

Agenda Report

December 13, 2010

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council
FROM: Planning Department
SUBJECT: ADOPTION OF A ZONE CHANGE TO DESIGNATE A LANDMARK DISTRICT OVERLAY FOR THE WESTON-BUNGALOWCRAFT LANDMARK DISTRICT (LD-18)

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Find that the application for a zone change to create a landmark district is categorically exempt from environmental review pursuant to the guidelines of the California Environmental Quality Act, (Section 15308: Class 8, Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment);
2. Acknowledge the determination of the Historic Preservation Commission that the proposed Weston-Bungalowcraft Landmark District (Attachment A) meets the criteria for designation as a landmark district, (§17.62.040 F. P.M.C) and the determination of the Planning Commission that the proposed district is consistent with the General Plan (Objective 6 of the Land-use Element, "to promote preservation of historically and architecturally significant buildings and revitalization of traditional neighborhoods.") and the purposes of the zoning ordinance (P.M.C. §17.04.030, "preserve the character and quality of residential neighborhoods");
3. Acknowledge that signatures from property owners in support of the landmark overlay district petition exceed the 51 percent requirement in P.M.C. §17.62.070 D;
4. Find that the number of contributing properties in the proposed Weston-Bungalowcraft Landmark District exceeds the 60% threshold in the zoning code and that the district represents a grouping of properties of citywide importance;
5. Find the proposed Weston-Bungalowcraft Landmark District meets the criteria for designation as a Landmark District and approve the landmark district designation and the zoning map overlay for the Weston-Bungalowcraft Landmark District, LD-18; and
6. Direct the City Attorney to prepare an ordinance within 60 days amending the official zoning map of the City of Pasadena established by §17.20.020 of the Pasadena Municipal Code to designate the landmark district with the LD-18 overlay zone.

RECOMMENDATION FROM HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION:

At a public hearing on June 21, 2010, the Historic Preservation Commission determined that the proposed Weston-Bungalowcraft landmark district meets the criteria for designation in §17.62.040 P.M.C. and unanimously recommended approval of the designation.

RECOMMENDATION FROM PLANNING COMMISSION:

At a public hearing on September 8, 2010, the Planning Commission found that the proposed zone change to create a landmark district is consistent with the General Plan and the purposes of the zoning code, certified the final petition with the signatures from at least 51 percent of the property owners and voted unanimously to recommend that the City Council approve designation of the Weston-Bungalowcraft landmark district.

BACKGROUND:

Since 1989 the City has formally designated 17 landmark districts. On March 30, 2010, the City received an application for landmark district designation from Paul Secord, a resident in the neighborhood (Mr. Secord has since moved out of the city and the application is now being handled by district resident William Woods). The application included extensive research and documentation of the district, photographs and a petition from a majority of residents of the proposed landmark district expressing support for designating a landmark district in this area (23 parcels in size).

COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:

The proposed designation is consistent with the General Plan – and will advance the objectives of the Land Use Element, e.g., Objective 6: Promote preservation of historically and architecturally significant buildings and revitalization of traditional neighborhoods and commercial areas.

The zoning of the area is RS-6 (Single-family Residential). The LD-18 zone is proposed as an overlay to the current zoning. The application is consistent with the purposes of the zoning ordinance, which includes several goals to preserve residential neighborhoods.

ANALYSIS:

The Weston-Bungalowcraft Landmark District meets the criteria for designation in §17.62.040.F.1, PMC, as follows:

- a. Within its boundaries, a minimum of 60 percent of the properties qualify as contributing;

All of the houses within the proposed district boundaries were built within the period of significance (1925-1931). Two houses, which were built during the

period of significance but have experienced alterations over time, are noncontributing¹ to the district (alterations described in Attachment B).

- b. The grouping represents a significant and distinguishable entity of Citywide importance and one or more of a defined historic, cultural, development and/or architectural context(s) (e.g., 1993 Citywide historic context, as amended, historic context prepared in an intensive-level survey or historic context prepared specifically for the nominated landmark district).

