



Agenda Report

October 2, 2017

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council
FROM: Planning & Community Development Department
SUBJECT: DESIGNATION OF THE HOUSE AT 95 TUSTIN ROAD 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 house at 95 Tustin Road meets landmark designation Criterion C in Pasadena Municipal Code (P.M.C) Section 17.62.040(C)(2)(c) because it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a locally significant property type, architectural style and period and represents the work of an architect whose work is of significance to the City. It is a locally significant example of a Mid-Century Modern style house designed by architect Harold Zook;
3. Adopt the attached resolution approving a Declaration of Landmark Designation for 95 Tustin Road, Pasadena, California;
4. Authorize the Mayor to execute the attached Declaration of Landmark Designation for 95 Tustin Road, Pasadena, California; and
5. Direct the City Clerk to record the declaration with the Los Angeles County Recorder.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

At its regular meeting of August 15, 2017, the Historic Preservation Commission recommended that the City Council approve the designation of 95 Tustin Road as a landmark under Criterion C of PMC §17.62.040.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The house at 95 Tustin Road is a distinctive example of Mid-Century Modern residential design in Pasadena designed by significant architect Harold Zook and retains the majority of its significant character-defining features. Therefore, the property at 95 Tustin Road qualifies for designation as a landmark under Criterion “C” as a locally significant example of a Mid-Century Modern Style House designed by Harold Zook.

BACKGROUND:

On May 2, 2017, on behalf of the property owner, ALM Trust, architect Emily Farnham submitted an application for landmark designation of the property at 95 Tustin Road. City staff evaluated the property according to the criteria in Title 17 of the P.M.C. and determined that the house qualifies for designation as a landmark.

Property Data

- Address: 95 Tustin Road, Pasadena, 91105
- Location: Northwest corner of Tustin Road and Kenworthy Drive
- Date of Construction Completion: 1950 (source: Original Building Permit)
- Original Owner: Bryant & Patricia Myers (source: Original Building Permit)
- Original Architect: Harold Zook (source: Original Building Permit and Plans)
- Original Builder: Unknown (illegible on Original Building Permit)
- Original / Present Use: Single-family residence
- Property size: 63,050 square feet (source: County Assessor)
- Building size: 2,962 square feet (source: County Assessor)

The Site (Existing Conditions)

The site is a 1.5-acre lot in a hillside setting within the Linda Vista/Annandale neighborhood of northwestern Pasadena. The site is irregularly shaped and the house is sited at the southeast corner. It is accessed via an asphalt driveway from Tustin Road to an attached carport at the southwest corner of the house. The area around the house is relatively flat and sits at the top of a hill with retaining walls surrounding much of the property. Paving immediately surrounding the house is both concrete and pebble-concrete and there are several Norman brick site walls, integrated planters and retaining walls at various locations on the property. A short concrete block wall with attached metal address numbers marks the driveway entrance. North of the house is a pool, built at the same time as the house and modified in 1976, and an outdoor patio area with a freestanding shade structure and barbeque. Although efforts were made to utilize similar materials and design features in these structures, they are not original to the property.

Exterior Features of the Building

This one-story Mid-Century Modern style house has a simple geometric form with a slightly splayed generally L-shape plan and attached carport. The house has a flat roof covered with deep boxed-in eave overhangs. A significant character-defining feature of the house is a stepped and canted wood fascia at the roof edge, which is in the process of being restored. The main entry to the house is on the south side, accessed from a pebble-concrete pathway extending from the asphalt driveway. The entry is toward the eastern end of elevation, and is marked by a curving Norman-brick wall set in a stack bond pattern extending perpendicularly from the façade and extending into the interior of the house. The front door had previously been altered but is in the process of being restored to the original design, which was a metal-framed sliding-glass door. The exterior walls of the house are currently entirely coated in plaster, although the original elevation drawings indicate that the east and north elevations were clad in vertically oriented overlapping 1" x 12" redwood siding. Based on historical photographs, the siding was likely stained. This siding is extant at the carport walls and has been painted. The house has large expanses of glazing, including floor-to-ceiling windows and clerestory windows. The original architectural plans for the house, as well as extensive historical photographs, have been provided by the applicant (see Attachment A).

Documented Changes to the Property

Two small additions were made to the rear of the house in 1994. The additions both had curving exterior walls which are in the process of being made more rectilinear to improve their compatibility with the original design of the house. The interior is being fully remodeled while retaining unique historical features such as the previously mentioned Norman brick wall continuing from the exterior to the interior, a Norman brick planter near the front entry and a copper fireplace hood. The pool was remodeled in 1976 and it is likely, although not documented, that the pergola, patio and barbeque area were also built at that time or in 1994 in conjunction with the two small additions to the house. As previously mentioned, wood siding that was on the north and east elevations (and a small area of the south elevation near the front door) have been replaced with stucco.

