

Agenda Report

TO: CITY COUNCIL **DATE:** OCTOBER 24, 2005
FROM: CITY MANAGER
SUBJECT: DESIGNATION OF 1453 E. CALIFORNIA BOULEVARD AS A
LANDMARK

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: Actions by regulatory agencies for protection of the environment);
2. As recommended by the Historic Preservation Commission, find that the property at 1453 E. California Boulevard is significant under Criterion c for designation as a landmark (P.M.C. §17.62.40) because it is an architecturally intact and outstanding local example of early twentieth-century Monterey and Spanish Colonial Revival design by architect Wallace Neff.
3. Adopt a resolution designating 1453 E. California Boulevard as a landmark;
4. Authorize the Mayor to execute the Declaration of Landmark Designation; and
5. Direct the City Clerk to record the Declaration with the Los Angeles County Recorder.

RECOMMENDATION FROM THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

On September 19, 2005, at a noticed public hearing, the Historic Preservation Commission voted unanimously to recommend approval of the designation of 1453 E. California Boulevard as a landmark.

BACKGROUND

On August 3, 2005, the property owners, Kerry and Karen Vahala, submitted an application to nominate their house for designation as a landmark. The house was constructed in 1923. Staff evaluated the property according to the landmark

criteria in Title 17 of the Pasadena Municipal Code and determined that the complex qualifies for landmark designation.

ANALYSIS

The property is eligible for designation under Criterion "c", which states:

(The property) embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, architectural style or method of construction, and represents the work of an architect, designer, engineer, or builder whose work is of significance to the City or to the region, or possesses artistic values that are of significance to the City or to the region.

The house at 1453 E. California Boulevard is associated with the historic context of Period Revival architecture in Pasadena between 1915 and 1942.

The house is an exceptional local example of eclectic period revival architecture, incorporating elements of Monterey and Spanish Colonial Revival styles. It retains a high level of architectural integrity in all aspects: location, design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling, and association. It was included in the 2004 Period Revival historic resource survey project and evaluated as a contributor to a historic district that is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Additional information on the property is attached.

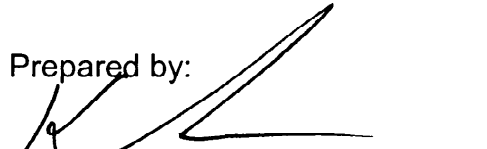
FISCAL IMPACT

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.

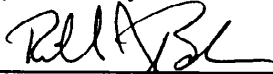
Respectfully submitted,


CYNTHIA KURTZ, City Manager

Prepared by:


Kevin Johnson, Assistant Planner

Approved by:



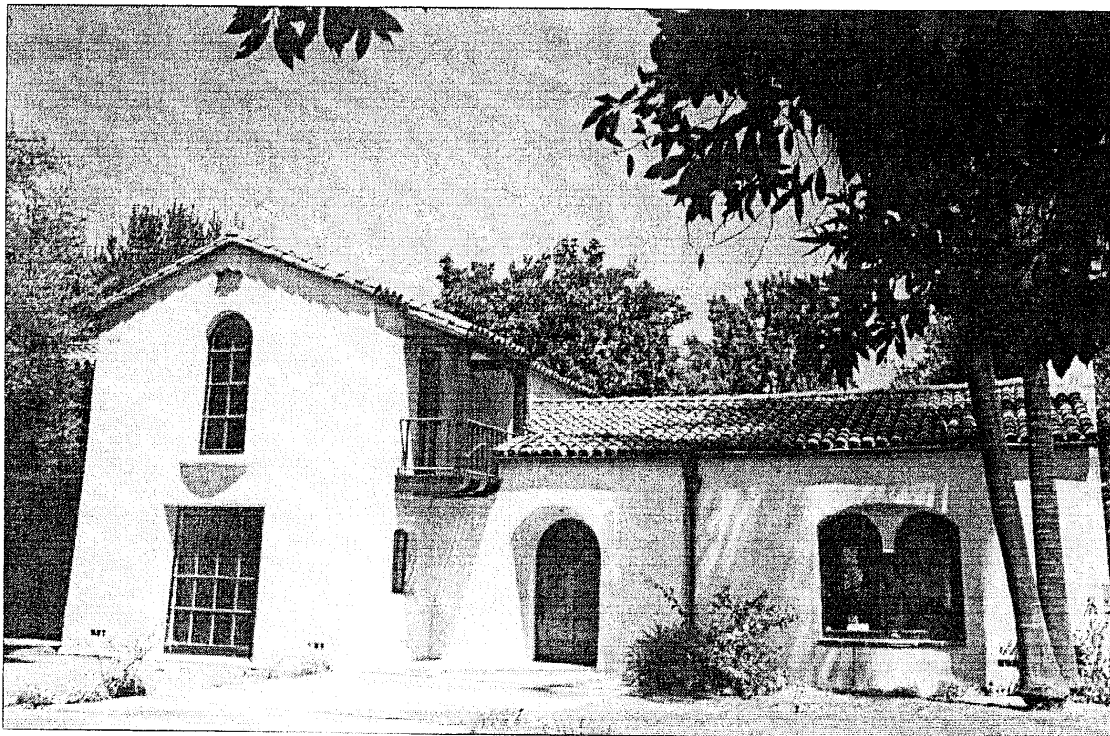
Richard Bruckner, Director of Planning & Development

