

# Agenda Report

TO: CITY COUNCIL

DATE: March 17, 2008

FROM: CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: DESIGNATION OF 2045 E. MONTE VISTA STREET AS A LANDMARK

## Recommendation

It is recommended that, following a public hearing, 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. Find that the single-family residence at 2045 E. Monte Vista Street is significant under Criterion "C" for designation as a landmark (P.M.C. §17.62.040) because it embodies the characteristics of the Tudor/English Cottage Period Revival architecture of the early twentieth century, and is an exceptional representation of the work of local architect Glenn Elwood Smith;
3. Approve the designation of the property at 2045 E. Monte Vista Street as a landmark;
4. Adopt a resolution approving a Declaration of Landmark Designation for 2045 E. Monte Vista Street, Pasadena, California;
5. Authorize the Mayor to execute the attached Declaration of Landmark Designation for 2045 E. Monte Vista Street, 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 4, 2008, at a noticed public hearing, the Historic Preservation Commission voted unanimously to recommend approval of the designation of 2045 E. Monte Vista Street as a landmark under criterion C of PMC §17.62.040.C.

## **Background**

On November 21, 2007, property owners Yolanda & Leon Brown submitted the application for designation of 2045 E. Monte Vista Street, originally the Ralph J. Horne residence, as a landmark. The Historic Preservation Commission has determined that the property should be designated as a landmark because of its integrity and representation of the distinctive characteristics of a Tudor/English Cottage Period Revival house, and because it is an exceptional representation of the work of local architect Glenn Elwood Smith.

## **Description**

Built in 1927 for Ralph J. Horne, this 1-story, approximately 1,736 square-foot residence, designed by Glenn Elwood Smith, is located on the northwest corner of Monte Vista Street and Oak Avenue. The house is modified C-shaped in plan, partially enclosing a courtyard on the east (Oak Avenue) side of the lot. An attached garage is located at the north end of the "C" facing Oak Avenue, bedrooms and utility rooms at the west side, and kitchen and living room at the south end. Only a small yard remains behind the garage. The front door faces southeast toward the intersection at a roughly 45-degree angle, and opens onto a small yard enclosed by a curved 3-foot brick-capped wall and curved iron gate. The main courtyard is enclosed from the street by a six-foot fence and gate.

The house exhibits many distinguishing features associated with Tudor/English Cottage Period Revival architecture. These features include an asymmetrical plan with irregular massing, a steeply pitched cross-gable roof with short eaves, stucco walls with wood half-timbering, tapestry-brick door surround, brick windowsills, an entry located under a small gable-roof portico, and groupings of tall, narrow casement windows. A portion of the roof over the kitchen is an attached turret with a crenellated parapet. Fenestration is entirely wood and consists of mainly pairs and groupings of six-light casement windows. The house also features French doors and a large multiple-light front window.

There have been some minor alterations to the house. They include the addition of a kitchen bay window and octagonal window to the east side of the house facing Oak Avenue, the rebuild of the top portion of a chimney (not easily seen from the street), and the enclosure with a roof and French doors of a small courtyard-facing patio. Other exterior features which appear to not date to the initial construction include a courtyard-facing kitchen door, a courtyard wall fountain installed adjacent to the garage, and river rock framing of the garage door..

### **Glenn Elwood Smith (1894-1976)**

Glenn Elwood Smith was born in Illinois in 1894 and moved to Pasadena in 1911. After working for the Foss Designing and Building Company, the Herbert A. Ham Structural Engineering company, and Myron Hunt, he began his own practice in Pasadena in 1928. A member of the American Institute of Architects, Smith wrote several articles for publications including California Book Of Homes, the Pictorial Review of the New York

Home Bureau Service, and the Pasadena Star-News, the latter of which published a number of his house plans during the early 1920s. Glenn Elwood Smith was noted for being “adept in designing homes in Spanish, English, Italian, and Moderne styles.”<sup>1</sup> Smith is credited with over thirty notable individual designs for buildings located in Pasadena and elsewhere in southern California, including the Spanish Colonial Revival style Fire Station #6 at 1435 N. Raymond Avenue (1938), the Art Deco style Lamanda Park Masonic Lodge at 25 S. Huntington Drive (1926), and the local landmark Burns E. Eastman building located at 1275 E. Green Street (1926).

