



# Agenda Report

November 9, 2020

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council  
**FROM:** Planning & Community Development Department  
**SUBJECT: DESIGNATION OF THE EDWARD WOODRUFF (E.W.) HOUSE AT 1500 N. LOS ROBLES 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) pursuant to Section 15308 Class 8 of the CEQA Guidelines pertaining to Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment and that there are no features that distinguish this project from others in the exempt class; therefore, there are no unusual circumstances;
2. Find that main residence, detached garage, and freestanding rear yard pergola accessory structure located at 1500 N. Los Robles Avenue meet landmark designation Criterion "C" in Pasadena Municipal Code (P.M.C) Section 17.62.040(C)(2)(c) because they embody the distinctive characteristics of a locally significant property type, architectural style, period, and method of construction. The property is a locally significant example of a two-story Arts and Crafts period single-family residence, designed and built by the original owner, Edward William (E.W.) Woodruff;
3. Adopt the attached resolution approving a Declaration of Landmark Designation for 1500 N. Los Robles Avenue, Pasadena, California;
4. Authorize the Mayor to execute the attached Declaration of Landmark Designation for 1500 N. Los Robles Avenue, 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 July 21, 2020, the Historic Preservation Commission recommended that the City Council approve the designation of the house and accessory structures at 1500 N. Los Robles Avenue as a Landmark under Criterion “C” of P.M.C Section 17.62.040.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The house and accessory structures at 1500 N. Los Robles Avenue qualify for designation as a Landmark under Criterion “C” because they embody the distinctive characteristics of a locally significant property type, architectural style and period. The house and accessory structures are locally significant, intact examples of a two-story Arts and Crafts period house, designed and built by the original owner, Edward William (E.W.) Woodruff, and it retains integrity.

## **BACKGROUND:**

On May 18, 2020, property owners Carol and Jeff Potter submitted an application for Landmark designation of the single-family house at 1500 North Los Robles Avenue. City staff evaluated the property according to the criteria in Title 17 of the P.M.C. and determined that the building qualifies for designation as a landmark.

### Property Data

- Address: 1500 North Los Robles Avenue, Pasadena
- Location: East side of North Los Robles Avenue, between Ladera Street and Howard Street
- Date of Construction Completion: 1913 (source: Original Building Permit)
- Original Architect: Owner/Builder, Edward William Woodruff (source: Original Building Permit)
- Original Builder: Owner/Builder, Edward William Woodruff (Source: Original Building Permit)
- Original / Present Use: Single-family residence
- Property size: 10,940 square feet (source: County Assessor)
- Building size: 2,702 square feet (source: County Assessor)

### Site Features

The property is located on a rectangular-shaped lot on the east side of North Los Robles Avenue, two blocks north of East Washington Boulevard, between Ladera Street and Howard Street. To the immediate north, south and east of the property are single-family residential properties of varying sizes, ages, and architectural styles. Directly across North Los Robles Avenue to the west is a multi-family residential structure, surrounded on all sides by the Pasadena Christian School. The property was part of the Thornton and Morse Tract which was subdivided in 1904 and was originally 200 feet

deep and approximately 74 feet wide. At a later date, approximately 43 feet of the east, rear yard was subdivided to create an expanded parcel for the property located at 469 Ladera Street.

The site is relatively flat with a landscaped front yard setback of approximately 32 feet, a rear yard of approximately 51 feet, a north side yard of approximately 11 feet, and a south side yard of 18 feet and contains a two-story single-family residence, a detached garage, and a freestanding pergola.

### Exterior Features of the House and Accessory Structures

The E.W. Woodruff House is a prime example of the two-story Arts and Crafts period house. The house features distinctive character-defining features of the Arts and Crafts movement including a prominent split front-facing gable that extends at mid-elevation to the south to partially cover a full-width upper-floor balcony that in turn serves as the cover to the full-width first-floor front porch. The upper balcony is framed by a low wood balustrade of equally-spaced vertical wood slats. The underside of the upper-floor balcony deck features expressed beams that tie into the exposed wood structural framing of the front porch. The front porch features three equally-spaced, tapered stucco-covered piers with wooden posts at the upper ends. A solid stucco-covered balustrade wraps the front porch with openings at the southern half to accommodate concrete steps. The gable roofing features extended roof eaves with visible rafter tails.

