

**CITY OF SAINT PAUL  
HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT**

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FILE NAME: 321 Irvine Avenue  
DATE OF APPLICATION: June 19, 2014  
APPLICANT: Paula Schad  
ARCHITECT: David Salmela      LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT: Shane Coen  
OWNER(S): Bruce Lilly & Paula Schad  
DATE OF PUBLIC HEARING: October 23, 2014      LAID OVER: December 4, 2014  
HPC SITE/DISTRICT: Hill Heritage Preservation District  
CATEGORY: New Construction  
CLASSIFICATION: New Construction  
STAFF INVESTIGATION AND REPORT: Amy Spong  
DATE: November 25, 2014

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**A. SITE DESCRIPTION:**

The property at 321 Irvine Avenue is a vacant lot with a 20% slope that is mostly wooded. Originally this lot was part of 322-24 Summit Avenue as most of the lots at the top of the hill on Summit extended all the way to Irvine Avenue. There was a two-story barn located on the 324 side but up at the edge of Irvine Avenue.

The National Register Nomination for the Hill Historic District describes the significance of Irvine Avenue: *"The area to the east of Ramsey Street comprises a wooded bluff which descends in terraces from the rear of the Summit Avenue residences to Pleasant Avenue. Located at an intermediate terrace is Irvine Avenue, a narrow, winding access road to the former servant's quarters, carriage houses, and service facilities for the residences above. The natural area along the terraces also serves to shield the residential district from the central business district below and has survived in a relatively unaltered state since the early days of settlement."*

**B. PROPOSED CHANGES:**

The applicant is proposing to construct a four-level, single-family residence with a tuck-under garage and detached workshop connected with a raised walkway. The first garage level measures 24' by 32', the second level 24' by 40', the third level is the largest at 24' by 65' and the fourth level measures 24' by 55' which is setback from the second and third levels by 16'. The workshop is two stories and connected to the main house by a raised walkway and measures 14' by 24'. The main entrance to the house is at the third level on the east elevation. This is accessed by a stairway from Irvine Avenue. The fourth level is set back from the main façade and will allow for a patio. The architect is proposing four skylights on the flat roofs, a projecting bay on the east elevation, two masonry chimneys, and a cantilever on the main façade over the garage doors and a series of retaining walls. The main materials are black cementitious walls, wood windows with black aluminum-clad, poured concrete retaining walls, tempered and black metal railings and masonry whitewashed chimneys. The street-facing garage doors are a flat panel but no material or color was noted. The front gate and screen wall/fence is zinc with small perforations in a vertical pattern. A planting plan was provided.

**C. BACKGROUND:**

This lot was part of the Lightner-Young Double House at 322-24 Summit Avenue, designed by Cass Gilbert and James Knox Taylor in 1886 in the Romanesque Revival style. The lot split was reviewed by the HPC at their Business Meeting on June 14, 2007 and they recommended approval of the lot split with five findings. Lot split proposals are reviewed and approved by the planning administrator and there are several conditions that must be met as stipulated in Chapter 69 of the City's Legislative Code. A major variance was also required in order to build on a lot with a slope greater than 18%.

The slope is 20% and the variance was granted by the Board of Zoning Appeals in 2009 with two conditions that site plan approval by the zoning administrator and design review approval by the Heritage Preservation Commission be obtained prior to construction or grading on the site. The single-family house that was being proposed at the time of the lot split and variance request had a footprint of 2,080 square feet and was two stories with a basement. A one-story, attached double garage was also proposed with a footprint of 725 square feet.

HPC staff met at the front counter with each property owner separately and then with the architect, landscape architect and property owners on June 26, 2014 to discuss the proposal. The model of the proposed building was brought at that time. Site Plan Review has been completed and the Department of Safety and Inspections has also determined that a variance is not required.

