

Agenda Report

TO: City Council

DATE: October 13, 2003

FROM: City Manager

SUBJECT: Proposed Zone Change for 250, 252, 260, 268, and 280 S. Orange Grove Boulevard to Establish Ross Grove Landmark District Overlay Zone (LD-6)

RECOMMENDATION:

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

1. Find that the application for a zone change is categorically exempt from environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act, (Class 8, Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment).
2. Find that the proposed zone change is consistent with the General Plan and the purposes of the zoning ordinance.
3. Acknowledge the decision of the Historic Preservation Commission on September 15, 2003 that the proposed Ross Grove Landmark District (Attachment 1) meets the criteria for designation as a landmark district (P.M.C. §17.52.40).
4. Acknowledge that the petition with signatures in support of the landmark overlay district petition exceeds the 51 percent requirement in P.M.C. §17.52.050.
5. Approve the zone change to add the LD (Landmark District) overlay district to the existing WGSP-1 zoning (West Gateway Specific Plan).
6. Approve a resolution (Attachment 3) to adopt the supplemental chapter for the Ross Grove Landmark District (Attachment 2) in the City's *Design Guidelines for Historic Districts*.
7. Direct the City Attorney to prepare an ordinance amending the official zoning map of the City of Pasadena established in P.M.C. § 17.08.040 by adding the Ross Grove Landmark District Overlay (LD-6).

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM ADVISORY BODIES:

At a public meeting on September 15, 2003, the Historic Preservation Commission determined that the proposed district meets the criteria in P.M.C. §17.52.040 for establishment of a landmark district.

Following a public hearing on September 24, 2003, the Planning Commission found that the proposed zone change to create a landmark district is consistent with the General Plan and the purposes of the zoning ordinance and recommended that the City Council approve the establishment of the Ross Grove Landmark District and adopt the supplemental chapter (conservation plan). All of the public comments at the hearing were in favor of the landmark district.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This application for a zone change is to establish a Landmark District for 5 single-family properties that were formally part of the Ambassador Campus. The district has an excellent collection of architectural styles that reflect the character of South Orange Grove as it appeared in the first quarter of the 20th century. All five are considered contributing properties¹ easily surpassing the 60% threshold in the new preservation ordinance. At this time, the Worldwide Church of God owns all the properties, therefore, this district designation has 100% owner support.

BACKGROUND:

The proposal to create a district grew out of the Worldwide Church of God's desire (as owner and applicant) as well as the larger community's interest in preserving these five properties along South Orange Grove Boulevard. If approved, this neighborhood will be the City's sixth landmark district, following Bungalow Heaven in 1989, Garfield Heights in 1999, Banbury Oaks in 2002, and Washington Square and South Oakland earlier this year. The landmark district designation protects the historic and architectural character of a neighborhood through design review. The code requires design review for major exterior alterations visible from the street. Demolitions, relocations and new construction are also reviewed in the districts.

Construction Dates/ Period of Significance: The houses in the district were built from 1892 to 1911.

Architectural Styles/Building Types: Representative architectural styles are: Classical/Vernacular/Prairie (#250), Craftsman (#260), Colonial Revival (#252 and #268) and Prairie style (#280). The buildings are mostly two-story single-family houses.

¹ Although the *Historic Resources Survey for the West Gateway Specific Plan Area* (1997) concluded that 250, 252, and 260 S. Orange Grove were less than significant, in this re-evaluation for the grouping staff looked at them in a broader context and found sufficient significance for a locally designated district.

Boundaries: The district is five single-family houses along South Orange Grove between West Del Mar Boulevard and the former Grove Street (now vacated). The five properties, once part of the Ambassador Campus, are now being sold as individual single-family houses. Other contiguous properties that are still part of the Ambassador Campus Planned Development are not included at this time due to a pending application (and EIR) for a larger project. The disposition of these additional historic resources will be addressed in that environmental analysis. Staff explored expanding the district to the west but found insufficient interest among adjacent property owners.

Eligibility for Landmark District: This collection of houses “constitutes (part of) the largest grouping of original South Orange Grove Boulevard homes still in existence.”² It has citywide significance because, in this compact area, there are a considerable variety of architectural styles, and this grouping reflects the character of South Orange Grove Boulevard as it appeared in the first quarter of the 20th century.

District Name: Most of the properties were part of the original Ross Subdivision. The district is adjacent to the former Grove Street (vacated in 1967), hence the name “Ross Grove.”

Guidelines: The *Design Guidelines for Historic Districts*, adopted by the City Council on September 16, 2002, apply to reviews of all projects in residential historic districts. These guidelines, developed with the participation of local residents, are an elaboration of the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*, and they have examples and illustrations targeting local conditions. These guidelines also have a freestanding chapter for each landmark district. Under the new ordinance, each district develops a new chapter for its area, and this chapter, once approved, is then added to the *Design Guidelines for Historic Districts* (See Attachment 2).

GENERAL PLAN AND ZONING CONSISTENCY:

These properties are low-to-medium density residential. The proposed project is consistent with the General Plan and will advance the objectives of the Land Use Element by promoting preservation of historically and architecturally significant buildings and revitalization of traditional neighborhoods.

This property is zoned WGSP-1B (West Gateway Specific Plan). The LD-6 zone is proposed as an overlay over the current zoning. The application is consistent with the purposes of the zoning ordinance, which includes several residential preservation goals.

² Gregory, Tim. *The Bella N. Scofield House – A History*, 2003.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH:

City staff notified all property owners within 300 feet around the district and invited them to the Historic Preservation Commission's meeting/workshop, the Planning Commission hearing and to this City Council hearing. Staff also posted notices in the neighborhood for all 3 public meetings.

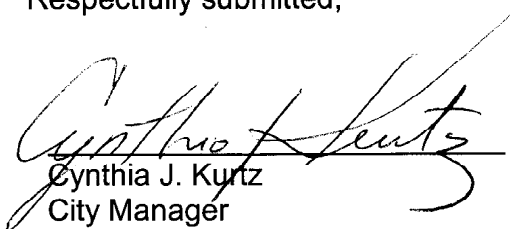
ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:

This zone change application is categorically exempt under the California Environmental Quality Act, (Class 8, Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment).

FISCAL IMPACT:


The City's General Fee Schedule exempts fees for design review in landmark districts. Fees will continue to be collected for all other entitlements, permits, and taxes. Based on the size of the district, the overall cost of this service to the City should be minimal. Over the long term, as the City designates more landmark districts and regulates design review in National Register districts, the costs of providing this service free of charge are likely to become more substantial. Property owners in a landmark district may also apply to the City for a Mills Act contract. In that event, the City absorbs a minor loss of revenue from property taxes over a period of ten years or longer.

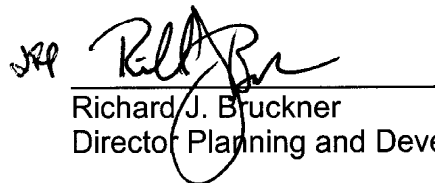
Respectfully submitted,


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