



Agenda Report

April 12, 2021

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council
FROM: Planning & Community Development Department
SUBJECT: **COMMENTS TO STATE HISTORICAL RESOURCES COMMISSION ON THE NOMINATION OF THE PASADENA AVENUE HISTORIC DISTRICT FOR LISTING IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council authorize the Mayor to forward a recommendation to the State Historical Resources Commission in support of the listing of the Pasadena Avenue Historic District in the National Register of Historic Places (prepared and submitted by Shannon L. Papin of Common Bond Preservation on behalf of Pasadena Heritage), with technical comments outlined in this report, including the additional comment provided by the Historic Preservation Commission at its April 6, 2021 meeting.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

At a special meeting on April 6, 2021, the Historic Preservation Commission recommended that the City Council support the listing of the Pasadena Avenue Historic District in the National Register of Historic Places, with technical comments outlined in this report and the additional comment that the property at 160 W. State Street be noted as a work of architect Arthur S. Heineman and that he be included in the list and biographies of significant architects in the registration form.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Pasadena Avenue Historic District is under consideration by the State Historical Resources Commission (SHRC) for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in response to a registration form submitted by Shannon L. Papin on behalf of Pasadena Heritage. Staff and the Historic Preservation Commission have reviewed the registration form and recommend that the City Council authorize the Mayor to submit a letter to the SHRC in support of the nomination with technical comments outlined in this report.

BACKGROUND:

The City recently received notification from the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) about the review of the Pasadena Avenue Historic District by the State Historical Resources Commission (SHRC). In accordance with the requirements of the National Park Service, the SHPO routinely notifies local officials and property owners about nominations to the National Register. The purpose of the notification is to allow time for public comment before the SHRC holds a public hearing on the nomination and the SHPO forwards a recommendation to the National Park Service.

SHPO also notifies historic preservation commissions in local jurisdictions, such as Pasadena, which participate in the Certified Local Government program. A letter from the SHPO (dated February 24, 2021; Attachment A) asks the City to provide comments on the nominations through the City's Chief Elected Official no later than 15 days before the meeting of the State Historical Resources Commission (SHRC) at which the nominations will be considered (scheduled for a virtual meeting on April 30, 2021).

Results of National Register Listing

Currently, for projects affecting properties in historic districts determined eligible for listing or officially listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance (Zoning Code Chapter 17.62) requires review and approval of applications for Certificate of Appropriateness for proposed demolitions, relocations or exterior alterations that are visible from a public or private street.

ANALYSIS:

The National Register registration form that has been prepared for the Pasadena Avenue Historic District (Attachment C) provides a thorough description of the proposed district, its historic context, and all of the recommended contributing and non-contributing resources it contains. Following detailed review, staff recommends that the following comments be transmitted to the State Historic Resources Commission to consider in its review of the nomination (a draft comment letter is included in Attachment B):

Recommended Comments:

1. **Location:** Section 2 on page 1 of the registration form identifies the City of the proposed district as Pasadena; however, a small portion of the district also extends into the City of South Pasadena. As such, both cities should be noted.
2. **District Period of Significance/Mid-Century Architecture Inclusion:** The justification for the proposed period of significance terminating in 1938 is unclear in the registration form. It identifies three early Ranch style and Minimal Traditional buildings built in or prior to 1938 as being contributing and similar buildings built after 1938 as non-contributing. The properties at 216 Arlington Drive, 181 Columbia Street, and 1100 S. Pasadena Avenue, all Ranch or

Minimal Traditional style houses built in 1937 and 1938, are identified as contributing and 1171 Avoca Avenue; 180 West Glenarm Street (incorrectly classified as Tudor Revival); 926-966, 1062, 1128, 1141, 1151 and 1175 S. Pasadena Avenue; and 240 W. State Street are all Ranch or Minimal Traditional style houses identified as non-contributing due to post-1938 construction. While some of these post-1938 buildings may be altered from their original appearance, other Ranch style houses listed as non-contributing are intact and architecturally similar to those identified as contributing. In addition, there are houses representing period revival-era architectural styles that were built in 1938 (231, 269 and 1105 Columbia Street) and none built after that date, which may be the reason this date was identified as the end of the period of significance, although this is not clearly stated. The registration form should include further analysis of the potential significance of examples of architectural styles from the mid-twentieth century to further justify the proposed end date of the period of significance and determine whether architectural styles from this period are contributing to the district.

3. **District Boundaries:** Further justification for the proposed district boundaries should be provided. For example, it is unclear as to why additional properties built within the period of significance, of similar architectural style and apparently architecturally intact, along Arlington Drive east of the proposed boundary are not included in the district.
4. **Description/Sketch Map Agreement:** The Sketch Map on page 107, Section 9 outlines in different colors the contributing properties (light blue), properties with contributing primary structures and non-contributing secondary structures (pink) and non-contributing properties (salmon), which correlate to the architectural descriptions of each property in Section 7. The following properties have conflicts between the description and the map:
 - a. 1183 Avoca Avenue (property number 26-27, Section 7 page 13) is shown on the Sketch Map in pink but described as having two contributing structures, one of which is a turn-of-the-twentieth-century carriage house. As such, this property should be rendered in light blue.
 - b. 232 West State Street (property number 167-168, Section 7, page 60) is described as having two contributing structures, but it is rendered in pink rather than light blue on the Sketch Map.
 - c. 261 Wigmore Drive (property number 185-186, Section 7, page 66-67) is described as having one contributing structure and one non-contributing structure, but it is rendered in light blue rather than pink on the Sketch Map.
5. **Recommended Contributing Status Change:** 1210 Avoca Avenue (property number 38-39, Section 7, page 16) is described as having two contributing structures; however, 1949 additions and alterations to the front façade (including a projecting bay window and application of wood siding) significantly elongate the original volume of the house to give it a Ranch style appearance that confuses its original historical configuration and character. Staff recommends this property be changed to non-contributing due to these inappropriate alterations.

6. Alterations: The description of the property at 1171 Avoca Avenue does not include several apparent alterations from its original appearance, and the description of 866 S. Pasadena Avenue references “many alterations” that are not fully described.
7. Summary Table: It would be helpful for the City’s future administration of the district if the summary table starting on page 71, Section 7 could also include construction date, architectural style and architect information.

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:

Advisory recommendations on National Register nominations are exempt from environmental review. The listing of properties and districts in the National Register is categorically exempt from CEQA under class 8, actions by regulatory agencies 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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Approved by:



STEVE MERMELL
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Attachments (3):

- A. SHPO Request for Comments & Meeting Notice
- B. Draft Comment Letter
- C. Draft Pasadena Avenue Historic District National Register of Historic Places Registration Form