



## Planning Department

**TO:** Chairperson and Members of the Planning Commission

**FROM:** Holly Smyth, AICP, Planning Director  
Victor Carniglia, Municipal Resources Group

**DATE:** May 7, 2018 Regular Planning Commission Meeting

**SUBJECT:** Categorical Exemption Determination under CEQA for Relocation and Rehabilitation of the "Queen Anne House" (aka building #54) by Adopting Resolution #18-11 from its Current Temporary Location at 1000 Sycamore Avenue at the City's Corporation Yard to site Either Inside or Outside the City Limits of Hercules

**APPLICANT:** The City of Hercules, Planning Division, City Hall

**LOCATION:** 1000 Sycamore Avenue, within the City's Corporation Yard located near Willet Street, Hercules, CA

### 1. RECOMMENDATION

Receive staff report, discuss potential changes, and consider approving Resolution #18-11 (Attachment 1) finding that a Categorical Exemption is adequate to address the Environmental Consequences of moving the Historic Queen Anne Structure (Historic Building 54).

### 2. PROJECT OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND:

The action before the Planning Commission is to determine whether a CEQA finding of "Categorical Exemption: Existing Facilities" is the appropriate determination to address the environmental consequences of moving a historic structure, commonly referred to as the "Queen Anne House" (Historic Structure #54), from its current location at the City's Corporation Yard, to an undetermined location either inside or outside the City of Hercules.

This need for an environmental determination for moving the Queen Anne House originated as a result of direction from the City Council in September 2016 to market the "Queen Anne" house to interested buyers that intend to rehabilitate and use the structure either in the City or in another community. While the City had at one point considered moving the house onto City park land at Duck Pond Park to serve as a public structure, it was determined that doing so was no longer financially viable given the condition of the "Queen Anne" house. The City subsequently issued RFP's to determine the level of public interest in purchasing, moving, and rehabilitating the Queen Anne house. At the November 9, 2016 City Council meeting, Rockhead and Quarry, LLC were

selected to purchase the home for \$1 with the intent to relocate outside of the City and rehabilitate the structure to serve as affordable housing.

In December 2017, City Council directed staff to retain a consultant to prepare the environmental documentation needed to address the environmental consequences under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of moving the Queen Anne house, with the intent of facilitating the future sale, relocation, and renovation by a third party of the Queen Anne house.

The consulting firm the “M Group” was retained by the City to prepare the necessary CEQA report, as the structure is on the National Historic Register as a contributor to the “Hercules “Village” Historic District (which was a worker village associated with the Hercules Powder Company), which they subsequently completed in March 2018. Attachment 2 contains the report prepared by “M Group” that provides the environmental and related historic documentation needed for moving the subject “Queen Anne” house.

The following is a summary of the information contained in this attached report. The report concludes that a CEQA finding of Categorical Exemption is appropriate for “relocating and rehabilitation” of the subject Queen Anne house “in a manner consistent with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards”. According to the report the only historic significance retained by the structure once moved and renovated is that the structure was once occupied by Eugene (Gene) Woodfield....who served as mayor from 1962-1975 and was “instrumental in crafting the City’s first General Plan and creating a blueprint for how the City would evolve following the closure of the Hercules Plant”, and whom the first City park was named after.

**Key contents of M-Group report:**

- Summary of Findings and Methodology used (pages 3 to 4, Attachment 2)
- Information about the historic context background of the house, including when it was built and moved (pages 4 to 8, Attachment 2).
- The historical significance of the house in relation to the State and Federal criteria used to judge significance (pages 8 to 10 Attachment 2).
- The historic integrity of the house (pages 9 to 10, Attachment 2).
- The CEQA determination of Categorical Exemption is discussed on pages 11 to 12 of Attachment B.

A “Notice of Exemption, Categorical Exemption: Existing Facilities Form” has been completed by staff and would be filed with the County once it is acted on by the Planning Commission.

On a side note, in speaking with Dmitri Belser, co-owner of Rockhead and Quarry, LLC, on May 3, 2018 his company is in process of placing a bid on a vacant lot in El Sobrante to relocate the building and his company is still ready to take on the project.

**Attachments:**

1. Resolution approving Categorical Exemption
2. M Group “Queen Anne House Historic Evaluation” report
3. Categorical Exemption form