The house is notable for its expressive and exposed wood structural framing with a repeating design element of wood posts, extended wood cross beams, and wood knee braces at all connection points. This detailing is repeated at the upper gable ends with three exposed outriggers supported by wood knee braces. The upper gable ends also feature vertical slatted attic vents, located above a decorative lintel beam with triple pairs of protruding trim. The house is uniformly clad in straight-edge wood shingles and features original wood, double-hung or fixed wood windows with upper transoms. The windows and doors each feature protruding sills, wide casement trim, and an extended wood lintel trim. An original wide oak front door features a leaded glass window, and multi-paned side lites. Directly above the front door entry, at the upper-floor balcony, is a pair of double French doors. An original pergola extends from the front porch to serve as a porte cochere at the south side yard driveway, with the southern end supported by a tapered stucco pier, matching the piers of the front porch. The rear of the house roughly mirrors the front with a split gable that extends out at the northern half to provide a rear covered porch.

The original detached garage with sliding barn doors remains standing in its original location along the southeast rear yard. The garage also features a gable roof, open eaves, and shingle siding. The pergola runs directly behind the rear of the house extending from the rear covered porch and running north to the north side yard property line. The pergola features a colonnade of neoclassical rounded Doric columns, capped by a simple rectangular wood runner beam on each side, with equally spaced wood

rectangular stretcher beams crossing the colonnade span. The stretcher beams are smaller in dimension than the runner beams.

### Documented Changes to the Property

The house has two notable additions including an 8'x12' second story addition at the rear supported with wooden posts and covered with a shed roof. The other addition is a 7'x20' second story addition at the north elevation that features a cross gable roof, and covers a side porch with similar detailing as the front porch.

Between 1919 and 1929, a long rear yard pergola that connected the subject property to the property immediately to the north, 1508 North Los Robles Avenue, was constructed by the house's second owners, Joseph and Florence Taggart; the Taggarts also owned the 1508 property. The Taggarts sold 1508 North Los Robles Avenue in 1929, and additions to that property in 1942 resulted in the demolition of the pergola as it crossed the property line; however, the pergola at 1500 North Los Robles remains.

A wood beam extension, jutting from the header of the front upper gable extends across the front of the front-facing upper balcony and is supported by a wood post that is extended from the northwest corner of the balcony balustrade. This wood framing is unoriginal as evidenced by a historical photograph. It is unknown when this feature was added.

A building permit record exists for a storage shed that was also constructed by the Taggarts in the far eastern rear yard before a portion of the rear yard was portioned off to the property at 469 Ladera Street. Although no longer a part of the subject property, the storage shed is still standing and in the same location, as evidenced by satellite imagery and the 1930 Sanborn Map.

### Current Conditions, Use, and Proposed Plans

The exterior of the building is largely intact as evidenced by historical photographs, and remains in good condition. No significant changes to the property are proposed at this time. Aside from being surveyed as an individual eligible resource, the property was also surveyed as a contributor to the eligible Howard Street Landmark District.

### Historical Overview

#### *Arts and Crafts Origins and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Single-Family Residential Development*

According to the Historic Context/Property Type Report entitled 'Residential Architecture of Pasadena, CA, 1895-1918: The Influence of the Arts and Crafts Movement' prepared for the City of Pasadena in 1998, the property was evaluated under the Historic Context of the Single-Family Residential Architecture of the Arts and Crafts Period in Pasadena, 1898-1918.

The Arts and Crafts architectural movement originated in England by William Morris during the second half of the nineteenth century primarily as a revolutionary reaction against industrialization, but also a reaction against the formality of Victorian architecture. The Arts and Crafts movement was more than an architectural movement, it was a lifestyle of change that espoused a simpler way of living, and a return to the handmade craft of product. The Arts and Craft movement was meant to provide relief from the deleterious effects of industrialization, along with the pollution, and overcrowding of cities, and mass-manufactured goods of the industrialized era of the late 1800s.

The movement gained traction in the United States by two New Yorkers, Elbert Hubbard, author and founder of an American Arts and Crafts community, the Roycrafters, and Gustav Stickley, a furniture maker and journalist-publisher of *The Craftsman* magazine, published between 1901 and 1916. *The Craftsman* featured many articles about the Arts and Crafts architectural movement in Pasadena, highlighted by contributor and Pasadenan, Helen Lukens Gaut. Ms. Gaut contributed photographs, essays, and most notably introduced Charles and Henry Greene to the American public. It was through these early promoters, along with the William Morris societies, that the Arts and Crafts movement gained prominence in American architectural vernacular, with three primary epicenters of Arts and Crafts architecture forming around Oak-Park in Illinois through Frank Lloyd Wright, the San Francisco Bay Area through Bernard Maybeck, and in Pasadena through the Greene brothers with distinctive regionalistic styles, promoted through the early suburb developments tied to the Garden City urban movement.

#### *Arts and Crafts Architectural Style*

The rise in the Arts and Crafts movement also coincided with the population and building boom of Pasadena at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and closely reflected the early ethos of Pasadena's founding in 1886 as a semi-isolated city of artistry unlike the more industrious City of Los Angeles.

