

# Agenda Report

February 3, 2014

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council  
**FROM:** Planning & Community Development Department  
**SUBJECT: ADOPTION OF A ZONE CHANGE TO DESIGNATE A LANDMARK DISTRICT OVERLAY FOR THE SOUTH GRAND-COVINGTON PLACE LANDMARK DISTRICT (LD-21)**

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the City Council:

1. Find that the application for a zone change to create a landmark district is categorically exempt from environmental review pursuant to the guidelines of the California Environmental Quality Act, (Section 15308: Class 8, Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment);
2. Find the proposed South Grand-Covington Place Landmark District meets the criteria for designation as a Landmark District as specified in §17.62.040 (F) of the Pasadena Municipal Code;
3. Approve the landmark district designation and the zoning map overlay for the South Grand-Covington Place Landmark District, LD-21; and
4. Direct the City Attorney to prepare an ordinance within 60 days amending the official zoning map of the City of Pasadena established by §17.20.020 of the Pasadena Municipal Code to designate the landmark district with the LD-21 Overlay Zone.

## **HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:**

On September 3, 2013, the Historic Preservation Commission determined that the proposed South Grand-Covington Place Landmark District meets the criteria for designation in §17.62.040 (F) Pasadena Municipal Code (PMC) and unanimously recommended approval of the designation.

## **PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:**

At a public hearing on November 13, 2013, the Planning Commission found that the proposed zone change to create a landmark district is consistent with the General Plan and the purposes of the zoning code, certified the final petition with the signatures from

at least 51 percent of the property owners and voted 5-1 to recommend that the City Council approve designation of the South Grand-Covington Place Landmark District.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The South Grand-Covington Place Landmark District meets the criteria set forth in PMC §17.62.040.F.1 for designation as a landmark district. In addition, a majority of the property owners (83%) have indicated support in writing for the designation. One property owner was previously opposed, but has since signed the petition in support of the designation.

**BACKGROUND:**

Since 1989, the City has formally designated 20 landmark districts. On July 16, 2013, the City received the application and a petition from 18 property owners, to designate the subject parcels as a landmark district. Staff evaluated the district according to the landmark criteria in Title 17 of the P.M.C. and determined that the district qualifies for landmark district designation.

**Description of the Proposed Landmark District**

Boundaries: The proposed boundaries of the district include properties at 1150 S. Arroyo Boulevard; 1100-1215, 1220, 1230 & 1240 S. Grand Avenue and all properties on Covington Place (see Attachment A). Within these boundaries there are 23 properties. Further analysis and justification of these boundaries is provided below.

Construction Dates: Four of the contributing houses were built in the Arts & Crafts Period, four were built in the mid-twentieth-century period, with the remaining 11 being built in the Period Revival era. The remaining four properties in the district boundaries are non-contributing.

Architects and Builders: Significant architects with designs in the district include Reginald Johnson, Donald D. McMurray, William McCay, Bertram Goodhue and Stiles O. Clements.

Zoning: All properties within the proposed district are zoned RS-4. The RS-4 district is a single-family residential zoning designation.

General Plan: The General Plan Designation of all properties within the proposed landmark district is Low Density Residential.

## **ANALYSIS:**

The proposed landmark district is a grouping of custom single-family residences built between 1905 and 1965 which represent architectural styles and the work of significant architects from multiple periods in the City's architectural history, including the Arts & Crafts Period, the Period Revival era and the recent past. The District represents the evolution of a typical Pasadena neighborhood over time including subdivision of large estates into smaller lots and construction of architecturally significant houses exemplifying their respective periods of development. The District is particularly unique for its high concentration of English Arts & Crafts and Neoclassical Revival houses.

