

Agenda Report

TO: CITY COUNCIL

DATE: APRIL 3, 2006

FROM: CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: DESIGNATION OF 220 N. SAN RAFAEL AVENUE AS A
HISTORIC MONUMENT

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 220 N. San Rafael Avenue is significant under Criterion "a" for its association with events from 1926 to 1974 in the scientific community that were major contributions world-wide in the field of seismology, especially those contributions of Charles F. Richter, Beno Gutenberg and Hugo Benioff.
3. Approve the designation of the property at 220 N. San Rafael Avenue as a historic monument.
4. Adopt a resolution approving a Declaration of Historic Monument Designation for 220 N. San Rafael Avenue, Pasadena, California;
5. Authorize the Mayor to execute the Declaration of Historic Monument Designation for 220 N. San Rafael Avenue, Pasadena, California; and
6. Direct the City Clerk to record the declaration with the Los Angeles County Recorder.

RECOMMENDATION FROM THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

On February 6, 2006, at a noticed public hearing, the Historic Preservation Commission voted unanimously to recommend approval of the designation of 220 N. San Rafael Avenue as a historic monument.

BACKGROUND

On November 29, 2005, Pasadena Heritage submitted the application for designation of 220 North San Rafael Avenue as a historic monument. Because of the property's integrity and its probable national importance for its association

with the study of seismology under criterion “a”, this staff report provides evidence to justify the designation at the City’s highest possible level as a historic monument. As is presented in the application, staff recognizes that the property is significant under criterion “b” for its association with Charles F. Richter and criterion “c” as the work of a significant architect, Reginald Johnson. Under the guidelines provided by the National Park Service for designating historic resources, however, the staff has determined that the property’s importance is best substantiated—at the level of a historic monument—under criterion “a.”

DESCRIPTION

The nearly three-acre parcel is a heavily wooded lot with four contributing buildings and structures that include a 5,922 square foot seismological laboratory, garage, driveway gate and auxiliary building (above the lab on Los Altos Drive). The facility is located in a hillside area on the west side of the Arroyo Seco in a residential neighborhood with large homes on large wooded lots. The contributing buildings and structures are described with their character-defining features in Attachment B.

ANALYSIS

The property is eligible for designation under historic monument Criterion “a”, which states:

(The property) is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of the history of the region, State, or nation.

The Seismological Laboratory at 220 North San Rafael Avenue is the site of significant activities in the area of the history of science during the period of significance (1926-1974). Under the auspices of Caltech its role in the field of seismology is unparalleled. The achievements of the scientists associated with the laboratory during the period have made a major impact worldwide on what we know of local earthquakes. See Attachment B for information on the history of the seismological laboratory.

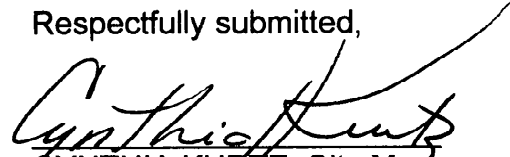
In addition, the property is significant as a unique accomplishment of a major architect, Reginald Johnson, whose residential designs¹ remain in this and many other areas of the City and Southern California. Noted for residential architecture reflecting Spanish Colonial architecture, the laboratory building demonstrates Johnson’s ability to apply this genre to a non-residential structure with highly specialized requirements and making this structure fit into its residential environment.

¹ In the recent report by Teresa Grimes and Mary Jo Winder, *Residential Period Revival Architecture and Development in Pasadena from 1915-1942*, fifty-two houses by Reginald Johnson were identified as significant historic resources.

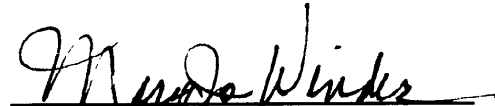
FISCAL IMPACT

Designation of this property does not affect revenues to the City.

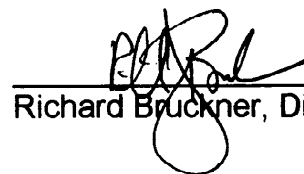
Respectfully submitted,


CYNTHIA KURTZ, City Manager

Prepared by:


Mary Jo Wilder, Senior Planner

Approved by:


Richard Bruckner, Director of Planning & Development

ATTACHMENT A: Description/History
ATTACHMENT B: Photographs
ATTACHMENT C: TPA form

RESOLUTION NO. _____

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PASADENA
ADOPTING A DECLARATION OF HISTORIC MONUMENT DESIGNATION
FOR 220 N. SAN RAFAEL AVENUE, PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission has found that 220 N. San Rafael meets criterion a, as set forth in Section 17.62.040(A) of the Pasadena Municipal Code; and

WHEREAS, the property at 220 N. San Rafael Avenue is significant because the property is the site of events from 1926 to 1974 in the scientific community that were major contributions world-wide in the field of seismology, especially those contributions of Charles F. Richter, Beno Gutenberg and Hugo Benioff.;

WHEREAS, Pasadena Heritage 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 220 N. San Rafael Avenue is hereby adopted.

