

# Agenda Report

**TO:** CITY COUNCIL

**DATE:** APRIL 25, 2005

**FROM:** CITY MANAGER

**SUBJECT:** DESIGNATION OF 494 BRADFORD STREET AS A HISTORIC MONUMENT (COUNCIL DISTRICT 6)

## **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Acknowledge that the designation of a historic resource is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (§15308);
2. As recommended by the Historic Preservation Commission, find that the house and landscape at 494 Bradford are significant under Criterion c for designation as a historic monument (P.M.C. §17.62.40 A) because the property is an exceptional representation of the collaborative work of architect, Roland Coate, and landscape architects, Florence Yoch and Lucile Council.
3. Approve the designation of the property at 494 Bradford Street as a historic monument.
4. Approve the attached resolution designating 494 Bradford Street as a monument (ATTACHMENT A);
5. Authorize the Mayor to execute the attached declaration of designation (ATTACHMENT B); and
6. Direct the City Clerk to record the declaration with the Los Angeles County Recorder.

## **RECOMMENDATION FROM THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

On February 7, 2005, at a noticed public hearing, the Historic Preservation Commission voted unanimously to recommend approval of the designation of 494 Bradford Street as a historic monument.

## **BACKGROUND**

Property owners, Dana and Jim Hartfield, submitted the application for designation of 494 Bradford as a landmark. Because of the property's integrity

and its importance as a collaborative work of Roland Coate and Florence Yoch, and her partner, Lucile Council, this staff report provides evidence to justify the designation at the City's highest possible level as a historic monument. The property owners and the Commission have concurred that the property should be designated at this level of significance.

## DESCRIPTION

**Property/site plan** – The nearly one-acre parcel is a hillside lot with a substantial change in topography from the high point on the southeast corner to the low point on the northwest corner. The house is sited on the higher ground of the southeast portion of the property with a paved driveway from Bradford Street to the detached garage at the south rear of the house. The drive separates the house from the expanse of the front garden that is a major portion of the lot. It sits at a 45-degree angle to the east property lot line. The property also includes a rear garden redesigned in 1956 by Florence Yoch and Lucile Council, Yoch's long-time business partner and companion.

**House/garage** – The Colonial Revival house is two stories with an irregular plan, gable roof, with a combination of wide wood-clapboard and brick-veneer siding. Other significant features include a Georgian Revival entry under a shed roof porch, wall dormers on the left bay wing, windows with 6-over-6 or 6-over-9 wood, double-hung units and shutters (some with brick lintels), entry steps with a wrought-iron handrail atop a concrete retaining wall, brick chimneys, a fan vent and a decorative cornice under the minimally projected eaves of the roof.

The garage has two-stories, 6-over-6 double-hung windows, a heavy wood paneled garage door, wide clapboard siding and a gable wall dormer.

**Landscape** – A substantial number of features of the original Florence Yoch design are intact in the front garden and some pathways, plantings and furnishings remain from the 1928 plan in the upper (back) garden. Although some major trees, shrubbery, flowers and tree groupings were part of the design, other plantings have been introduced or are extant because changes may have occurred while the garden was under construction, a practice for which the landscape designer was noted. Details of existing significant features of the garden are in Exhibit A.

## HISTORY

The construction year of 494 Bradford is documented in a City building permit and the September 7, 1928, issue of *Southwest Building Contractor*. Architect Roland Coate designed the house and garage for Ira L. Bryner at a contract cost of \$31,418.50. The architect's contract with Mrs. Bryner documents that construction of the house was coordinated with the landscaping by Florence Yoch.

The property is part of the original city plat map. Another house that appears on the 1910 Sanborn Map was sited where the 1928 house is now situated. The Bryner contract, however, verifies that the first house was demolished as it specifies that no materials from the old house would be used in the new construction. It does specify that old brick would be salvaged for the landscape features.

The original owner, Ira L. and Margaret E. Bryner, occupied the house until 1941. Albert E. and Harriet Doerr (Harriet Huntington, granddaughter of Henry E. Huntington) were the second owners of the property beginning in 1941. Harriet Doerr lived at 494 Bradford until 2002. Doerr is a noted author who began writing in her early 70s and wrote *Stones for Ibarra* (1984), *Consider This, Senora* (1993), *The Tiger in the Grass* (1995). The current owners are Dana and Jim Hartfield.