### **Criteria for Designation**

The South Grand-Covington Place Landmark District meets the criteria for designation in §17.62.040.F.1, PMC, as follows:

- a. Within its boundaries, a minimum of 60 percent of the properties qualify as contributing;

*The contributing single-family houses in the District were built between 1905 and 1965, which has been identified as the District's period of significance, and most of these properties remain intact on their street-facing elevations. Of the 23 properties in the proposed district, 19 have been identified as contributing (83%) and retain integrity of design (all of the character-defining architectural features are intact), materials (all of the original cladding materials, doors and windows appear to be intact), workmanship (the decorative detailing on all of the houses appears to be intact), and feeling.*

- b. The grouping represents a significant and distinguishable entity of Citywide importance and one or more of a defined historic, cultural, development and/or architectural context(s) (e.g., the 1993 Citywide historic context, a historic context prepared in an intensive-level survey or a historic context prepared specifically for the nominated landmark district).

*The District is significant because it represents a grouping of intact houses in significant architectural styles identified in the historic context reports "Residential Architecture of Pasadena, CA 1895-1918: Influence of the Arts and Crafts Movement; Residential Period Revival Architecture and Development in Pasadena from 1915-1942; and Cultural Resources of the Recent Past." The District represents the evolution of a typical Pasadena neighborhood over time including subdivision of large estates into smaller lots and construction of architecturally significant houses exemplifying their respective periods of development. The District is particularly unique for its high concentration of English Arts & Crafts and Neoclassical Revival houses.*

### **Support from Property Owners:**

At its November 13, 2013 meeting, the Planning Commission certified the final petition from property owners within the district boundary. In the petition, 83% (19 out of 23) of the property owners signified their support for landmark district designation in writing, which exceeds the minimum 51% requirement. Since the Historic Preservation Commission meeting on September 3, 2013, staff has not received any formal opposition to this landmark district. One property owner expressed opposition at the Historic Preservation Commission meeting, but has since signed the petition in support of the landmark district designation.

### **RESULTS OF DESIGNATION:**

The landmark district designation protects the historic and architectural character of a neighborhood through the Certificate of Appropriateness process. The code requires an application for Certificate of Appropriateness, reviewed by the Director of Planning & Community Development for minor projects such as the removal of non-original insignificant exterior features, the replacement of doors and windows that match the originals, alterations to garages, and side yard fences. Major projects, such as demolitions, relocations, significant exterior alterations, major changes to original windows and doors or their openings, changes to exterior cladding, and front yard fences, require review by the Historic Preservation Commission at a noticed public hearing.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:**

Class 8 exempts from environmental review actions taken by regulatory agencies to assure the maintenance, restoration, enhancement, or protection of the environment where the regulatory process involves procedures for protection of the environment. The establishment of a landmark district will include procedures by which new structures, or changes to existing structures that contribute to the historic character, or environment, of the district, are reviewed for consistency with the character of the district.

### **COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:**

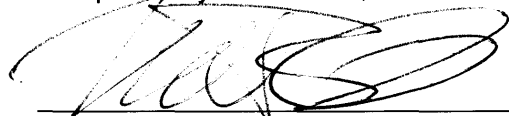
The General Plan – Objective 6: Promote preservation of historically and architecturally significant buildings and revitalization of traditional neighborhoods and commercial areas.

The zoning of the area is RS4 (Single-family Residential). The LD-21 zone is proposed as an overlay to the current zoning. The application is consistent with the purposes of the zoning ordinance, which includes several goals to preserve residential neighborhoods.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

In some instances, owners of designated properties may apply to the City for a Historic Property Contract (Mills Act), 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 the local Mills Act ordinance. As a result of this program, the reduced property tax amount that comes out of the City's local share amount from the State, is a small percentage of the City's overall property tax revenue.

Respectfully submitted,



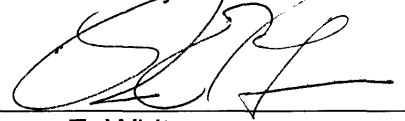
VINCENT P. BERTONI, AICP  
Director of Planning & Community  
Development Department

Prepared by:



Kevin Johnson  
Senior Planner

Concurred by:



Leon E. White  
Principal Planner

Approved by:



MICHAEL J. BECK  
City Manager

Attachments:

- Attachment A – Map of Proposed Landmark District
- Attachment B – Inventory of Properties