

# Agenda Report

September 30, 2013

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council  
**FROM:** Planning & Community Development Department  
**SUBJECT: DESIGNATION OF 405 MIRA VISTA TERRACE 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 property at 405 Mira Vista Terrace meets Criterion "C" for designation as a landmark (P.M.C. §17.62.040) because the house is a locally significant example of a two story Arts and Crafts period Chalet style house from the early twentieth century and retains its integrity;
3. Approve the designation of the property at 405 Mira Vista Terrace as a landmark;
4. Adopt the attached resolution approving a Declaration of Landmark Designation for 405 Mira Vista Terrace, Pasadena, California;
5. Authorize the Mayor to execute the attached Declaration of Landmark Designation for 405 Mira Vista Terrace, 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 15, 2013, the Historic Preservation Commission recommended that the City Council approve the designation of 405 Mira Vista Terrace as a landmark under Criterion C of PMC §17.62.040. In addition, the Historic Preservation Commission recommended that the period of significance extend from 1912 to 1928 to include the rear addition and front door alterations.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The property at 405 Mira Vista Terrace qualifies for designation as a landmark under Criterion "C" as an intact, locally significant example of a two story Arts and Crafts period house in the Chalet style.

## **BACKGROUND:**

In May 2013, the property owner Biff Sanders submitted an application for landmark designation of the property. Designed by architect J. Constantine Hillman, the single-family residence and detached garage were constructed in 1912.

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**

- Historical Name: George H. Crosby House
- Address: 405 Mira Vista Terrace, Pasadena, CA 91105
- Location: West side of Mira Vista Terrace, west of Linda Vista Avenue
- Date of Construction: 1912, documented by building permit
- Period of Significance: 1912-1928
- Original Architect: J. Constantine Hillman
- Original / Present Use: Single-family residence
- Original / Present Owner: George H. Crosby / Biff Sanders
- Lot size: 1.04 acre
- House size: 3,720 square feet

## **Setting & Site Description**

The site is a 1.04 acre interior lot in a hillside setting overlooking the Lower Arroyo Seco in the Linda Vista neighborhood. The site was part of the Michael Cochrane Armour development, which began in 1909 when the developer bought 65 acres of Linda Vista real estate. Cochrane Armour worked with architect J. Constantine Hillman to create large elegant estates in a neighborhood previously comprised of a few modest dwellings. The site, which slopes upward from the street, is approximately 160 feet in width and 300 feet in depth, with the house set back approximately 40 feet from the front property line on a terraced hillside. At the northeast corner of the property, adjacent to the street, is a two-car garage cut into the hillside.

## **Building Features**

Built in 1912, this two-story residence has a T-shaped original footprint with the primary elevation facing east toward Mira Vista Terrace. The main entry and porch are located on the secondary south-facing elevation and are accessed via concrete steps leading up from Mira Vista Terrace. On the primary elevation, the gabled roof and sleeping porch (now enclosed) are supported by large wooden brackets. The second story walls and balcony are sheathed in vertical tongue-and-groove wood siding with cut-out ornamentation and the first floor walls are coated in rough-textured stucco.

Fenestration is symmetrical and includes groupings of wood casement and fixed windows.

The Crosby House exhibits many identifiable features associated with an Arts and Crafts period house in the Swiss chalet subtype including deep overhanging eaves, vented gables, exposed rafters, cut-out wood detailing, multi-light casement windows and flat-board balconies. However, it distinguishes itself from Hillman's other Swiss Chalet at 373 Mira Vista, and the general conventions of the style, by having a side-facing gable roof and the placement of the balconies on a secondary elevation. There is also a concrete balustrade framing the main entrance that adds a grandeur and formality not typically seen in other examples of this style.

#### Garage & Site Features

The detached garage was built at the same time of the house. Adjacent to the street, it is cut into the hillside and constructed of concrete retaining walls on three sides and a flat concrete roof, which originally had a planter which served as an extension of the garden area at the main level of the site. The garage also had a balustrade with pedestals at the corners which are also now gone. The non-original roll-up garage door is a simple paneled design. The garage has the original rough-textured stucco coating. Because of the extensive alterations, the garage is at this time a non-contributing feature to the property.

