

Agenda Report

TO: CITY COUNCIL

DATE: FEBRUARY 26, 2007

FROM: CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: DESIGNATION OF 745 EAST RIO GRANDE STREET 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 under Class 8, Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment (CEQA Guidelines, Article 19, §15308);
2. As recommended by the Historic Preservation Commission, find that the house at 745 East Rio Grande Street is significant under Criterion c for designation as a landmark (P.M.C. §17.62.40 B) because it is architecturally intact and an excellent local example of a pre-cut ("kit house") Colonial Revival bungalow that was eventually marketed nationally as the "Pasadena" model by the Aladdin Company of Michigan.
3. Approve the designation of the property at 745 East Rio Grande Street as a landmark.
4. Recommend that as part of the designation, the original front doors be restored to strengthen the historic integrity of the house.
5. Adopt the attached resolution approving a Declaration of Landmark Designation for 745 East Rio Grande Street, Pasadena, California;
6. Authorize the Mayor to execute the attached Declaration of Landmark Designation for 745 East Rio Grande Street, Pasadena, California; and
7. Direct the City Clerk to record the declaration with the Los Angeles County Recorder.

RECOMMENDATION FROM THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

On December 18, 2006, at a noticed public hearing, the Historic Preservation Commission voted unanimously to recommend approval of the designation of 745 East Rio Grande Street as a landmark.

BACKGROUND

Property owner, Joe Libonati, submitted the application for designation of 745 East Rio Grande Street. Because of the property's integrity and its importance as an intact representation of a precut bungalow that was eventually marketed nationally as the "Pasadena" model by the Aladdin Company of Michigan, the staff and the Historic Preservation Commission have concurred that the property should be designated as a landmark.

DESCRIPTION

Built in 1916, the one-story house is on East Rio Grande Street between North El Molino Street and North Lake Avenue. The surrounding neighborhood consists primarily of single-family homes and a few duplexes from the early 1900's to the 1920's. Of the twenty-two houses on this block face, twenty were built between 1901 and 1924, but few retain their original character-defining features. The area is just to the east of the Normandie Heights Landmark District.

The approximately 1,200 square-foot house on a 8,220 square foot lot exhibits typical Colonial Revival Cottage features including a one-story, L-shaped plan; a symmetrical three-bay façade with a central, front gabled portico-like entry; horizontal wood siding; multi-light wood casement windows; wood trellises; and a clipped gable roof with side vents. In addition to the residence, the property has an original detached two-car garage and workshop in the same style as the house. This garage (along with the workshop) appears to be intact and is, therefore, contributing to the significance of the property.

ANALYSIS

The property at 745 East Rio Grande Street is eligible for designation under Criterion c, (§17.62.040 PMC) which states:

(The property) embodies 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 city or that possesses high artistic values that are significant to the city.

Under this criterion, 745 East Rio Grande Street is significant as an intact example of precut residential architecture. The house has a high level of architectural integrity (its ability to demonstrate why it is significant) through its design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The house is in its original location and has undergone few significant alterations since its early history.

Precut houses, also referred to as “ready-cut,” “mail-order,” or “kit” houses, became popular in the 1910s. Precut houses differ from the pattern-book houses that offered inexpensive plans for bungalows but didn’t include the potential purchase of building materials.

The material in each kit house was precut and numbered for self-construction. Also included in the bundle were the windows, doors, trim, nails, and paint that completed the kit; precut companies encouraged customization, reversing floor plans, upgrading window styles, switching porches or combining two plans.¹

The source for the house at 745 E. Rio Grande, the Aladdin Company in Bay City, Michigan (1906-1981), was the first manufacturer in the United States to offer precut houses. The Aladdin catalog grew to a point of offering over 450 different models of homes and was advertised in various magazines and newspapers. The names of the houses appealed to the mass market – there was something for everyone – from the generic Colonial, to those that offered the cachet of Villa, Cadillac, and Yale. Many were named after geographic places: Charleston, Georgia, Kentucky, Erie, Devon, Plymouth, and Michigan. California contributions included: Brentwood, Burbank, Pomona, and Pasadena. Others evoked a feeling of beauty like Venus and New Eden.²

Although the model of the house at 745 E. Rio Grande doesn’t appear in the Aladdin Company catalog until 1918, it seems likely that this design, named the “Pasadena,” was in limited release in 1916, when the house was constructed. The “Pasadena” was featured in catalogs in 1918, 1919, 1922, 1923, 1933 and 1935.