ATTACHMENT A: Photographs

ATTACHMENT B: Description of resource & architect

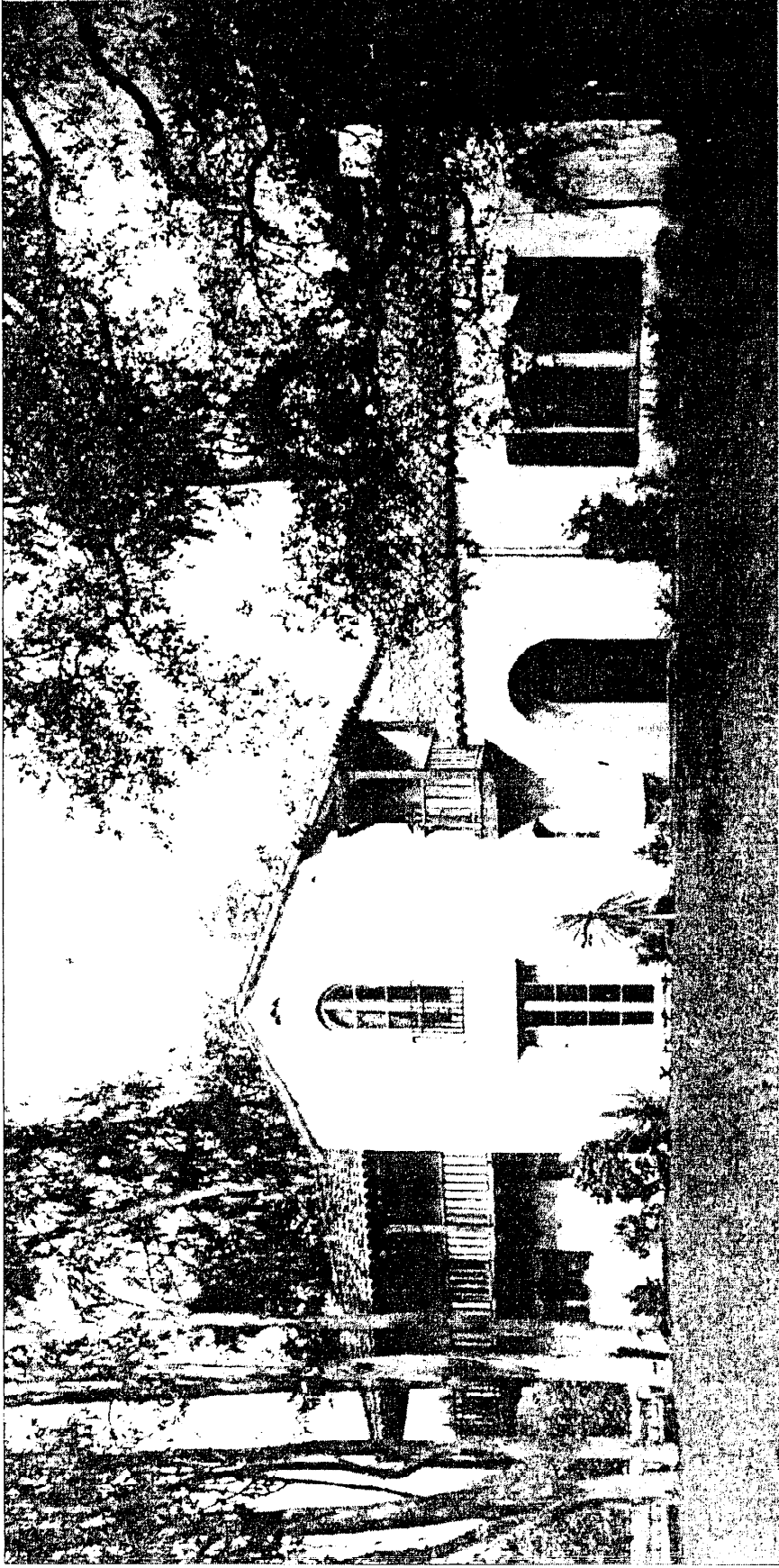
ATTACHMENT A

1453 E. CALIFORNIA BOULEVARD



Front elevation – eastern side

1453 E. CALIFORNIA BOULEVARD



Historic photo (date unknown) taken by George D. Haight from Wallace Neff: Architect of California's Golden Age

ATTACHMENT B

Attachment B

Description

The one- and two-story house is sited on an interior lot on the north side of E. California Boulevard just east of Hill Avenue and is largely shielded from view by landscaping along California Boulevard. The entire roof of the house is clad in terra-cotta barrel tiles and all windows are recessed and have divided lights. The exterior of the house is coated with smooth-troweled stucco, restored to its original finish, which was discovered when layers of paint were removed during restoration.

The house embodies two Period Revival styles: the two-story portion is Monterey Colonial in style and the one-story portion is Spanish Colonial Revival in style. The westerly two-story portion of the house has a hipped roof with a wrap-around cantilevered wood balcony covered by the main roof and with shaped wood supports beneath. A smaller version of this balcony is seen on the opposite side of the front-facing gable, giving the illusion that the balcony continues through the interior of the house. Within the balcony are three rectangular fixed windows and a matching door and below the balcony are two arched casement windows with wooden shutters.

The two-story front-facing gable and easterly one-story portion of the house are designed in the Spanish Colonial Revival Style with a cross-gabled roof. The front-facing gable contains a small decorative tile vent and two major windows, one square (with wood shutters that have been removed for repair and will be replaced) and the other arched with a rounded sill and an iron grate (also being repaired and to be reinstalled). The one-story portion of the house includes an arched recessed entry area with a carved-wood front door having a small circular window near the top and a recessed window opening with a pair of arched casement windows. This window opening originally had wooden shutters which were removed by a previous owner. The chimney at the eastern end of the roof is topped with decorative terra-cotta.

