

Agenda Report

TO: CITY COUNCIL **DATE: NOVEMBER 24, 2003**

FROM: CITY MANAGER

**SUBJECT: PUBLIC HEARING: NOMINATION OF 1201 AVOCA AVENUE FOR
DESIGNATION AS A LANDMARK**

CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council, following a public hearing:

1. Acknowledge that the application for a landmark designation is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act.
2. Find that the single-family residence at 1201 Avoca Avenue meets Criterion 3 of Section 17.52.040, P.M.C., for its significance as an important representation of architecture of the Arts and Crafts period in Pasadena and an architecturally intact example of the work of G. Lawrence Stimson Company, a prominent design/build firm that had a major influence on the built environment during the period;
3. Approve the designation of the property as a landmark;
4. Adopt a resolution designating the property as a landmark (ATTACHMENT A);
5. Authorize the Mayor to execute the attached declaration of designation (ATTACHMENT B); and
6. Direct the City Clerk to record the declaration with the Los Angeles County Recorder.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

On October 6, 2003, the Commission voted unanimously to recommend that the City Council designate 1201 Avoca Avenue a landmark.

BACKGROUND:

Nomination Application

The owner of the property at 1201 Avoca Avenue submitted an application for landmark designation of the house on August 17, 2003.

Public Notice

Notice of a public hearing by the Historic Preservation Commission to review the nomination was posted and mailed to property owners within a 300-foot radius of the nominated property.

Review by the Historic Preservation Commission

On October 6, 2003, the Historic Preservation Commission held a public hearing to consider whether the property met the criteria for designation as a landmark and to forward a recommendation to the City Council. At that meeting the Commission found that the property meets landmark criterion 3 based on its integrity as an important representation of the Arts and Crafts period in Pasadena and an architecturally intact example of the work of the G. Lawrence Stimson Company.

Description

The nominated property is a two-story Arts and Craft period house with a low-pitched side gable roof and wood shake cladding on the exterior walls. Its plan is a simple rectangular; however, design and massing of architectural elements is asymmetrical. The front (east) elevation has three bays with a centered entry bay. This bay has a wide, wood, paneled door with sidelights that have a vertical "T" muntin pattern, which is repeated in doors and windows throughout the house. A deep portico with a very low-pitched gable roof and exposed rafters and beams, shelters the front entry. Wood posts that are set on brick half-piers support it. Matching piers are at the corners of a slightly raised concrete porch platform that continues across the entire front of the house. Above the portico is a slightly projecting bay with a pair of twelve-light windows to the left and a single twelve-light window to the right. A wood planter box under these windows gives a strong horizontal emphasis to this bay.

The house features a roof that has an unbroken eave line across the front façade and gable ends that extend unusually far beyond the gable wall emphasizes the horizontal design of this house. It has exposed rafters on the front elevation and large extended beams on the side elevations. The underside of the roof extension also has exposed wood lath. The entire gable wall is filled with horizontal wood slats.

Significance

The evaluation of significance of 1201 Avoca Avenue is under Criterion 3 for landmark designation because the house is a locally significant historic resource that embodies distinctive characteristics of the two-story Arts and Crafts period house and it represents the work of the G. Lawrence Stimson Company, a prominent designer, builder, and land developer in the Pasadena area from the early 1900s to the 1930s. The property was previously evaluated in the "Third Supplemental Historic Architectural Survey Report/710 Freeway Gap Closure Report (1994)" and was identified as part of a grouping of residential properties that is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district.

The house, constructed in 1909, is one of several that were built by Stimson in the southwest part of the City in the early 1900s. George L. Stimson, son of G. Lawrence, who ran the business end of the company, may have been the architect for this house. The company is responsible for many noted houses built during the Arts and Crafts period and 1201 Avoca Avenue, although there have been some alterations, is significant because it exhibits both typical architectural features of the period and unusual features that show a creative interpretation of the ideas for architectural design during that time. Typical elements of the two-story Arts and Crafts period in this house are wood shake exterior walls, low-pitch gable roof, exposed roofing elements, wide entry and bands of windows. The unusual, though not unique, features of the house are noteworthy: the slightly asymmetrical placement and design of façade elements, the extreme extension of the roof eaves on the gable ends, and treatment of the entire gable ends as vents.

Landmark Designation

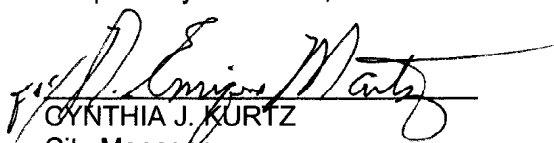
To date, Pasadena has designated 53 landmarks and historic monuments. When a property is designated as a landmark, it is protected from inappropriate alterations and demolition. The Historic Preservation Commission or staff reviews exterior alterations for compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. The Commission may deny demolition of the house.

The designation has no legal effect on zoning, land use, or the sale of the property. The City applies the State Historical Building Code to work affecting designated landmarks. Owners of designated landmarks may apply to the City for a Mills Act contract.

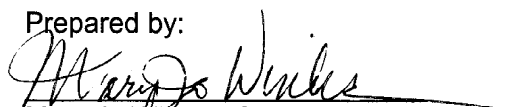
FISCAL IMPACT

A decision on the designation will have a negligible effect on revenues to the City. The General Fee Schedule exempts designated landmarks from fees for Certificates of Appropriateness (permits) from the Historic Preservation Commission. The City does not, however, waive any other fees (e.g., plan check, construction tax) for projects affecting designated landmarks. Some staff time may be needed if there is a proposal to expand or alter a designated structure. Owners of properties formally designated as landmarks (or listed in the National Register of Historic Places) that enter into a Mills Act agreement with the City receive a property tax reduction, which reduces property tax revenues to the City.

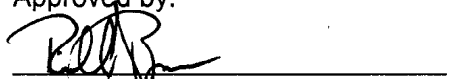
Respectfully submitted,


CYNTHIA J. KURTZ
City Manager

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