



Agenda Report

July 22, 2019

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 ARDEN ROAD LANDMARK DISTRICT (LD-28)**

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 that the proposed Arden Road Landmark District meets the criteria for designation as a Landmark District as specified in §17.62.040.F of the Pasadena Municipal Code;
3. Find that the proposed zoning map amendment is consistent with the General Plan;
4. Find that the proposed zoning map amendment would not be detrimental to the public interest, health, safety, convenience, or general welfare of the City; and
5. Approve the landmark district designation and the zoning map amendment for the Arden Road Landmark District, LD-28; 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-28 Overlay Zone.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

On December 4, 2018, the Historic Preservation Commission determined that the proposed Arden Road Landmark District meets the criteria for designation in §17.62.040.F of the Pasadena Municipal Code (PMC) and unanimously recommended approval of the designation.

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

At a public hearing on March 13, 2019, the Planning Commission acknowledged the determination of the Historic Preservation Commission that the proposed landmark district meets the criteria for designation in §17.62.040.F of the Pasadena Municipal Code (PMC), confirmed that the designation has written support from at least 51% of the owners of individual parcels in the district, found that the proposed zoning map amendment to create a landmark district is consistent with the General Plan and voted unanimously to recommend that the City Council approve designation of the Arden Road Landmark District.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Arden Road 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 (54%) have indicated support in writing for the designation.

BACKGROUND:

Since 1989, the City Council has formally designated 27 landmark districts. On October 9, 2018, Amy Kessel, on behalf of supporting property owners in the proposed landmark district, submitted an application for designation of the Arden Road 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. Prior to the application being made, staff conducted an informational meeting which was noticed to all property owners within the district boundary, at the Beckman Institute Auditorium, 400 S. Wilson Avenue on March 31, 2016.

Description of the Proposed Landmark District

Boundaries: The proposed boundaries of the district are Arden Road roughly between South Mentor Avenue on the west, properties at 1141 and 1144 Arden Road on the east, northern property lines of Arden Road properties on the north and the City boundary to the south (see Attachment A). Within these boundaries there are 28 properties. Further analysis, justification, and recommendations regarding these boundaries are provided below.

After the Historic Preservation Commission review of the landmark district proposal, but before the Planning Commission review, one property owner on the edge of the district (908 Oak Grove Drive) rescinded their petition signatures and requested to be removed from the district boundary. The applicant agreed to this request and the revised boundary map in Attachment A and the information in this report reflects the removal of this property from the district boundaries.

Construction Dates: The majority of the contributing buildings (21) in the district were built or substantially remodeled on the exterior in the Period Revival Era (1915-1942).

All (6) of the non-contributing buildings were built outside the period of significance. One additional non-contributing property is a private utility facility. See Attachment B for construction dates of each specific property in the district.

Architects and Builders: The district has a strong collection of architect-designed buildings including works by Wallace Neff, L.C. Brockway, Garrett Van Pelt Jr., G. Lawrence Stimson, Frederick Kennedy Jr., Marston & Van Pelt, John C. Austin, Everett Phipps Babcock, Robert Ainsworth and Roland Coate. An unknown architect named C.R. Wicks designed four houses in the district, all for the same owner, Dr. H.F. Lafler. Staff searched for information about the architect but was unable to find any information about his or her work. Interestingly, the two houses designed by John C. Austin were both originally built during the Arts & Crafts period in close proximity to each other near the corner of Colorado Street (now Boulevard) and Madison Avenue and were both relocated to Arden Road and altered in 1925. One of these, 1121 Arden Road, was owned, relocated and altered by Austin himself. Significant builders C.G. Wopschall, G. Lawrence Stimson and J.J. Brintnall constructed several houses in the proposed district.

Zoning: All of the properties within the proposed district are zoned single-family residential (RS-2 and RS-4).

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

ANALYSIS:

The proposed landmark district is a grouping of single-family residential buildings built or altered on the exterior between 1917 and 1930 which represent architectural styles and development patterns identified as significant in the City's study "Residential Period Revival Architecture and Development in Pasadena from 1915-1942."

Criteria for Designation

The Arden Road 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;

Most (21) of the buildings in the district were built or altered to a period revival era architectural style between 1917 and 1930, the period of significance, and remain largely intact on their street-facing elevations (75% contributing).

Generally, buildings that retain most of their original exterior features or historically significant alterations are contributing to a landmark district. Minor exterior alterations, which may be reversed, typically do not render a building noncontributing. Buildings with two or more substantial alterations including

openings with altered dimensions, exterior cladding/coating in a different material or finish, or modified roof form or material are typically noncontributing. Buildings built outside of the period of significance or that do not represent the general architectural character or historic context of the district are also noncontributing.

In this case, there are four houses that were built between 1948 and 1961 and represent the context of "Cultural Resources of the Recent Past." Given the strong architectural cohesion of the Period Revival-era context represented by the majority of the properties in the district, staff recommends that these houses be excluded from the period of significance and be considered non-contributing to the district. One of these houses, 1070 Arden Road, is a Late Regency style house designed by architect Bob Ray Offenhauser and may be individually eligible for landmark designation.

- 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 is a collection of residential buildings that represent architectural styles and development patterns, as well as works of significant architects, identified in the historic context report "Residential Period Revival Architecture and Development in Pasadena from 1915-1942."

Support from Property Owners:

The application includes a petition indicating that owners of 54% (15 out of 28) of the properties within the district boundary signified their support for landmark district designation in writing, which exceeds the minimum 51% requirement. No formal opposition to this landmark district has been received, with the exception of the one property owner mentioned previously that requested to be excluded and has been removed from the proposed boundary.

RESULTS OF DESIGNATION:

The landmark district designation protects the historic and architectural character of a neighborhood through the Certificate of Appropriateness process. The Zoning 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.

Guidelines: The Design Guidelines for Historic Districts and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings apply to reviews of all projects affecting structures in designated landmark districts.

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 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."

FISCAL IMPACT:

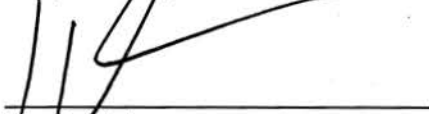
In some instances, owners of designated properties may apply to the City for a Historic Property Contract (Mills Act), which allows an alternative and often lower property tax assessment. The City Council reviewed the projected loss of property tax revenue from this program in 2002 when it adopted the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



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Attachments: (3)

- Attachment A – Map of Proposed Landmark District
- Attachment B – Inventory of Properties
- Attachment C – Photographs of Buildings in Proposed Landmark District