

# Agenda Report

June 9, 2014

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council  
**FROM:** Planning & Community Development Department  
**SUBJECT: DESIGNATION OF THE HOUSE AT 397 NORTH CATALINA 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 house at 397 North Catalina Avenue is significant under Criterion "C" for designation as a landmark (P.M.C. §17.62.040) because it is an intact example of a late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century Vernacular Hipped Cottage with influences of the Queen Anne style and the Arts and Crafts movement;
3. Adopt the attached resolution approving a Declaration of Landmark Designation for 397 North Catalina Avenue, Pasadena, California;
4. Authorize the Mayor to execute the attached Declaration of Landmark Designation for 397 North Catalina Avenue, Pasadena, California; and
5. Direct the City Clerk to record the declaration with the Los Angeles County Recorder.

## **HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:**

On Tuesday, April 1, 2014, the Historic Preservation Commission recommended that the City Council approve the designation of the house at 397 North Catalina Avenue as a landmark under Criterion C of PMC §17.62.040.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The house at 397 North Catalina Avenue qualifies for designation as a landmark under Criterion "C" because it is intact example of a late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century Vernacular Hipped Cottage with influences of the Queen Anne style and the Arts and Crafts movement.

## **BACKGROUND:**

On February 13, 2014, property owners Samuel Kuo and Ping-Sh Han submitted an application for landmark designation of the property. The staff evaluated the property according to the landmark criteria in Title 17 of the P.M.C. and determined that the property meets the applicable criteria for landmark designation.

### Property Data

- Historical Name: C.C. Loury House
- Address: 397 North Catalina Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91106
- Location: West side of North Catalina Avenue between East Maple and Villa Streets
- Date of Construction: 1901 (documented in 1995 based on original building permit)
- Original Architect: None (owner-builder)
- Original / Present Use: Single-family residence.
- Original / Present Owner: C.C. Loury / Samuel Kuo and Ping-Sh Han
- Lot size: 8,999 square feet (source: County Assessor)
- House size: 1,859 square feet (source: County Assessor)

### Site Features

The site, an 8,999-square-foot interior lot, is located on the west side of North Catalina Avenue between East Maple and Villa Streets. The site is approximately 50 feet in width and 180 feet in depth and the house is at the east end of the site behind a 22-foot deep front yard. Located behind the house is a detached carport, which is a newer feature of the property and non-contributing to the historic designation. A concrete driveway on the north side of the lot leads to the detached carport. The sandstone retaining walls that define the front yard appear to be original and contribute to the property's historic significance.

### Building Features

Built in 1901, the house is one and one-half stories and has a rectangular plan and a steeply pitched hipped roof covered in composition shingles. Distinctive features of the roof include curving eaves and exposed, sculpted rafters with rounded ends. A large gabled dormer extends toward the street from the main volume of the house and sits atop a  $\frac{3}{4}$ -width projecting front porch, supported by Tuscan posts and resting on a foundation of Arroyo stones. The dormer has wood fish-scale shingles and a single double-hung window in the gable-end as well as a wide barge board with rounded ends and a carved wood frieze. The remainder of the house is clad in wood clapboard siding with corner boards. The existing paneled front door with etched glass fan light is the only apparent non-original feature of the house, although the opening and trim components appear to be intact. Wood fixed windows on the street-facing elevation

have transoms and pedimented surrounds; those on the sides and rear are double-hung and are also pedimented but lack transoms.

### Documented Changes to the Property

The house underwent substantial rehabilitation in 2011, retaining all exterior materials. The front door had already been replaced prior to this work, as evidenced by a photograph taken during the City's 2009 survey of late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century development and architecture. There is an aluminum sliding window on the rear elevation. Other than these minor alterations, the house appears remarkably intact on the exterior.

### Current Conditions, Use, and Proposed Plans

The property is currently in good condition, given its recent rehabilitation. Nine new multi-family residential units are proposed to be added to the rear portion of this property, behind the historic house, and extending onto an adjoining property at 995 East Maple Street. The Design Commission reviewed an application for Preliminary Consultation for this project on January 16, 2014 and the Historic Preservation Commission provided comments on the proposed nine-unit project at its April 1, 2014 meeting.

