



Agenda Report

October 27, 2014

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council
FROM: Planning & Community Development Department
SUBJECT: DESIGNATION OF THE HOUSE AT 2350 EAST ORANGE GROVE BOULEVARD 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 2350 East Orange Grove Boulevard is significant under Criterion "C" for designation as a landmark (P.M.C. §17.62.040) because it is an intact and highly artistic example of a Tudor Revival house;
3. Adopt the attached resolution approving a Declaration of Landmark Designation for 2350 East Orange Grove Boulevard, Pasadena, California;
4. Authorize the Mayor to execute the attached Declaration of Landmark Designation for 2350 East Orange Grove Boulevard, Pasadena, California; and
5. Direct the City Clerk to record the declaration with the Los Angeles County Recorder.

At its regular meeting of September 16, 2014, the Historic Preservation Commission recommended that the City Council approve the designation of the house at 2350 East Orange Grove Boulevard, including broken stone driveways and pathways and a perimeter site wall, as a landmark under Criterion "C" of PMC §17.62.040.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The house at 2350 East Orange Grove Boulevard qualifies for designation as a landmark under Criterion "C" because it is an intact and highly artistic example of a Tudor Revival house.

BACKGROUND:

On August 6, 2014, Don Heida and George Dockter, the owners of the property, 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 qualifies for landmark designation.

Property Data

- Historical Name: None
- Address: 2350 East Orange Grove Boulevard, Pasadena, CA 91104
- Location: South side of South Orange Grove Boulevard between Martelo and Carmelo Avenues
- Date of Construction: 1929 (documented on original building permit)
- Original Architect: Harry E. Walker
- Original / Present Use: Single-family residence
- Original / Present Owner: Warren C. Earle / Don Heida and George Dockter
- Lot size: 14,208 square feet (source: County Assessor)
- Building size: 4,919 square feet

Site Features

The site, a 0.32-acre interior lot, is located on the south side of East Orange Grove Boulevard between Martelo and Carmelo Avenues. The site is approximately 95 feet in width and 150 feet in depth. It has two buildings: the main house with attached garage at the northern end of the site and an octagonal pavilion at the southwest corner of the site. There is a broken stone driveway at the northwestern end of the property that provides vehicular access to the garage (the doors to which are oriented to the rear, with access through a covered portal between the house and garage), as well as broken stone pedestrian pathways. At the west side of the property is a concrete paved area; the rest of the property is lawn and other landscaping.

Building Features

Built in 1929, the two-story house is irregularly cruciform in plan and has a highly complex, steeply pitched roof with a primary side-facing gable, multiple intersecting cross-gables, a hipped roof at a two-story polygonal bay at the rear of the house and small gabled dormers, one of which is bracketed. The roof is covered in wood shakes and has shallow eaves with exposed rafters on the down-slopes; the eastern and western gable-ends on the north elevation have false half-timbering. The central north-facing gable end has a chimney extending from its peak with a cartouche detail on the wall face below it. The exterior walls of the house are clad in buff-colored brick and two types of stone. One type of stone is a similar buff color to the brick and is stacked while the other had darker brown and red tones and is applied flat. Some wall surfaces on secondary elevations are coated in cement plaster.

Fenestration on the house is complex and consists of rectangular casement windows, Gothic-arched casement windows and a circular window near the entrance. Window detailing also varies and includes minimal wood trim, cut stone lintels with brick sills, header brick at the Gothic-arched windows and stacked buff-colored stone surrounding the circular window (which is within a field of the darker flat-laid stone). The main entry door surround is made of cut stone and has a Tudor arch shape. The door itself is made of tongue-and-groove wood and has a small rectangular light cut out near the top with metal scrollwork in the opening. The door has a Tudor arch shape to correspond to the shape of the stone surround and has ornate metal straps, hardware and joinery. Between the house and attached garage is a covered vehicle pass-through opening with wood tongue-and-groove gates which are angled at the top and come to a peak in the center. The gates also have metal straps, joinery and hardware. Other notable features of the house include a small area of false thatched roof appearance done in wood shingles on the garage, an exterior broken stone stairway and patio with wood balustrade at roughly the center of the north elevation, Gothic-arched supports at the rear porch and tongue-and-groove wood garage doors with wood framing, Gothic arches and leaf medallions in relief.

Rear Pavilion Features

Built in 1949, the open pavilion at the southwest corner of the site is octagonal in plan and has a hipped roof covered in wood shakes. Support posts are brick with wood posts and arching brackets at the top. The pavilion is raised slightly above grade and the foundation wall is brick with integrated planters. The steps and floor are large stone pavers set in concrete. The structure also includes a brick fireplace and wood diagonal latticework toward the rear.

