

Agenda Report

TO: CITY COUNCIL

DATE: October 20, 2008

FROM: CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: COMMENT TO STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER ON THE NOMINATION OF THE POPPY PEAK AND PEGFAIR ESTATES HISTORIC DISTRICTS AND FIVE INDIVIDUAL HOUSES DESIGNED BY BUFF & HENSMAN TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Recommendation

It is recommended that the City Council authorize the transmittal of a letter (Attachment B) to the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) in support of the nomination of the Poppy Peak and Pegfair Estates Historic Districts and five individual houses designed by Buff & Hensman to the National Register of Historic Places.

Recommendation from the Historic Preservation Commission

The Historic Preservation Commission reviewed a final draft of the National Register nominations at its meeting on September 15, 2008 and recommended that the City Council forward a recommendation approving the nomination to the State Historic Preservation Officer.

Background

The City of Pasadena submitted the multiple-property submission and nominations, which were prepared by architectural historians Barbara Lamprecht and Daniel Paul of the firm ICF Jones & Stokes. The project was funded by a 2007 Certified Local Government (CLG) grant, which in 2006 also funded a historic-context report and reconnaissance survey of Mid-century Modern architecture. The nomination forms, including maps and photographs, are attached to this report.

Before preparing the nominations, City staff mailed notices to the property owners and held a public meeting to gauge the level of support or opposition. The results of this outreach were:

- Poppy Peak, 42% support, 4% opposed, 54% no response
- Pegfair Estates, 32% support, 16% opposed, 52% no response
- All five Buff & Hensman property owners indicated support

Subsequently, on September 15, 2008, the Historic Preservation Commission held a public meeting to review the nominations and to receive comments from the property owners. No owners spoke in opposition at this meeting. In addition to these meetings, the state Office of Historic Preservation will also send an official notice to property owners and allow them to indicate support or opposition. If more than 50% of property owners indicate opposition in writing, the properties may only be determined eligible for listing in the National Register by the Keeper of the Register, but they will not be officially listed.

The proposed Poppy Peak Historic District is located south of La Loma Road, west of Avenue 64 in the southwestern portion of the city and includes the Constance Perkins House (1540 Poppy Peak Drive, Richard Neutra, 1955), which is a locally designated historic monument, three houses designed by Buff & Hensman (1695 Poppy Peak Drive, 1958; 1611 Pleasant Way, 1961 and 1617 Pleasant Way, 1958), two houses designed by Harwell Hamilton Harris (1642 Pleasant Way, 1935 and 1444 Poppy Peak Drive, built in 1936 at 20 Glen Summer Road and relocated to current location in 1951 by architect Leland Evison) and several other architect-designed single-family residences in the Mid-century Modern and California Ranch architectural styles. The period of significance is 1935-1968, which covers the full range of the modern period. The district is eligible for listing under Criterion C in the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance in the area of architecture. Houses built before 1935 are noncontributing to the district because they do not represent the context of the mid-twentieth-century period and the associated architectural styles.

The proposed Pegfair Estates Historic District is located south of Lida Street adjacent to Art Center College of Design's hillside campus and contains a collection of custom houses designed in the Modern Ranch style, many with Asiatic influences, including houses designed by Neptune & Thomas (1540 Pegfair Estates Drive, 1961) and Heitschmidt & Thompson (1620 Pegfair Estates Drive, 1962). The period of significance is 1961-1967. The district is eligible for listing under Criterion C in the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance in the area of architecture.

The five Buff & Hensman houses that are nominated individually are:

- The Frank House; 919 La Loma Road; Buff, Straub & Hensman; 1957
- The Pike House, 512 Glen Court, Calvin Straub, 1958
- The Norton House, 820 Burleigh Drive, Buff & Hensman, 1955
- The Mello House, 541 Fremont Drive; Buff, Straub & Hensman; 1957
- The Gill House, 1385 El Mirador Drive; Buff, Straub & Hensman; 1964

These houses are all eligible for listing under Criterion C in the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance in the area of architecture.

In accordance with the requirements of the National Park Service, the SHPO routinely notifies local officials and property owners about nominations to the National Register. The purpose of the notification is to allow time for public comment before the State Historical Resources Commission holds a public hearing on the nomination and the SHPO forwards a recommendation to the National Park Service. The State Historical Resources Commission is scheduled to review this nomination, and the Marguerita Lane Historic District, in Sacramento on November 7, 2008.

Effects of Listing in the National Register

Benefits of listing in the National Register

- Use of the State Historic Building Code, a more flexible alternative to the Uniform Building Code
- Advantageous position to compete for public and private grants when available
- Consideration in the planning of federal undertakings or activities funded by the federal government¹
- An honor of recognition for architectural or historic worth, worthy of preservation

City review of new construction and alterations

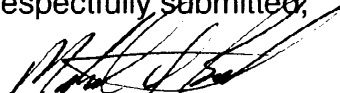
If the two districts and five individual properties are listed by the Keeper of the Register, the Historic Preservation Commission will review new proposals for new infill construction and exterior alterations for compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings.

¹ Properties in the National Register are automatically listed in the California Register of Historic Places and subject to the same review when there is an undertaking by a state agency or funding from the state.

Fiscal Impact

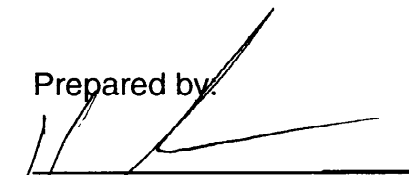
The listing of the Poppy Peak and Pegfair Estates Historic Districts and five individual Buff & Hensman houses in the National Register has no fiscal impact to the City. In some instances, though, owners of designated properties may apply to the City for Historic Property Contract, which allows an alternative 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. Properties with a historic designation may also be in an advantageous position to compete for rehabilitation and restoration grants from private, State, and federal sources, though these funds are rarely available for single-family houses.

Respectfully submitted,



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Approved by:


Richard J. Bruckner
Director Planning & Development

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Letter from SHPO
- B. Draft Support Letter to SHPO
- C. Multiple Property Submission
- D. Poppy Peak Historic District Nomination Form
- E. Pegfair Estates Historic District Nomination Form
- F. Frank House Nomination Form
- G. Pike House Nomination Form
- H. Norton House Nomination Form
- I. Mello House Nomination Form
- J. Gill House Nomination Form
- K. District Maps & Representative Photos