### Historical Overview

The period between 1883 and 1904 encompassed the settlement of Pasadena by easterners following the sale of the Spanish ranchos that originally made up the territory of Pasadena and surrounding communities, including a building boom that occurred between 1886 and 1895. The City's historic context report for this period states:

The houses that were constructed in Pasadena during the period can generally be grouped into one of two categories: vernacular and high-style. Vernacular architecture includes various house types that were usually constructed by the original owner, based upon traditional notions of convenience and utility. Relatively simple structures, they were built without any conscious attempt to mimic current fashion. Houses of style, by contrast were often created by schooled, self-conscious, and professionally trained architects and builders.

The house represents the Vernacular Hipped Cottage property type, which is identified in this study with the following character-defining features:

- One story
- Rectangular, boxy plan
- Wood clapboard siding
- Hipped roofs with shallow overhanging boxed eaves
- Centrally located dormers

- Full- or partial-width front porches, usually recessed
- Tripartite, bay, and double-hung windows
- Minimal ornamentation

### **ANALYSIS:**

The house at 397 North Catalina Avenue is eligible for landmark 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.

The house exhibits the distinctive characteristics of the Vernacular Hipped Cottage property type, as described in the City's historic context report, "Late 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Development and Architecture," (Galvin Preservation Associates, 2010) blended with influences of the Queen Anne style and the Arts & Crafts movement. The registration requirements in the historic context report state:

To be eligible for listing under Criterion C, single-family residences must be rare or notable examples of a master architect or builder, or rare or notable examples of one of the subtypes [identified in this report]. They must possess architectural integrity and the essential character-defining features of the style or type. In particular, the retention of the original roof form, wall materials, fenestration patterns, and their component parts is required. Houses that illustrate more than one style are eligible if they achieve a harmonious design. The historic design, workmanship, feeling, and materials must be strongly present in the evaluation of integrity.

The house exhibits the essential character-defining features of the Vernacular Hipped Cottage property type, including one-story height; rectangular, boxy plan; wood clapboard siding; hipped roof; partial-width front porch; double-hung windows; and minimal ornamentation. It has notable features that separate it from the typical example of the type, harmoniously blending the vernacular type with higher style Queen Anne features as well as features of the Arts & Crafts movement, which was in the early stages of development when the house was built. Queen Anne-influenced features include the gabled dormer with fish-scale shingles, Tuscan porch posts and the sculpted wood rafter tails and frieze. Arts and Crafts-influenced features include the Arroyo stone porch foundation, and large windows on the street-facing elevation. The house has 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.
- Materials: The building has most of the original materials used in its construction. The original front door has been changed; however, this minor alteration does not affect its integrity.
- Workmanship: The building demonstrates the defining characteristics of a distinct architectural movement in the City's history.
- Feeling: The property clearly expresses the characteristics of turn-of-the-twentieth-century vernacular residential architecture in Pasadena.

The property was previously evaluated in 1995 as part of a historic resources survey for the North Lake Specific Plan area and was assigned a status code of 5S3 (since changed to 6L), which indicated that it was ineligible for historic designation but should be considered in the local planning process. In 2009, the property was re-evaluated as part of the City's study of late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century development and architecture and was determined to be eligible for designation as a landmark (status code 5S2) based on a more comprehensive review of buildings from this period in the City's history. It should be noted that the original door was in place when the building was surveyed in 1995 but not in 2009 (see Attachment A).

**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.

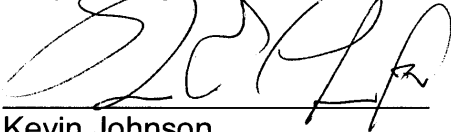
**FISCAL IMPACT:**

In some instances, owners of designated historic 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 which comes out of the City's local share amount from the State, is a small fraction of the City's overall property tax revenue.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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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:

  
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MICHAEL J. BECK  
City Manager

Attachments (4):

- A. Vicinity Map & Historical Documentation (Sanborn Maps, Assessor Records, Building Permits)
- B. Application & Supporting Documentation
- C. Photographs
- D. Effects of Landmark Designation