

Agenda Report

April 12, 2010

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: Planning and Development Department

SUBJECT: NOMINATION OF FORD PLACE HISTORIC DISTRICT FOR LISTING IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council authorize transmittal of a letter in support of the nomination of the Ford Place Historic District for listing in the National Register of Historic Places to the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) with the technical corrections and comments (Attachment B) from the Historic Preservation Commission including the recommendation to change the western boundary of the district to omit the vacant parcel at the north-east corner of Ford Place and North Los Robles Avenue.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

At its meeting on March 15, 2010, the Historic Preservation Commission reviewed the National Register nomination for the Ford Place Historic District and recommended that the City Council forward a recommendation approving the nomination to the State Historic Preservation Officer (with minor technical corrections and comments) including a change to the western boundary of the district to omit the vacant parcel at the north-east corner of Ford Place and North Los Robles Avenue.

BACKGROUND:

The Master Development Plan for Fuller Theological Seminary (page 8, item 15), adopted by the City Council in November 2006, requires Fuller Seminary to nominate Ford Place to the National Register of Historic Places. The purpose of this condition is to ensure protection over the long term of a grouping of historic resources on the campus of Fuller Seminary. Pasadena Heritage had originally nominated Ford Place to the National Register in 1981, but this nomination never advanced to the National Park Service for formal consideration. Fuller Seminary has been in this location since 1953.

The proposed district is based on an early residential subdivision centering on North Oakland Avenue and Ford Place. Of the 15 buildings in the district, 11 are contributing. The boundaries in the nomination include the mature Canary Island date palms on both sides of Ford Place and the 100-block of Oakland Avenue and two open parcels: one on the south side of Ford Place (owned by Fuller Seminary) and a vacant parking lot at the

north-east corner of North Los Robles Avenue and Ford Place (owned by the First Congregational Church). The period of significance for the district is 1902-1916, which covers the initial construction of the contributing buildings and major landscaping features. Later changes, such as the Aaron Burns Mall (1971) on a vacated portion of North Oakland Avenue, are outside the period of significance and non-contributing to the district.

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 in Sacramento on April 30, 2010.

The nominated district is eligible for listing in the National Register—at the local level of significance—under Criterion A for its association with "...the early development of Pasadena and as one of the City's earliest planned residential neighborhoods." The district is also eligible under Criterion C for "the high quality examples of period architectural styles constructed [sic] by master architects."

The condition in the master plan specifies, "The nomination shall include all contributing buildings owned and maintained by the applicant" [i.e., Fuller Seminary]. Because the vacant parcel at the edge of the district is not owned by Fuller Seminary, and because it is oriented to Los Robles Avenue and not Ford Place, the Historic Preservation Commission agreed with a recommendation from staff to omit this parcel from the historic district. Whether in the district or outside it, the code requires design review for new construction on this parcel. A major consideration in design review of new construction would be the effect on the adjoining historic district.

Effects 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 grant funds when available
- Consideration in the planning of federal/state undertakings or activities funded by the federal/state government
- Honorary recognition of properties for architectural or historic worth, worthy of preservation
- Eligibility to apply for historic property contracts (for qualifying properties)
- Design review of exterior alterations, new construction, demolition (for compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings)

Design review of new construction and alterations

The City already requires design review for minor and major alterations and new construction in this area. As part of this review, the Design Commission (or Planning Director) applies the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings to all proposals affecting historic resources.

No change in state or federal review

At the state and federal level, regulatory reviews of changes to properties in the National Register occur only when a project has state or federal funding or licensing. These reviews (reviews of federally funded or licensed projects are known as "Section 106") apply equally, though, to properties eligible for listing in the National Register and to properties formally listed in the Register.

COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:

Nominating the Ford Place Historic District to the National Register is consistent with a guiding principle of the General Plan: Change will be harmonized to preserve Pasadena's historic character and environment. Objective 6 in the land-use element promotes historic preservation by encouraging "...preservation of historically and architecturally significant buildings," and policy 6.2, protection of historic and cultural resources, supports measures to "protect historic and cultural resources," which include listing of qualifying properties in the National Register of Historic Places. The nomination, as previously noted, also fulfills a condition of approval in the master development plan for Fuller Seminary.

FISCAL IMPACT:

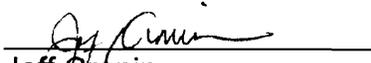
The listing of the Ford Place district in the National Register has no fiscal impact to the City because the City already requires design review for minor and major alterations and new construction in this area. Properties with a historic designation may also be in an advantageous position to compete for rehabilitation and restoration grants from private, State, and federal sources.

Respectfully submitted,

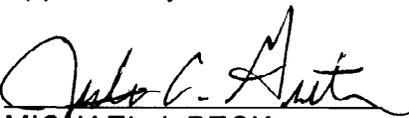


STEVE MERMELL
Assistant City Manager

Prepared by:


Jeff Cronin
Principal Planner

Approved by:


MICHAEL J. BECK
City Manager

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Ford Place Historic District, National Register Registration Form
(with map)
- Attachment B: Recommendations from Historic Preservation Commission