

Agenda Report

TO: CITY COUNCIL

DATE: OCTOBER 3, 2005

FROM: CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: DESIGNATION OF 985 N. LOS ROBLES AVENUE AS A
LANDMARK

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Acknowledge that the designation of a historic resource is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (§15308);
2. As recommended by the Historic Preservation Commission, find that the house at 985 North Los Robles Avenue is significant under Criterion c for designation as a landmark (P.M.C. §17.62.40 B) because the property is an architecturally intact and outstanding representation of early twentieth century Colonial Revival design by architect, Sylvanus Marston.
3. Approve the attached resolution designating 985 North Los Robles Avenue as a landmark (ATTACHMENT A);
4. Authorize the Mayor to execute the attached declaration of designation (ATTACHMENT B); and
5. Direct the City Clerk to record the declaration with the Los Angeles County Recorder.

RECOMMENDATION FROM THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

On August 15, 2005, at a noticed public hearing, the Historic Preservation Commission voted unanimously to recommend approval of the designation of 985 North Los Robles Avenue as a landmark.

BACKGROUND

The application to designate the property as a landmark was submitted by Karen Bateman, representing the owner. The property owner appeared at the Historic Preservation Commission on August 15 and spoke in favor of the designation.

ANALYSIS

SIGNIFICANCE

The property, at 985 N. Los Robles Avenue is eligible for designation under Criterion c, which states:

(The property) embodies the distinctive characteristics of a historic resource property type, period, architectural style or method of construction, or is an exceptional representation of the work of an architect, designer, engineer, or builder whose work is significant to the city, or that possesses high artistic values that are significant to the city.

Under this criterion, 985 North Los Robles is significant as a representative work of the architect, Sylvanus Marston (1883-1946), a prominent local architect in the early part of the twentieth century whose work made a significant contribution to the architectural history of the City. Marston is most noted as the designer of Pasadena's first bungalow court, St. Francis Court, in his early career, and many Period Revival houses that were designed through the 1930's. This Colonial Revival house is significant as an indicator of Marston's transition from influences of the Arts and Crafts movement to the revivals of the 1910's. It is an Arts and Crafts period house of exceptional quality that represents the importance of American Colonial architecture in the context of the Arts and Crafts movement.

A pergola over the sidewalk, the garage and the fence surrounding the property are recent additions and are non-contributing elements to the landmark property. Nonetheless, the house retains its historic integrity (its ability to demonstrate why it is significant) through its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

Sylvanus Marston is noted as one of Pasadena's most distinguished and prolific architects and as a master of disparate styles.¹ Marston was born in Oakland, California, and came to Pasadena when he was an infant with his family (his father had been a prominent builder in San Francisco). He graduated from Cornell University, one of the few schools in the country at that time with a program in architecture, and returned to Pasadena to begin his practice. In 1914, he partnered with another prominent architect, Garret Van Pelt, a partnership that lasted until 1927. During this period, the firm designed many large residences influenced by the classical architecture of Spain and Italy. Their Arthur Garford House (1916) on Hillcrest Avenue is one of the earliest Spanish Colonial Revival houses in the City.

In 1923, another prominent Revival Period architect, Edgar Maybury, joined Marston's firm, which expanded its work to include non-residential buildings and

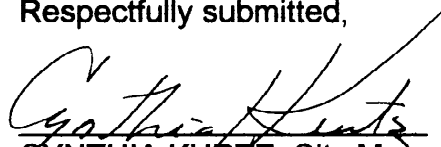
¹ Grimes, Teresa and Winder, Mary Jo: *Residential Period Revival Architecture and Development in Pasadena from 1915-1942*.

to other Southern California cities. One of their most important works from this period in the firm's history is the Westminster Presbyterian Church on North Lake Avenue.

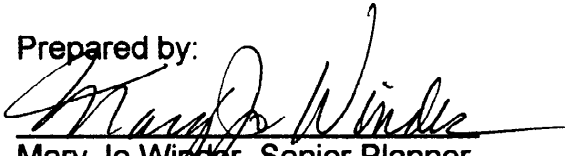
FISCAL IMPACT

Designation of a property does not affect revenues to the City. In some instances, though, owners of designated properties may apply to the City for Historic Property Contract, 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 a local Historic Property Contract (Mills Act) ordinance. That ordinance specifies that the revenue loss shall not exceed \$75,000 per year.

Respectfully submitted,


CYNTHIA KURTZ, City Manager

Prepared by:


Mary Jo Winder, Senior Planner

Approved by:


Richard Bruckner, Director of Planning & Development

ATTACHMENT A: Resolution
ATTACHMENT B: Declaration
ATTACHMENT C: Photographs

ATTACHMENT A

RESOLUTION NO. _____

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PASADENA
ADOPTING A DECLARATION OF LANDMARK DESIGNATION FOR 985
NORTH LOS ROBLES AVENUE, PASADENA, CALIFORNIA**

WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission has found that 985 North Los Robles Avenue meets criterion c, as set forth in Section 17.62.040(B) of the Pasadena Municipal Code; and

WHEREAS, the single-family residence at 985 North Los Robles Avenue is significant because the property is an architecturally intact and outstanding representation of early twentieth century Colonial Revival design by architect, Sylvanus Marston;

WHEREAS, the designation of the property was submitted by Karen Bateman, a representative of the owners, Curt Maranto and Mark Mortenson; and

WHEREAS, the City Council may approve a recommendation from the Historic Preservation Commission to designate a landmark and evidence such approval by adopting a declaration executed by the Mayor pursuant to Subsection 17.62.050 (C) of the Pasadena Municipal Code;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Pasadena that the attached declaration of landmark designation for 985 North Los Robles Avenue is hereby adopted.

Adopted at the _____ meeting of the City Council on the _____ day of _____, 2005 by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

Jane Rodriguez, City Clerk

Approved as to form:



Michele Beal Bagneris, City Attorney

ATTACHMENT B

DECLARATION OF LANDMARK DESIGNATION FOR:

**985 NORTH LOS ROBLES AVENUE
PASADENA, CALIFORNIA**

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 17.62.070 of the Pasadena Municipal Code, the City Council of the City of Pasadena by this declaration hereby designates as a landmark certain real property described as:

See attached legal description.

Under Pasadena Municipal Code Section 17.62.090, all work affecting designated landmarks, except ordinary maintenance and repair, such as but not limited to new construction and additions, exterior alterations, relocation, and demolition, is subject to review by the City of Pasadena Historic Preservation Commission.

DATED: _____

ATTEST:

CITY OF PASADENA
A municipal corporation

Jane Rodriguez, City Clerk

By: _____
Bill Bogaard, Mayor

LEGAL DESCRIPTION

**For 985 North Los Robles Avenue, Pasadena
APN: 5729033018**

East 50 ft of south 150 ft of lot 22 and south 150 ft (ex of st) of lot 23 of DR. R. K. Janes subdivision quarter of the south half of block "R" of Painter and Ball's addition, in the City of Pasadena, County of Los Angeles, State of California, as per map recorded in Book 19, Page 74 of Miscellaneous Records in the office of the County Recorder of said county.