

# Agenda Report

**TO:** CITY COUNCIL **DATE:** MARCH 20, 2006  
**FROM:** CITY MANAGER  
**SUBJECT:** DESIGNATION OF 539 NORTH 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 under Class 8, Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment (CEQA Guidelines, Article 19, §15308);
2. As recommended by the Historic Preservation Commission, find that the house at 539 North Los Robles Avenue is significant under Criterion c for designation as a landmark (P.M.C. §17.62.40 B) because it is architecturally intact and an excellent example of a one and one-half story bungalow from the Arts and Crafts period.
3. Approve the designation of the property at 539 North Los Robles Avenue as a landmark.
4. Adopt the attached resolution approving a Declaration of Landmark Designation for 539 North Los Robles Avenue, Pasadena, California;
5. Authorize the Mayor to execute the attached Declaration of Landmark Designation for 539 North Los Robles Avenue, Pasadena, California; and
6. Direct the City Clerk to record the declaration with the Los Angeles County Recorder.

## **RECOMMENDATION FROM THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

On February 6, 2006, at a noticed public hearing, the Historic Preservation Commission voted unanimously to recommend approval of the designation of 539 North Los Robles Avenue as a landmark.

## **BACKGROUND**

Property owners, Steffi & Frank Lakey, submitted the application for designation of 539 North Los Robles Avenue. Because of the property's integrity and its

importance as an intact representation of a one and one-half story bungalow from the Arts and Crafts period, the staff and the Historic Preservation Commission have concurred that the property should be designated as a landmark.

## **DESCRIPTION**

Permitted in 1905<sup>1</sup>, the one and one-half story house is located on North Los Robles between Villa Street and Parke Street. The surrounding neighborhood contains a mixture of single-family homes from the late 1890's to the 1920's with many multi-family properties built from 1940 through 1963 and a few properties redeveloped in the 1980's and 1990's.

The 2,585-square-foot house exhibits typical Arts and Crafts features including clapboard siding on the first floor and wood-shingle wall cladding on the gables; double-hung wood windows; a wide wood front door with a beveled glass light; vented gables; exposed rafters on the horizontal portions of the roof and triangular braces on the sloping roofs. In addition to the residence, the property has an original detached two-car garage in the same style as the house. This garage and the wood pergola with wisteria in the back yard are both contributing features.

Alterations include the addition of a second dormer on the south elevation, a small balcony on the rear (west) elevation, an enlarged back porch deck, a side yard fence and gate and re-designed front porch steps. The house is not included in the City's National Register nomination of Arts and Crafts period houses<sup>2</sup>.

## **ANALYSIS**

The property at 539 North Los Robles Avenue is eligible for designation under Criterion c, (§17.62.040 PMC) 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, 539 North Los Robles Avenue is significant as an intact example of Arts and Crafts period residential architecture. The house has a high level of architectural integrity (its ability to demonstrate why it is significant)

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<sup>1</sup> The building permit was issued on November 22, 1905, but there is no record of the house in the city directory or tax rolls until 1908.

<sup>2</sup> *The Influence of the Arts & Crafts Movement*, 1997, Lauren Bricker, Robert Winter and Janet Tearnen.

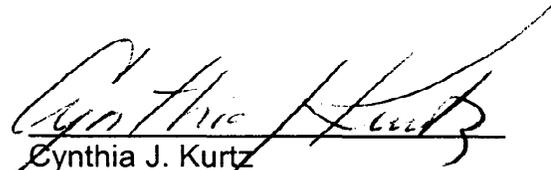
through its design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The house is in its original location and has undergone few significant alterations since its original construction.

According to the City's listing of Arts and Crafts period houses compiled by John Ripley<sup>3</sup>, the house was built by Charles C. Thompson. According to city directories, Charles moved to Pasadena from Iowa in 1882 and he and his wife Belle Thompson lived in this house for over thirty years. There is no additional information about the owner/builder in the City's archives or records.