Current Condition, Use, and Proposed Plans

The exterior of the house is currently in good condition and construction is ongoing on the interior remodeling and exterior restoration/rehabilitation work mentioned above. The owner has also submitted a concurrent application for the Historic Property Contract (Mills Act) program. The house will continue to be used as a single-family residence.

Historical Overview

Mid-Century Modern Style

Mid-Century Modern describes the postwar iteration of the International Style in both residential and commercial design. The International Style was characterized by geometric forms, smooth wall surfaces, and an absence of exterior decoration. Mid-Century Modern represents the adaptation of these elements to the local climate and topography, as well as to the postwar need for efficiently built, moderately-priced homes. In Pasadena, this often meant the use of wood post-and-beam construction. The Mid-Century Modern house or office is characterized by its clear expression of structure and materials, large expanses of glass, and open interior plan. Local practitioners of the style included prewar International Style architects like Rudolph Schindler, Richard Neutra, Gregory Ain and Harwell Hamilton Harris, as well as second generation Modernists like Ray Kappe, Buff & Hensman, Ladd & Kelsey, Carl Maston, A. Quincy Jones, Whitney Smith, and Wayne Williams. Architects such as John Lautner incorporated geometric and sculptural forms, embracing a more expressionistic or organic version of the style. Richard Neutra's Perkins House at 1540 Poppy Peak Drive (1955) and Buff & Hensman's Dubnoff Residence at 1150 La Loma Road (1965) are both excellent residential examples of Mid-Century Modernism in Pasadena.

Character-defining features of Mid Century Modern Houses are:

- One or two-story configuration
- Simple geometric forms
- Expressed post-and-beam construction, in wood or steel
- Flat roof with wide overhanging eaves and cantilevered canopies
- Unadorned wall surfaces
- Exterior panels of wood, stucco, brick or stone
- Flush-mounted metal frame full-height and clerestory windows
- Exterior staircases, decks, patios and balconies
- Little or no exterior decorative detailing

Architect Designed Houses

The 2007 Cultural Resources of the Recent Past Historic Context Report discusses architect designed houses in this style from the time period. The term "architect-designed" is used to distinguish high-style, site specific single-family residences from the simpler tract houses that proliferated primarily in large-scale residential developments during this period. The major defining architect-designed residential architecture in postwar Pasadena include those residences inspired by the tenets of the Case Study House Program; the post-and-beam architecture practiced by the teachers and graduates of the University of Southern California School of Architecture; and the Modernist variation of the ranch house.

There are concentrations of architect-designed residential properties from the period, which occur primarily along the Pasadena's western and southern edges, where the subject property is located. These areas, composed largely of single family residences, occupy hilly terrain that had not been previously developed; this resulted in site-specific designs that responded to the unique circumstances of hillside development and were made possible by new technologies developed during and after the War. The area west of the 210 and 710 Freeways on both sides of the Arroyo also contain substantial numbers of houses from the period, particularly in the southwest corner of the city. Many of these are infill properties in previously developed neighborhoods. In some cases, these lots were created by subdividing large estates, for example in the Hillcrest Neighborhood as well as along the Arroyo on lots previously occupied by the Adolphus Busch estate and Busch Gardens.

Harold B. Zook, Architect (1920-)

Harold Barnard Zook was born in Chicago, Illinois in 1920. He was the son of Roscoe H. Zook, a noted architect who worked throughout the Midwest and specialized in period revival architecture from the 1920's to the 1940's. The junior Zook attended Cornell University and received his Bachelor's Degree in Architecture in 1941. In 1946, Zook moved to Palm Springs where he worked for two Modernist Architects, John Porter Clark and Albert Frey. He moved to Pasadena in 1947 and partnered with Harold J. Bissner, before starting his own firm in 1948.

Zook was a prolific architect. Notably, he designed all seven structures along Mesita Road, a private road in a hillside neighborhood in northeast Pasadena, including his own house at 1125 Mesita Road, a designated landmark. He also designed numerous other residential projects and some prominent commercial properties including the Saga Hotel and Lowe's Furniture Store both on East Colorado Boulevard. Zook's designs have been the subject of articles in *Architectural Record* and *Arts and Architecture*. In 1950, Whitney Smith of the University of Southern California, organized a contemporary architecture and furniture exhibit at Scripps College. Zook was among the architects that participated, exhibiting a plan for a home that was being constructed in North Pasadena. Other architects exhibiting were the likes of Richard Nuetra and Rudolph M. Schindler.