The district is significant because it represents a cohesive collection of small-scale houses in architectural styles identified in the 2004 Historic Context Report "Residential Period Revival Architecture and Development in Pasadena from 1915 – 1942." All of the houses in the district are either English Cottage Revival or Spanish Colonial Revival bungalows.²

In addition, the application includes extensive documentation of the district's representation of early speculative development using designs from architectural pattern books, in this case, the Bungalowcraft pattern books by Rex Weston. The use of pattern books for development of single-family residences in Pasadena has been documented in several of the city's historic context reports. These reports suggest that pattern books were originally used as a source or inspiration for individual single-family residences and that the subject development was an early application of the use of pattern books for speculative development of a grouping of houses and a precursor to post-war housing tracts.

Boundaries: The proposed district boundary corresponds to two groupings of speculative pattern-book houses that were built from two subdivisions of the 1906 San Rafael Heights Tract No. 8. Architecturally, elsewhere on Annandale Road, the majority of the houses on the west side are consistent with the houses within the boundaries, and the visual distinction between the pattern-book houses and the other houses on the street is minimal; thus, the boundaries are not representative of physical evidence that can be observed by the average person. Staff discussed with the applicant the possibility of extending the boundaries to include these additional houses and to create a more cohesive grouping of houses as a district. The applicant, however, opposed this suggestion because the majority of these "excluded" houses are not pattern-book houses and are unrelated to the defining characteristic on which the nomination is based. Nevertheless, these houses could be added to the district at a later date

¹ **Noncontributing Property.** A property in the boundaries of a landmark district or district listed in the National Register and lacking architectural characteristics relating to the historic context and historic significance of the district, and identified in the designation or listing as noncontributing.

² Grimes, Teresa and Winder, Mary Jo: *Residential Period Revival Architecture and Development in Pasadena from 1915-1942*, 2004.

because of their strong compatibility in design, scale, age, and setback with the pattern-book houses.

Support from Property Owners: In the final petition, 61% (14 out of 23) of the property owners have signified their support for district designation in writing, which exceeds the minimum 51% requirement.

Two property owners submitted letters to the Historic Preservation Commission in opposition to the district (see Attachment C), both requesting that their properties be excluded from the landmark district. These two houses, 112 and 152 Annandale Road, are in the center area of the grouping of houses in the district and not at the outer edges. The two advisory Commissions that evaluated the district determined that it meets the criteria for designation with the boundaries proposed. The district would not meet the criteria if these two properties were excluded because the elimination of either of these properties would cause the district to become non-contiguous.

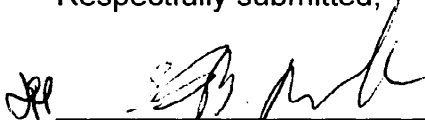
ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

Class 8 exemptions consists of actions taken by regulatory agencies, as authorized by state or local ordinance, to assure the maintenance, restoration, enhancement, or protection of the environment where the regulatory process involves procedures for the protection of the environment.

FISCAL IMPACT:

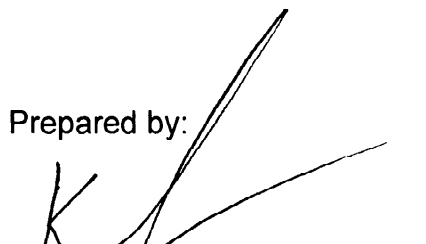
Designation of this property does not affect revenues to the City. In some instances, though, owners of designated properties may apply to the City for Historic Property Contract, which allows an alternative and often lower property tax assessment. The City Council reviewed the projected loss of property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

Respectfully submitted,



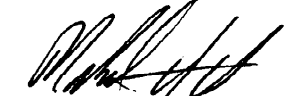
STEVE MERMELL
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Prepared by:



Kevin Johnson
Planner

Approved by:



MICHAEL J. BECK
City Manager

Attachments:

- Attachment A – Map of Proposed Landmark District
- Attachment B – Chart of Contributing/Non-contributing Properties
- Attachment C – Letters of Opposition to Designation (submitted to Historic Preservation Commission)
- Attachment D - Photographs