### FISCAL IMPACT

Designation of this 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.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Cynthia J. Kurtz  
City Manager

Prepared by:

  
Emily Stadnicki  
Planner

Approved by:

JRP   
Richard J. Bruckner  
Director Planning & Development

- ATTACHMENT A: Application
- ATTACHMENT B: Photographs
- ATTACHMENT C: Effects of Landmark Designation

<sup>3</sup> Pasadena Houses of the Craftsman Era, 1995

**RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PASADENA ADOPTING  
A DECLARATION OF LANDMARK DESIGNATION FOR 539 NORTH LOS ROBLES  
AVENUE, PASADENA, CALIFORNIA**

WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission has found that 539 North Los Robles Avenue meets criterion c, as set forth in Section 17.62.040(A) of the Pasadena Municipal Code; and

WHEREAS, the house at 539 North Los Robles Avenue is significant because the property is an architecturally intact and outstanding representation of a one and one-half story bungalow from the Arts and Crafts period;

WHEREAS, the application for Landmark designation is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15331;

WHEREAS, the owners of the property, Steffi and Frank Lakey, nominated the property for Landmark designation; 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 539 North Los Robles Avenue is hereby adopted.

Adopted at the \_\_\_\_\_ meeting of the City Council on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2006 by the following vote:

AYES:

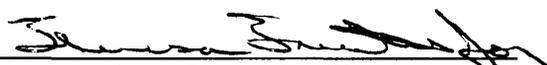
NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jane Rodriguez, City Clerk

Approved as to form:

  
Michele Beal Bagneris, City Attorney

**DECLARATION OF LANDMARK DESIGNATION FOR:**

**539 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 Exhibits "A" & "B")

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

**EXHIBIT "A"**

Parcel 1:

The Southerly 56 feet of Lot 1 of MacPherson's Subdivision of a portion of Lot 6 in Block "S" of San Pasqual, in the City of Pasadena, County of Los Angeles, State of California, as per map recorded in Book 15, Page 79 of Miscellaneous Records, in the Office of the County Recorder of said County.

Except the Northerly 54 feet thereof.

Parcel 2:

Lot 2 of MacPherson's Subdivision of a portion of Lot 6 in Block "S" of San Pasqual, in the City of Pasadena, County of Los Angeles, State of California, as per map recorded in Book 15, Page 79 of Miscellaneous Records, in the Office of the County Recorder of said County.

A metes and bounds description for informational purposes is as follows:

**Beginning** at the Southwest corner of said Lot 2;

Thence along the West line of said Lot 2, North 8°28'00" East, 62.18 feet to the South line of the Northerly 54 feet of the Southerly 56 feet of said Lot 1;

Thence along said South line, North 90°00'00" East, 167.57 feet to the East line of said Lot 1, being also the West line of Los Robles Avenue (70.00 feet wide) as shown on said map;

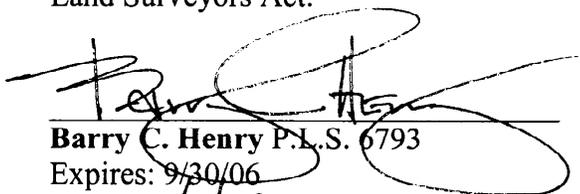
Thence along said West line, South 00°00'00" West, 61.50 feet to the Southeast corner of said Lot 2;

Thence along the South line of said Lot 2, South 90°00'00" West, 176.72 feet to the **Point of Beginning**.

All as shown on Exhibit "B" attached herewith and made a part hereof.