Architect

Wallace Neff, a practitioner of what is known as the "California regional school," is noted as one of Southern California's most influential eclectic architects. "Most of his best-known buildings were inspired by Mediterranean architecture"¹ although he was proficient in many other period revival styles. Neff was born in La Mirada, California into a wealthy family whose patriarch (Neff's maternal grandfather) was Andrew McNally, founder of Rand McNally and Company. Neff studied architecture in Germany and at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology under Ralph Adams Cram and was greatly influenced by extensive travels in Europe at a young age. Before opening his own practice in Pasadena in 1922, he worked in a shipyard during World War I and, after the war, as an

¹ Grimes, Teresa and Winder, Mary Jo: *Residential Period Revival Architecture and Development in Pasadena from 1915-1942*, 2004.

apprentice designer and draftsman in the offices of the Frank Meline Company and architect George Washington Smith. At the height of his popularity, he designed houses for many Hollywood stars, movie producers and wealthy businessmen. His designs were described in architectural magazines as “delightful,” “playful” and “theatric.” Later in his career, after a failed attempt at designing mobile homes, Neff would create a type of construction called “Airform Construction” or “Bubble Housing” which featured large domelike structures. The idea grew from the need for low-cost “fire- and bomb-resistant housing for defense workers and war-evacuated populations.”²

Other houses in Pasadena that were designed by Neff include the Wilbur Collins Residence (1927) at 1522 Lombardy Road, the George O. Noble Residence (1927) at 675 Burleigh Drive and the Charles H. Thorne Residence (1928) at 114 Los Altos Drive.

