

Agenda Report

TO:

CITY COUNCIL

DATE: DECEMBER 13, 1999

FROM:

CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT:

APPROVAL OF A RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT THE

DESIGNATION OF CITY HALL AS A NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK AND AUTHORIZATION FOR THE MAYOR TO SIGN A LETTER TO APPROPRIATE ELECTED OFFICIALS TO

REQUEST SUPPORT FOR THE DESIGNATION.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

- 1. Approve the Resolution to support the designation of the Pasadena City Hall as a National Historic Landmark; and
- 2. Authorize the Mayor to notify by letter the appropriate elected officials of the City's effort to have the Pasadena City Hall designated as a National Historic Landmark and request support for the nomination of the building.

BACKGROUND:

Although the Pasadena City Hall has been listed in the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Civic Center Historic District since 1979 and locally designated as a landmark since 1972, it has not yet been recognized at the level of significance that the building merits—a building that is nationally significant and listed in the National Register as a National Historic Landmark. As the dominant feature of a grouping of buildings and sites in the Civic Center Historic District, it is also the most historically and architecturally important structure of that district. Designed by John Bakewell and Arthur Brown and constructed in 1926-27, City Hall is nationally significant for its exuberant design and for its embodiment of elements that represent the City Beautiful movement of the 1890s through the 1920s.

Within the last several months, City staff has consulted with the National Historic Landmark (NHL) staff of the National Park Service (NPS), who have concurred that the building is eligible and encouraged its designation. NHL will work with City staff on the proposed designation and will visit Pasadena in early 2000 to initiate the project. Once a nomination document is completed by staff, it will be evaluated by the National Park Service staff and the National Park System Advisory Board before it is presented to the Secretary of the Interior for a final approval.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7.B.(5)

Five properties in Pasadena have already achieved National Historic Landmark status. Two of these properties, the Rose Bowl and the David B. Gamble House, are owned by the City. The other three properties are the Hale Solar Laboratory, the Space Flight Operations Facility (JPL) and the Space Simulator (JPL).

The effect of designation as a National Historic Landmark is discussed in the attached excerpt from the Code of Federal Regulations, 36 CFR Part 65 (Attachment B). National Historic Landmark designation of the Pasadena City Hall will not impose additional restrictions on changes to or projects involving the building. Federal review procedures (Section 106), which are implemented if federal funding is used for a construction project, also remain the same. The Section 106 procedure, which considers the impact of federally-funded projects on historic resources, applies to a property that is listed in the National Register, is a National Historic Landmark or is eligible for National Register designation. Compliance with Section 106 ensures that federal funds do not have a negative impact on a historic resource, regardless of whether or not a building has obtained formal designation. NHL designation does not affect local review procedures by the Design and Cultural Heritage commissions.

An excerpt from the NPS "Questions & Answers" about NHL designation provides additional information (ATTACHMENT C). In summary, NHL designation does not affect ownership of a property; it does not obligate an owner to make specific changes to a property or to follow advice by the NPS on changes (unless changes are federally funded, licensed or permitted); it does not require that a property be open to the public. Benefits of NHL status that are not available to other historic properties are: priority funding opportunities; a bronze display plaque provided by the NPS; and, additional technical and information services provided by NPS staff.

FISCAL IMPACT:

When designated a National Historic Landmark, the building may be eligible for benefits not available to other historic properties; e.g., enhanced opportunities for grant money and technical assistance from National Park Service staff.

Respectfully submitted

City Manager

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Approved by:

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ATTACHMENT A: Resolution

ATTACHMENT B: 36 CFR Part 65, "Effects of Designation"

ATTACHMENT C: Question & Answers from NPS