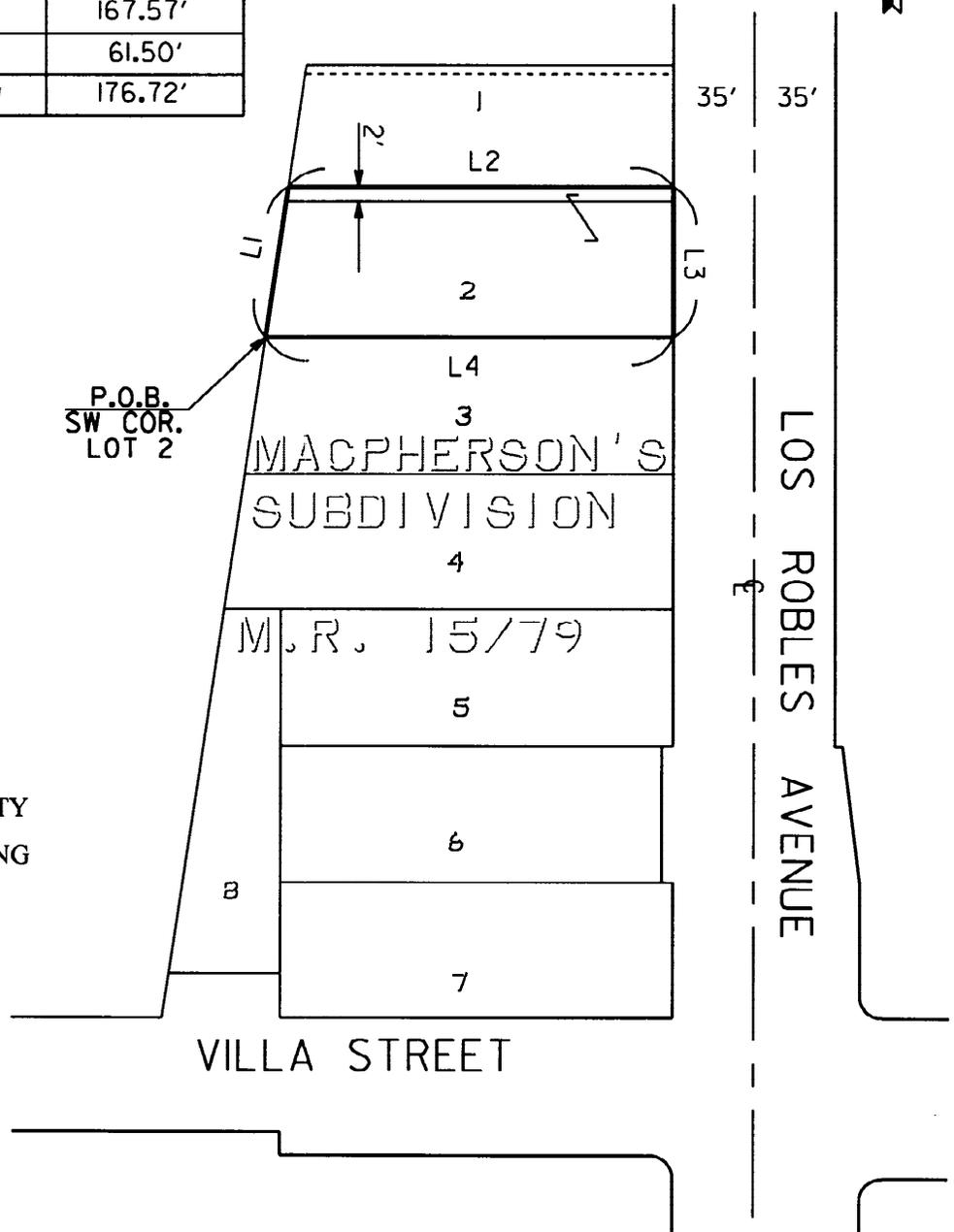
The above described parcel contains 10,587 square feet (0.243 acres), more or less.

This real property description has been prepared by me, or under my direction, in conformance with the Professional Land Surveyors Act.

  
Barry C. Henry P.L.S. 6793  
Expires: 9/30/06  
Date: 3/2/06



LINE DATA		
LINE	BEARING	DISTANCE
L1	N08°28'00"E	62.18'
L2	N90°00'00"E	167.57'
L3	S00°00'00"W	61.50'
L4	S90°00'00"W	176.72'



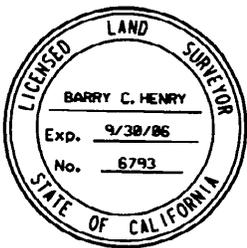
**LEGEND**



LIMITS OF PROPERTY

P.O.B. POINT OF BEGINNING

AREA= 10,587 S.F.



P:\P\PDAX0067\WBS068\wdrnut.dgn



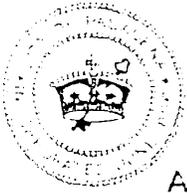
**DAVID EVANS  
AND ASSOCIATES INC**  
800 North Haven Avenue, Suite 300  
Ontario California 91764  
Phone: 909.481.5750

EXHIBIT  
"B"

539 N LOS ROBLES AVE  
APN: 5725-032-003

IN THE CITY OF PASADENA  
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES  
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

SHEET NO:	1 OF 1
JOB NO:	PDAX0067 WBS 084
DATE:	2/28/06
SCALE:	1"=80'