ANALYSIS:

The house at 95 Tustin Road is eligible for designation as a landmark under Criterion C of PMC Section 17.62.040.C.2, which states:

[The property] 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.

Under Criterion C, the house at 95 Tustin Road is significant because it is a locally significant, intact example of the Mid-Century Modern property type, designed by Harold Zook. The registration requirements in the City's 2007 Cultural Resources of the Recent Past Historic Context Report state:

In order to qualify under Criterion C (3), this property type would display most of the character-defining features of its style. It must retain high integrity of design, materials and workmanship that convey its period of construction. While most buildings undergo alteration over time, these alterations should not significantly change the historic appearance of the building.

The building has architectural integrity (its ability to demonstrate why it is significant) through its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship and feeling, as follows:

- Location: The building is in its original location.
- Design: The building retains its form, plan, space, structure, and style, as described above. The design of the house embodies the defining characteristics of a distinct architectural movement and the design quality of the architects' work, which is evident in the siting of the house, roofline with extended eaves and sculpted fascia and large expanses of glazing.
- Setting: The hillside residential neighborhood setting is intact.
- Materials: The building has most of the original exterior materials used in its construction except that two elevations (as well as a small area near the front door) were originally clad in wood siding which has been replaced with stucco. This reduces the house's overall integrity of materials; however, because stucco was also used elsewhere on the house, is compatible with the architectural style of the house, and all other exterior materials are intact, this change does not result in the house being ineligible for landmark designation.
- Workmanship: The building exhibits workmanship through details such as the sculpted fascia and brickwork.
- Feeling: The property clearly expresses the characteristics of the Mid-Century Modern architectural style.

Integrity of association does not apply to the house because it is not associated with a significant event or the life of a significant person. Based on the above, the property retains sufficient integrity to qualify for designation as a landmark under Criterion C. The house retains all of its original character-defining features, including one-story configuration, simple repeated geometric forms, flat roof with wide overhanging eaves and sculpted fascia, unadorned wall surfaces of plaster and brick and full-height and clerestory windows. The small 1994 additions to the rear of the house are currently being rebuilt to be more compatible with the design of the original structure. The replacement of siding with stucco on two sides of the house reduces the house's integrity of materials but does not result in a reduction in overall integrity such that the house would no longer be eligible for landmark designation.

It should also be noted that the property was determined eligible for landmark designation in conjunction with the City's 2007-2009 study of Cultural Resources of the Recent Past.

Contributing features to this designation include the main house, hillside setting with views and original site features including concrete paths and retaining walls.

COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:

The General Plan Land Use Element – Guiding Principle 2: “Pasadena’s historic resources will be preserved. Citywide, new development will be in harmony with and enhance Pasadena’s unique character and sense of place. New construction that could affect the integrity of historic resources will be compatible with, and differentiated from, the existing resource;” and Goal 8: “Preservation and enhancement of Pasadena’s cultural and historic buildings, landscapes, streets and districts as valued assets and important representations of its past and a source of community identity, and social, ecological, and economic vitality.”

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:

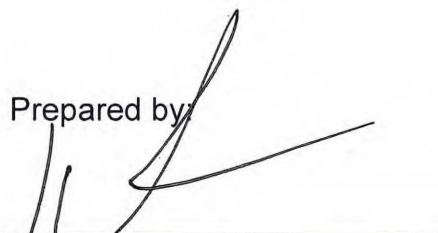
In some instances, owners of designated historic properties may apply to the City for a Historic Property Contract (Mills Act), which allows an alternative and often lower property tax assessment. The City Council reviewed the projected loss of property tax revenue from this program in 2002 when it adopted 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 fraction of the City's overall property tax revenue.

Respectfully submitted,



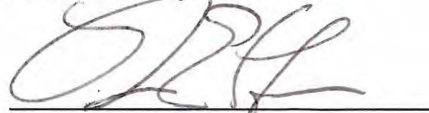
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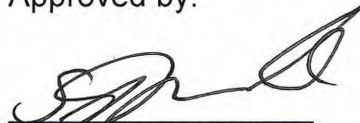
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STEVE MERMELL
City Manager

Attachments: (4)

- Attachment A – Application Materials
- Attachment B – Vicinity Map & Historical Documentation
- Attachment C – Photographs
- Attachment D – Effects of Landmark Designation