² Belloli, Andrea ed., Wallace Neff 1895-1982, c.1989

RESOLUTION NO. _____

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PASADENA
ADOPTING A DECLARATION OF LANDMARK DESIGNATION FOR 1453 E.
CALIFORNIA BOULEVARD, PASADENA, CALIFORNIA**

WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission has found that 1453 E. California Boulevard meets criterion c, as set forth in Section 17.62.040 of the Pasadena Municipal Code; and

WHEREAS, the single family residence at 1453 E. California Boulevard is significant because it embodies the distinctive characteristics of the period revival single family residential property type as presented in its incorporation of Monterey and Spanish Colonial Revival styles and because it is an important representation of the work of Wallace Neff;

WHEREAS, the designation of the property was submitted by owners, Kerry and Karen Vahala; and

WHEREAS, the City Council may approve a recommendation from the Historic Preservation Commission to designate a landmark 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 landmark designation for 1453 E. California Boulevard is hereby adopted.

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

AYES:

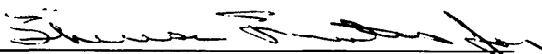
NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

Jane Rodriguez, City Clerk

Approved as to form:



Michele Beal Bagneris, City Attorney

DECLARATION OF LANDMARK DESIGNATION FOR:

1453 E. California Boulevard
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 landmark certain real property described as:

(See attached legal description)

Under Pasadena Municipal Code Section 17.62.090, all work affecting designated landmarks, 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 or Planning Director.

DATED: _____

ATTEST:

CITY OF PASADENA
A municipal corporation

Jane Rodriguez, City Clerk

By: _____
Bill Bogaard, Mayor

EXHIBIT "A"

That portion of The Rancho San Pasqual, in the City of Pasadena, County of Los Angeles, State of California Parcel 1 as shown on Portion of Ranchos San Pasqual and Santa Anita as per map recorded in Book 39, Page 85 of Miscellaneous Records in the Office of the County Recorder of said County, described as follows:

BEGINNING at a point on the north line of California Boulevard (75 feet wide) distant 234.00 feet east of the east line of Hill Avenue (72 feet wide);

Thence North 90°00'00" East along said north line of California Boulevard, 86.90 feet;

Thence North 00°00'00" East along a line parallel with said east line of Hill Street, 262.50 feet;

Thence South 90°00'00" West along a line parallel with said north line of California Boulevard, 86.90 feet;

Thence South 00°00'00" West along a line parallel with said east line of Hill Street, 262.50 feet to the **POINT OF BEGINNING**.