CITY OF PASADENA  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

APPLICATION TO DESIGNATE A HISTORIC RESOURCE AS  
A HISTORIC MONUMENT OR LANDMARK

§ 17.52.050 of the Pasadena Municipal Code sets forth a procedure for designating any historic resource in the City as a historic monument or landmark. 1. The process begins with a preliminary evaluation by staff to determine if the nominated property meets the applicable criteria and is eligible for designation. 2. If staff determines that the nominated property is eligible for designation, the nomination is scheduled for a public hearing before the Historic Preservation Commission. 3. The Historic Preservation Commission determines if the historic resource meets the criteria for designation as a historic monument or landmark. If the Commission finds that the nominated resource qualifies for designation, it forwards a recommendation on the designation to the City Council. 4. At a noticed public hearing, the Council then determines whether to approve or deny the request for designation.

PART I. PROPERTY PROPOSED FOR DESIGNATION

1. Name of Property: \_\_\_\_\_  
 2. Property Address: 539 N. LOS ROBLES AVE., PASADENA  
 3. Date of Original Construction: 1905  
 4. Architect / Builder: CHARLES C. THOMPSON  
 5. Present Owner: (Name) FRANK S. LAKEY AND STEFFI LAKEY  
 (Address) SAME  
 (State/ZIP) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Phone/FAX) (626) 683-0425  
 (E-mail) PETELAKY@ADL.COM

PART II. APPLICANT

Applicant: (if not property owner) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Address) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (State/ZIP) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Phone/FAX) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (E-mail) \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
 P1112017-00422 Date received 12/1/17

PART III: TYPE OF DESIGNATION

PROPERTY TO BE DESIGNATED AS A:

HISTORIC MONUMENT

*A historic monument means any historic resource that is significant at a regional, state or national level, and is an exemplary representation of a particular type of historic resource.*

LANDMARK

*A landmark means any historic resource that is significant at a local level, and is an exemplary representation of a particular type of historic resource.*

PART IV: BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY

Briefly describe the property proposed for designation, indicating whether the entire site or a portion of the site is the subject of the nomination (e.g., how many buildings on the site). A map may be used for the description. Please also submit recent photographs. Use continuation sheet if necessary.

The house was built by Charles C. Thompson. (No permits available from the time period of 1905). The style is Craftsman and Victorian – apparently typical for that period of the century. Building materials were of excellent quality (quarter sawn white oak throughout the living areas). The structural framing is red wood. Ceiling gas lighting in all rooms. Special features were built into the house. For example a dumb waiter and a hot water heater under the eaves (water tight wood boxes with pipes which led to a large metal drum - same idea of today`s solar heating).

Charles C. Thompson came in 1882 from Iowa to California. Before he built the Los Robles house he owned a home on the corner of Los Robles and Walnut Street and he owned 8 acres with fruit trees on Washington Street.

He was a well known photographer and designed the living room in the Los Robles house in a way that he could show slide shows to his visitors.

