

Agenda Report

TO: CITY COUNCIL

DATE: DECEMBER 17, 2007

FROM: CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: DESIGNATION OF 1154 S. FAIR OAKS AVENUE, 160-162 N. ALTADENA DRIVE AND 1879 E. WALNUT STREET AS LANDMARKS

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Acknowledge that the designation of historic resources is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA Guidelines §15308: Class 8 - Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment);
2. Find that Pacific Electric sub-station #2 at 1154 S. Fair Oaks Avenue, meets criteria A & C in P.M.C §17.62.040 for designation as a landmark because of its associations with the Northern District Lines of the Pacific Electric Railway system, and, although substantially altered, it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a brick industrial building from the late 1890's/early 1900's and of a rare property type (electrical substations associated with the former electric rail system);
3. Find that the Lamanda Park electrical sub-station at 160-162 N. Altadena Drive meets criterion C in P.M.C §17.62.040 for designation as a landmark because it embodies the distinctive characteristics of Spanish eclectic design by local architect Robert Ainsworth;
4. Find that the Woodbury Well water pump house at 1879 E. Walnut Street meets criterion C in P.M.C §17.62.040 for designation as a landmark because it embodies the distinctive characteristics of Art Deco style and is a rare example of the style applied to a municipal utility property type in the City;
5. Approve the designation of the properties at 1154 S. Fair Oaks Avenue, 160-162 N. Altadena Drive, and 1879 E. Walnut Street as landmarks;

6. Adopt resolutions approving declarations of Landmark Designation for 1154 S. Fair Oaks Avenue, 160-162 N. Altadena Drive and 1879 E. Walnut Street, Pasadena, California;
7. Authorize the Mayor to execute the attached Declarations of Landmark Designation for 1154 S. Fair Oaks Avenue, 160-162 N. Altadena Drive and 1879 E. Walnut Street, Pasadena, California; and
8. Direct the City Clerk to record the declarations with the Los Angeles County Recorder.

RECOMMENDATION FROM THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

On September 17, 2007, at a noticed public hearing, the Historic Preservation Commission voted unanimously to recommend approval of the designation of 1154 S. Fair Oaks Avenue, 160-162 N. Altadena Drive and 1879 E. Walnut Street as landmarks. The Commission also provided the following additional recommendations:

- The City should research the existence of original windows that are covered over at 1154 S. Fair Oaks Avenue and, if possible, restore the original windows, and
- The City should consider seismic retrofit and use of the building at 1154 S. Fair Oaks for a public purpose or museum, possibly for the Electric Railway Historical Association.

Staff concurs with these recommendations. The city is currently in negotiations with Art Center College of Design regarding the future use and retrofit of the building at 1154 S. Fair Oaks Avenue.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides background information and analysis to the City Council concerning applications for designation of three City-owned buildings as landmarks. Detailed architectural descriptions, including identification of character-defining features for each property, are attached in ATTACHMENTS B – D. Pasadena Heritage filed the applications for designation of the three properties.

BACKGROUND

On May 22, 2007, Pasadena Heritage submitted an application for landmark designation of the City-owned properties at 1154 S. Fair Oaks Avenue and 160-162 N. Altadena Drive. On June 22, 2007, the applicant added a third application for designation of a City-owned property: 1879 E. Walnut Street. Following the procedures in the code, City staff evaluated the properties according to the criteria in Title 17 of the P.M.C., determined that the properties qualify for

designation, and referred the applications to the Historic Preservation Commission.

ANALYSIS

1154 S. Fair Oaks Avenue (Pacific Electric Substation #2)

The property at 1154 S. Fair Oaks Avenue is eligible for designation under criterion A, (§17.62.040 PMC): “[The property] is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of the history of the city.” Under this criterion, Pacific Electric Substation #2 is significant for development of the electric car railway system, both in Pasadena and the surrounding region.

In addition, the building is eligible under criterion C:

[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, the remaining portion of Pacific Electric Substation #2 exhibits the distinctive characteristics of a brick warehouse building from the late-nineteenth century. Although the building is vacant and deteriorated and the front parapet has been removed, it retains sufficient integrity to qualify for designation. The building is also a rare example of its property type: buildings associated with electric power generation for interurban electric railway lines of the Pacific Electric system.

160 – 162 N. Altadena Drive (Lamanda Park Substation)

The property at 160-162 N. Altadena Drive is eligible for designation under criterion C, (§17.62.040 PMC):

[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, the Lamanda Park Substation is significant as an intact example of an eclectic combination of Mediterranean Revival architectural styles applied to a rare property type (buildings associated with the expansion of electricity into houses and business during the 1920's and early 1930's). The building was designed by a distinguished local architect, Robert Ainsworth and it retains its original design and materials. The designation of the property is limited

to the exterior of the building itself and not the equipment or infrastructure on the remainder of the property.

1879 E. Walnut Street (Woodbury Well)

The property at 160-162 N. Altadena Drive is eligible for designation under criterion C, (§17.62.040 PMC):

[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, the water pump house at 1879 E. Walnut Street is significant as an intact example of Art Deco style applied to a utilitarian municipal building. The building retains its original design and materials. The designation of the property is limited to the building itself and not the equipment or infrastructure on the remainder of the property. Furthermore, the designation only affects the exterior of the building.

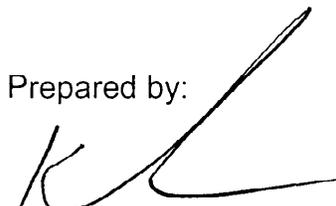
FISCAL IMPACT

Designation of these properties does not affect revenues to the City. With a historic designation, the properties may be in an advantageous position to compete for rehabilitation and restoration grants from private, State, and federal sources. The designations do not restrict future uses of the buildings or future sales of the properties. They also do not impose added costs on normal maintenance and operation of the buildings.

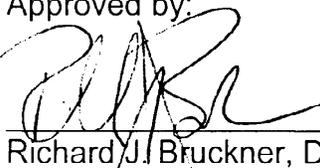
Respectfully submitted,


CYNTHIA J. KURTZ
City Manager

Prepared by:


Kevin Johnson, Planner

Approved by:


Richard J. Bruckner, Director of Planning & Development

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Applications & Taxpayer Protection Form
- B. Pacific Electric Substation #2 Description, Photographs and Documentation
- C. Lamanda Park Substation Description, Photographs and Documentation
- D. Woodbury Well Description and Photographs
- E. Effects of Landmark Designation