A series of concrete retaining walls with a stucco coating matching the house run north to south through the property, approximately in line with the front elevation of the house. The walls to the south of the house are original and are capped with a concrete balustrade, mentioned above. These walls are contributing features. Non-original wrought iron fences enclose the yard area to the north and west of the house.

#### Documented Changes to the Property

Building permits show the property had numerous alterations early in its history. In 1922, the three sleeping porches on the second story were enclosed. Crosby engaged the original architect, Hillman, for this work. In 1924, a new owner, M.B. Cunningham, added a sleeping porch to the second story (no architect listed). Cunningham added a 20' x 26' north wing for a "four rooms servants quarters" in 1926. The addition matches the original house in exterior detailing. It also extends into the hillside on the second floor forming a breezeway under the house on the west side. In 1928, prominent architect G. Lawrence Stimson designed a substantial interior remodeling project that included moving the front door further west under a new "wrought iron with wire glass roof marquise." The house hasn't had any significant exterior alterations since the late 1920s.

### Current Conditions, Use, and Proposed Plans

The property is generally in good condition. Over the next ten years, repairs of gutters/downspouts, concrete planters, wood siding, rafter tails, windows, stucco, and foundation are proposed, and replacement of the window boxes and canvas awning, an HVAC upgrade, and seismic retrofit are proposed. No significant changes to the property are proposed.

### Historical Overview

The Arts & Crafts movement began in England around the year 1860 as a response to industrialization and mass production of goods. Its focus was one of promoting manual craftsmanship rather than machine production, which was believed to result in a harmonious society where producers and consumers could take pride in their work and, thereby, enhance their lives. Works were simple and designed to show evidence of construction methods. William Morris is widely cited as being the movement's primary proponent in England, with his Red House being one of the earliest pieces of English Arts & Crafts architecture. The movement included many other forms of craft including printmaking, decorative objects, wallpaper, textiles, furniture and stained glass.

In America, Elbert Hubbard and Gustav Stickley, who both organized Arts & Crafts guilds, were the movement's primary proponents. Stickley's magazine *The Craftsman* was influential in spreading the ideals of the movement throughout the country. The American Arts & Crafts architectural movement was centered in three primary locations: Oak Park, Illinois; Berkeley and Pasadena, each drawing on local materials. In Pasadena, the primary architectural tenet of the movement was to enhance the connection between house and landscape. This was achieved through large roofed front porches, use of wood exterior cladding materials and other locally available materials such as stones from the Arroyo Seco, elimination of ornament, and planning of the house around natural features of the site (contours, trees, etc.). Architectural details were frequently handcrafted by local artisans.

The Chalet is a noted subtype of the two-story Arts and Crafts period house. In Pasadena examples of Arts and Crafts houses of the "high-style" Chalet subtype include 572 Prospect Boulevard (1906), 365 West Bellevue Drive (1906), 405 Mira Vista Terrace (1912), and 373 Mira Vista Terrace (1916). These high-style houses were designed to recreate features of Swiss chalets such as tapering stacked brackets of carved wood at the eaves, flat cut-out balcony pickets, and a partial third story. However, the term "Chalet" was also used for two-story Arts and Crafts houses that generally followed the chalet form. Typical characteristics of these chalets include stained wood shingles or siding, wide overhanging eaves, a broad, sweeping front-facing gable roof, wide front porch, and a second-story balcony with wooden slats or flat cut-out pickets. Chalet-style examples of Greene and Greene-designed houses in Pasadena include the Louise Bentz House (1905-1906) and the John Bakewell Phillips House (1906). References to chalets can also be found in the house catalogs and

pattern books of the Arts and Crafts period, in which the chalet archetype was consciously invoked. (Bruno Giberti. "The Chalet as Archetype: The Bungalow, the Picturesque Tradition and Vernacular Form" *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review* 3.1 (1991): 54-64.)

### J. Constantine Hillman

John Constantine Hillman, known professionally as J. Constantine Hillman, was born in Oregon in 1864. He worked as an architect in partnership with Claude Bragdon in Rochester, NY from 1896 until 1903 when he relocated to Pasadena. Hillman was associated with the well-known firm of Myron Hunt and Elmer Grey for several years. In 1910, he established his own practice with an office in the Chamber of Commerce Building on Colorado Boulevard. Hillman is best known for his collaboration with Michael Cochrane Armour on the Linda Vista neighborhood development. He designed eight houses in the Linda Vista area, including his own at 320 Linda Vista Avenue. Hillman also had other commissions in Pasadena, as well as Los Angeles and Coronado Island. Hillman and his wife, Elizabeth Kendall Hillman, had three children. He died in Pasadena on December 23, 1932 at the age of 68.