The Pasadena – the beautiful. A home of sunshine, flowers, trees and foliage. This remarkable home is Aladdin’s most notable offering to home builders for 1918. Remarkable in design, remarkable in arrangement, and lastly, remarkable in cost of materials. The design is a wonderful result of the work of a careful architect of bungalow homes. It represents the new thought in bungalow architecture. The departure from the rough and blunt lines to the more beautiful and substantial touches is symbolical of one’s desire in a home. California—its sunshine and flowers veiled in a blue sky—is evident in its every line. Setting, as it does, close to the ground, climbing rambles help express the dainty and artistic feeling of this home design.³

Aladdin manufactured homes until 1981, and had sold more than 50,000 homes during the 77 years they were in business.

Along with bigger firms like Sears, Aladdin changed the architectural landscape of twentieth-century American architecture. With their simple styles, they represented the majority of American house built in the first half of the twentieth century and the majority of those lived in throughout the century.⁴

¹ *House in a Box: Prefabricated Housing in the Jackson Purchase Cultural Landscape Region, 1900 – 1960*, Cynthia E. Johnson, February 2006

² Aladdin Sales Catalog, 1918.

³ Ibid.

⁴ *Kit Homes*, Fred J. Becker Architecture Newsletter, May 2000.

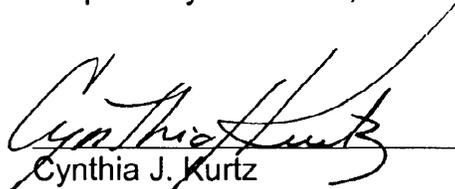
Other principal precut manufactures include: Sears, Roebuck and Company, Wardway Homes (Montgomery Ward), Gordon-Van Tine, Sterling, and Lewis-Liberty.⁵

Flauntleroy "Bud" Compton (1889-1980) built the house at 745 Rio Grande using "day work" at a cost of \$1,500⁶. Records indicate he lived in the house for 63 years. Compton was a close associate of Ernest Batchelder and the house has installations of Batchelder tiles in the solarium, the kitchen and on the patio. According to the current owner, the tiled fireplace mantel was given to Compton by Batchelder as a wedding gift.

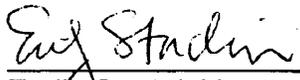
FISCAL IMPACT

Designation of this 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 J. Kurtz
City Manager

Prepared by:


Emily Stadnicki
Planner

Approved by:


Richard J. Bruckner
Director Planning & Development

- ATTACHMENT A: Application & Taxpayer Protection Form
- ATTACHMENT B: Photographs
- ATTACHMENT C: *The Pasadena*, from the Aladdin Sales Catalog

⁵ Johnson.

⁶ City of Pasadena building permit # 7413.

RESOLUTION NO. _____

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PASADENA ADOPTING A DECLARATION OF LANDMARK DESIGNATION FOR 745 EAST RIO GRANDE STREET, PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission has found that 745 East Rio Grande Street meets criterion c, as set forth in Section 17.62.040(A) of the Pasadena Municipal Code; and

WHEREAS, the house at 745 East Rio Grande Street is significant because the property is an architecturally intact and an excellent local example of a pre-cut ("kit house") bungalow that was eventually marketed nationally as the "Pasadena" model by the Aladdin Company of Michigan;

WHEREAS, the application for Landmark designation is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15331;

WHEREAS, the owner of the property, Joseph Libonati, nominated the property for Landmark designation; 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 745 East Rio Grande Street is hereby adopted.

Adopted at the _____ meeting of the City Council on the _____ day of _____, 2007 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:

745 EAST RIO GRANDE 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 Landmark certain real property described as:

(See attached Exhibits "A" & "B")

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.

