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October 31, 2016

The Honorable Paula Devine and Members of the City Council
City of Glendale
613 East Broadway, Suite 200
Glendale, CA 91206

Re: Appeal of Denial of Demolition Permit Application No. PDPRV 1601877 Located at 1420 Valley View Road

Dear Mayor Devine and Members of the City Council:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of The Glendale Historical Society (TGHS), I would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on the denial of a permit to demolish the 1908 Chubbuck Residence at 1420 Valley View Rd.

Established in 1979, TGHS is a non-profit organization with nearly 700 members dedicated to the preservation of Glendale's history and architectural heritage through advocacy, education, and outreach.

TGHS agrees with the staff determination that the owners must prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) before the City considers whether to issue a permit to demolish the existing buildings. We therefore request that you deny the applicant's appeal.

One of the owners' own historic resources consultants argued that the subject house may be a historic resource and that its demolition may constitute an avoidable significant impact under CEQA. In addition, the subject property was found eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources and the Glendale Register of Historic Resources by TGHS Board member Francesca Smith, a qualified architectural historian with more than thirty years' experience. She meets and exceeds the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards in architectural history and history. Please refer to the attached DPR 523 form. Our evaluation found the subject property eligible for listing in the California Register under Criteria 2 and 3 and designation in the Glendale Register under Criteria 2, 3, and 5, which triggers review and consideration under CEQA before the buildings can be demolished.

The Glendale Historical Society (TGHS) advocates for the preservation of important Glendale landmarks, supports maintaining the historic character of Glendale's neighborhoods, educates the public about and engages the community in celebrating and preserving Glendale's history and architectural heritage, and operates the Doctors House Museum. TGHS is a tax-exempt, not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization, and donations to TGHS are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.

Despite the unpermitted demolition of the interior, and destructive removal of the roof, the building contains exemplary exterior elements of Arts & Crafts design detail, including extensive decorative wood joinery, ornamental craftsmanship, and original materials from the period. The house is a rare example of a high-style Craftsman residence, which is an uncommon resource type north of the Verdugo Wash in Glendale. The property is also significant for its associative qualities. It is associated with the Honorable Levi Chubbuck, a person who significantly contributed to the history of the nation, state, and region. Finally, the subject property dates from the first five years of Glendale's incorporation and is an intact example of the City's early heritage, when Craftsman-style homes were widespread.

The owners of the subject property had a second historic resource assessment prepared after the first found that the building may be a historic resource. This sort of consultant "shopping" to generate an assessment more in line with the property owner's goals is one reason City Council voted last month to require that the City, rather than project applicants, select consultants who prepare environmental review documents when an EIR is required.

We agree with staff that both Kaplan Chen Kaplan (KCK) assessments are inadequately researched. In the first assessment of the property, the consultant neglected entirely to mention the ownership of the property by the Honorable Levi Chubbuck and his wife Josephine until it was pointed out by TGHS. This information is readily available in the City's permit file, which lists him as the owner of the property in 1920. We note that reviewing a property's permits is one of the most basic obligations (and simplest tasks) of a historic resources consultant.

The second assessment includes the Chubbucks perforce; while it mentions that Levi Chubbuck resided at 1420 Valley View in 1920, our research shows that the Chubbucks lived there from at least 1920 (Rush T. and Jill Sill lived there in 1917 according to the Glendale City Directory, information also missing from the initial KCK report [the 1918 and 1919 City Directories were not available for review], through 1931 (Glendale City Directory). By 1932 they had moved to North Central Avenue.

The consultant's application of National Register guidance to gauge the significance of the Chubbucks as owners and residents of 1420 Valley View is misguided. National Register guidance does not necessarily apply to Glendale Register criteria, which has no requirement that a person's significant work had to have been performed at the property for it to be considered for local designation (this is not atypical). Indeed, if that were the case, the residences of Casey Stengel (1663 Grandview Avenue, GR #109), Ed "the Strangler" Lewis (1415 Royal Blvd. Glendale Register #68), and Art Baker (571 Cumberland Road, currently in process, approved by the Historic Preservation Commission on Sept. 29, 2016) would either not have been found eligible for the Glendale Register under Criterion 2 or not be designated at all. That said, as owner and resident of 1420 Valley View, Mr. Chubbuck continued to speak publicly and write on a number of matters and to amass his museum-worthy collection of Native American artifacts. See the attached DPR form for more details on his significance.

Both KCK assessments ignore the intricacy and exemplarity of the bungalow's ornamental design elements described in detail in our DPR form and thus wrongly find it ineligible under Criterion 3. In the second assessment the consultant enumerates the number and addresses of the

thirty-two Craftsman Bungalows (mis-labeled as “craftsman style houses” [p. 4]) found eligible for designation in the 2006 – 2007 Craftsman Survey; oddly it states that 1420 Valley View has “similar attributes” (p. 5) to several of those historic bungalows before concluding that it is not eligible under the very same criterion by which they were evaluated. The consultant also finds that the subject property does not meet Criterion 5, “the proposed historic resource exemplifies the early heritage of the city,” despite stating that this 1908 bungalow is one of only a “few houses in that area in the first quarter of the 20th Century” and is “typical of the type of housing built throughout the area,” which is essentially what it means for a historic resource to exemplify the city’s early heritage.

A property needs to meet only one of the five designation criteria to be deemed eligible for listing on the Glendale Register. We have provided substantial evidence that this threshold has been met. In addition 1420 Valley View meets California Register criteria 2 and 3, and the attached DPR 523 form has been submitted to the California Office of Historic Preservation. Therefore demolition should not take place until an appropriate environmental review, likely in the form of a focused EIR, has been prepared and adopted, as staff have likewise concluded.

The applicants have submitted a letter from attorney Arnold Graham stating that the appeal must be granted, citing *Berkeley Hillside Preservation v. City of Berkeley* (2015) 60 Cal. 4th 1086, which it claims “recently reaffirmed that a single family home is categorically exempt from CEQA.” The decision in this case did nothing of the kind. CEQA specifically includes the following exception: “Historical Resources. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource” (14 CCR 15300.2 subdivision f). This applies to *any* historic resource, including single-family houses, and demolition is a substantial adverse change. The property in *Berkeley Hillside Preservation v. City of Berkeley* did not involve a historic resource, and the decision addressed the meaning of the “unusual circumstances” exception to CEQA’s categorical exemptions, which is irrelevant for 1420 Valley View. As the Staff Report notes, the City is entirely within its rights to determine that the property is a historic resource under CEQA and require an EIR before it can be demolished.

We have already observed that the original interior of 1420 Valley View was gutted without a permit. We respectfully request the issuance of appropriate administrative citations and fines for municipal and building code violations pursuant to Glendale Municipal Code section 1.24. In addition, the owners received a re-roofing permit; instead the roof was removed entirely without replacement. That action has endangered the building’s structural integrity and its future. We therefore also ask for the immediate repair of the roof to protect the historic property from further deterioration.

The property owners should not be allowed to use the building’s disrepair, which they have done much to exacerbate, as an excuse to proceed with demolition. Disrepair is not one of the seven recognized aspects of integrity, practically when it was undertaken on purpose and in bad faith. Individuals who perform unpermitted work in Glendale need to be held accountable for their actions.

We appreciate your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Greg Grammer

Greg Grammer, President
The Glendale Historical Society

attachment: DPR523 form for 1420 Valley View Road

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