### George H. Crosby

George Howard Crosby was a wealthy industrialist from Minnesota, who spent five winter months each year in Pasadena. Born in 1865, Crosby started in real estate and began a mining enterprise, discovering the several lucrative mines in the Mesabi and Cuyana Ranges. He served as president of Crosby Motor Company, Crosby Exploration Company, and Crosby Water, Light and Power Company, all in the Duluth area. Crosby also owned brick manufacturing plants and was a national director of the American Red Cross. He died in Duluth, in 1961.

### **ANALYSIS:**

The George H. Crosby house at 405 Mira Vista Terrace 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 this criterion, 405 Mira Vista Terrace is significant as a distinctive example of two-story Arts and Crafts period Chalet style residential architecture, designed by J. Constantine Hillman. The building has a high level of architectural integrity (its ability to

demonstrate why it is significant) through its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship and feeling, as follows:

- Location: The building is in its original location.
- Design: The building retains its form, plan, space, structure, and style, as described above. It embodies the defining characteristics of a distinct architectural movement and the design quality of the architect's work.
- Setting: The residential neighborhood is intact.
- Materials: The building has the original materials used in its construction.
- Workmanship: The building exhibits workmanship through details such as the bracket supports, beams and flat wood siding with decorative cut-outs.
- Feeling: The property clearly expresses the characteristics of the Arts and Crafts residential architecture in the Chalet style.

The house exhibits exemplary craftsmanship and creativity. It appears to retain all of its original character-defining features. All alterations, including the enclosure of sleeping porches and rear additions are all compatible with the original structure. The house is listed in the city's 1999 survey of Arts and Crafts Period Residential Architecture (Bricker, Winter & Tearnen) in the Swiss, Bavarian or Tyrolean chalet subtype, and as being eligible for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

#### **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:**

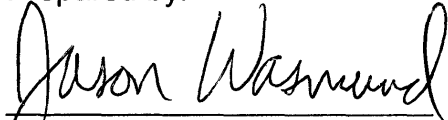
In some instances, owners of designated properties may apply to the City for Historic Property Contract, which allows an alternative and often lower property tax assessment. The City Council reviewed the projected loss of property tax revenue from this program in 2002 when it adopted a local Historic Property Contract (Mills Act) ordinance.

Respectfully submitted,



VINCENT P. BERTONI, AICP  
Director of Planning & Community  
Development Department

Prepared by:



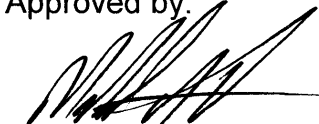
Jason Wasmund  
Assistant Planner

Concurred by:



Leon E. White  
Principal 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 LANDMARK DESIGNATION FOR 405 MIRA  
VISTA TERRACE, PASADENA, CALIFORNIA**

WHEREAS, the City Council has found that 405 Mira Vista Terrace meets criterion "C", as set forth in Section 17.62.040(C) of the Pasadena Municipal Code; and

WHEREAS, the property at 855 Rosalind Road 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 Landmark designation is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15308; and

WHEREAS, the property owner, Harold "Biff" Sanders submitted the application for landmark designation; and

WHEREAS, the City Council may designate a 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 Landmark designation for 405 Mira Vista Terrace is hereby adopted.



Adopted at the \_\_\_\_\_ meeting of the City Council on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2013 by the following vote:

AYES:

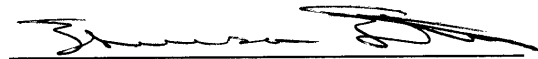
NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

\_\_\_\_\_  
MARK JOMSKY, CMC, City Clerk

Approved as to form:



Theresa E. Fuentes  
Assistant City Attorney

**DECLARATION OF LANDMARK DESIGNATION FOR:**

**405 MIRA VISTA TERRACE  
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 Landmark certain real property described in the attached Exhibit "A," also identified with APN 5708-028-028.