DATED: _____

ATTEST:

CITY OF PASADENA
A municipal corporation

Jane Rodriguez, City Clerk

By: _____
Bill Bogaard, Mayor

EXHIBIT "A"
745 E. RIO GRANDE STREET

Lot 90 of The Wilson Tract in the City of Pasadena, County of Los Angeles, State of California as per map recorded in Book 6, Page 67 of Maps in the Office of the County Recorder of said County.

A metes and bound legal description for informational purposes is described as follows:

Beginning at the Southwest corner of said Lot 90, said point also being on the North line of Rio Grande Street (30.00 foot half width) as shown on said map;

Thence along the Westerly line of said Lot 90, North 00°04'00" East, 137.00 feet to the Northwest corner of said Lot 90;

Thence along the Northerly line of said Lot 90, South 89°49'00" East, 60.00 feet to the Northeast corner of said Lot 90;

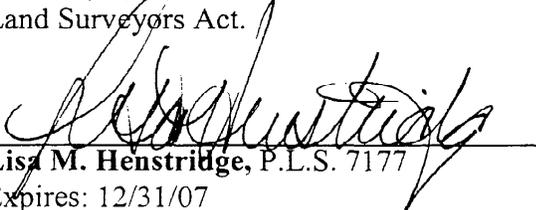
Thence along the Easterly line of said Lot 90, South 00°04'00" West, 137.00 feet to the North line of said Rio Grande Street;

Thence along said North line, North 89°49'00" West, 60.00 feet to the **Point of Beginning**.

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

The above described parcel contains 8,220 square feet (0.189 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.



Lisa M. Henstridge, P.L.S. 7177

Expires: 12/31/07

Date: 1/2/2007



AVE

LADERA ST

50'
25'25"

25'
EL MOLINO

80 79 78 77 76 75 74 73 72 71 70 69 68

WILSON TRACT

81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91

M.B.

6

67

RIO GRANDE ST

30'

P.O.B.
SW COR.
LOT 90



SCALE
1"=100'

LEGEND



INDICATES LIMITS
OF EASEMENT

P.O.B. POINT OF BEGINNING

COR. CORNER

AREA = 8,220 S.F.

LINE TABLE

LINE	DIRECTION	DISTANCE
L1	N00°04'00"E	137.00'
L2	S89°49'00"E	60.00'
L3	S00°04'00"W	137.00'
L4	N89°49'00"W	60.00'



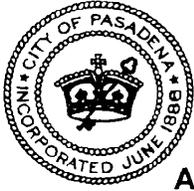
**DAVID EVANS
AND ASSOCIATES INC.**
800 North Haven Avenue, Suite 300
Ontario California 91764
Phone: 909.481.5750

**EXHIBIT
"B"**

745 E. RIO GRANDE ST
APN: 548-022-027

CITY OF PASADENA
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

SHEET NO:	1 OF 1
JOB NO:	PDAX0067
DRAWN BY:	RXSI
DATE:	12/27/06
SCALE:	1"=100'



**CITY OF PASADENA
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

**APPLICATION TO DESIGNATE A HISTORIC RESOURCE AS
A HISTORIC MONUMENT OR LANDMARK**

§17.52.050 of the Pasadena Municipal Code sets forth a procedure for designating any historic resource in the City as a historic monument or landmark. 1) The process begins with a preliminary evaluation by staff to determine if the nominated property meets the applicable criteria and is eligible for designation. 2) If staff determines that the nominated property is eligible for designation, the nomination is scheduled for a public hearing before the Historic Preservation Commission. 3) The Historic Preservation Commission determines if the historic resource meets the criteria for designation as a historic monument or landmark. If the Commission finds that the nominated resource qualifies for designation, it forwards a recommendation on the designation to the City Council. 4) At a noticed public hearing, the Council then determines whether to approve or deny the request for designation.