When the City's first settlers arrived from the Mid-west and Eastern United States, they brought with them the known architectural housing styles of those regions, primarily the Queen Anne shingle-style house. With the advent of the Arts and Crafts movement, and an influx of designers and architects residing in the Arroyo Seco Valley and outlying regions, a new architectural movement that was reflective of the Southern California landscape soon developed. Naturally, this style grew out of the Queen Anne shingle-style house, and developed into what is known as the Arts and Crafts architectural style, transforming the verticality and formality of the Queen Anne into a new architectural idiom of horizontality and the embracement of the California lifestyle through indoor and outdoor spaces such as fully integrated front porches, rear porches, and sleeping porches. Houses also featured thoughtful expanses of glazing to bring in air and light, while, on the exterior, the houses were sheathed in wood siding of varying styles reflective of a naturalistic spirit.

The Arts and Crafts architectural style was noted for its harmonious siting within the landscape, and often seen as an organic extension of the landscape through its wood-clad exterior, simplified form that was respectful of the land contours, and horizontality that emphasized its grounding and being of the land, not just on the land.

Local California materials were used for construction including redwood and Arroyo stones. Stucco was also used, albeit restrictively, on architectural features such as foundations, porch piers, lower walls, and foundations. The craft of design was evident in the arrangement of the building's form, its relationship to its surroundings, the application and palette of its exterior materials, and its use of articulated wood structural elements such as those found on the E.W. Woodruff House.

The internal layout of programmatic rooms were also designed to reflect the new Arts and Crafts, and Southern California ethos, with the removal of formalized and partitioned rooms found in the traditional architecture of the 1800s to a more free-flowing arrangement of spaces, and minimal use of dedicated circulation zones such as hallways. Common in Arts and Crafts architecture was the informal entry through a front porch, which often opened immediately onto an expansive living room, considered under this architectural lexicon, the heart of the home. Bedrooms often opened onto balconies or sleeping porches at the upper levels, while ground-level bedrooms would open onto, or look out onto the rear and side yard gardens.

The "Craftsman" style is often used interchangeably with the Arts and Crafts movement, however, as the Historic Context Report notes, the use of "Craftsman" in describing this period of architecture is often misguided as it represents an ahistorical usage of vocabulary. Under this report, the authors also noted that there are two subtypes of architecture that were surveyed, the one-or one-and-one-half story bungalow, and the two-story Arts and Crafts period house, with the former often referred to as the California Bungalow, and the latter representative of the E.W. Woodruff house.

The California Bungalow is often determined as the primary dwelling type associated with Pasadena, and its sense of place as a "City of Homes." The California Bungalow provided affordable, yet quality, housing to an expanding working and professional class of Pasadena citizens. The statelier, and larger two-story Arts and Crafts houses, provided housing for the City's new wealthier East Coast and Mid-west transplants, including E.W. Woodruff.

#### *E.W. Woodruff and the History of the E.W. Woodruff House*

According to the Sutton Nebraska Museum Historical Society, Edward William Woodruff was once a prominent local businessman and political figure of Sutton, a small-town in southern Nebraska. Mr. Woodruff was the second-ward councilman in 1888-1890, and the mayor in 1891. Woodruff was born in Illinois in 1874 and married Emma Catherine Barnhart (b. 1864, PA) in 1881. Woodruff was initially listed in the 1880 Census of Sutton as a boarder of a local hotel. The Woodruffs had a daughter, Lena Mary, in 1882. Mr. Woodruff eventually transitioned into the financial sector, and was appointed

as a clerk in the Treasury Department in Washington D.C. in the 1890s. The Woodruffs resided in D.C. until Edward retired around 1912 and moved his family out to Pasadena, California. It was here that he built his new home in 1913, the E.W. Woodruff house located at 1500 North Los Robles Avenue. Emma Woodruff died in 1934, and Edward died in 1937. Their only daughter, Lena, never married, and was a stenographer with a local school, before moving on to become a stenographer at Pasadena City Hall. Lena died in 1957.

The Woodruffs lived together in the E.W. Woodruff house until 1919 when they sold it to Joseph and Florence Taggart. The Taggarts resided at the property with their two sons until moving to Altadena in 1924. However, they retained the property as a rental, eventually selling it in 1935 to Lewis and Blanche Garrison. In 1938, the Garrisons sold the property to Everest P. and Norma Zediker and their four children. The family resided there until about 1950, after which the property was primarily used as a rental until the current owners, the Potters, purchased the house in 1994.

