finding: Complies as Proposed.

The period of significance for Canemah is 1850-1928. Homes built after this period are not considered significant, but can be considered compatible or incompatible.

The original nomination used resource classifications, primary [22 homes], secondary [27], compatible [40], and intrusive [10]. The primary resources were those considered most significant from the earliest period. While later homes and those with lesser historic significance were ranked secondary or compatible. This classification system has been revised to contributing/eligible, non-contributing/non-eligible, and noncontributing/out of period.

The home has no significance for the original nomination of the Canemah district. In 1977, when the district was created, this home was less than 50 years old and was not discussed in the nomination document other than being identified as compatible. The Canemah National Register nomination states "There are some small residences or structures of post 1928 construction and style scattered through the district. Some are compatible with the district, while some are less so."

6. *The historical and architectural style, the general design, arrangement, materials of the structure in question or its fixtures; the relationship of such features to similar features of the other buildings within the district and the position of the building or structure in relation to public rights-of way and to other buildings and structures in the area;*

Finding: Complies as Proposed.

The applicant states “The current ranch style house doesn’t fit or add to the community. Plus instead of being on a single lot like most of the other homes around it, it takes up two lots. The entire thing is in disrepair and isn’t even livable in it’s current state.”

The home is approximately 800 square feet, single story, ranch style, and is built close to the slope down to 4th Avenue. It is highly visible from 4th Avenue due to the location of the driveway and lack of trees or large vegetation in front of the home. The homes on either side are both 1.5 story vernacular homes that are contributing to the district. The proportion and placement of the existing structure does not overpower or distract from the contributing structures in the area.

7. The effects of the proposed work upon the protection, enhancement, perpetuation and use of the district, which cause it to possess a special character or special historic or aesthetic interest or value;

Finding: Complies as Proposed.

The loss of this structure represents a loss of a modestly sized single dwelling on a 100x100 site, which is the predominant use of the district. The development pattern in Canemah generally consists of homes on 50x100 lots or 100x100 combined lots. On 4th Avenue, the Board has recently approved the following:

712 4th Avenue: 100x100 lot (constructed)

708 4th Avenue: 50x100 lot (approved)

Behind 702 4th avenue: 100x100 lot (approved)

625 4th avenue: 80x100 lot (constructed)

413 4th Avenue : 100x100 lot (under construction)

Canemah cottages: Two 50x100 lots plus 100x100 lot with 5 cottage homes total (under construction)

306 4th Avenue: 100x100 lot (approved)

Demolition of the home will allow redevelopment of the area with higher intensity; four new homes will be possible, while arguably only two new homes would be possible if the existing home remains. That said, the existing home could be used to various redevelopment opportunities that would have a similar density or impact – it could gain an addition or an ADU (or become an ADU to a larger structure), or become part of a cluster housing development. In all cases, the redevelopment, additions, and new construction are subject to the design guidelines and Historic Review Board approval.

8. Whether denial of the permit will involve substantial hardship to the applicant, and whether issuance of the permit would act to the substantial detriment of the public welfare and would be contrary to the intent and purposes of this section;

Finding: Complies as Proposed.

The applicant states “We’re wanting to build 3-4 new homes on the property in line with historical requirements. Denial of the permit would require us to rehab the current structure. It’s takes up two lots so we’d lose the possibility of building another home there. And since this one is at the front of the property it would not look as historically appealing as the ones we’d build in the back of the property. Financially we’d lose an entire lot.”

See findings elsewhere in this report regarding the impact on the public welfare.

9. The economic, social, environmental and energy consequences.

Finding: Complies as Proposed.

The applicant states “Economically by removing the current structure and replacing it with a few new ones will add jobs in the area for a year or so. Also because of the new structures it will add property tax money for the city. Socially it will bring new families to the neighborhood that will help with maintaining

the homes and the historical significance of the area. Environmentally it will add more homes to the area but will also be adding better drainage and control the rain water better. Which could help with managing the integrity of the slope. Energy wise it will add a few more homes which will need utilities brought to them. But they will be more energy efficient than homes built decades ago.”

The resulting opportunities for new housing can have both positive and negative social and economic consequences; while bringing additional units to an area with a housing shortage, the new construction may also result in costlier housing units in an area with a lack of affordable housing.

Staff finds that demolition of an existing home results in functional building materials being discarded and replaced with new materials, which does have environmental and energy consequences. This waste can be mitigated through the deconstruction and reuse of materials rather than demolition. The last de-designation/demolition request approved by the Board was in 2012, when a landmark structure at Main and 18th was proposed for de-designation. The Board required deconstruction and salvaging of materials as a condition of approval. The home in question in 2012 was individually designated and was built sometime between 1895-1902. The Board may want to consider a condition of approval for deconstruction if deemed appropriate in this case. A copy of the findings of fact for the 2012 review is attached as an Exhibit to this staff report.

D. The failure of the applicant to provide the information required by Subsection C.1.—9. shall be grounds for deeming the application incomplete.

Finding: Complies as Proposed. The applicant submitted the required materials.

E. The board may approve or deny the demolition or moving request after considering the criteria contained in Section 17.40.070C. Action by the board approving or denying the issuance of a permit for demolition or moving may be appealed to the city commission by any aggrieved party, by filing a notice of appeal, in the same manner as provided in Section 17.50 for appeals. If no appeal of a demolition permit is filed, the building official shall issue the permit in compliance with all other codes and ordinances of the city.

Finding: Complies as Proposed. The process will be followed as described.

F. In any case where the city commission has ordered the removal or demolition of any structure determined to be dangerous to life, health or property, nothing contained in this title shall be construed as making it unlawful for any person, without prior approval of the historic review board, pursuant to this title, to comply with such order.

Finding: Not applicable. The City Commission has not ordered the demolition of this structure.

II. PUBLIC NOTICE

A public notice was sent to neighbors with 300 feet of the subject property, posted online, emailed to various entities, and posted onsite.

III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the following findings, staff recommends that the Historic Review Board approve the proposed demolition of the structure at 616 4th Avenue, file number HR 19-08.

Exhibits

1. Vicinity Map
2. Applicant Submittal
3. Public Comments

4. 616 4th Avenue Inventory Form
5. Canemah National Register Nomination (on-file)
6. HR 12-06 Findings of Fact