STAFF BRIEF

This document is the staff’s comparison of the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, Design Guidelines for Denver Landmark Structures and Districts, the Landmark Preservation Ordinance (Chapter 30, Revised Municipal Code) and other applicable adopted area guidelines as applied to the proposed application. It is intended to provide guidance during the commission’s deliberation of the proposed application. Guidelines are available at www.denvergov.org/preservation.

Project: 2022-COA-005
Address: 1622 Emerson
Historic Dist/DLM: Swallow Hill
Year structure built: n/a
Council District: #10- Chris Hinds
Applicant: John Buchanan

LPC Meeting: January 11, 2022
Staff: Abigail Christman

Project Scope Under Review:
Mass, Form, and Context application for a multi-family residential infill.

Staff Summary:
Application is for a three-story, multi-family infill building within the Swallow Hill Historic District. The proposed infill will be located on the same zone lot as 1632 Emerson St. The zone lot comprises lots 24-27 of the Park Avenue Addition block 23. Based on Sanborn maps, 1632 Emerson was constructed sometime prior to 1897 on lots 26-27. A side addition was added sometime between 1929 and 1951. No building appears to have ever been located on lots 24-25 where the new infill is proposed.

The project includes the proposed demolition of an alley house located on lot 27 to the rear of 1632 Emerson St. and a large, multi-car garage located at the rear of lots 24 and 25. Based on Sanborn maps, the dwelling was constructed sometime prior to 1897 and the garage was constructed between 1904 and 1925. The period of significance for the Swallow Hill Historic District is prior to and including 1917. Since the dwelling was constructed within the period of significance and the garage is a large structure (approximately 20’ x 50’) which may have been built during the period of significance, the proposed demolition of these buildings needs to be reviewed by the Commission to determine whether they are contributing to the district. Staff has requested a demolition application be submitted for each building. Complete applications have not yet been received and will be submitted to the Commission separately.

The Swallow Hill Historic District includes elaborate examples of Queen Anne architecture constructed prior to the 1893 Silver Crash as well as more restrained designs constructed afterward. The district includes a mix of single-family residences as well as multi-family residences. Applicant has worked extensively with staff in developing this design. Earlier version of the proposal drew more strongly from Queen Anne residences, but staff suggested looking to the district’s other historic multi-family residences for inspiration. The infill at 1622 Emerson will be located mid-block with historic single-family residences to the north and south. A large-scale multi-family infill is located across the street. A large historic multi-family residence (836 E 17th Ave.) is located at the northwest corner of the block. The proposed infill draws inspiration from the district’s historic multi-family residences while also fitting within the context of adjacent single-family residences.
The proposed infill will be recognizable as new construction while respecting the character of the historic district. The infill is a simplified interpretation of the historic multi-family residences within the district. The infill will feature a flat roof, simplified cornice, porch, balconies, and projecting bay, all features found on other multi-family buildings within the district. The infill will feature a narrower street frontage than is typical for multi-family buildings within the district, but this will help it better relate to the adjacent single-family homes and maintain patterns on this block. The infill will relate to the adjacent structures without visually overwhelming them and will not detract from the district's historic character. The building uses variations in wall plane to reduce the apparent scale of a large mass and to relate to the varied forms of the district's Queen Anne residences.

Staff recommends approval of the proposed mass, form, and context application with the condition that demolition applications be submitted for the alley house and large garage at the rear of the lot. Materials, details, window and door types, and site work will be reviewed in the Part 2: Design Detail application.

**Registered Neighborhood Organization (RNO) comments:**
This project was referred to the primary RNO, the Swallow Hill Neighborhood Association on 11/15/2021 along with several referrals RNOs: Capitol Hill United Neighborhoods, District 10 Neighborhood Coalition, Inc., Neighbors for Greater Capitol Hill, Opportunity Corridor Coalition of United Residents, and Uptown on the Hill. Capitol Hill United Neighborhoods was the only RNO to request a meeting, which was held on December 8th. No RNO comments have been submitted to Landmark.