Adopted at the _____ meeting of the City Council on the _____ day of _____, 2006 by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

Jane Rodriguez, City Clerk

Approved as to form:



Michele Beal Bagneris, City Attorney

DECLARATION OF HISTORIC MONUMENT DESIGNATION FOR:

**220 N. SAN RAFAEL AVENUE
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:

(See attached legal description)

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

EXHIBIT "A"
220 N. SAN RAFAEL AVENUE

That portion of Lot 1 of Tract No. 4116, in the City of Pasadena, County of Los Angeles, State of California, as per map recorded in Book 44, Pages 4 and 5 of Maps, in the Office of the County Recorder of said County, described as follow:

Beginning at the most Westerly corner of said Lot 1;

Thence along the Westerly line of said Lot 1, North 3°50'45" East, 513.60 feet to the Northwest corner of said Lot 1;

Thence along the most Northerly line of said Lot 1, South 89°48'55" East, 252.20 feet;

Thence South 2°52'50" West, 122.17 feet;

Thence South 7°05'00" West, 308.19 feet;

Thence South 5°09'00" East, 21.50 feet;

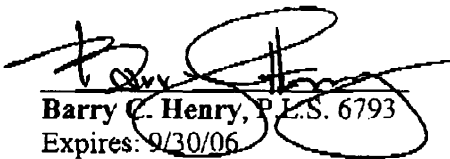
Thence South 53°32'30" West, 185.54 feet to the Westerly line of said Lot 1, said point being also the beginning of a non tangent curve concave southwesterly having a radius of 140.00 feet, a radial to said point bears North 49°02'25" East;

Thence northwesterly along said curve, 110.00 feet through a central angle of 45°01'05" to the **Point of Beginning**.

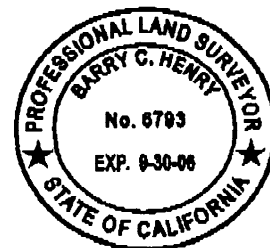
All as shown on Exhibit "B" attached herewith and made a part hereof.

