

Agenda Report

June 3, 2013

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council
FROM: Planning & Community Development Department
SUBJECT: DESIGNATION OF 221 S. MARENGO AVENUE AS A LANDMARK

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council:

1. Find that the designation of a historic resource is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA Guidelines §15308: Class 8 - Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment);
2. Find that the property at 221 S. Marengo Avenue is significant under Criterion "C" for designation as a landmark (P.M.C. §17.62.040) because it is a locally significant example of a Neoclassical style multiple-family property and retains its integrity;
3. Approve the designation of the property at 221 S. Marengo Avenue as a landmark;
4. Adopt the attached resolution approving a Declaration of Landmark Designation for 221 S. Marengo Avenue, Pasadena, California;
5. Authorize the Mayor to execute the attached Declaration of Landmark Designation for 221 S. Marengo Avenue, Pasadena, California; and
6. Direct the City Clerk to record the declaration with the Los Angeles County Recorder.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

On Monday, March 4, 2013, the Historic Preservation Commission recommended that the City Council approve the designation of 221 S. Marengo Avenue as a landmark under Criterion C of PMC §17.62.040.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The garden apartment complex at 221 S. Marengo Avenue qualifies for designation as a landmark under Criterion "C" as the best representation in the City of a multiple-family property in the Neoclassical style.

BACKGROUND:

On July 19, 2012, Joy Selby and Alejandra Veloz, representing the board of the Monticello Manor condominium association with the signed consent of the majority of the property owners, submitted an application for designation of 221 S. Marengo Avenue, "Monticello Manor," as a landmark. The staff initially evaluated the property according to the landmark criteria in Title 17 of the P.M.C. and on August 16, 2012, having determined that the property did not qualify for designation, issued a decision letter to deny the application. The Historic Preservation Commission called the decision for review, requesting additional research regarding the architectural style, and eligibility outside the time periods of the cited historic contexts, the *Cultural Resources of the Recent Past Historic Context Report*, the *Residential Period Revival Architecture and Development in Pasadena, 1915-1942* historic context report, and the *Architectural/Historical Development of the City of Pasadena* citywide historic context report. Subsequently, staff conducted further research and determined that the property is a late example of the Neoclassical style instead of the Colonial Revival style that was originally identified in past surveys. This determination is based on the presence of character-defining features of the Neoclassical style, and the date of construction within the range cited in *A Field Guide to American Houses (Virginia & Lee McAlester, 1984)*.

Property Data

- Address: 221 S. Marengo Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91101
- Location: West side of Marengo Avenue between Cordova Street on the north and Del Mar Boulevard on the south
- Date of Construction: 1953, documented by building permit
- Original Developer: Charles E. Carpenter
- Original Architect/Designer: Unknown
- Original Contractor: John G. Gonlag
- Original / Present Use: Sixteen-unit apartment complex
- Original/Present Owner: Multiple owners (own-your-own apartments)
- Property Size: 20,123 square feet

Site Features

The site, a 20,123 square foot interior lot, is at the east side of Marengo Avenue south of Cordova Street and north of Del Mar Boulevard. This narrow rectangular site contains five buildings, four of which are arranged around an elongated courtyard at street level and are separated by generous landscaped areas and semi-private yards. A driveway on the south side of the lot slopes down to provide access to parking at the rear below street level. The front building, with four units, faces the street and partially encloses the east end of the courtyard. The two buildings to the west of the front building each contain four units and face north toward the courtyard. The two-unit building at the west end of the courtyard, which appears to be one story from the courtyard, is built above a row of garage parking below. At the very rear, an additional

two units are built above garage parking. A walkway on the north side of the lot provides access to the courtyard units from the street. Two low front gates with the stylized shield pattern found on the porch railings provide pedestrian access to the property from the street.