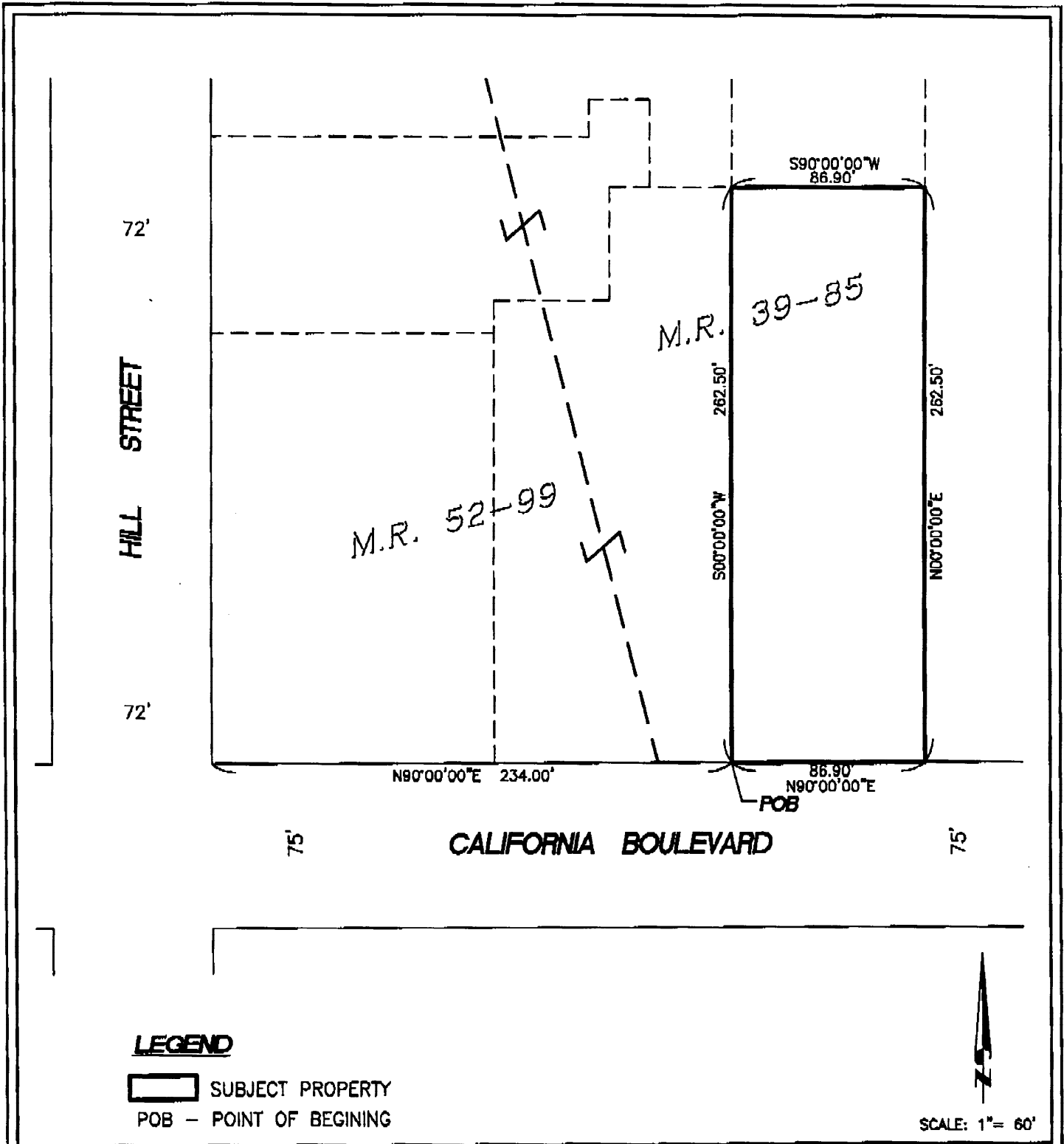
All as shown on Exhibit "B" attached herewith and made a part hereof.

The above described parcel of land contains approximately 22,811 square feet (0.524 acres), more or less.

This real property description has been prepared by me, or under my direction, in conformance with the Professional Land Surveyors Act.

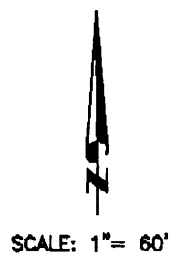
Barry C. Henry P.L.S. 6793
Expires: 09/30/06

Date:



LEGEND

- SUBJECT PROPERTY
- POB - POINT OF BEGINING



DAVID EVANS AND ASSOCIATES INC.
 300 North Haven Avenue, Suite 300
 Ontario California 91764
 Phone: 909.4615750

EXHIBIT 'A'
 BOUNDARY
 PLAT

CITY OF PASADENA
 1453 E. CALIFORNIA BOULEVARD

CLIENT : CITY OF PASADENA

SHEET NO.	1 of 1
JOB NO.	PDAX0067
DRAWN BY:	AAP
DATE:	10-18-05
SCALE:	1" = 60'