

Agenda Report

October 15, 2012

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council
FROM: Planning & Community Development Department
SUBJECT: DESIGNATION OF 897 SUMMIT AVENUE AS A LANDMARK

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended 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 property at 897 Summit Avenue is significant under Criterion "C" for designation as a landmark (P.M.C. §17.62.040) because it is a locally significant example of a Folk Victorian house and retains its integrity;
3. Approve the designation of the property at 897 Summit Avenue as a landmark;
4. Adopt the attached resolution approving a Declaration of Landmark Designation for 897 Summit Avenue, Pasadena, California;
5. Authorize the Mayor to execute the attached Declaration of Landmark Designation for 897 Summit 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, July 16, 2012, the Historic Preservation Commission recommended that the City Council approve the designation of 897 Summit Avenue as a landmark under Criterion C of PMC §17.62.040.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The residence at 897 Summit Avenue qualifies for designation as a landmark under Criterion "C" as an intact, locally significant example of Folk Victorian house built in 1894.

BACKGROUND:

In May 2012, the property owner, Stacey R. Strickler, submitted an application for designation of 897 Summit Avenue as a landmark. 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. Concurrent with this application, the applicant also submitted an application for Historic Property Contract (Mills Act).

Property Data

- Address: 897 Summit Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91103
- Location: Southwest corner of Summit Avenue and Mountain Street
- Date of Construction: 1894 Documented
- Original Architect/Designer: Unknown
- Original Contractor: Unknown
- Original Location: 397 N. Raymond Avenue
- Date Moved: 1915
- Original / Present Use: Single-Family Residence/ Fourplex (Assessor)
- Original/Present Owner: S.R. Glasley/ Stacey R. Strickler
- Property Size: 7,918 square feet
- Building Size: 2,524 square feet

The Site

The site, a 7,918 square foot lot, is at the southwest corner of Summit Avenue and Mountain Street. The house has generous front, north street side, and south side yards that are consistent with or greater than other yards in the neighborhood. It is set back approximately 30 feet west of the Summit Avenue sidewalk, 30 feet south from the Mountain Street sidewalk, 20 feet north of the south side property line, and 15 feet from the rear property line. A detached two-car garage is at the southwest corner of the property with driveway access to Mountain Street.

The Building Structure and Exterior Features

Built in 1894, this one-and-one-half-story, currently four-unit residence is a frame structure with a concrete foundation and exterior wood siding. It is rectangular in plan with a gabled roof ridge running east to west over the entire structure. The asymmetrical front elevation facing Summit Avenue is characterized at the first story by a rounded projecting bay window with a hipped roof, a gabled dormer, and a projecting shed-roofed front porch. The gable-end above the front porch has a centered grouping of three windows in a shallowly projecting bay with divided wood panels. A set of concrete front steps with a steel pipe handrail on one side leads to the poured concrete front porch. Steel pipe rails and a wood post support the roof of the porch. There is an entry opening to the south first-floor unit which incorporates a plain wood front door at

the south side of the front porch. A front-facing entry opening to the north first floor unit has a single French door flanked by sidelights.

The south side elevation has a centered projecting bay window topped by a large gabled roof that extends slightly beyond the wall plane and has a pair of double-hung windows in the gable-end.

The north side elevation, facing Mountain Street, has a small one-story bay window projecting from the first story as well as a cross-gable with a pair of two-light casement windows extending beyond the wall plane. To the west of this gable a shed-roofed dormer with two double-hung windows extends to the rear of the house.

Siding on the house consists of narrow exposure shiplap with corner boards at the first story, fish scale shingles at the second story gables, and wide exposure shiplap at the second story wall areas. The house also has tongue-and-groove skirting at the base. Fenestration consists mainly of individual or pairs of narrow double-hung windows, with occasional inswing casement windows at the second floor. The front- and south-facing bays have fixed center windows with a distinctive large lower pane. The original double-hung windows have detailed sill aprons and head casings. Roof eaves are boxed and include carved corbels and a carved barge board which ends in a bulls eye pattern at the front elevation.

At the rear is an addition to the first floor with an exterior stair that leads to a balcony and door to the second-floor unit.

Garage

A detached two-car garage is at the southwest corner of the property. The garage has a front-facing gable roof and clapboard siding with corner boards. An addition to the front of the garage has a flat roof and a metal garage door. The garage is not a contributing structure as it was built when the house was moved to the site in 1915.

Documented Changes to the Property

There have been several alterations to the property. The house was moved from 397 N. Raymond Avenue to the property in 1915. Originally a single family residence, the house was converted to two units by 1923, three units by 1964, and four units presently. The original front porch posts and porch roof are missing. The two front doors are not original and their openings were likely altered. Early Sanborn maps indicate that the distinctive curved front bay and south-facing bay were early alterations before 1910. The original rear porch was replaced with an addition to the first floor which included an exterior stair and balcony leading to the door of the second floor unit. The dormer extending west from the north-facing gable with the wide-exposure shiplap is also an alteration.