PART I. PROPERTY PROPOSED FOR DESIGNATION

1. Name of Property:	
2. Property Address:	745 E. Rio Grande Street
3. Date of Original Construction	1916
4. Architect / Builder:	Fauntleroy "Bud" Compton
5. Present Owner: (Name)	Joseph Libonati
(Address)	745 E Rio Grande St
	Pasadena
(State/ZIP)	California 91104
(Phone/FAX)	626 545 2158 818 399 2092
(E-mail)	joe.libonati@nbcuni.com

PART II. APPLICANT

Applicant: (if not property owner)	
(Address)	
(State/ZIP)	
(Phone/FAX)	
(E-mail)	

Date

Signature

PLN 2006-00488

Date received: 9/1/06

Planner: KJ

PART III: TYPE OF DESIGNATION

PROPERTY TO BE DESIGNATED AS A:

HISTORIC MONUMENT <input type="checkbox"/>	LANDMARK <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<i>A historic monument means any historic resource that is significant at a regional, state or national level, and is an exemplary representation of a particular type of historic resource.</i>	<i>A landmark means any historic resource that is significant at a local level, and is an exemplary representation of a particular type of historic resource.</i>

PART IV: BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY

Briefly describe the property proposed for designation, indicating whether the entire site or a portion of the site is the subject of the nomination (e.g., how many buildings on the site). A map may be used for the description. Please also submit recent photographs. Use continuation sheet if necessary.

Refer to continuation sheet, site plan and recent photographs.

See attached.

PART V: SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION ON SIGNIFICANCE OF PROPERTY.

With this application, please attach information that will assist staff with the preparation of a designation report. Books, photographs, articles, and other archival information will all be useful to document the significance of the historic resource.

Refer to bibliography, historical photographs, chronology, and other supporting information.

See attached

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATING A HISTORIC MONUMENT

<input type="checkbox"/>	1. It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of the history of the region, state or nation.
<input type="checkbox"/>	2. It is associated with the lives of persons who are significant in the history of the region, state or nation.
<input type="checkbox"/>	3. It is exceptional in the embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of a historic resource property type, period, architectural style or method of construction, or that 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.
<input type="checkbox"/>	4. It has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history of the region, state or nation.

A historic monument designation may include significant public or semi-public interior spaces and features.