## **Analysis**

The property at 2045 E. Monte Vista Street is eligible for designation under Criterion “C”, (§17.62.040 PMC):

(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, 2045 E. Monte Vista Street is significant as an example of Tudor/English Cottage Period Revival architecture, designed by notable local architect Glenn Elwood Smith. The house has a high level of architectural integrity (its ability to demonstrate why it is significant) through its design, materials, and workmanship. The half-timbered gables (particularly the front gable which protrudes two inches on small wood corbels and uses curved wood timbers), brick window sills, large front window, brick front door surround, short front yard wall with brick cap and curved iron gate, and the parapet wall with ramparts, exhibit a detailed attention to design and craftsmanship that is unusual for a house of that size. Alterations to the house are minor. The house exhibits most of the character-defining features of its style, and it retains most of its original materials.

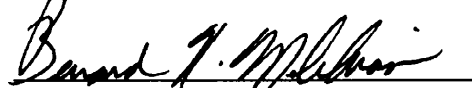
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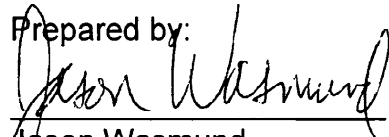
<sup>1</sup> Tim Gregory, *Glenn Elwood Smith, Architect*, 2005 [unpublished report on file with Planning and Development Department]

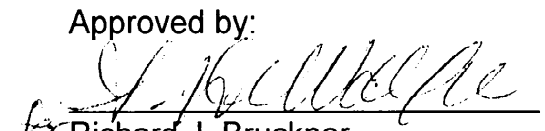
**Fiscal Impact**

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,

  
Bernard K. Melekian  
City Manager

Prepared by:  
  
Jason Wasmund  
Assistant Planner

Approved by:  
  
Richard J. Bruckner  
Director Planning & Development

**ATTACHMENTS**

- A: Application Materials
- B: Current Photographs
- C: Effects of Landmark Designation

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

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PASADENA  
ADOPTING A DECLARATION OF LANDMARK DESIGNATION FOR 2045 E.  
MONTE VISTA STREET, PASADENA, CALIFORNIA**

WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission has found that 2045 E. Monte Vista Street meets criterion C, as set forth in Section 17.62.040(C) of the Pasadena Municipal Code; and

WHEREAS, the house at 2045 E. Monte Vista Street is significant because the house embodies the characteristics of Tudor/ English Cottage Period Revival architecture of the early twentieth century, and is an exceptional representation of the work of local architect Glenn Elwood Smith;

WHEREAS, the application for Landmark designation is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15308;

WHEREAS, the owners of the property, Leon and Yolanda Brown, 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 2045 E. Monte Vista Street is hereby adopted.

Adopted at the regular meeting of the City Council on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2008 by the following vote:

AYES:


NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jane L. Rodriguez, City Clerk

Approved as to form:



\_\_\_\_\_  
Theresa E. Fuentes  
Assistant City Attorney

**DECLARATION OF LANDMARK DESIGNATION FOR:**

2045 E. MONTE VISTA 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 Exhibit "A")

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 L. Rodriguez, City Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
Bill Bogaard, Mayor

0000058696C031

EXHIBIT A

LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF 2045 E. MONTE VISTA STREET

Subject property is located in the City of Pasadena, County of Los Angeles, State of California, and is described as follows:

Lot 3 Block B of Tract No. 8075, in the City of Pasadena, County of Los Angeles, State of California, as per map recorded in Book 99, Page(s) 93 and 94 of Maps, in the office of the County Recorder of said County.

PROPERTY ADDRESS: 2045 Monte Vista Street, Pasadena, CA 91107