

Agenda Report

July 9, 2012

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council
FROM: Planning Department
SUBJECT: DESIGNATION OF 581 NORTH LOS ROBLES AVENUE AS A LANDMARK

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council:

1. Find that the designation of a historic resource 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 the Charles F. Crowell House at 581 North Los Robles Avenue is significant under Criterion "C" for designation as a landmark (P.M.C. §17.62.040) because it is a locally significant, intact example of an early twentieth century American Foursquare house with Arts & Crafts period influences, built by contractor Charles F. Crowell;
3. Approve the designation of the property at 581 North Los Robles Avenue as a landmark;
4. Adopt the attached resolution approving a Declaration of Landmark Designation for 581 North Los Robles Avenue, Pasadena, California;
5. Authorize the Mayor to execute the attached Declaration of Landmark Designation for 581 North Los Robles Avenue, Pasadena, California; and
6. Direct the City Clerk to record the declaration with the Los Angeles County Recorder.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

On Monday, May 21, 2012, the Historic Preservation Commission recommended that the City Council approve the designation of 581 North Los Robles Avenue as a landmark under criterion C of PMC §17.62.040.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The house at 581 North Los Robles Avenue is eligible for designation as a landmark because it is a locally significant, intact example of an early twentieth century American

Foursquare house with Arts & Crafts period influences, built by contractor Charles F. Crowell.

BACKGROUND:

On February 7, 2012, Mr. Bedros Darkjian, on behalf of the current property owner, Ms. In Eon Moon, submitted an application for landmark designation of her property. The staff evaluated the property according to the landmark criteria in Title 17 of the P.M.C. and determined that the house qualifies for designation.

Description

The Site

The site includes the two-story house, built in 1904, at the eastern end of the property and a detached carriage house at the southeast corner of the site. A concrete driveway is on the southern end of the property, with a low stone wall along its north side. The remainder of the relatively flat site has landscape and hardscape.

Exterior Features of the Building

The two-story building is roughly rectangular in plan with a later addition on the rear. The house is clad in narrow wood lap siding with rounded edges on the first floor and, separated by a wood trim piece and small cornice, wood shingles on the second floor. The primary roof of the house has a hipped form with flared ends resulting in a slight bell shape. The eaves are open with exposed rafters. At the northern half of the east-facing (front) façade, a gable-roofed volume projects slightly from the face of the house. The gable is oriented toward the street and has open eaves supported by a decorative bracket at each end. The roof edge is finished with a barge board with cut-out ornament at the ends and widely spaced rafters that puncture the barge board. A horizontally oriented rectangular window with diamond-shaped divided lights is centered in the gable end, which terminates in a beam with a shallow peaked detail and a row of corbels beneath.

Extending from the gabled volume and over the ground floor front porch is an uncovered balcony surrounded by a flared solid wall clad in wood shingles with a small open wood railing centered at the top edge of each side. The balcony is accessed by a centered wood door with a square light flanked by square window openings connected to the door opening. The openings each have a casement window with square divided lights. The balcony is supported by square wood posts with classical capitals and a solid Arroyo stone wall at the base that defines the front porch area beneath the balcony. The opening for the concrete front steps is centered within the stone wall and the steps are flanked by lower stone walls. The wood front door with recessed panels is centered within the front porch area. The remainder of the street-facing façade to the south of the projecting balcony/porch volume has a single rectangular double-hung

window on the second floor and a larger opening below with a fixed window and divided-light transom flanked by double-hung windows.

The south side elevation has symmetrical window openings with a projecting three-sided bay window at the center of the first floor. The roof of the bay window has a slight closed eave with paired exposed rafters. The north side elevation is largely obscured from public view due to landscaping and a large apartment building on the northerly site, although one window opening at the eastern end is visible. The rear elevation has a later addition with an unusual curving exterior wall at the southwest corner of the house.

Garage & Site Features

A detached garage, formerly a carriage house, is at the rear of the site. The structure has a steeply pitched gable roof with a shed-roof extension at the north end. The original carriage doors have been replaced by a solid wall with two window openings. At the second floor, the original hayloft doors and projecting hoist remain intact, as well as the original wood siding. The building also has an exterior stair and landing to the second floor hayloft area, which appears to be a later addition.

Documented Changes to the Property

A permit was issued for construction of a screened porch, kitchen and one bedroom in 1979. A plan included in the records indicates that this addition was constructed in the rear; the curving portion of the building at the rear was indicated as the screened porch at that time. Close observation of the building indicates that a window opening may have been enclosed on the west elevation, although this does not severely impact the integrity of the house.