#### **D. Pre-Application Review**

The HPC conducted a Pre-Application Review on July 10, 2014. The current proposal has not changed significantly from the Pre-Application Review but the drawings that were submitted at that time are included in this packet for reference. The adopted minutes from that meeting are as follows:

##### *Pre-Application Review*

*A. 321 Irvine Avenue, Hill Heritage Preservation District, by Paula Schad, owner, for preliminary review to construct a new four-level single-family residence with a tuck-under garage. (Spong, 266-6714)*

*Staff read aloud the staff report, made some clarifications, including some additional information. Staff presented historic maps, current maps, photos, and drawings of the property and the project. Commissioner Lightner requested confirmation that the spaces between the properties are vacant; Ms. Boulware noted areas that are vacated and some that are improved. Several other areas on the maps were clarified to orient the Commission. Commissioner Lightner inquired as to if the house on the adjacent lot is new construction; Ms. Boulware noted that it is and was reviewed by the HPC, but some of the detailing we see today wasn't approved in that manner. A discussion was had regarding several properties and buildings visible on the maps.*

*Bruce Lilly and Paula Schad, the owners, were present to speak on behalf of the project. Mr. Lilly introduced Shane Coen and David Salmela. Mr. Coen discussed the current proposal for the landscaping. Mr. Salmela discussed the reasoning for the design and placement of the garage and the context of the project within the neighborhood. Mr. Coen discussed the water issues that will be mitigated at the site. Chair Dana requested expansion on the materials proposed; Mr. Salmela described the reasoning and possible ways in which to combine masonry and stucco. Commissioner Trout-Oertel inquired as to whether any stone will be used to relate to the ruins in the district; Mr. Salmela responded that stone may be used in the landscaping. Ms. Schad discussed the possible use of stone. Commissioner Trout-Oertel inquired as to if the intention is to have the residence visible from the street or partially screened; Mr. Salmela noted that it will be integrated and filtered. Commissioner Lightner inquired as to the area in front of the workshop will be screened; Ms. Schad noted some ideas. Mr. Lilly noted the desire to have the house and workshop screened from public view.*

*Commissioner Hutter inquired as to the plinth; Ms. Spong noted that this may be a misnomer. Mr. Salmela noted that this is a flat area that connects to the workshop and will have a chimney. A discussion was had regarding this area and the chimney. Commissioner Hutter encouraged the applicant to explore appropriate window size and proportions for the district, primarily on the Irvine-facing elevation; Mr. Salmela discussed the guidelines that were considered in the design of the building and suggested that there is precedent for the proposed design. Mr. Salmela suggested that they were encouraged to install double-hung windows and discussed why this is unnecessary; Ms. Boulware clarified that the guideline encourages vertically oriented windows, but not specifically double-hung windows.*

*Ms. Spong discussed a zoning variance that exists for the property based on a previous proposal, but that this project would require another variance. Ms. Schad described issues in receiving an engineer's report in order to retain a variance. Ms. Spong discussed the process that should take place; Chair Dana noted that there may be another pre-application review after the variance is received.*

*Commissioner Lightner encouraged the applicant to address the design of the windows and the roof to better relate to the guidelines. Commissioner Ferguson discussed the massing of the proposal in Finding No.6 and suggested that the finding is not accurate and noted that the guideline for facade openings makes suggestions for sizes, but not requirements. Commissioner Ferguson discussed the design of the entrances related to the district and guidelines; a discussion was had regarding the entrances in relation to the bluff.*

#### **E. October 23, 2014 Public Hearing**

The HPC held the public hearing on October 23<sup>rd</sup> and staff recommended the application be laid over in order for more detailed drawings to be submitted and for reconsideration of the black stucco color of the walls, the size of the windows on the front elevation, and the front retaining wall design. The applicant was present to speak and there was discussion regarding the black stucco color and whether the stucco was an integral color or applied. The applicant is proposing an integral stucco but a couple commissioners commented there are different shades of black, including those that lean toward brown or red and there is little contrast between the walls and black metal trim and flashing. There was also discussion regarding the front façade windows and one commissioner commented about revisiting how they are grouped or stacked to be more consistent with the guidelines.

There was one neighbor, Ed Peele of 318 Irvine Avenue that came to testify and stated he had three main concerns: 1) that the general design is not in keeping with anything around it, 2) that there is a large amount of south facing glass; from a safety perspective with the street connection from the upper to the lower Irvine Avenue at this location of the new façade, and 3) the hydrology issues of the site possibly not being properly addressed. A second testimony letter was read into the record from Tom Fisher, Dean and Professor of the School of Design at the University of Minnesota in full support of the proposed design. The public hearing was closed given no one else was present to speak.

