



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Mayor Mahan
Vice Mayor Kamei
Councilmember Davis
Councilmember Foley
Councilmember Candelas

SUBJECT: SCHIELE AVE

DATE: 09/20/2024

Approved  


Date: 9/20/2024

 

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Support the staff recommendation to adopt a resolution designating Schiele Subdivision and Alameda Park as a City Landmark District as nominated by the San Jose City Council on April 30, 2024.

BACKGROUND:

We are finally at the end of a long road for the proponents and residents of the Schiele Subdivision and Alameda Park in their bid to preserve history and tell the story of their neighborhood. These residents have been working towards designation as a City Landmark Historic District since 2004. Twenty years later, we have a chance to strike a balance between preserving history and growth of our city. It's a challenge that once ignored, can never be reversed.

Historic districts have some level of protection and oversight to maintain their integrity and architectural significance. The designation of an area as an historic district represents a commitment to recognizing and protecting a community's architectural heritage. It's important to understand that an historic designation is an overlay and does not regulate land use. An historic district designation does not affect a landowner's right to construct an ADU or JADU. For more information on benefits and restrictions of a designation, see the city's [webpage](#).

Hopefully, many of you have read the book written by historian, Krista Van Laan, and Schiele Avenue resident, Kay Gutnecht called, "Schiele Subdivision and Alameda Park – History, Architecture, and Preservation in a San Jose Neighborhood." In it, Van Laan and Gutnecht tell

the history of this neighborhood and what makes it so special. The following are some facts about the land and why it's history should be recognized and preserved.

The neighborhood is on land that is part of the original Stockton Ranch, the site of much of San Jose's early agricultural development. It was the location of the first honeybees in California, brought through the Isthmus of Panama by a brilliant and charismatic young botanist named Christopher Shelton. The north side of Schiele Avenue is the site of houses by many of the great San Jose architects of the late 1800s, including eight extant houses designed by Theodore Lenzen (1833-1912), one of the most respected and important architects of San José. And in the 1980s, the neighborhood was nicknamed, "Little Castro," and played an important role in gay history in the Bay Area.

Thank you to all the residents, former councilmembers, and city staff who have worked so long and diligently on this designation request. We urge our colleagues to support our motion to approve the recommendation.

The signers of this memorandum have not had, and will not have, any private conversation with any other member of the City Council, or that member's staff, concerning any action discussed in the memorandum, and that each signer's staff members have not had, and have been instructed not to have, any such conversation with any other member of the City Council or that member's staff.

