

Agenda Report

September 21, 2015

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council
FROM: Planning & Community Development Department
SUBJECT: ADOPTION OF A ZONE CHANGE TO DESIGNATE A LANDMARK DISTRICT OVERLAY FOR THE GLEN SUMMER LANDMARK DISTRICT (LD-22)

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends 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. Find the proposed Glen Summer Landmark District meets the criteria for designation as a Landmark District as specified in §17.62.040.F of the Pasadena Municipal Code;
3. Approve the landmark district designation and the zoning map overlay for the Glen Summer Landmark District, LD-22; and
4. 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-22 Overlay Zone.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

On May 19, 2015, the Historic Preservation Commission determined that the proposed Glen Summer Landmark District, with one property excluded (45 Glen Summer Road) meets the criteria for designation in §17.62.040.F Pasadena Municipal Code (PMC) and unanimously recommended approval of the designation. In preparation for the subsequent Planning Commission review of the application, staff identified an error in its calculations of contributing and non-contributing properties and prepared a revised calculation and inventory of contributing and non-contributing properties. These revisions were presented to the Historic Preservation Commission on July 21, 2015 and the Commission expressed support of the revised calculations and the inclusion of 45 Glen Summer Road in the district boundary.

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

At a public hearing on July 22, 2015, 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 6-0 to recommend that the City Council approve designation of the Glen Summer Landmark District.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Glen Summer Landmark District meets the criteria set forth in PMC §17.62.040.F.1 for designation as a landmark district. In addition, a majority of the property owners (75%) have indicated support in writing for the designation.

BACKGROUND:

Since 1989, the City has formally designated 21 landmark districts. On March 9, 2015, Janice Price, on behalf of supporting property owners in the proposed landmark district, submitted an application and a petition from 44 property owners for designation of the Glen Summer Landmark District. The staff evaluated the district according to the landmark criteria in Title 17 of the P.M.C. and determined that the district qualifies for landmark district designation.

Description of the Proposed Landmark District

Boundaries: The boundaries of the district include address numbers 40 through 285 Glen Summer Road and 1177 Nithsdale Road. Within these boundaries there are 59 properties.

Construction Dates: Six of the houses were built in the 1920s, 41 were built in the 1930s, ten were built in the 1940s, one was built in the 1950s, and one was built in the 1970s.

Architects and Builders: A significant architect with designs in the district is Harold Bissner (five properties). No other significant architects were found for any other properties.

Zoning: All properties within the proposed district are zoned RS-6. The RS-6 district is a single-family residential zoning designation.

General Plan: The General Plan Designation of all properties within the proposed landmark district is Low Density Residential.

ANALYSIS:

The proposed landmark district is a grouping of custom single-family residences built between 1927 and 1941 which represent architectural styles from the Period Revival era and the recent past. The District largely represents single-family residences in architectural styles from the Period Revival era with intact Minimal Traditional style houses also contributing to the historic character of the district as a representation of the completion of vacant lots in the post-WWII-era with similarly sized, but less architecturally distinct, houses typical of that era. The District is particularly unique for its high concentration of small-scale Spanish Colonial Revival houses.

Criteria for Designation

The Glen Summer 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;

The contributing single-family houses in the District were built between 1927 and 1941, which has been identified as the District's period of significance, and most of these properties remain intact on their street-facing elevations. Of the 59 properties in the proposed district, 42 have been identified as contributing (71%) and retain integrity of design (all of the character-defining architectural features are intact), materials (all of the original cladding materials, doors and windows appear to be intact), workmanship (the decorative detailing on all of the houses appears to be intact), and feeling.

- 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., the 1993 Citywide historic context, a historic context prepared in an intensive-level survey or a historic context prepared specifically for the nominated landmark district).

The District is significant because it represents a grouping of intact houses in significant architectural styles identified in the historic context reports "Residential Period Revival Architecture and Development in Pasadena from 1915-1942" and "Cultural Resources of the Recent Past." The District represents single-family residences in architectural styles from the Period Revival era with intact Minimal Traditional style houses also contributing to the historic character of the district as a representation of the of the completion of vacant lots in the post-WWII-era with similarly sized, but less architecturally distinct, houses typical of that era. The District is particularly unique for its high concentration of small-scale Spanish Colonial Revival houses.

Support from Property Owners:

At its July 22, 2015 meeting, the Planning Commission certified the final petition from property owners within the district boundary. In the petition, 75% (44 out of 59) of the property owners signified their support for landmark district designation in writing, which exceeds the minimum 51% requirement. Since the Historic Preservation Commission meeting on May 19, 2015, staff has not received any formal opposition to this landmark district. One property owner (45 Glen Summer Road) expressed opposition in a letter to the Historic Preservation Commission and requested to be excluded from the district boundary; however, in an email to staff dated September 16, 2015, this property owner expressed support for the designation.

RESULTS OF DESIGNATION:

The landmark district designation protects the historic and architectural character of a neighborhood through the Certificate of Appropriateness process. The code requires an application for Certificate of Appropriateness, reviewed by the Director of Planning & Community Development for minor projects such as the removal of non-original insignificant exterior features, the replacement of doors and windows that match the originals, alterations to garages, and side yard fences. Major projects, such as demolitions, relocations, significant exterior alterations, major changes to original windows and doors or their openings, changes to exterior cladding, and front yard fences, require review by the Historic Preservation Commission at a noticed public hearing.

The landmark district designation also allows owners of properties to apply for a Historic Property Contract (Mills Act) which allows a reduction of property tax in exchange for the continued preservation of the property. Typical Mills Act improvements have included (but are not limited to), repair and replacement of original architectural features, new roofing and gutters, electrical and plumbing upgrades, termite repair, water damage, and painting.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

Class 8 exempts from environmental review actions taken by regulatory agencies to assure the maintenance, restoration, enhancement, or protection of the environment where the regulatory process involves procedures for protection of the environment. The establishment of a landmark district will include procedures by which new structures, or changes to existing structures that contribute to the historic character, or environment, of the district, are reviewed for consistency with the character of the district.

COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:

The General Plan – 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-22 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.

FISCAL IMPACT:

In some instances, owners of designated properties may apply to the City for a Historic Property Contract (Mills Act), 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 the local Mills Act ordinance. As a result of this program, the reduced property tax amount which comes out of the City's local share amount from the State, is a small percentage of the City's overall property tax revenue.

Respectfully submitted,



VINCENT P. BERTONI, AICP
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Prepared by:



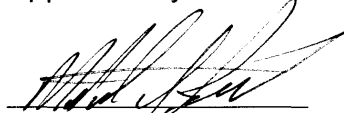
Kevin Johnson
Senior Planner

Concurred by:



Leon E. White
Principal Planner

Approved by:



MICHAEL J. BECK
City Manager

Attachments:

Attachment A – Map of Proposed Landmark District
Attachment B – Inventory of Properties