Commissioner Mazanec motioned to lay over the application in order for additional details to be provided and the three items staff noted to be considered. Commissioner Trimble seconded the motion and the motion passed 8 to 0. There was a second motion from Commissioner Wagner to call for a straw vote regarding the stucco color and the front elevation windows; Commissioner Trout-Oertel seconded the motion. There were 4 commissioners who spoke in favor of the windows on the front as proposed and 3 commissioners who abstained. Regarding the black stucco color, there were 5 commissioners who supported an integral black stucco, 1 commissioner not in support and 2 commissioners who abstained. Commissioner Wagner also reminded that the HPC is 13 members and only 7 were present to take an informal straw vote. Staff also reminded that a straw vote is not binding but was a way to provide some feedback to the applicants on where HPC members were in their review process after discussion.

Staff met with the landscape architect and property owner on November 12<sup>th</sup> to discuss the additional information needed in order to provide the detailed information. There was also new discussion about the screen wall and gate between the driveway and entry stairs which is over 7 feet tall at the southern point. Staff stated that the guidelines are clear in any front yard that fencing shall be low and visually open.

The revised drawings were submitted to PED for the December 4<sup>th</sup> HPC meeting. There are additional details regarding materials as well as a sample board of all the colors and materials proposed. The front gate was lowered to 4 feet tall but the remaining fence is over 7 feet high. The skylights are now clad in black metal instead of the black stucco. This was discussed in the staff meeting. There are more materials noted and a detail of the boxed window trim detail on the front façade. The pattern of the whitewashed chimney is also noted and a detail on the concrete retaining walls on the site.

**F. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CONSIDERATIONS:**

**Irvine Avenue Development Plan (2003)**

**Goal/Vision:** Irvine Avenue should remain a low-density residential area due to the steep slopes and the narrow roadway. Seen from a distance—for example, from the High Bridge—the Irvine Avenue hillside should appear predominantly wooded with a few buildings peeking through the trees. On top, Summit Avenue rooflines should play with the tree-tops. Under the trees within the neighborhood, Irvine Avenue should appear as a wooded lane punctuated by buildings and retaining walls. Any new buildings should blend into the historic and natural character of the area. Garage doors should be downplayed architecturally so that the street doesn't end up looking like an alley. Construction should be engineered to take into account the stability and hydrology of the slopes.

**Historic Character**

12. The north side of Irvine Avenue is within the Historic Hill District. The guidelines for the historic district should include a policy on preserving Irvine Avenue's historic character as a lane of homes and carriage houses, recognizing how distinct the street is from most of Ramsey Hill~e.g., irregular spacing of buildings; wide variation in setbacks from the street; naturalistic landscaping instead of lawns; and carriage houses facing the street.

**G. GUIDELINE CITATIONS:**

**Hill Historic District Design Review Guidelines**

**General Principles:**

1. Every reasonable effort shall be made to provide a compatible use for a property which requires minimal alteration of the building, structure, or site and its environment, or to use a property for its originally intended purpose.
2. The distinguishing original qualities or character of a building, structure, or site and its environment shall not be destroyed. The removal or alteration of any historic material or distinctive architectural features should be avoided when possible.
3. All buildings, structures, and sites shall be recognized as products of their own time. Alterations that have no historical basis and which seek to create an earlier appearance shall be discouraged.
4. Changes which may have taken place in the course of time are evidence of the history and development of a building, structure, or site and its environment. These changes may have acquired significance in their own right, and this significance shall be recognized and respected.
5. Distinctive stylistic features or examples of skilled craftsmanship which characterize a building, structure, or site shall be treated with sensitivity.
6. Deteriorated architectural features shall be repaired rather than replaced, whenever possible. In the event replacement is necessary, the new material should match the material being replaced in composition, design, color, texture, and other visual qualities. Repair or replacement of missing architectural features should be based on accurate duplications of features, substantiated by historic, physical, or pictorial evidence rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different architectural elements from other buildings or structures.
7. The surface cleaning of structures shall be undertaken with the gentlest means possible. Sandblasting and other cleaning methods that will damage the historic building materials shall not be undertaken.
8. Every reasonable effort shall be made to protect and preserve archaeological resources affected by, or adjacent to any project.
9. Contemporary design for alterations and additions to existing properties shall not be discouraged when such alterations and additions do not destroy significant historical, architectural or cultural material, and such design is compatible with the size, scale, color, material, and character of the property, neighborhood, or environment.
10. Wherever possible, new additions or alterations to structures shall be done in such a manner that if such alterations were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the structure

would be unimpaired.