Excerpted from Design Guidelines for Denver Landmark Structures and Districts, January 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guideline</th>
<th>Meets Guideline?</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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<tr>
<td>2.55 Do not demolish contributing buildings to a historic district or historic buildings with individual landmark designation.</td>
<td>Pending</td>
<td>An alley dwelling (constructed prior to 1897) and a large garage (constructed between 1904 and 1925) are proposed for demolition. Demolition applications are pending and will need to be reviewed by the Commission to determine whether the building proposed for demolition contribute to the district.</td>
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<td>4.1 Respect established building location, lot coverage and open space patterns when locating a new building. a. Design the site footprint of a new building to be compatible with the existing historic lot coverage pattern on the surrounding context/block. b. Provide a general pattern of open space that is compatible with the existing historic pattern on the surrounding context/block.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>The proposed infill is compatible with block patterns. The building width and setbacks align with the adjacent single-family homes. The infill will be much longer than the single-family homes, extending nearly to the alley, but the building length will not be readily visible from the street. The overall building dimensions are comparable to other multi-family residences in the district.</td>
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4.2 Locate a new building to respect the alignment of historic building façades and entrances in the surrounding context/block.
   a. Locate a new building to reflect established setback patterns of the surrounding context/block.
   c. Where front yard setbacks are uniform, place a new structure in alignment with its neighbors.
   d. Orient a building’s entrance to be consistent with the established historic pattern of the surrounding context/block. Typically, the primary entrance faces the street.
   Yes
   The setback will align with the adjacent historic properties on the block. The infill will feature a single street-facing façade entrance sheltered by a porch. This fits patterns on the block and helps it relate to the adjacent single-family residences. A second side-facing door will also be located off the porch but will not be readily visible. These doors directly access the two front units. Rear first floor units and the upper level units will be accessed from doors located on the north side adjacent to the parking lot.

4.5 Design a new building to be recognized as current construction, while respecting key features of the historic district as well as the surrounding historic context/block.
   a. Use a simplified interpretation of historic designs found in the historic district, or use a contemporary design that is compatible with historic siting, massing, and forms found in the historic district. At a minimum, an acceptable design should be neutral and not detract from the district’s historic character.
   b. Include features that relate to the surrounding historic context/block, such as front porches in a residential setting, or a defined roof cornice on a commercial structure.
   c. Use contemporary details, such as window moldings and door surrounds, to create interest and convey the period in which the structure was built.
   Yes
   The proposed infill will be recognizable as new construction while respecting the character of the historic district. The infill is a simplified interpretation of the historic multi-family residences within the district. The infill will feature a flat roof, simplified cornice, porch, balconies, and projecting bay, all features found on other multi-family buildings within the district. The infill will feature a narrower street frontage than is typical for multi-family buildings within the district, but this will help it better relate to the adjacent single-family homes and maintain patterns on this block. The infill will relate to the adjacent structures without visually overwhelming them and will not detract from the district’s historic character.