#### *Character-Defining Features of the Two-Story Arts and Crafts Period House:*

The character-defining features of the two-story Arts and Crafts period house are:

- Fully-integrated Indoor and outdoor transitional spaces
  - Prominent front porches, rear porches, and upper floor sleeping porches
- Wood-sheathed exterior
  - Shiplap, clapboard, shingle siding, or combination of
- Articulated window and door fenestrations through trim and sill treatments
- Front or side gable roofing and deep overhangs
- Locally-sourced materials and thoughtful application of material palette
  - Wood siding, Arroyo stone
- Expressed structural detailing and wood joinery
  - Exposed rafters and rafter tails, gable outriggers, knee braces, trellis woodwork, elemental porch columns, upper gable end detailing
- Simple geometric forms
- De-formalized internal spatial programming

Character-defining features are those visual aspects and physical features or elements constructed during the property's period of significance that give the building its character. In general, a property that retains its character defining features continues to convey its significance and therefore retains integrity as an historic resource. Removal or alteration of just one character-defining feature does not necessarily alter the integrity of an historic resource. Impacts to historic integrity can result from a single major change or from many incremental changes over time.

#### **ANALYSIS:**

The E.W. Woodruff House and accessory structures at 1500 North Los Robles Avenue are 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.*

Generally, in order to qualify under Criterion C, a 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.

Under Criterion C, the E.W. Woodruff House at 1500 North Los Robles Avenue is significant because it is a locally significant, intact example of a single-family two-story Arts and Crafts Period House. The house was previously evaluated in the City's 1999 survey of the Arts & Crafts Period as being individually eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. More recently, the property was also identified as a contributing structure to an eligible landmark district on Howard Street between Los Robles Avenue and El Molino Avenue. Though records do not indicate a specific designer, architect, or building, the original owner was the builder of record on the original building permit. The building has a high level of architectural integrity (its ability to demonstrate why it is significant) through its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship and feeling, as follows:

- Location: The building and other site features are in their original locations.
- Design: The building retains the majority of its form, plan, space, structure, and style, including its simple massing, exterior shingle-clad walls, original fenestration patterns, doors and windows, original and extensive articulated exposed wood structural elements, roof form, primary entry, and detached original garage.
- Setting: The single-family residential property along with its similar immediate surrounding context is largely intact and has been identified as the eligible Howard Street Landmark District. The subject property has remained largely unaltered with the house and garage in their original locations. The only change to the setting was the cessation of the far rear yard to another adjacent property which is currently used as rear yard space and thus, essentially retaining the same historic setting.
- Materials: The building retains a majority, of its original exterior materials including cladding, windows and doors.
- Workmanship: The building retains the majority of its exterior materials and features that reflect the craftsmanship of early 20<sup>th</sup> century two-story Arts and



Crafts single-family design and construction, and therefore retains integrity of workmanship.

- **Feeling:** The property clearly expresses the characteristics of the two-story single-family Arts and Crafts architectural style and evokes the feeling of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century residential housing construction of Pasadena.
- **Association:** The property at 1500 North Los Robles Avenue retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship and feeling, and therefore continues to convey its association with early 20<sup>th</sup> century single-family residential development and the Arts and Crafts movement in Pasadena.

Based on the above, the property retains sufficient integrity to qualify for designation as a landmark under Criterion C. The building retains all of its original character-defining features, including its original windows and doors, shingle-clad exterior, prominent wood structural detailing, the full-width front porch that transitions to the still-standing porte cochere, original roof forms at the primary elevation, and the original detached garage. All alterations to the building, including the north side yard second story addition and ground level side porch, and rear-facing second story addition, along with the rear yard pergola structure, have historic significance of their own right, while still retaining compatibility with the original structure in form, materiality, composition, and detailing. Though the exact dates of these additions are not known, they are noted on the Sanborn Map of 1930, implying that they were constructed during the house's period of significance between the original owner, E.W. Woodruff, and the house's second owners, the Taggarts. Additionally, the neoclassical pergola constructed by the Taggarts is evocative of its construction era, during Pasadena's then subsequent and notable residential architectural movement: the Period Revival era of the 1920s and 1930s.

Contributing features to this designation include the main house, the rear yard detached garage, and the rear yard pergola structure.

### **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:**

The proposed designation qualifies for a categorical exemption pursuant to Section 15308, Class 8 of the CEQA Guidelines. 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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DAVID M. REYES  
Director of Planning & Community  
Development Department

Prepared by:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Edward Sisson  
Assistant Planner

Reviewed by:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Leon E. White  
Principal Planner

Approved by:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
STEVE MERMELL  
City Manager

Attachments (8):

- A. Vicinity Map
- B. Application
- C. Sanborn Maps (1910 and 1930)
- D. Original Tract Map and Current Parcel Map
- E. Building Description Blanks
- F. Historical Photograph
- G. Current Photographs
- H. Effects of Historic Designation