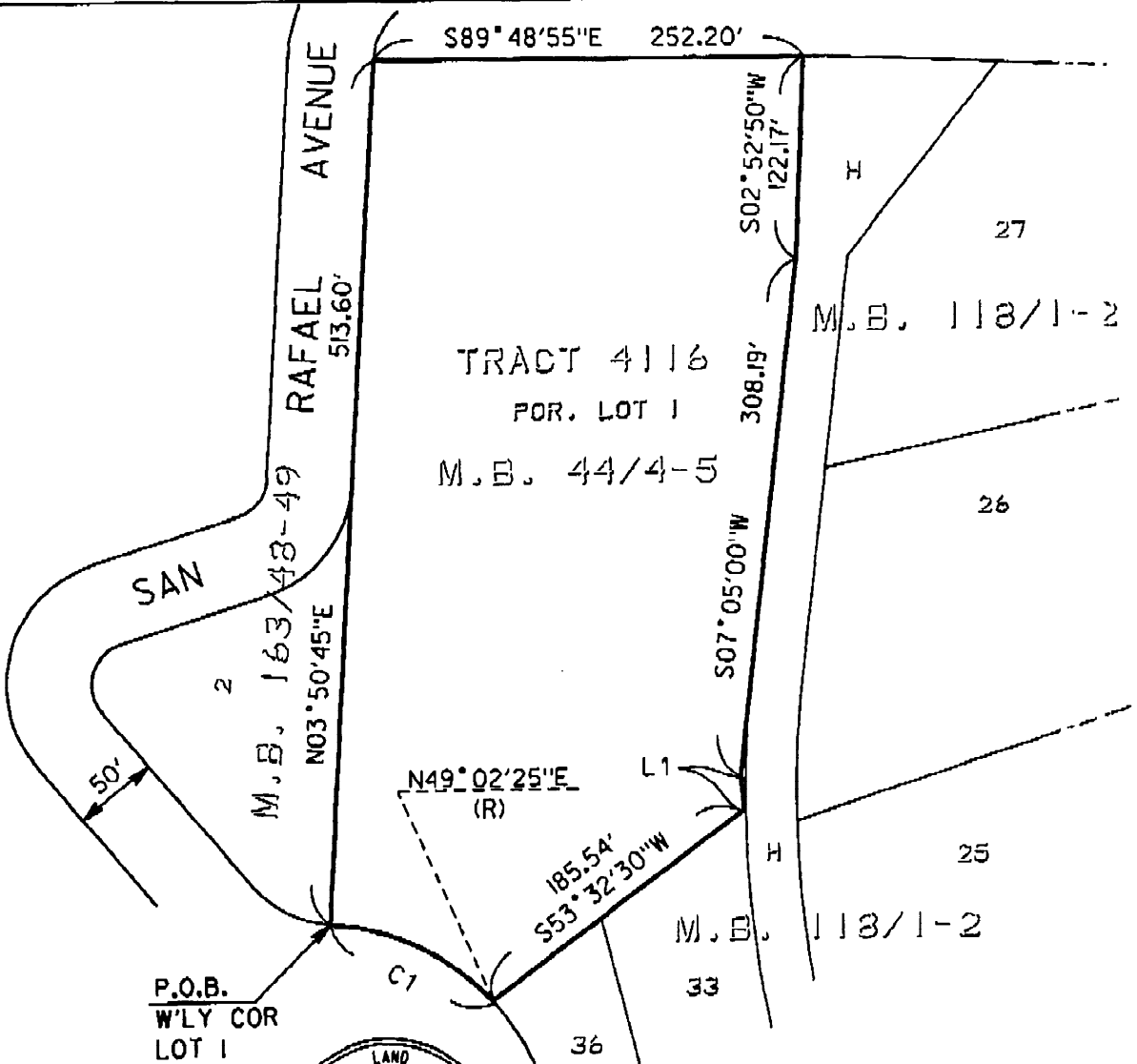
The above described parcel contains 126,789 square feet (2.91 acres) more or less.

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

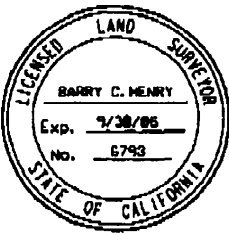

Barry C. Henry, P.L.S. 6793
Expires: 9/30/06

Date: 3/20/06





P.O.B.
W'LY COR
LOT 1




LINE DATA		
LINE	BEARING	DISTANCE
L1	S05°09'00"E	21.50'

LEGEND

- LIMITS OF PROPERTY
- P.O.B. POINT OF BEGINNING
- (R) RADIAL
- AREA= 126,789 S.F.

LINE DATA			
LINE	Δ	RADIUS	LENGTH
C1	45°01'05"	140.00'	110.00'

P:\P\909481575\B5081722\06080106.dwg



**DAVID EVANS
AND ASSOCIATES INC**
800 North Haven Avenue, Suite 300
Pasadena California 91764
Phone: 909-481-5750

**EXHIBIT
"B"**

220 N. SAN
RAFAEL AVENUE
APN: 5708-024-0H

IN THE CITY OF PASADENA
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

DATE	1/16/06
BY	...
SCALE	1"=100'

ATTACHMENT A

EXHIBIT 1 DESCRIPTION OF BUILDINGS – 220 N. SAN RAFAEL AVENUE

Laboratory Building – The primary building of the laboratory facility is a west-facing, two-story, three bay, board-formed poured-in-place concrete structure with a tile-clad side gable roof. Its first floor is built into the hillside; the second floor is the main floor that is accessed by a flight of stairs to the building's entry. Fenestration is deeply recessed in the thick concrete walls; most windows are paired triple-light casements with wood-slat shutters. A projecting left bay has a centered window opening on the top floor and smaller off-set right opening on the bottom. The middle bay on the top floor has a doorway flanked by window openings and an additional window to the right; on the lower floor three smaller window opening are under the staircase. The right bay has four-light French doors with shutters that open on to a knee-braced wood-railed balcony on the top floor and a double-wide opening with flush metal doors below. Ornament is limited to decorative tiles around the entry and a simple molded cornice at the roof eave. Alterations on the front elevation include the replacement of wood steps, porch deck, railings (at entry and balcony), and front door, and the addition of the double door opening and steps on the right bay. Ornament on north and south elevations is limited to square-patterned vents in the gable walls and metal grid window screens (south only). The north elevation has a small addition with a tiled shed roof and an arched opening that has the original heavy wood door. Two concrete tunnels that are not visible from the exterior but are significant to the building extend into the hillside at the lower floor.