4.7 Use a roof form that is compatible with the historic context.
   a. Use a roof form that is consistent with typical roof forms of existing structures in the district in terms of pitch, orientation, and complexity.
   b. Avoid using a flat roof unless it is a typical feature of the surrounding historic context.
   Yes
   The infill features a flat-roof design with a cornice. This is characteristic of multi-family buildings within the district such as 1002-1010 E 17th Ave., 1576-1582 Emerson St., 914-922 E 16th St., and 1571-1583 Ogden St.
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<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Meeting</th>
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<td>4.8</td>
<td>Design windows, doors and other features to be compatible with the original primary structure and historic context. &lt;br&gt;a. Incorporate windows, doors and other openings at a ratio similar to those found on nearby historic structures. New construction with public visibility should incorporate doors and windows with similar proportions to those in the surrounding historic context.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Solid-to-void ratios are compatible with the historic district and characteristic of other historic multi-family residences within the district.</td>
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<td>4.20</td>
<td>Establish a sense of human scale in the building design. &lt;br&gt;d. Design building features, such as entries, windows, articulation and other details, to be proportioned and sized to human scale.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>The infill features a front porch and entry that relates to the scale of the adjacent historic single-family residences.</td>
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<td>4.21</td>
<td>Maintain typical spacing patterns created by the repetition of historic building widths along the street. &lt;br&gt;a. Proportion a new façade to reflect the established range of historic building widths seen in the surrounding historic context. &lt;br&gt;b. Where a new structure must exceed the typical building width in the surrounding historic context, use changes in building configuration, articulation or design features such as materials, window design, façade height or decorative details to break the façade into modules that suggest typical historic building widths seen in the surrounding historic context.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>The building width is comparable to that of the adjacent historic single-family residences. The façade is proportioned to fit within the block context and will not overwhelm the adjacent structures. The building width and height fits within block patterns.</td>
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<td>4.22 Maintain the overall mass and scale pattern as viewed from the street.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Mass and scale as viewed from the street will be compatible with the block and the district. The height and width of the proposed infill are compatible with the other single-family residences on the block. The infill will be much deeper/longer than the adjacent homes, but this will not be readily visible from the street. Floor-to-floor heights are similar to adjacent properties and visually align when possible (there are changes in grade on the block). The porch will distinguish the first floor and the cornice distinguishes the top. The building uses stringcourses and multiple variations in wall plane to reduce the apparent scale of a large mass. These variations in wall plane also reference the complex Queen Anne forms of the district which feature multiple shifts in wall plane. At the rear, the second and third stories will cantilever over ground-level parking spaces, but this will not be readily visible from the street.</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Incorporate floor-to-floor heights that appear similar to those seen in the surrounding historic context, especially at the ground floor.</td>
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<td>b. Distinguish the ground floor from upper floors.</td>
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<td>c. Use vertical and horizontal articulation to reference typical articulation patterns in the surrounding historic context and reduce the apparent scale of a larger building mass.</td>
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<td>e. Design a new structure to incorporate a traditional base, middle and cap configuration when this is the traditional pattern in the surrounding context.</td>
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<td>4.23 Maintain typical historic entry patterns along the street.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>The infill will feature a partial-width porch with a balcony above. This is a simplified version of the two-story porch at the adjacent 1610 Emerson St. The size and placement of the porch on the infill relates to the adjacent single-family homes as well as the larger district.</td>
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<td>4.24 Reflect typical historic upper story window patterns.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Upper story windows feature grouped vertical windows with transoms above. This is based on the window patterns found on 1600 Emerson.</td>
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4.30 Locate driveways, trash enclosures and parking areas to minimize impacts on surrounding residential context.
   a. Locate driveways, trash enclosures and parking areas away from private yard areas on adjacent residential properties, whenever possible.

Yes

Parking will be located to the rear of 1632 Emerson, accessed via the alley. Parking will not be readily visible. A portion of the parking will extend under the infill structure, with the second and third floors cantilevering over a row of parking spaces on the ground level. A small courtyard is proposed between 1622 and 1632 Emerson, which will help block views of the rear parking area. A trash enclosure will be located at the rear of 1622 Emerson, located on the alley.

Recommendation: Approval with Condition

Conditions: That demolition applications for the alley house and garage at the rear of the lot be submitted and reviewed by the Commission prior to infill approval.

Basis: The infill is a simplified version of historic forms in the district. The mass and form fit with block patterns. Demolition applications need to be submitted for the alley house and garage (2.55).

Suggested Motion: I move to CONDITIONALLY APPROVE application #2022-COA-005 for the infill at 1622 Emerson St., as per design guidelines 2.55, 4.1, 4.2, 4.5, 4.7, 4.8, 4.20-4.24, and 4.30, character-defining features for the Swallow Hill historic district, presented testimony, submitted documentation and information provided in the staff report with the condition that demolition applications for the alley house and garage at the rear of the lot be submitted and reviewed by the Commission prior to infill approval.
Swallow Hill Historic District with location of 1622 indicated with a red square
1897 Sanborn Map with 1622 and 1632 Emerson outlined in black

1904 Sanborn Map with 1622 and 1632 Emerson outlined in black
1925 Sanborn Map with 1622 and 1632 Emerson outlined in black