Under Pasadena Municipal Code Section 17.62.090, all work affecting designated 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

EXHIBIT "A"

LEGAL DESCRIPTION FOR 405 MIRA VISTA TER.

PARCEL 1:

THE SOUTHWESTERLY 6 FEET OF LOT 9 OF TRACT NO. 2844, IN THE CITY OF PASADENA, COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, STATE OF CALIFORNIA, AS PER MAP RECORDED IN BOOK 35 PAGE 11 OF MAPS, IN THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY RECORDER OF SAID COUNTY.

PARCEL 2:

LOT 10 AND THE NORTHERLY 6.74 FEET OF LOT 11 OF TRACT NO. 2844, IN THE CITY OF PASADENA, COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, STATE OF CALIFORNIA, AS PER MAP RECORDED IN BOOK 35 PAGE 11 OF MAPS, IN THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY RECORDER OF SAID COUNTY.

PARCEL 3:

THAT PORTION OF LOT 13 OF TRACT NO. 2844, IN THE CITY OF PASADENA, COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, STATE OF CALIFORNIA, AS PER MAP RECORDED IN BOOK 35 PAGE 11, OF MAPS, IN THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY RECORDER OF SAID COUNTY, BOUNDED NORTHERLY BY A STRAIGHT LINE EXTENDING FROM A POINT ON THE WESTERLY LINE OF SAID LOT, DISTANT SOUTHERLY THEREON 159.66 FEET FROM THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF SAID LOT, TO THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF LOT 9 OF SAID SUBDIVISION, AND BOUNDED SOUTHERLY BY A STRAIGHT LINE EXTENDING FROM A POINT IN SAID WESTERLY LINE DISTANT SOUTHERLY THEREON 307.66 FEET FROM THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF SAID LOT TO THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF LOT 11 OF SAID TRACT NO. 2844.

EXCEPT THEREFROM:

THAT PORTION OF LOT 13 OF TRACT NO. 2844, IN THE CITY OF PASADENA, COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, STATE OF CALIFORNIA, AS PER MAP RECORDED IN BOOK 35 PAGE 11 OF MAPS, IN THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY RECORDER OF SAID COUNTY, DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:

BEGINNING AT THE NORTHEASTERLY CORNER OF PARCEL 27 OF RECORD OF SURVEY RECORDED IN BOOK 17 PAGE 17 OF RECORDS OF SURVEYS, RECORDS OF SAID COUNTY, SAID POINT ALSO BEING ON THE WESTERLY LINE OF SAID LOT 13, DISTANT SOUTHERLY THEREON 231.41 FEET, MORE OR LESS, FROM THE NORTHWESTERLY CORNER OF SAID LOT 13; THENCE PERPENDICULAR TO SAID WESTERLY LINE OF LOT 13 SOUTH 83 DEGREES 38' 15" EAST 15.00'; THENCE SOUTH 6 DEGREES 21' 45" WEST 72.78 FEET, MORE OR LESS TO A LINE WHOSE WESTERLY TERMINUS IS A POINT ON SAID WESTERLY LINE OF LOT 13 DISTANT SOUTHERLY THEREON 307.66 FEET FROM THE NORTHWESTERLY CORNER OF SAID LOT 13, AND WHOSE EASTERLY TERMINUS IS THE SOUTHWESTERLY CORNER OF LOT 10 OF SAID TRACT NO. 2844; THENCE ALONG SAID LINE SOUTH 83 DEGREES 28' 31" WEST 15.39 FEET, MORE OR LESS, TO A POINT ON SAID WESTERLY LINE OF LOT 13, SAID POINT ALSO BEING ON THE EASTERLY LINE OF SAID PARCEL 27; THENCE ALONG SAID

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EXHIBIT "A"(CONT.)

EASTERLY LINE NORTH 6 DEGREES 21' 45" EAST 76.25 FEET, MORE OR LESS, TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING.

THE MODIFIED PROPERTY CONTAINS 45,326.24 SQUARE FEET, MORE OR LESS.

ALL AS SHOWN ON EXHIBIT "B" ATTACHED HERETO, AND BY REFERENCE, MADE A PART HEREOF.