Current Condition, Use, and Proposed Plans

The property is intact yet showing signs of deterioration. In particular, the wood shingle cladding on the east balcony is in need of repair/maintenance work. The carriage house is also deteriorated and a new roof was in the process of being installed at the time of the City's most recent inspection. The original doors and windows appear to be intact. The current owner has submitted an application for Historic Property Contract (Mills Act) to assist with rehabilitation work that is needed on the house.

ANALYSIS:

The Charles F. Crowell House at 581 N. Los Robles Avenue is eligible for designation under Criterion C, (PMC §17.62.040(C)(2)), which states:

[The property] embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, architectural style, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of an architect, designer, engineer, or

builder whose work is of significance to the City or, to the region or possesses artistic values of significance to the City or to the region.

Under criterion C, the Crowell House is significant as an intact example of an early twentieth century American Foursquare house with Arts & Crafts period influences designed by contractor Charles F. Crowell. The building exhibits a high quality of design, was constructed during the period of significance for the property type, and meets the registration requirements identified in the Multiple Property Documentation Form, Late 19th/Early 20th Century Development & Architecture in Pasadena.

The house retains all of the character-defining features of the American Foursquare property type, except that in lieu of the typical central hipped dormer, the house has a larger gabled projection and balcony that illustrate the influence of the emerging Arts & Crafts movement. This feature is uncommon on other American Foursquare houses, resulting in a harmonious design that is notable for its demonstration of the transition that was occurring in 1904 from the Victorian era to the Arts & Crafts period. Although the doors have been removed, the carriage house is an important component of the designation as there are very few examples remaining. The original form and second floor hayloft features remain evident and convey the original use of the structure. The house has architectural integrity (its ability to demonstrate why it is significant) through its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship and feeling.

Contributing structures to this designation include the main house and the carriage house.

COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:

The General Plan – Objective 6: Promote preservation of historically and architecturally significant buildings and revitalization of traditional neighborhoods and commercial areas.

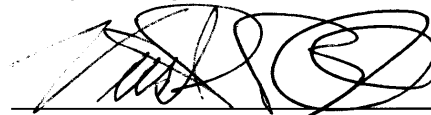
ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

Class 8 exemptions consists of actions taken by regulatory agencies, as authorized by state or local ordinance, to assure the maintenance, restoration, enhancement, or protection of the environment where the regulatory process involves procedures for the protection of the environment.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact as a result of this action and will not have any indirect or support cost requirements. The anticipated impact to other operational programs or capital projects as a result of this action will be minimal. In some instances, 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,



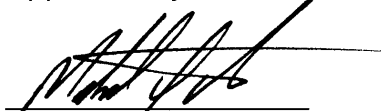
VINCENT P. BERTONI, AICP
Director of Planning

Prepared by:



Kevin Johnson
Planner

Approved by:



MICHAEL J. BECK
City Manager

Attachments (2):

Attachment A – Application Materials
Attachment B – Photographs

RESOLUTION NO. _____

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

WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission has found that 581 North Los Robles Avenue meets criterion "C", as set forth in Section 17.62.040(C) of the Pasadena Municipal Code; and

WHEREAS, the property at 581 North Los Robles Avenue is significant because it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a historic resource property type, period, architectural style or method of construction, or represents the work of an architect, designer, engineer, or builder whose work is significant to the City or to the region, or that possesses high artistic values that are significant to the City or to the region; and

WHEREAS, the application for Historic Landmark designation is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15308; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Bedros Darkjian, on behalf of the property owner, Ms. In Eon Moon, submitted the application for landmark designation; and

WHEREAS, the City Council may approve a recommendation from the Historic Preservation Commission to designate a Historic 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 Historic Landmark designation for 581 North Los Robles Avenue is hereby adopted.

Adopted at the _____ meeting of the City Council on the _____ day of _____, 2012 by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

MARK JOMSKY, CMC, City Clerk

Approved as to form:



Theresa E. Fuentes
Assistant City Attorney

DECLARATION OF HISTORIC LANDMARK DESIGNATION FOR:

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

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 17.62.050 of the Pasadena Municipal Code, the City Council of the City of Pasadena by this declaration hereby designates as a Historic Landmark certain real property described as:

ELIZA JACOBSON'S SUB N 49.13 FT EX OF ST OF LOT 5

Under Pasadena Municipal Code Section 17.62.090, all work affecting designated Historic 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.

DATED: _____

ATTEST:

CITY OF PASADENA
A municipal corporation

Mark Jomsky, City Clerk

By: _____
Bill Bogaard, Mayor