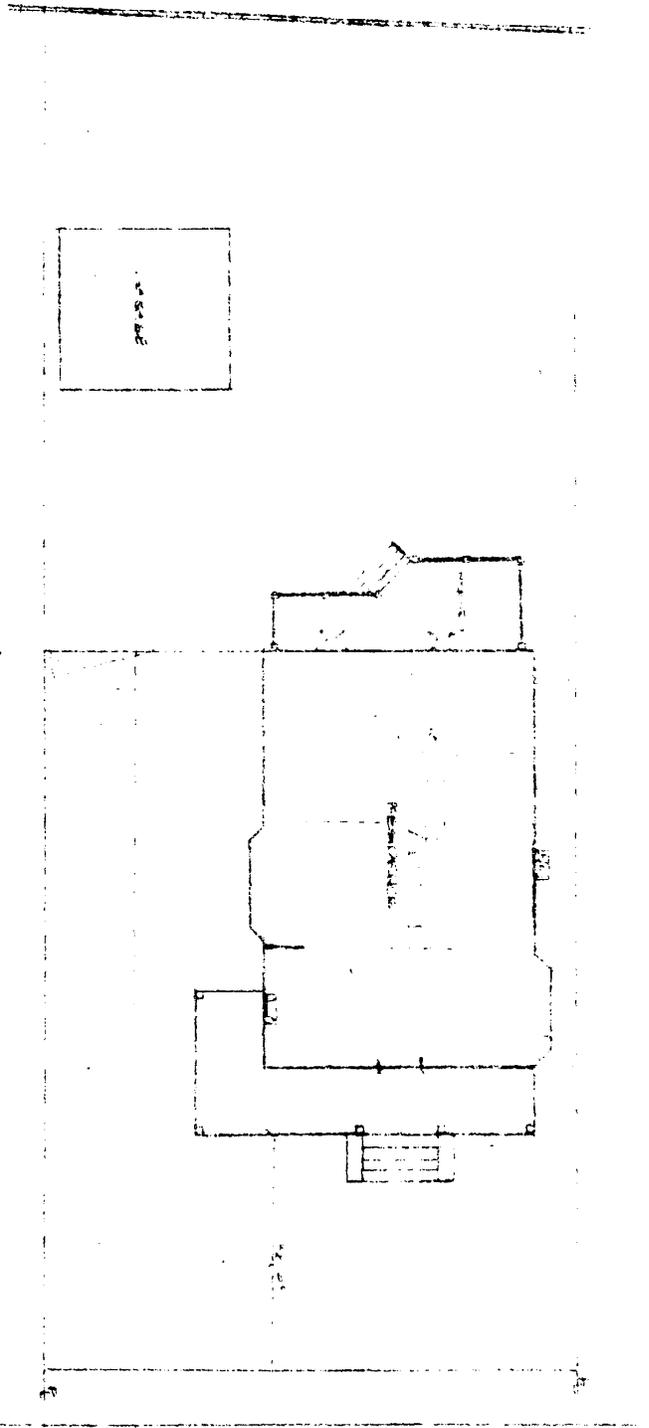
of a designation report. Books, photographs, articles, and other archival information will all be useful to document the significance of the historic resource.

Refer to bibliography, historical photographs, chronology, and other supporting information.

PLAN LOTS 1200-1205

THESE LOTS ARE  
BUILT UP WITH  
A HOUSE AND  
A GARAGE (1972)