Current Conditions, Use, and Proposed Plans

The exterior is currently in fair condition. The southern first floor unit is occupied while the northern first floor unit and second floor units are vacant with cabinetry and fixtures removed. Plaster has been removed from most of the walls at the second floor and the rear addition. The property owner plans to do extensive exterior and interior rehabilitation, including replacement of the plumbing, electrical, and mechanical systems, rehabilitate the front porch, rebuild the rear staircase, insulate, paint, repair the foundation, install historically compatible exterior doors, remove the addition to the garage, and reduce the number of units from four to three.

Historical Overview

The Folk Victorian style was common in the United States during the late nineteenth century. This style features simple building massings with added ornamentation in the form of machine fabricated wooden scrollwork, spindlework, and trim. Such decorative detailing became widely available due to the invention of improved, mechanized woodworking tools and the expansion of the railroads. Folk Victorian homes are distinguished from their Queen Anne and Eastlake counterparts by their small scale and simple, often symmetrical plans. Folk Victorian was perhaps the most popular residential style for Pasadena's early homesteaders. Several examples of the style still exist in the city. They range in level of detail from relatively plain buildings to ornate residences with rows of spindlework and patterned shingle siding. For example, the house at 1478 Navarro Avenue exhibits the simple plan, applied ornamental spindlework, and fish scale shingles of a typical two-story Folk Victorian. Another excellent, although smaller, example at 417 N. Marengo Avenue, constructed in 1895, combines the simple building form of Folk Victorian with the flat stickwork of Eastlake and the angled bay of Queen Anne.

Early Residents

S.R. Glasley was the earliest known resident, listed in a 1900 directory. Henry Monat, a banker, owned the house in 1913. Jane Eliza Meeker, who lived at 409 N. Raymond Avenue, bought the house and in 1915 moved it from 397 N. Raymond Avenue to 897 Summit Avenue, which she owned. J.E. Meeker was a widow of a New York attorney when she moved to Pasadena, and was involved in Pasadena society life. She lived exclusively at 409 N. Raymond Avenue and did not occupy the house at any point of time.

ANALYSIS:

The property at 897 Summit Avenue is eligible for landmark 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 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.

Under this criterion, 897 Summit Avenue is significant as an example of a Folk Victorian house. Although the house is not in its original location (location is not important for a resource significant for its architectural value), it retains its integrity of setting in a nearby residential neighborhood at the center of a lot with generous setbacks and landscaping. The house has a high level of architectural integrity (its ability to demonstrate why it is significant) through its design, materials, and workmanship. The simple rectangular plan with added bays, projecting gables, dormers, and ornamentation inspired by (in this case) the Queen Anne style exemplifies the Folk Victorian style. Notable character-defining design features include fish scale shingles on all of the gables, projecting bays with extended gables, the front-facing gabled dormer with a horizontal tripartite inswing casement window, the row of front-facing windows at the second story with recessed panels above and below each window, the rounded front bay, and the central bay windows with small upper and large lower sashes. Workmanship is exemplified by the eave corbels, window head casing detail and sill apron corbel detail, barge board, and the decorative detailing at the base of the projecting gables. Although there have been several alterations (replaced front porch posts, railing, and roof, replaced front doors and altered front door openings, a rear addition, and the addition of a north-facing dormer), the house retains sufficient integrity to be a landmark in the Folk Victorian style. The house was identified as eligible to be a landmark in the 2010 study of Late 19th/Early 20th Century Development and Architecture.

COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:

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

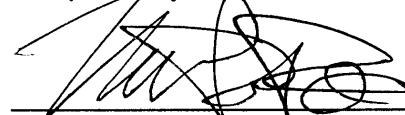
ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

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 it 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 & Community
Development Department

Prepared by:



Jason Wasmund
Assistant Planner

Approved by:



MICHAEL J. BECK
City Manager

Attachments:

- Attachment A – Vicinity Map
- Attachment B – Application Materials
- Attachment C – Photographs
- Attachment D – Effects of Landmark Designation

RESOLUTION NO. _____

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PASADENA
ADOPTING A DECLARATION OF HISTORIC LANDMARK DESIGNATION OF
897 SUMMIT AVENUE, PASADENA, CALIFORNIA**

WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission has found that 897 Summit Avenue meets criterion "C", as set forth in Section 17.62.040(C) of the Pasadena Municipal Code; and

WHEREAS, the property at 897 Summit 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, Stacey R. Strickler, the property owner, 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 897 Summit 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:

897 SUMMIT 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:

The Easterly 100 feet of Lot 49 of L.H. Michener's Subdivision of the North 38.86 acres of Block "U" of Painter and Ball's Addition of Pasadena, in the City of Pasadena, County of Los Angeles, State of California, as per map recorded in Book 14 Page 77 of Miscellaneous Records, in the Office of the County Recorder of said County.

APN: 5725-011-012

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