Garage – This single-story structure, reinforced concrete section has a south-facing front with a low-pitched tiled gable roof and a wood-framed stucco section with a tiled shed roof attached to the east. The garage section has been infilled (used as a machine shop since 1949²) with a stucco wall with wide double doors and a small window with an air-conditioner. The east section, which appears as a dwelling unit on a period Sanborn map, has windows with shutters that match those on the main building and a stucco chimney with a triangular hood.

Gateway – A curved asphalt approach drive with concrete curbing leads to the entry gates off of San Rafael Avenue. The driveway is flanked by a pair of square capped reinforced concrete piers with sloped walls connecting to slightly shorter and narrower piers. The two-leaf gate is cast iron. A recessed panel on the left main pier is where a plaque reading, "Kresge Seismological Laboratory, California Institute of Technology," was once attached (removed circa 2004).

Auxiliary Building – This small building is sited higher on the slope to the east behind the laboratory. Its construction is stucco clad frame with a tile clad gable roof. It is accessed by a single door on the south elevation and has one small window on the west elevation.

² Comment by Dr. Clarence Allen who arrived as a graduate student in 1949 (2/1/2006).

EXHIBIT 2 HISTORY OF 220 N. SAN RAFAEL AVENUE

On August 4, 1925, a Pasadena Star-News announced the beginning of excavation for the "seismological hall" and the approval by the Board of Directors to construct the new facility in a residential zone in the San Rafael Hills. The article noted the importance of the development for its expected contribution as "one of the foremost scientific institutions in the country devoted to the study of earthquakes and their causes." It also cited the cost, \$40,000, and the architect, Reginald D. Johnson (1882-1952).

Established in 1921 under the auspices of the Carnegie Institution of Washington and scientist, Harry Wood (1879-1958), the seismological laboratory began its association with the new geology department at the California Institute of Technology in 1926³. By that time Wood and John Anderson (1876-1959) had already developed the Wood-Anderson torsion seismometer that became the standard for earthquake recording. In 1926, the seismological program included the installation of a network of seismographs around Southern California. The following year, Charles Richter (1900-1985) joined the laboratory staff and in 1930 Beno Gutenberg (1889-1960), a renowned German geophysicist, was recruited and later became the first director of the new laboratory. Richter and Gutenberg's collaboration led to several important studies, the most well-known is the magnitude scale that Richter developed in the early 1930s which was expanded by Gutenberg. By the early 30s, the two scientists had elevated seismology into an international science of earthquake study and detection. By then other prominent colleagues had either started with or joined Gutenberg and Richter at the new facility, among them, Hugo Benioff, John Bewalda, Harry Reid and Harold Jeffreys, Father Macelwane, and Perry Byerly. These scientists led the Seismological Laboratory to worldwide prominence in the study of local earthquakes and the use of teleseismic recordings to study the Earth's deep interior.⁴

In 1937, the entire function of the seismological laboratory in Pasadena was transferred to Caltech by the Carnegie Institution. Harry Wood was the first director of the laboratory with his directorship lasting through the beginning years until 1946. Beno Gutenberg was the director from 1946 to 1957; Frank Press headed the facility from 1957 to 1965; Don Lynn Anderson followed and was director when the primary facility for the Seismological Laboratory was moved in 1974 from San Rafael Avenue to the new South Mudd Hall on campus.

Under Gutenberg's directorship in the 1950s, following a major financial contribution by the Kresge Foundation to Caltech, the lab was renamed the

³ The establishment of the Southern California Seismological Laboratory was superseded by the Berkeley Seismological Laboratory founded in 1887.