Building Features

This garden apartment complex was built in 1953. Each of the four-unit apartment buildings, including the front street-facing building, are nearly identical, with symmetrical front elevations, side-gabled roofs, and medium-smooth white stucco walls. The front elevation consists of a deep, full-façade, two-story porch which includes a second story balcony, supported by four slender, square, evenly spaced columns. Iron railings are detailed with a stylized shield pattern. The windows are evenly spaced, flanked by green shutters, with those adjacent to the corners flanked by a single shutter. Windows are predominantly four-over-over-four, wood-framed, double-hung sash with plain surrounds. Six-panel front doors provide access to the units, and single French doors flanked by full-height shutters provide access to the balcony. At the center of the front elevation, double three-panel doors flanked by full-height shutters provide access to the stairway to the second floor. All doors have plain surrounds. The side-gabled roof, which terminates at the porch columns, has three dormers with clapboard siding and eight-light windows. Gables without eaves are clad with clapboard, terminate at the roof with a molding, and include a single circular vent with decorative vent surround. Two stucco-sided chimneys emerge from the peak of the roof.

Documented Changes to the Property

On the front elevation, two air conditioning condensers were installed into the front walls of the upstairs units. Also on the front elevation, the windows of the upstairs Unit #3 were replaced with 12-light sashes that do not match the original light pattern, and in Unit #2, dual-paned double hung windows with interior grids were installed. In the four rear buildings windows were also replaced in various locations.

Current Conditions, Use, and Proposed Plans

The property is currently in good condition. There is no significant exterior deterioration. The property is currently a residential condominium, and no changes to the property are proposed.

Historical Overview

The Neoclassical style was common in the United States in the first half of the twentieth century, but rare in Pasadena. The identifying features of the style are an imposing scale, a “full height porch with roof supported by classical columns; columns typically have Ionic or Corinthian capitals; façade shows symmetrically balanced windows and center door.” (A Field Guide to American Houses, Virginia & Lee McAlester, p.343.)

Examples from the first phase of popularity from 1900-1920 typically had hipped roofs and elaborate columns with correct (usually prefabricated) capitals. Inspired by Mount Vernon, the full-façade porch subtype was prevalent from 1925 through the 1950s, in which the colonnaded porch “occupies the full width and height of the façade.” In this subtype, the porch is covered by a hipped or side-gabled roof, or by a shed extension from the roof. These later examples usually have slender, usually square, columns with very simple capitals.

ANALYSIS:

Pasadena Municipal Code §17.62.040.C.2 describes the criteria for designation as a landmark:

“A landmark may be the best representation in the City of a type of historic resource or it may be one of several historic resources in the City that have common architectural attributes that represent a particular type of historic resource. A landmark shall meet one or more of the following criteria:

- a. It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of the history of the city, region or state.
- b. It is associated with the lives of persons who are significant in the history of the city, region or state.
- c. It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, architectural style, period, or method of construction, or 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 of significance to the City or to the region.
- d. It has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important locally in prehistory or history.”

The property at 221 S. Marengo Avenue is eligible for landmark designation under Criterion “C” as the best example in Pasadena of a multiple-family property designed in the Neoclassical style. It retains its original location and its integrity of setting: the property remains intact and the surrounding block of apartment buildings is in the process of developing to a higher density but will remain predominantly residential.

The property has architectural integrity (its ability to demonstrate why it is significant) through its design, materials, and workmanship. The symmetrically balanced front elevation opening placement with center door, the full-height and width front porch covered by a side-gabled roof, slender, square columns, and rectangular double-hung windows identify it as an example of the later full-façade porch subtype of the Neoclassical style. Other features include the front-facing dormers, gable vents with decorative surrounds, and the lack of eaves at the gables. Workmanship is exemplified by the iron railing design and the double three-panel doors. The apartment buildings have most of the character-defining features of the style and retain most of the original materials. The property retains the feeling of a garden apartment complex from the

early 1950s in a late Neoclassical style reminiscent of Mount Vernon (despite its name, “Monticello Manor”).

Two other multiple-family properties in Pasadena also exhibit characteristics of the Neoclassical style. An apartment complex at 181 S. Marengo Avenue has architectural features that are similar to the nominated property, but is smaller in scale, lacks a central “front door,” and the columns are thin and not evenly spaced. Another apartment complex at 1135 E. Washington Boulevard has Neoclassical-style columned two-story entries, but the entries are inset, span a small portion of the building width, and exclusively face interior courtyards.