### **New Construction**

#### General Principles:

*The basic principle for new construction in the Historic Hill District is to maintain the district's scale and quality of design. The Historic Hill District is architecturally diverse within an overall pattern of harmony and continuity. These guidelines for new construction focus on general rather than specific design elements in order to encourage architectural innovation and quality design while maintaining the harmony and continuity of the district. New construction should be compatible with the size, scale, massing, height, rhythm, setback, color, material, building elements, site design, and character of surrounding structures and the area.*

#### Massing and Height:

*New construction should conform to the massing, volume, height and scale of existing adjacent structures. Typical residential structures in the Historic Hill District are 25 to 40 feet high. The height of new construction should be no lower than the average height of all buildings on both block faces; measurements should be made from street level to the highest point of the roofs. (This guideline does not supersede the City's Zoning Code height limitations.)*

#### Rhythm and Directional Emphasis:

*The existence of uniform narrow lots in the Historic Hill naturally sets up a strong rhythm of buildings to open space. Historically any structure built on more than one lot used vertical facade elements to maintain and vary the overall rhythm of the street rather than interrupting the rhythm with a long monotonous facade. The directional expression of new construction should relate to that of existing adjacent structures.*

#### Materials and Details:

*Variety in the use of architectural materials and details adds to the intimacy and visual delight of the district. But there is also an overall thread of continuity provided by the range of materials commonly used by turn-of-the-century builders and by the way these materials were used. This thread of continuity is threatened by the introduction of new industrial materials and the aggressive exposure of earlier materials such as concrete block, metal framing, and glass. The purpose of this section is to encourage the proper use of appropriate materials and details.*

*The materials and details of new construction should relate to the materials and details of existing nearby buildings.*

*Preferred roof materials are cedar shingles, slate and tile; asphalt shingles which match the approximate color and texture of the preferred materials are acceptable substitutes. Imitative materials such as asphalt siding, wood-textured metal or vinyl siding, artificial stone and artificial brick veneer should not be used. Smooth four-inch lap vinyl, metal, or hardboard siding, when well installed and carefully detailed, may be acceptable in some cases. Materials, including their colors, will be reviewed to determine their appropriate use in relation to the overall design of the structure as well as to surrounding structures.*

*Color is a significant design element, and paint colors should relate to surrounding structures and the area as well as to the style of the new structure. Building permits are not required for painting and, although the Heritage Preservation Commission may review and comment on paint color, paint color is not subject to Heritage Preservation Commission approval*

Building Elements:

*Individual elements of a building should be integrated into its composition for a balanced and complete design. These elements for new construction should compliment existing adjacent structures as well.*

Roofs.

*There is a great variety of roof treatment in the Historic Hill District, but gable and hip roofs are most common. The skyline or profile of new construction should relate to the predominant roof shape of existing adjacent buildings.*

*Most houses in the Historic Hill District have a roof pitch of between 9:12 and 12:12 (rise-to-run ratio). Highly visible secondary structure roofs should match the roof pitch of the main structure, and generally should have a rise-to-run ratio of at least 9:12. A roof pitch of at least 8:12 should be used if it is somewhat visible from the street, and a 6:12 pitch may be acceptable in some cases for structures which are not visible from the street.*

*Roof hardware such as skylights, vents, and metal pipe chimneys should not be placed on the front roof plane.*

Windows and Doors.

*The proportion, size, rhythm and detailing of windows and doors in new construction should be compatible with that of existing adjacent buildings. Most windows on the Hill have a vertical orientation, with a proportion of between 2:1 and 3:1 (height to width) common. Individual windows can sometimes be square or horizontal if the rest of the building conveys the appropriate directional emphasis. Facade openings of the same general size as those in adjacent buildings are encouraged.*

*Wooden double-hung windows are traditional in the Historic Hill District and should be the first choice when selecting new windows. Paired casement windows, although not historically common, will often prove acceptable because of their vertical orientation. Sliding windows, awning windows, and horizontally oriented muntins are not common in the district and are generally unacceptable. Vertical muntins and muntin grids may be acceptable when compatible with the period and style of the building. Sliding glass doors should not be used where they would be visible from the street.*

*Although not usually improving the appearance of a building, the use of metal windows or doors need not necessarily ruin it. The important thing is that they should look like part of the building and not like raw metal appliances. Appropriately colored or bronze-toned aluminum is acceptable. Mill finish (sliver) aluminum should be avoided.*

Porches and Decks:

*In general, houses in the Historic Hill District have roofed front porches, while in most modern construction the front porch has disappeared. Front porches provide a transitional zone between open and closed space which unites a building and its site, semiprivate spaces which help to define the spatial hierarchy of the district. They are a consistent visual element in the district and often introduce rhythmic variation, clarify scale or provide vertical facade elements. The porch treatment of new structures should relate to the porch treatment of existing adjacent structures. If a porch is not built, the transition from private to public space should be articulated with some other suitable design element.*

*Open porches are preferable, but screened or glassed-in porches may be acceptable if well detailed. Most, but not all, porches on the Hill are one story high. Along some streets where a strong continuity of porch size or porch roof line exists, it may be preferable to duplicate these formal elements in new construction. The vertical elements supporting the porch roof are important. They should carry the visual as well as the actual weight of the porch roof. The spacing of new balustrades should reflect the solid-to-void relationships of adjacent railings and porches. Generally, a solid-to-void proportion*

*between 1:2 and 1:3 is common in the Historic Hill.*

*Decks should be kept to the rear of buildings, should be visually refined, and should be integrated into overall building design. A raised deck protruding from a single wall usually appears disjointed from the total design and is generally unacceptable.*

#### Site

*Setback. New buildings should be sited at a distance not more than 5% out-of-line from the setback of existing adjacent buildings. Setbacks greater than those of adjacent buildings may be allowed in some cases. Reduced setbacks may be acceptable at corners. This happens quite often in the Historic Hill area and can lend delightful variation to the street.*

*Landscaping. Typically, open space in the Historic Hill District is divided into public, semipublic, semiprivate and private space. The public space of the street and sidewalk is often distinguished from the semipublic space of the front yard by a change in grade, a low hedge or a visually open fence.*

*The buildings, landscaping elements in front yards, and boulevard trees together provide a "wall of enclosure" for the street "room". Generally, landscaping which respects the street as a public room is encouraged. Enclosures which allow visual penetration of semipublic spaces, such as wrought-iron fences, painted picket fences, low hedges or limestone retaining walls, are characteristic of most of the Historic Hill area. This approach to landscaping and fences is encouraged in contrast to complete enclosure of semipublic space by an opaque fence, a tall "weathered wood" fence or tall hedge rows. Cyclone fence should not be used in front yards or in the front half of side yards. Landscape timber should not be used for retaining walls in front yards.*

*For the intimate space of a shallow setback, ground covers and low shrubs will provide more visual interest and require less maintenance than grass. When lots are left vacant, as green space or parking area, a visual hole in the street "wall" may result. Landscape treatment can eliminate this potential problem by providing a wall of enclosure from the street. Boulevard trees mark a separation between the automobile corridor and the rest of the streetscape, and should be maintained.*

*Garages and Parking. If an alley is adjacent to the dwelling, any new garage should be located off the alley. Where alleys do not exist, garages facing the street or driveway curb cuts may be acceptable. Garage doors should not face the street. If this is found necessary, single garage doors should be used to avoid the horizontal orientation of two-car garage doors.*

*Parking spaces should not be located in front yards. Residential parking spaces should be located in rear yards. Parking lots for commercial uses should be to the side or rear of commercial structures and have a minimum number of curb cuts. All parking spaces should be adequately screened from the street and sidewalk by landscaping. The scale of parking lots should be minimized and the visual sweep of pavement should be broken up by use of planted areas. The scale, level of light output, and design of parking lot lighting should be compatible with the character of the district.*

#### Public Infrastructure

*The traditional pattern of public streets, curbs, boulevards, and sidewalks in the area should be maintained. Distinctive features of public spaces in the area, such as brick alleys, stone slab sidewalks, granite curbs, and the early twentieth century lantern style street lights, should be preserved. The same style should be used when new street lights are installed. New street furniture such as benches, bus shelters, telephone booths, kiosks, sign standards, trash containers, planters and fences should be compatible with the character of the district.*

*Electric, telephone and cable TV lines should be placed underground or along alleys, and meters*

*should be placed where inconspicuous.*

#### **H. FINDINGS:**

1. On April 2, 1991, the most recent expansion of the Hill Heritage Preservation District was established under Ordinance No. 17815, § 3(II). The City Legislative Code states the Heritage Preservation Commission shall protect the architectural character of heritage preservation sites through review and approval or denial of applications for city permits for exterior work within designated heritage preservation sites §73.04.(4).