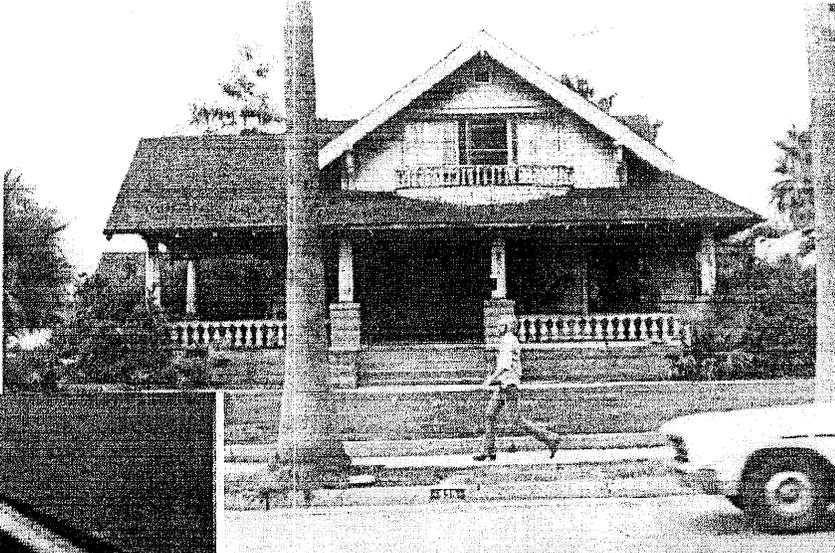
1200-1205



LOS CORLES AVE

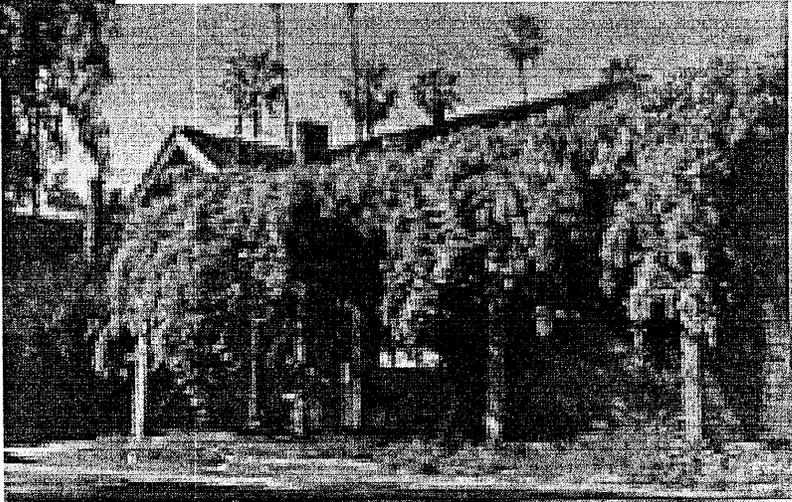


539 N. Los Robles Avenue  
*Individual Landmark*



Archive photos, dates  
unknown

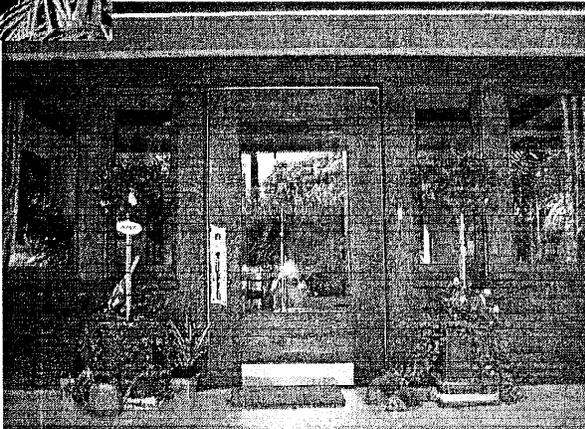
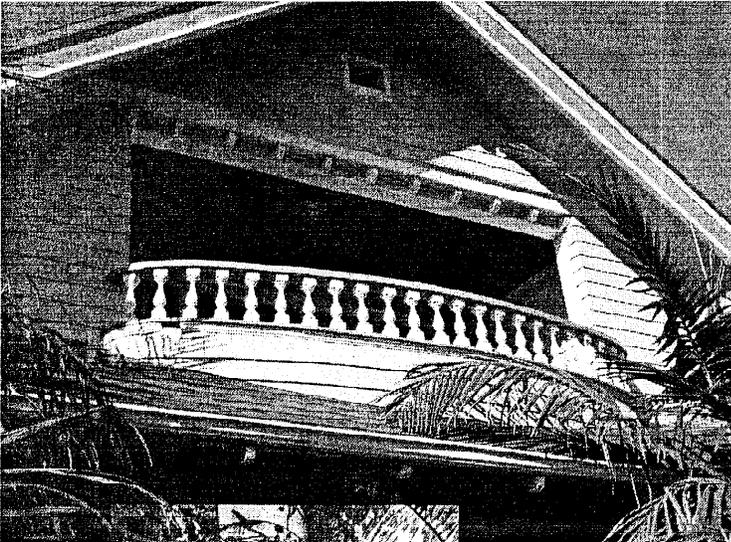
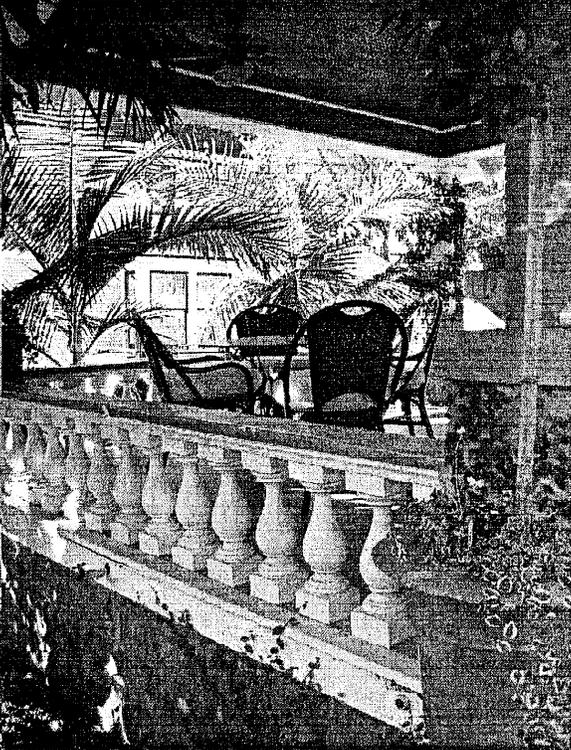
Front elevation and  
wisteria in back yard