Other than minor changes, both house and garden remain virtually as they were when they were constructed in 1928. Other than planting changes over the years, some to reduce maintenance cost during WWII when the Doerrs owned the property, only a landscape plan in 1952 by Yoch and Council indicate a major change in the garden design at the rear of the house.

## **ANALYSIS**

The property, including the house, garage and garden at 494 Bradford is eligible for designation under Criterion c, which states:

(The property) is exceptional in the embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of a historic resource property type, period, architectural style or method of construction, or is an exceptional representation of the work of an architect, designer, engineer, or builder whose work is significant to the region, state or nation, or that possesses high artistic values that are of regional, state-wide or national significance.

Under this criterion, 494 Bradford Street qualifies for designation as a historic monument because it is an exceptional representation of the collaboration of two outstanding and influential designers, Roland Coate as architect and Florence Yoch as landscape architect. The designation as a monument is most appropriate because the property is not only significant in the history of the City of Pasadena, which is required for landmark designation, but is also significant to the Los Angeles region. Florence Yoch's garden design in particular possesses high artistic values; and, is the only residential garden design in the Pasadena and Los Angeles region that remains virtually intact.<sup>1</sup> Additional information on Coate, Yoch and Council are attached as Exhibit A.

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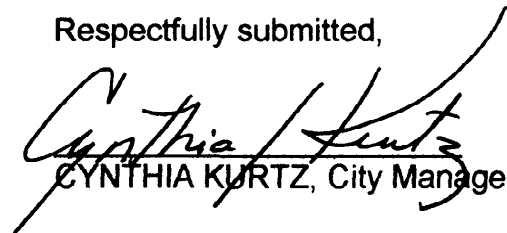
<sup>1</sup>This statement is based on discussions with various persons who are knowledgeable of the existing works of Yoch and Council, including local architectural historian, Ann Scheid Lund.

The designation of 494 Bradford Street recognizes the contributions of two prominent designers in this Southern California region during the early to mid-twentieth century. The house is an excellent example of the work of Roland Coate; and the garden design by Florence Yoch represents her philosophy and ideals about the role of natural and planned spaces in the lives of those using those spaces. This property is exemplary as a historic resource that represents an important collaboration between these two influential designers. The City's list of historic monuments currently contains four other properties in this category.

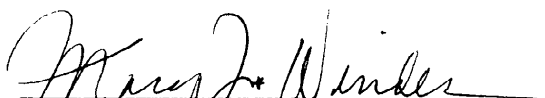
**FISCAL IMPACT**

Designation of a property does not affect revenues to the City. In some instances, though, owners of designated properties may apply to the City for Historic Property Contract, which allows an alternative and often lower property tax assessment. The City Council reviewed the projected loss of property tax revenue from this program in 2002 when it adopted a local Historic Property Contract (Mills Act) ordinance.


Respectfully submitted,

  
CYNTHIA KURTZ, City Manager

Prepared by:

  
Mary Jo Winder, Senior Planner

Approved by:

  
Richard Bruckner, Director of Planning & Development

- ATTACHMENT A: Resolution
- ATTACHMENT B: Declaration
- ATTACHMENT C: Photographs

## EXHIBIT A

Roland Coate, Florence Yoch, Lucile Council

Architect, Roland Coate (1890-1958) moved to and began working in Pasadena in 1920 for Reginald Johnson. In 1922, the distinguished firm of Johnson, Kaufmann & Coate was formed and that year, designs for All Saints Episcopal Church in Pasadena and St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral (demolished) in Los Angeles were produced. Coate is most noted for his single-family house designs in Pasadena/San Marino area and West Los Angeles, most designs referencing Tudor, Georgian, Spanish Colonial, French and Colonial Monterey. The recent Period Revival architecture study by Teresa Grimes and Mary Jo Winder lists twenty-three residences under designs by Roland Coate (between 1921 and 1940) and thirteen under Johnson, Kaufmann & Coate (between 1921 and 1924).

Florence Yoch (1890-1972) began her career as a landscape architect in 1915 after attending UC Berkeley and Cornell and graduating from the University of Illinois. In her long career, she created over 250 projects that ranged from small residential gardens to large ranches and estates. She is also noted for film landscape set designs, especially her design for Tara in *Gone with the Wind*. She was born and raised in Southern California and her work in Pasadena, where she and her partner, Lucille Council, lived, was substantial. Besides the numerous private gardens in San Marino and Pasadena, she designed the landscaping for Caltech's Athenaeum and student housing grounds. Working together with the best architects of the period 1920-40, Yoch and Council created designs that combined formal and informal spaces, and "emphasized the tidy and understated over the carefree and bold"<sup>2</sup> Her philosophy of design was to create gardens that reflected California horticulture and the natural landscape but introducing elements of European garden design to make each creation unique.