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATING A HISTORIC LANDMARK

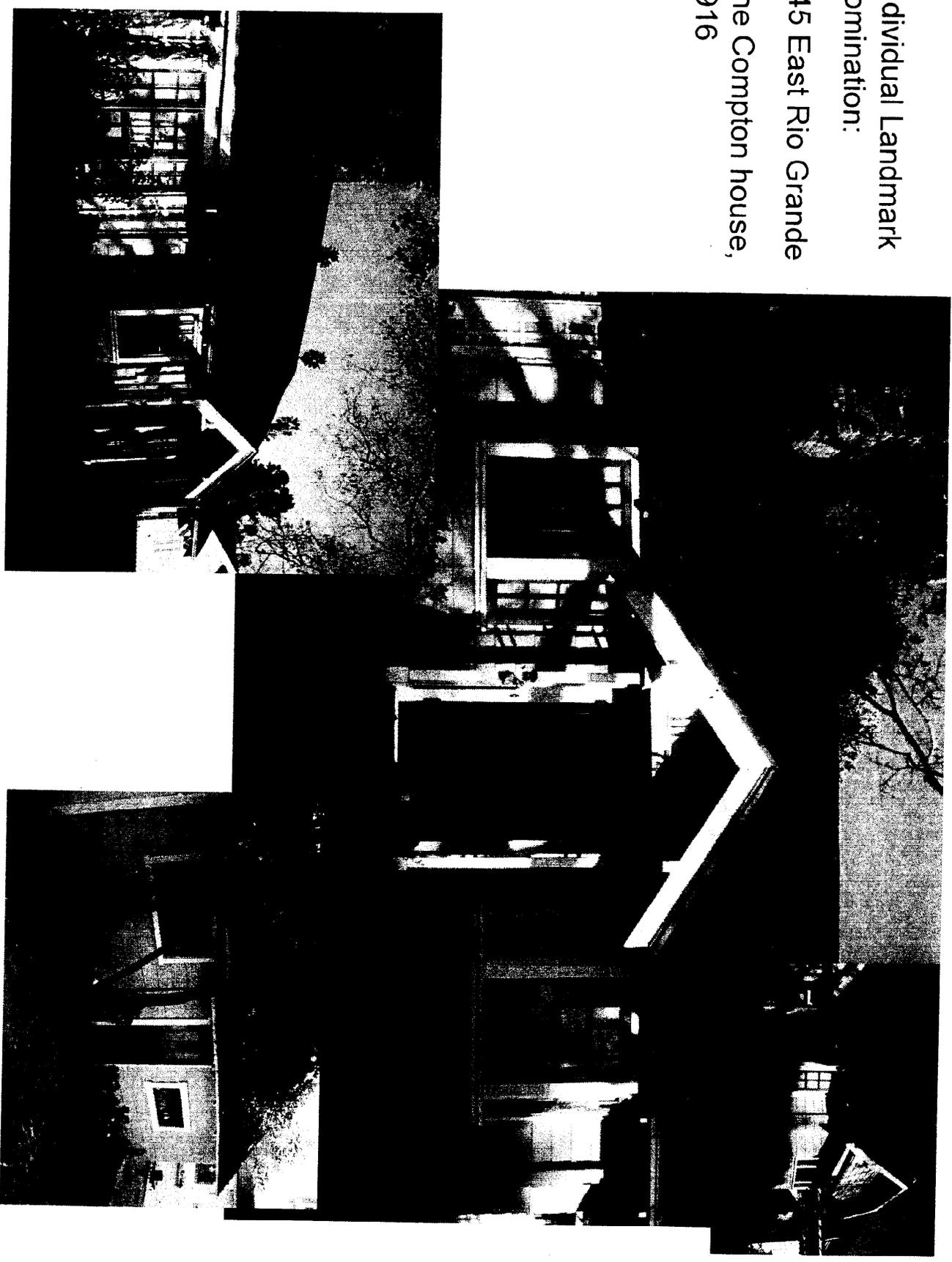
<input type="checkbox"/>	1. It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of the history of the city.
<input type="checkbox"/>	2. It is associated with the lives of persons who are significant in the history of the city.
<input type="checkbox"/>	3. It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a locally significant historic resource property type, architectural style, period, or method of construction, or that represents the work of an architect, designer, engineer, or builder who is locally significant, or that possesses high artistic values that are locally significant.
<input type="checkbox"/>	4. It has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important locally in prehistory or history.

