



### 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 April 19, 2004, 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 the significance of the building as a unique example of the Prairie School of architecture.

### Description

The two-story Prairie style house at 683 South Los Robles Avenue has a wood-framed structure that appears to have a rectangular plan from the street, but in fact is irregular in shape. The strong horizontal orientation of the house is emphasized by the flat roof and the use of different materials on the first and second story exterior walls. The first story is finished with stucco, while the second is sheathed in wood shingles. The roof is characterized by broad overhanging eaves, a bead board soffit, and a plain fascia. The design and massing of the front (east) elevation is asymmetrical. A low arroyo stone wall with piers at each end defines the front porch. Approximately three-quarters of the length of the front elevation, the porch is offset to the south. In 1916, the porch was covered by a flat roof supported by arroyo stone columns. This features complements the arroyo stone wall around the porch and the flat roof of the house. The main entrance is centered on the porch and consists of a set of French doors flanked by secondary doors. The doors are divided into multiple lights and are surrounded by wood molding that flares out at the upper corners. To each side of the main entrance are fixed-pane windows that are similar in design but different in size. Square wood columns are situated along the second story and appear to support the flat roof. The exterior wall of the second story is set behind these columns. The narrow space between allows for the casement windows to open out. The columns are positioned between the windows creating an irregular pattern, but providing unobstructed views. One fixed-pane window is distinguished by a leaded glass transom. Like the main entrance, the other windows on the second story are divided into multiple lights.

The south elevation is distinguished by a porte cochere constructed of thick timbers, the ends of which are cut on the diagonal. The structure is attached to the rear of the elevation and shelters a secondary entrance. A short broad set of concrete steps leads to the dining room. Flanking the steps are low arroyo stone piers. The door features multiple lights and original hardware. The windows to each side are divided into multiple lights like those on the front elevation.

The rear elevation has a shallow bay projecting from the north end. Windows associated with the kitchen have been replaced by louvers. Otherwise, the windows are multi-paned casements like those on the other elevations.

There are two small ancillary buildings on the rear of the lot: a one-car garage and a one-story guesthouse. Both buildings have front-facing gabled roofs with east-west orientations.

The interior of the house retains the original floor plan and many of the original features and finishes. On the first floor there are four main interconnected rooms with original hardwood floors, molding, light fixtures, hardware, and built-in cabinetry and bookcases. Upstairs there are three bedrooms and one bathroom.

There are no mature trees or landscaping on the site; however, large arroyo stones are situated along the edge of the sidewalk.

Currently under rehabilitation, the house remains remarkably intact. A historical photograph of the house (see attached) depicts two minor changes. A wood railing that surrounded the edge of the roof and a pergola (similar in design to the porte cochere) have been removed, but could be easily restored. In 1932, the second-story sleeping porch was screened. The screens have since been removed; however, a built-in cabinet remains. It may still be removed in the rehabilitation. All of the windows appear to be original, with the exception of those on the rear related to the kitchen. The shingles on the second story were in poor condition and recently removed. They will be replaced in kind as a part of the rehabilitation.

The garage and guesthouse were constructed shortly after the main house. They do not, however, contribute to the historic character of the property and are not proposed for inclusion in the landmark designation. The garage was in poor condition and is being rebuilt. The garage is visible at the end of the driveway. It was originally covered with shingles, but will be recovered with stucco to match the first story of the main house. The guesthouse was also in poor condition and is undergoing major rehabilitation. It was also originally covered with shingles and will also be recovered with stucco. The non-original door and windows will remain. It is not visible from the public right-of-way.

#### Significance

The Commission evaluated the property under Criterion 3 because of its architectural significance. Criterion 3 applies to architecturally significant historic resources: *It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a locally significant historic resource property type, architectural style, period, or method of construction, or that represents the work of an architect, designer, engineer, or builder who is locally significant, or that possesses high artistic values that are locally significance.*

The house embodies distinctive characteristics of the Prairie School of architecture with regional influences. Constructed in 1913, the house was apparently designed by the original owner, Friedrich O. Andreae. Born in Vienna, Austria around 1872, Andreae was formerly a banker in Highland Mills, New York. He came to Pasadena in 1909. Andreae died a year after the permit was issued to construct the house. Only 41 years of age at the time of his death, he was survived by his wife Gertrude and a nine-year old son. In 1915, the house was sold to Arther and Louvisa Gaston. It changed hands many times through the years.

The Prairie School of architecture is best understood in the broader context of the Arts and Crafts movement. While the architectural manifestation of the Arts and Crafts movement in Pasadena was the Craftsman style, in the Midwest it was the Prairie style. It is generally associated with the work of Frank Lloyd Wright and other Chicago practitioners. The typical Prairie style house was a low horizontal rectangular box two-stories in height. Low-pitched hipped roofs were characterized by broad overhanging

eaves. Exteriors were sheathed with stucco or shingles, or a combination of the two. Rows of casement windows contributed to the horizontal orientation of the houses.

683 South Los Robles Avenue is a unique local example of a Prairie style house. It embodies the distinguishing characteristics of the style in its boxy rectangular plan, combination of stucco and shingle siding, broad overhanging eaves, and horizontal orientation. The flat roof is a variation on the low-pitched hipped roof usually associated with the style. Yet it maintains the emphasis on the horizontal orientation that is a character-defining feature of the style.

While the massing and plan of the house are related to the Prairie School, the arroyo stone porch and piers and the sleeping porch are regional modifications that link the house to the Craftsman style. The extensive use of French doors and the sleeping porch opened the rooms to the outdoors. The columns along the second story are also unusual, but express the clean lines associated with the Prairie School. The porte cochere and the missing driveway portal are derivative of East Asian architecture that was a source of inspiration for the Arts and Crafts movement.

There are only a few good examples of Prairie style houses in Pasadena. They include the house at 1011 South Madison Avenue (1911, Sylvanus Marston architect) and the house at 250 South Orange Grove Boulevard (1910)

#### Landmark Designation

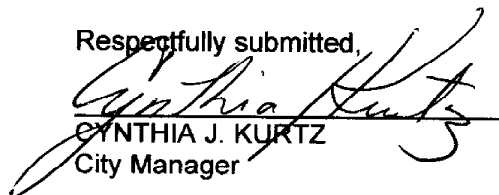
To date, Pasadena has designated 53 landmarks and historic monuments. When a property is designated as a landmark, it is protected from inappropriate alterations and demolition. The Historic Preservation Commission or staff reviews exterior alterations for compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's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

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.

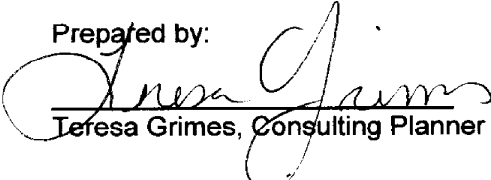
#### **FISCAL IMPACT**

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.

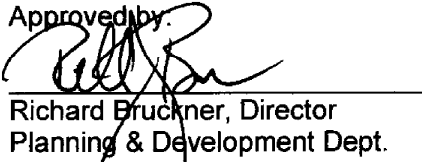
Respectfully submitted,

  
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City Manager

Prepared by:

  
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Approved by:

  
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**ATTACHMENTS:**

- A. Resolution
- B. Declaration of Designation
- C. Photographs