Florence Yoch and Lucile Council lived in several houses in Pasadena, but the only one that is known is located on Linda Vista Avenue. Since the property is not very visible from the street, it is not known if the garden design is currently intact or if the property is eligible for designation under the City's significance criteria.

### Landscape Features

Major significant features in the front garden are: all decomposed granite paths with brick edging, planting areas, retaining walls, wrought-iron rails, benches, incised concrete steps, and river-rock retaining walls. Trees that are significant include: a gigantic pine located at the left front of the rose garden; six California live oaks (right front of the rose garden, northwest corner of the property, upper right side of the rose garden, upper left from the lawn, and two on the hillside left of the garden house); citrus trees along the front property line, in the yard below

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<sup>2</sup> James J. Yoch, Guest Curator for *Personal Edens: The Gardens and Film Sets of Florence Yoch*. The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens, 1992.

the house on the left side of the driveway, and in the grove on the right side of the driveway; a Chinese elm at the steps that lead up to the driveway; a eucalyptus on the north side of the motor court; a laurel bay to the right of the garden house; pittosporiums north of the laurel bay and on the west edge of the upper motor court and two crepe myrtles on either side of the path that bisects the rose garden. Significant plantings are the rose bushes in the rose garden, ivy around the pool and on retaining walls, boxwood hedges and the lawns on the west side of the driveway and above the pool.

Significant structures that are original are the wood garden house, the pool and the fence at the front property line. The driveway and motor court that have the original large aggregate-filled asphalt and concrete curb and gutter is also significant.

In 1952, the owners of the property contracted with Yoch and Council to modify the upper (rear) garden. Remaining original features from this design are the outer decomposed gravel path along the garage and back of the lot, brick terraces, wood benches, a stone urn (antique that appears to be an original feature) and a galvanized metal arbor with a Cecile Bruner climbing rose.

**ATTACHMENT A**

**RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PASADENA  
ADOPTING A DECLARATION OF HISTORIC MONUMENT DESIGNATION  
FOR 494 BRADFORD STREET, PASADENA, CALIFORNIA**

WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission has found that 494 Bradford Street meets criterion "c", as set forth in Section 17.62.040(A) of the Pasadena Municipal Code; and

WHEREAS, the single-family residence, garage and garden at 494 Bradford are significant because the property is an exceptional representation of the collaborative work of architect, Roland Coate, and landscape architect, Florence Yoch;

WHEREAS, the owners of the property, Dana and Jim Hartfield, nominated the property for historic monument designation; and

WHEREAS, the City Council may approve a recommendation from the Historic Preservation Commission to designate a historic monument and evidence such approval by adopting a declaration executed by the Mayor pursuant to Subsection 17.62.050 (C) of the Pasadena Municipal Code;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Pasadena that the attached declaration of historic monument designation for 494 Bradford Street is hereby adopted.

Adopted at the \_\_\_\_\_ meeting of the City Council on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2005 by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

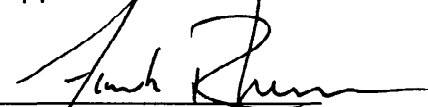
ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

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Jane Rodriguez, City Clerk

Approved as to form:



Frank L. Rhemrev  
Assistant City Attorney



**ATTACHMENT B**

Michele Beal Bagneris, City Attorney

**DECLARATION OF HISTORIC MONUMENT DESIGNATION FOR:**

**494 BRADFORD STREET  
PASADENA, CALIFORNIA**

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 17.62.070 of the Pasadena Municipal Code, the City Council of the City of Pasadena by this declaration hereby designates as a historic monument certain real property described as:

**As per Maps Records of Los Angeles County, H J HOLMES  
SUBDIVISION WEST 95 FT MEASURED ON NORTH AND  
SOUTH LINES OF LOT 26**

Under Pasadena Municipal Code Section 17.62.090, all work affecting designated historic monuments, except ordinary maintenance and repair, such as but not limited to new construction and additions, exterior alterations, relocation, and demolition, is subject to review by the City of Pasadena Historic Preservation Commission.

DATED: \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

CITY OF PASADENA  
A municipal corporation

Jane Rodriguez, City Clerk

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Bill Bogaard, Mayor

**ATTACHMENT C**