2. *Comprehensive Plan Consideration.* In 2003, the City adopted the Irvine Avenue Development Plan as an addendum to the Comprehensive Plan. "This plan represents the community vision for the preservation of the Irvine Avenue hillside and for the reasonable, limited development of Irvine and Pleasant Avenue properties." Along with this plan the Zoning Code was amended to address development standards for construction on "Steep Slopes." The Irvine Avenue Plan and the Zoning Code have very specific development standards intended to ensure that parcels can be developed without damaging the long term stability of the slope and without adversely affecting surrounding properties. The proposed development required site plan review to ensure compliance with the Irvine Avenue Plan and Steep Slope standards.

3. The lot is vacant and no historic fabric will be removed or lost as part of this proposal, although there will likely be remnants of the original barn foundation close to Irvine Avenue. The natural character of the lot will be impacted with the construction of the house. The Irvine Avenue Development Plan states that tree preservation is important and the Zoning Code mandates the completion of a tree preservation plan. While some of these sites behind the Summit Avenue homes were terraced and used for gardens and formal landscapes, this particular site behind 322-24 Summit does not appear to have had any terracing but remained mostly wooded and natural. New terracing is proposed and landscaping. However, the planting plan has the same species grouped in an ordered way, which is not characteristic of the natural and voluntary nature of the bluff landscape.

4. *Historic Context.* Only two contributing structures, and several limestone retaining walls, remain along Irvine Avenue: 339-341 Irvine Avenue and the structure that is still part of the Lindsay-Weyerhauser property at 294 Summit Avenue. These are the two remaining structures for which to inform a compatible new design for the house at 321 Irvine Avenue. While not located within the District boundaries, the early houses that make up the south side of Irvine Avenue should also be referenced as they are similar to the few small houses that have been lost on the north side of Irvine Avenue. The Minnesota Historical Society collection has several images of Irvine Avenue from 1950.

The property at 339-341 Irvine Avenue is made up of an 1895 brick barn that has no setback from Irvine and measures 62' wide by 35' deep and 24' tall (although this reads more as three stories for a portion), with two additions in 1901 and 1915. The 1901 addition measures 16' wide by 40' deep and two-stories tall while the 1914 permit was for a stone retaining wall and garage addition that measures 13' tall but the width and depth are not legible on the permit copy. The permit lists A. H. Stem as the architect of the garage. All of these structures have flat roofs and little or no setback from Irvine Avenue. The windows are tall and narrow and individually spaced and the entries are marked by wood stairs to enter at the side near the facade. At some point the structures were painted white.

The building at the back of 294 Summit Avenue housed a swimming pool, an auto garage and a 1 ½ story portion that was likely a residence. The original permits were not obtained; however, the structure is very consistent with the Georgian Revival style main house. The pool house has a low-sloping gabled roof and walls have wide wood-lap siding. The structure has a shallow setback from Irvine Avenue and is much wider than it is deep. The individually-spaced, small window openings on the second level are mostly 6-



over-6 divided lights. The bluff is terraced behind.

The orientation of both of these structures with much of the massing along Irvine Avenue was likely done to minimize impacts to the bluff.

**5.** The guidelines state: *“New construction should be compatible with the size, scale, massing, height, rhythm, setback, color, material, building elements, site design, and character of surrounding structures and the area.”* The proposed four-story, single family residence is of a contemporary nature and is differentiated from the historic structures along this block face. While this is not discouraged under the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for new construction, the whole of the design still needs to be compatible with the established character of the street and historic district as stated in the Hill District guidelines. This can be accomplished by evaluating the various individual principles below.

**6. Massing and Height:** The exposed footprint of the new house is fairly consistent with the larger footprints of the two contributing historic structures; however, the house’s main mass is set further up the hill in contrast to the historic structures which are set up to Irvine Avenue. While the property is proposed at four levels, the fourth level is stepped back from the main façade, perceiving mostly a three-story structure with a rooftop patio. The massing and height are compatible with neighboring historic and non-historic structures.

**7. Rhythm and Directional Emphasis:** There is not a strong established rhythm on this block face as the one 1895 structure is vertically oriented and the 1914 garage addition as well as the Weyerhauser pool house are more horizontally oriented. The houses to the south of Irvine Avenue have a stronger rhythm with front porches, similar setbacks and gabled and hipped roofs. The proposed rhythm and directional emphasis are compatible as these elements are not well established.