The Historic Preservation Commission raised the question of whether the property can be also designated under Criterion “A,” association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of the history of the city, region, or state. It is an example of an “own-your-own” apartment complex, an early form of multiple ownership. It is not the first example in the city—a quote from the developer alluded to the existence of other “own-your-own” apartments in Pasadena, and it is also likely that other examples of “own-your-own” apartments remain in Pasadena. Being an example of an “own-your-own” apartment complex adds to the significance of the property but is not sufficiently unique for individual designation under Criterion “A” for association with the postwar “own-your-own” apartment movement in Pasadena.

The nominated property is the best example of a Neoclassical style multiple-family property in Pasadena, even though there are noticeable alterations to the front elevation, the column spacing is much wider than typical, the columns lack capitals, and the main door lacks a pediment or other appropriate decorative treatment.

COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:

The General Plan – Objective 6: Promote preservation of historically and architecturally significant buildings and revitalization of traditional neighborhoods and commercial areas.

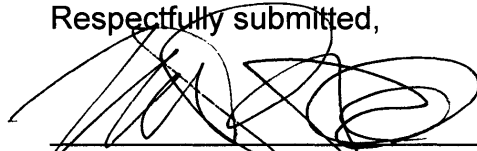
ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

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:

In some instances, 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,



VINCENT P. BERTONI, AICP
Director of Planning & Community
Development Department

Prepared by:



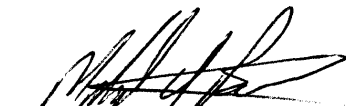
Jason Wasmund
Assistant Planner

Concurred by:



Leon E. White
Principal Planner

Approved by:



MICHAEL J. BECK
City Manager

Attachments:

- Attachment A – Vicinity Map
- Attachment B – Application Materials & Research by Tim Gregory
- Attachment C – Photographs
- Attachment D – Effects of Landmark Designation

RESOLUTION NO. _____

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PASADENA
ADOPTING A DECLARATION OF LANDMARK DESIGNATION FOR 221 S.
MARENGO AVENUE, PASADENA, CALIFORNIA**

WHEREAS, the City Council has found that 221 S. Marengo Avenue meets criterion "C", as set forth in Section 17.62.040(C) of the Pasadena Municipal Code; and

WHEREAS, the property at 221 S. Marengo Avenue is significant because it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a historic resource property type, period, architectural style or method of construction, or represents the work of an architect, designer, engineer, or builder whose work is significant to the City or to the region, or that possesses high artistic values that are significant to the City or to the region; and

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

WHEREAS, Joy Selby and Alejandra Veloz, property owners, for the Monticello Manor Association submitted the application for landmark designation; and

WHEREAS, the City Council may 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 221 S. Marengo Avenue is hereby adopted.

Adopted at the _____ meeting of the City Council on the _____ day of _____, 2013 by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

MARK JOMSKY, CMC, City Clerk

Approved as to form:



Theresa E. Fuentes
Assistant City Attorney
0000108529C031

DECLARATION OF LANDMARK DESIGNATION FOR:

221 S. MARENGO AVENUE
PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 17.62.050 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:

That portion of Lot 6 in Block "H" of the San Pasqual Tract, in the City of Pasadena, County of Los Angeles, State of California, as per map recorded in Book 3 Page 315 of Miscellaneous Records, in the Office of the County Recorder of said County, described as follows:

Beginning at a point in the East line of said Lot, distant 186.5 feet North from the Southeast corner thereof; Thence North along said East line 77.5 feet; Thence West 285 feet; Thence South 66 feet; Thence East 76.5 feet; Thence South 11.5 feet; Thence East 208.5 feet to the point of beginning.

Excepting therefrom the Easterly 4 feet thereof included in Marengo Avenue.

APNs: 5722-013-016, 5722-013-017, 5722-013-018, 5722-013-019,
5722-013-020, 5722-013-021, 5722-013-022, 5722-013-023,
5722-013-024, 5722-013-025, 5722-013-026, 5722-013-027,
5722-013-028, 5722-013-029, 5722-013-030, 5722-013-031

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.

DATED: _____

ATTEST:

CITY OF PASADENA
A municipal corporation

Mark Jomsky, City Clerk

By: _____
Bill Bogaard, Mayor