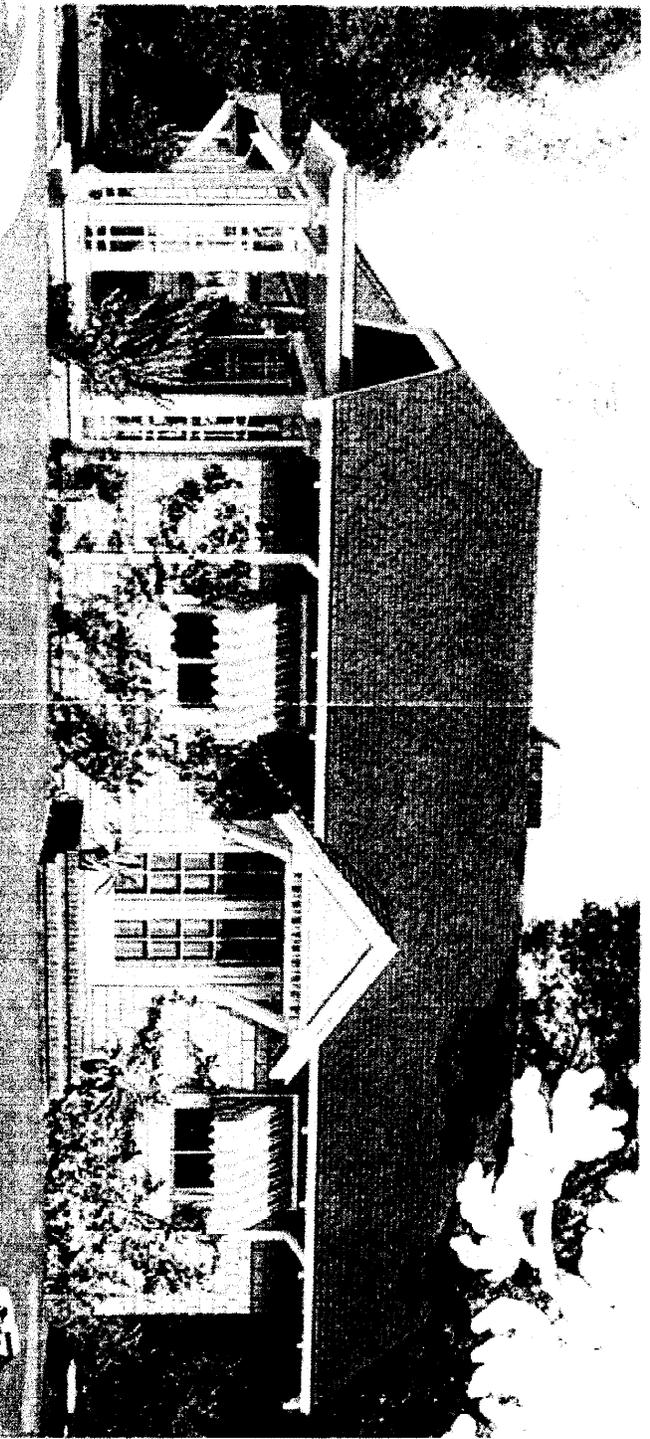
Application for 745 E. Rio Grande St - Libonati

Part IV: The property proposed for Landmark Designation is located at 745 E. Rio Grande Street, between Lake and El Molino, one block north of Washington at the intersection of Rio Grande and Rutan Way. The house was constructed by Fauntleroy "Bud" Compton, who was a close associate of Ernest Batchelder, in 1916. Inside the home is a Batchelder tile fireplace mantel which was given to Mr. Compton by Mr. Batchelder as a wedding gift. The house also contains a solarium which has Batchelder tiles on the floor and walls, kitchen counters, a bathroom and an outside patio, all covered in Batchelder tiles. The garage was a workshop for Mr. Compton and his original work area is preserved in the back, which looks out over the rose garden he originally planted when his children were born. His wife had him fill in their lily pond for fear the children would fall in. Just outside the solarium is a fountain, also covered in Batchelder tile. All of the tile in the house was installed by Mr. Compton. The enclosed photos illustrate the various use of tile in and around the house.

Part V: Dr. Robert Winter is familiar with the house and is planning to publish a book documenting it (publication date to be determined). Mr. Compton was acknowledged in Dr. Winter's book Batchelder: Tilemaker from Balcony Press, 1999.

Individual Landmark
nomination:
745 East Rio Grande
The Compton house,
1916





The Pasadena

See notes on back of front cover.

THE Pasadena—the beautiful. A home of sunshine, flowers, trees and foliage! This compact little home is Aikema's most notable effort and he lends his ideas for 1918. Remarkable in design, remarkable in arrangement, and costly, comparable in cost of materials.

The design is a wonderful result of the work of a careful architect of landscape features. It represents the type thought in bungalow architecture. The departure from the rough and blunt lines to the more beautiful and substantial touches is symptomatic of our's desire in a home.

Construction, its simplicity and details noted in a blue sky, is evident in its every line. Nothing as it does, close to the ground, clinging gardens, deep eaves, the classic and artistic feature of this house.

And the floor arrangement is no less a success. Built about half a dozen that is unusual, but have come in more roomy and spacious, so that seven, accessible to include in a home of these dimensions. The cost of materials for the Pasadena, all materials and ready to erect, is reduced to a minimum. A beautiful system of building, with joints that are artistic in design within the reach of money. For those of it, the Pasadena, open view, when in design of floor cover. And with close, but not in the special corners on pages 12 and 13. See notes on page 2.