**8. Materials and Details:** The guidelines state *“Materials, including their colors, will be reviewed to determine their appropriate use in relation to the overall design of the structure as well as to surrounding structures.”*

**a. Black stucco siding.** The dominant materials used on historic structures during the District’s period of significance are limestone, sandstone, brick in red, brown and buff tones and along Irvine Avenue, wood lap siding. Less common but still present are a few early houses in stucco—one in the Italian Villa and another in Renaissance Revival. There is a 1990’s era house in stucco just to the east of this property so the material has been accepted in new construction within the District. The proposed black color is not appropriate, as this color is used historically as an accent for trim and metals. The existing stucco properties are medium to light color tones. The color does not comply with the guidelines for color. Given that other materials, such as the metal railings, window trim and flashing are also black there is no contrast between these elements which makes the structure monolithic, which is not in keeping with the character of the District.

**b. Aluminum-clad wood windows.** The window sashes and trim are aluminum-clad in black as well as the trim. There is an additional detail submitted for the front elevation windows of a boxed trim which is also black. This does provide more detail for the front windows and visually provides some depth instead of the large amount of glass appearing more like a curtain wall. The windows on the front elevation (second and third levels) do not comply with the guidelines which state: *“The proportion, size, rhythm and detailing of windows and doors in new construction should be compatible with that of existing adjacent buildings”* as the sizes and proportions are much larger with little wall space in-between creating an uneven rhythm.

**c. Masonry chimneys.** The free-standing chimney near the main entrance will be whitewashed and

there is a horizontal pattern for the masonry units. The rear chimney will not be visible but the chimney in between the main house and the workshop will be a visual feature. These design elements generally comply with the guidelines.

- d. *Concrete retaining walls, gate and screen wall.* There are a series of historic limestone retaining walls and new walls should be compatible in some aspects to provide for some visual continuity along Irvine Avenue. The proposed poured concrete walls that are parallel to Irvine Avenue should incorporate some of the characteristics of the early limestone even if a different material is proposed. Gray is a similar color but the proposal has a flat surface with no pattern. There is no cap or corner relief detail or posts, this is inconsistent with the nearby historic and early limestone walls.

The zinc gate has been lowered to 4 feet tall but the zinc fence that projects from the garage elevation is still over 7 feet tall at Irvine Avenue. Fences in front yards should be low and visually open. There are perforations but they are small which doesn't have the similar openness as a picket fence. The height also makes the point of entry less visible. The solid concrete wall on the west side of the garage is not visually open and its' height was not indicated. The zoning code also prohibits fences in the front yard over 4 feet in height.

- e. *Black metal railings.* The black metal railings with vertical pickets are consistent with the guidelines. They lack larger corner support posts that are a traditional railing design. The guidelines state "*The spacing of new balustrades should reflect the solid-to-void relationships of adjacent railings and porches*" however the railing is at the fourth level and not at the traditional location for front porches so this doesn't necessarily apply.

## **9. Building Elements.**

*Roof.* The roof is flat which is compatible with the historic structure at 339-341 Irvine Avenue but not with the smaller workers cottages on the south side of Irvine that have hip and gable roofs. The guidelines state that most houses have pitched roofs, however, this stretch of Irvine Avenue does have some early flat roofed structures and carriage houses so this element complies with the guidelines. An EPDM material is proposed which will not be visible except from the back of the Summit Avenue properties above.

*Doors and Windows.* Windows in new construction should be vertically oriented as the guidelines state "*Most windows on the Hill have a vertical orientation, with a proportion of between 2:1 and 3:1 (height to width) common. Individual windows can sometimes be square or horizontal if the rest of the building conveys the appropriate directional emphasis. Facade openings of the same general size as those in adjacent buildings are encouraged.*" Many of the façade windows have a vertical orientation however, they are very large and not consistent with the solid-to-void ratio of the historic structures or the guideline that states openings should be of the same general size. The ratio of the square windows is 1:1. There are several square windows on the sides that are quite large-5' by 5'. During the Pre-Application Review and HPC hearing, the HPC encouraged having window openings that are more consistent with the traditional sizes and/or rhythm, at least on the front elevation. This is referred to as the solid to void ratio. The guidelines address the variety of styles in the District but also that there is still a thread of continuity, "*This thread of continuity is threatened by the introduction of new industrial materials and the aggressive exposure of earlier materials such as concrete block, metal framing, and glass.*" The proposal includes glass as a main material, metal trim and poured concrete walls.