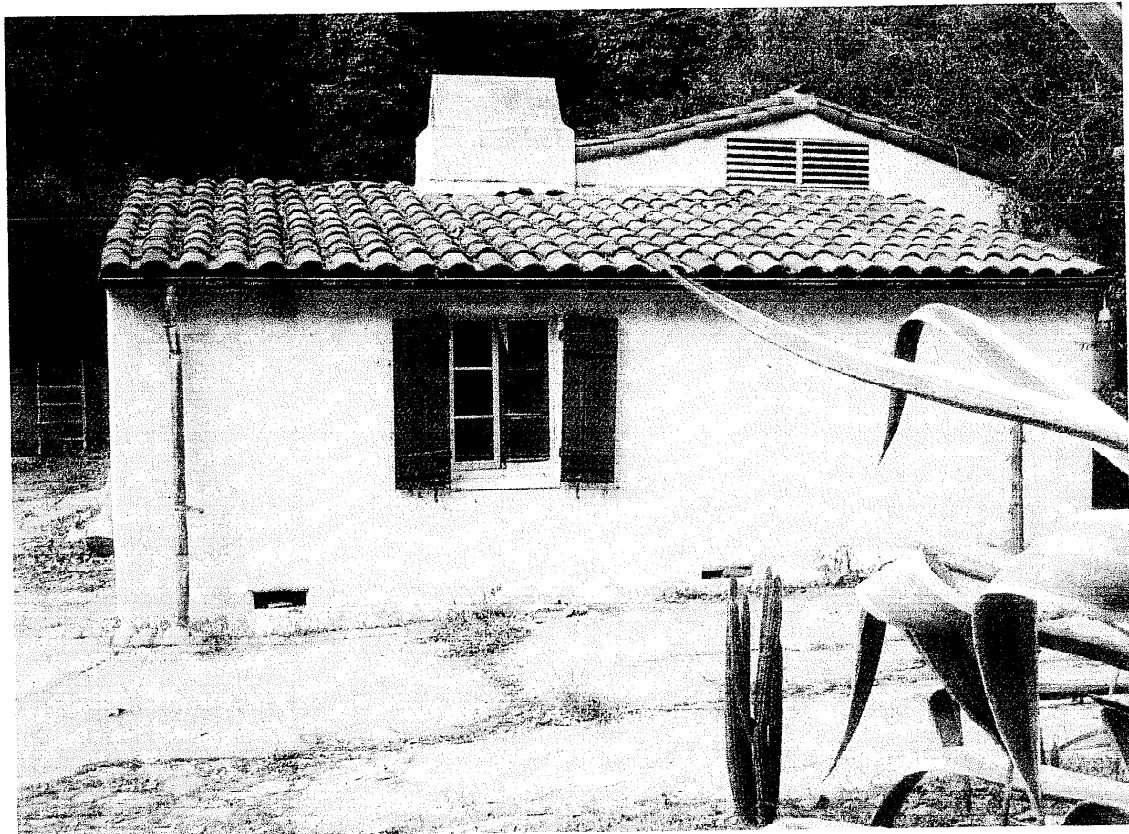
⁴ Caltech Website <http://www.gps.caltech.edu/seismo/history.html> (1/18/2006).

Kresge Seismological Laboratory. About the same time, another contribution allowed the institution to expand to a large residential building across the road at 295 San Rafael⁵. Adapted to offices and lab facilities, the building was called the Donnelly Laboratory. The property at 220 N. San Rafael continued to be the center of major contributions in the seismological sciences through the early 1970s. From its construction in 1926 to its transfer to the Caltech campus in 1974 the Seismological Laboratory was nationally the prime center for major achievements in the study and measurement of Earth's seismic events.

⁵ This house is now privately owned and used as a residence. It is not a part of this designation.

ATTACHMENT B

220 N San Rafael



220 N. San Rafael



ATTACHMENT C



Disclosure Pursuant to the City of Pasadena Taxpayer Protection Amendment of 2000 Pasadena City Charter, Article XVII

- I. The value of this application has the potential to / [checked] does not have the potential to exceed \$25,000. [Applicant must check one blank.]
II. Applicant hereby discloses its trustees, directors, partners, officers, and those with more than a 10% equity, participation, or revenue interest in Applicant, as follows:

Table with columns for names and details. Applicant Name: Pasadena Heritage (Christine Raggareta). Trustees, directors, partners, officers of Applicant: (use additional sheets as necessary) 2006 Board of Directors! Neil Barker, Bob Riffer, Steven Brooks, Hunt Salembier, John Cate, Michael Schneickert, Shauna Clark, Joyce Hwett Turner, Shirley Curren, Carolyn Wilson, Tim Evans, Lambert Giessinger, Michael Harris, Tina Hart, Jordan Hayes, Brad King, Wendy Lees, Kelly Sutherland-McLend, Russell Replode. Those with more than a 10% equity, participation or revenue interest in Applicant: (use additional sheets as necessary)

For office use only
Application No. PLN 2005-00612