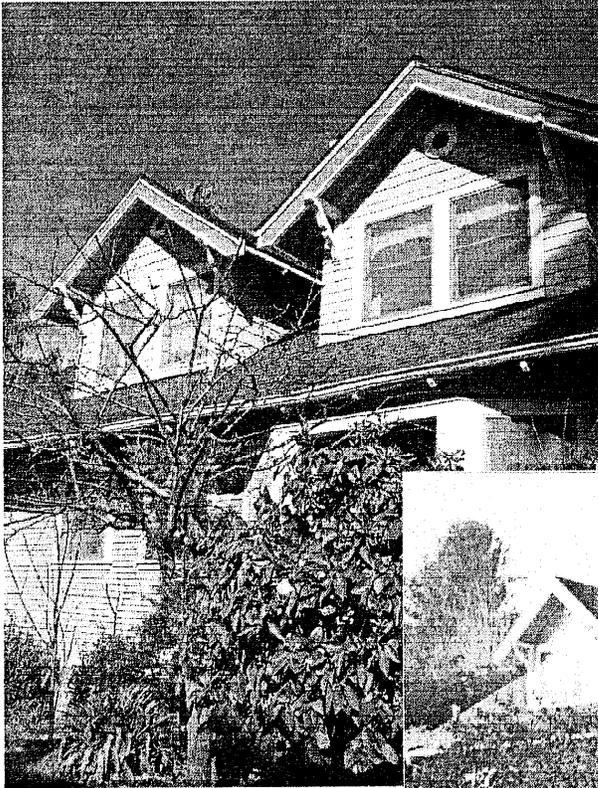
539 N. Los Robles Avenue  
*Individual Landmark*



Front elevation



**539 N. Los Robles Avenue**  
*Individual Landmark*



Side (south)  
elevation



## ATTACHMENT C: EFFECTS OF LANDMARK DESIGNATION

Identifying and designating properties of major significance encourages the preservation and protection of Pasadena's historic resources. The City of Pasadena's Historic Preservation Ordinance provides a process to recognize and protect individual sites and historic districts.

### Designation Process

A property may be nominated for historic designation by any person. Design & Historic Preservation staff then evaluates the property to determine if it meets the criteria for designation. If it appears that the criteria have been met, the staff will prepare a designation report, which describes the property and how it meets the criteria for designation. Once the designation report is complete, the HPC will conduct a public hearing and make a recommendation to the City Council. The City Council may then designate the property as a historic site.

### Alterations/Demolition

Designated historic structures are protected by the Municipal Code. A Certificate of Appropriateness (permit) is required for work to modify the exterior appearance of a designated historic property that is open to public view. A certificate is also required for alterations, additions, new construction, or demolition. This review ensures that any proposed changes are compatible with the character of the individual property and/or historic district. Decisions on proposed alterations are based on the proposed project's compliance with the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the City's adopted *Design Guidelines for Historic Districts*, which is based on the Standards.

The Historic Preservation Commission is the decision-maker for major projects affecting designated historic resources, except in the Central District where the Design Commission is the decision-maker for such projects. Staff is the decision-maker for minor projects affecting designated historic resources. Major projects are defined as demolition, relocation, removal of significant features, significant alteration of front or side elevations, additions to street-facing elevations, and new fences or walls in landmark districts. Minor projects are defined as removal of insignificant exterior features, re-roofing, matching replacement doors and windows, demolition of garages, small side/front additions, most rear additions that are not taller than the original building or replacement of exterior cladding with the same cladding material. Projects affecting non-contributing buildings on a site or in a district, or the environmental setting of a site, are reviewed by staff but are subject to the less stringent requirements than contributing buildings.

Staff-level decisions may be appealed to the Historic Preservation Commission, and decisions by the Commission may be appealed to the City Council. The City Council may also "call for review" all decisions by the staff or Commission.

### Incentives

Designated historic properties are eligible for the following incentives, which are evaluated on a case-by-case basis:

- A Mills Act historic property contract to reduce property taxes in exchange for agreeing to maintain the historic character of the property in accordance with established guidelines.
- Use of more flexible provisions in the State Historical Building Code when making modifications,
- Waiver of covered parking requirements, and
- Potential variances from modern development standards for historic properties undergoing adaptive use or relocation.