*Porches and Decks.* The guidelines state that "*Along some streets where a strong continuity of porch size or porch roof line exists, it may be preferable to duplicate these formal elements in new*

*construction.*” This side of the street does not have a strong continuity of porches or porch roof lines so these elements do not need to be duplicated, however, the guidelines state: *“If a porch is not built, the transition from private to public space should be articulated with some other suitable design element”* and the Irvine Avenue Development Plan states *“...front doors should be made inviting and prominent.”* The current proposal does not comply with these guidelines as the main entrance is on the third level half-way back on the east elevation. A suitable design element could be the feature wall/fence of zinc and the gate but they still need to be low and visually open to appear welcoming. These elements should not be an unfinished metal or industrial material unless there is a more uniform and matte finish.

**10. Setback.** Measurements of neighboring property setbacks were not provided in order to determine whether the proposed setback of the new residence and workshop are compatible and within 5% of neighboring (contributing) buildings. However, the Irvine Avenue Development Plan encourages additional off-street parking for new structures and the proposed 25' setback allows for an additional two parking spots (in addition to the garage) on the driveway. The setback appears to generally conform to the guidelines.

**11. Garages and Parking.** The guidelines state: *“Where alleys do not exist, garages facing the street or driveway curb cuts may be acceptable. Garage doors should not face the street. If this is found necessary, single garage doors should be used to avoid the horizontal orientation of two-car garage doors.”* Given the bluff, there is no alley and single garage doors are proposed. The two upper floors are cantilevered over the first level garage doors and while the cantilever is not an appropriate traditional design element, the architect's intent was to minimize the garage doors. This is consistent with the Irvine Avenue Development Plan which states: *“Garage doors shall be downplayed architecturally and front doors should be made inviting and prominent. While it is aesthetically desirable to put garage doors behind the front door or to the rear or the side of the house, these design alternatives can be impractical for steep lots without alleys and where pavement aggravates run-off problems.”*

**12. Public Infrastructure.** There do not appear to be exposed *brick alleys, stone slab sidewalks, granite curbs* or other historic public infrastructure at this site that would be affected.

The guideline states, *electric, telephone and cable TV lines should be placed underground or along alleys, and meters should be placed where inconspicuous* should be followed when utilities are installed at the property. Air conditioning units should be located at the rear of the property or screened by a fence in the rear portion of the side yard and gas fireplace vents should not be located on primary elevations and should be low-profile and painted/finished to match the surrounding material. Utility meters are noted on the west elevation toward the front of the house however, condenser units were not noted but should be inconspicuously sited.

**13.** In summary, there are general principles from the Hill Historic District Design Review Guidelines such as massing and the boxy shape that are compatible with neighboring carriage houses. Given the unique bluff conditions and adopted Irvine Avenue Development Plan the setback is more consistent with those recommendations as opposed to the Hill Guidelines. There are many design elements that are a departure from neighboring historic properties, however given the unique and varied character of this stretch of Irvine Avenue not all these elements need to strictly comply. There are still three main design elements which staff prioritized as impacting the overall design continuity of the Hill Historic District: The black stucco color of the walls, the size of the windows (solid-to-void ratio) on the south façade on the second and third levels, and the tall walls projecting from the garage level.

**14.** The proposal will not have an adverse effect for the Program for Preservation and architectural control of the Historic Hill Heritage Preservation District (Leg. Code §73.06 (e)) provided the conditions below are met.

**I. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Based on the findings, staff recommends approval of the building permit application provided the following condition(s) are met:

1. The color of the wall stucco shall be a medium to dark gray and the final color shall be submitted to HPC staff for final review and approval.
2. The south (front) elevation windows on the second and third levels shall be revised to be more consistent with the solid-to-void ratio and proportions as indicated in the Hill District Guidelines.
3. The zinc coated screen with gate and solid concrete wall shall not be lowered (possibly stepped) as indicated by the Hill Design Review Guidelines and the zoning code.
4. All final materials, details and colors shall be reviewed and approved by HPC staff or the HPC. The windows shall have no tinting or reflective qualities. A soft Low-E is acceptable.
5. Any revisions to the approved plans must be submitted to the HPC and/or staff for review.
6. When the final set of plans (2 copies to DSI) are submitted for building permit, a 3<sup>rd</sup> copy shall be submitted to the HPC office for final review and approval. This is the set that gets stamped approved for the HPC review.

**J. ATTACHMENTS**

1. Photos
2. HPC application
3. Updated Plans (11-13-14)
4. HPC Decision letter dated November 26, 2014