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*--A community organization dedicated to preserving the character, charm and historical resources of the Mission Hills neighborhood.*

March 17, 2023

Suzanne Segur  
Senior Planner/HRB Liaison  
City of San Diego  
Development Services Dept.  
202 C Street  
San Diego, CA 92101  
Email: [SSegur@saniego.gov](mailto:SSegur@saniego.gov)

Re: **Comments to Preliminary Review of 820 Fort Stockton Drive**

Dear Ms. Segur:

The following are comments to the Preliminary Review Questionnaire and Historical Resources Research report dated January 25, 2023 (the "New Report") submitted by Nexus Planning and Research on behalf of the developer/owner Affordable Development 820, LLC (the "Developer") of the above-referenced property.

Please recall that the Developer previously submitted a Historical Resource Technical Report dated October 2021 (the "Original Report") which concluded that the property appears eligible for designation under local Criteria C and D. The New Report completely ignores the analysis and findings of the Original Report, and paradoxically reaches the opposite conclusion. For the reasons stated below, we firmly agree with the conclusions set forth in the Original Report and additionally believe that the property could be eligible under local Criterion A with further analysis.

As noted in the Original Report, 820 Fort Stockton is a rare example of a Craftsman bungalow duplex constructed by an asserted Master Builder, McFadden & Buxton. The property exhibits many character-defining features of the Craftsman style, including: the very rare feature of two full porches on opposing corners of the building; low-pitched cross-gable rooflines; exposed rafter tails; beams supporting eaves in the gable ends; tapered columns supporting one porch roof and square columns over tapered piers supporting the other porch roof; two clinker-brick chimneys; and, many other features.

With respect to local Criterion C, the property exhibits multiple character-defining features of the Craftsman style, as noted above, and embodies the distinctive characteristics of a Craftsman bungalow. The Original Report concludes that alterations to the property do not detract from the Craftsman bungalow appearance, while the New Report argues that alterations adversely impact six out of seven

aspects of integrity. The New Report greatly exaggerates the impact of such alterations. Alterations to the Fort Stockton front porch only partially enclose such porch and do not alter the most significant Craftsman features of the porch, including the overall shape, supporting columns and beams, and prominent roof gable. Infill of the rear “courtyard” (a small inset area) is a rear porch enclosure; this infill is ephemeral and can be easily removed without affecting the original intact materials and original design. This infill is also not located on a publicly visible façade. Additionally, the dwelling unit conversions to commercial use are irrelevant for eligibility purposes and the wood security grills are easily removable. The property should be eligible for designation under local Criterion C.

With respect to local Criterion D, the Original Report makes a strong case for eligibility as the work of builders McFadden & Buxton, for whom “the quality of their builds and subdivision projects . . . give cause to consider the firm as Master Builders.” The New Report dismisses this argument without any analysis.

The property should be further analyzed under local Criterion A, as a very unique and rare purpose-built duplex in the Craftsman style. The Original Report notes that the property is a rare example of a Craftsman bungalow duplex. Indeed, except for a few examples of two-story versions of duplexes from the Victorian and early Craftsman period, there are few existing examples of one-story purpose-built Craftsman bungalow duplexes in the region.

Lastly, the New Report places great emphasis on material deterioration at the property, concluding that due to such deterioration the property is not eligible for designation. However, the New Report confuses “condition” with “integrity” incorrectly stating that integrity is impacted by deterioration. Deterioration and condition are not part of a historical significance assessment. In this regard, it should be noted that the Developer removed various original materials from the building last year, including a portion of the balustrade on the Fort Stockton front porch and sections of siding in several locations. The materials have not been replaced, thus exposing these areas to the elements and accelerating the property’s deterioration.

This Craftsman bungalow duplex, situated on a prominent corner near the eastern entrance to the Mission Hills neighborhood, is a beloved fixture in the community. Underscoring this point, residents of Mission Hills last year submitted a petition to the city with over 1,000 signatures to “save the red house.” We hope the city will understand and appreciate the importance of this building to the architectural and cultural heritage of Mission Hills. This property should be forwarded to the Historical Resources Board for historical designation under multiple criteria, so that it can be preserved and appreciated for generations to come.

Sincerely,  
Mission Hills Heritage



Kirk Burgamy, President