Documented Changes to the Property

Permit records do not indicate significant changes to the properties and none are evident upon viewing the house.

Current Conditions, Use, and Proposed Plans

The property is currently in a remarkable state of preservation and in good condition. The owners have also applied for Historic Property Contract (Mills Act) concurrently with this application, including a Rehabilitation and Maintenance Plan for the property that will be evaluated by staff.

Historical Overview

Period Revival Era

The Period Revival era in Pasadena occurred between 1915 and 1942. During this period, architectural designs were first influenced by regional American styles (including those exhibited at the 1915 California-Panama Exposition in San Diego), then, in the

second half of that period (1925–1942), by European Styles from England, Spain, Italy and France. The Tudor Revival style described in more detail below is based on Elizabethan English architecture and is identified as a historically significant architectural style in the City's historic context report "Residential Period Revival Architecture and Development in Pasadena from 1915-1942."

Tudor Revival Style

Although not typically representative of early 16th-century England (the Tudor period), the Tudor Revival style is "based on a variety of late Medieval English and early Elizabethan prototypes." Identifying features, as described in A Field Guide to American Houses, are:

Steeply pitched roof, usually side-gabled (less commonly hipped or front-gabled); façade dominated by one or more prominent cross gables, usually steeply pitched; decorative (i.e., not structural) half-timbering present on about half of examples; tall, narrow windows usually in multiple groups and with multi-pane glazing; massive chimneys, commonly crowned by decorative chimney pots.

There are seven subtypes identified, one of which is the "Multiple Façade Gables" subtype exemplified in the house at 2350 East Orange Grove Boulevard. Other subtypes include front-gabled roof, symmetrical paired gables, single dominant mid-façade gable, front-facing gable with wing, false thatched roof and parapeted gables. Tudor details, other than those in the description above, that are exhibited in this house include slight roof overhangs; overlapping gables; wide, heavy-plank front doors; stone entry surrounds; Tudor arches, masonry wall cladding; groupings of multi-light wood casement windows (usually three or more); gabled dormers and a small entry porch.

Harry E. Walker (1884-1951)

The architect of the house at 2350 East Orange Grove Boulevard was Harry E. Walker, about whom very little is known. The information included with the application (Attachment B) indicates that he had many professions during the time he lived in the Pasadena area between 1925 and 1942. Only one other house in the area could be found to be attributed to Walker: a Spanish Colonial Revival style house at 1586 Oak Grove Avenue in San Marino.

Warren C. Earle (1881-1953)

The original owner of the house in 1929 was Warren C. Earle, whose occupation is listed in the 1929 City Directory as Pasadena City Engineer and Superintendent of Streets. Earle began working in this position in 1922 and the report included in Attachment B states that he was in charge of the City's first planning program. The Bennett, Parsons & Frost "Plan for the City of Pasadena" would have been authored

during his tenure in this position and several important buildings in the Civic Center, including City Hall, would have been built during that time. Earle's contributions to these efforts are currently unknown. Earle's mortgage was foreclosed soon after completion of construction of the house when he was indicted along with five other City officials as part of an embezzlement scandal for which he was subsequently incarcerated for a year and a half at San Quentin prison.

ANALYSIS:

The house at 2350 East Orange Grove Boulevard 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 Tudor Revival style, as described in the City's historic context report, "Residential Period Revival Architecture and Development in Pasadena from 1915-1942" (Teresa Grimes & Mary Jo Winder, 2004). The report does not include registration requirements; however, a house from this period would typically be eligible for historic designation if it is a good example of an identified period revival architectural style and/or of the work of a significant architect or designer. It would display most of the character-defining features of its style and would retain high integrity of design, materials and setting that convey its period of construction. While most buildings undergo alteration over time, these alterations should not significantly change the historic appearance of the building.

The property exhibits the essential character-defining features of the Tudor Revival style as described above. The property 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 all of the original materials used in its construction and appears wholly unaltered.
- 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 period revival residential architecture in Pasadena.

The property was previously evaluated in 2004 as part of a Citywide historic resources survey focused on identifying groupings of houses that represent the context of period

revival architecture. The house is within the boundaries of a grouping of houses on East Orange Grove Boulevard and Lambert Drive that was identified as being eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district (National Register of Historic Places status code of 3D). No buildings were evaluated for individual historic designation as part of that survey.

The rear pavilion structure was built in 1949, outside of the period of significance of the period revival era, which ends in 1942. Although the pavilion has some minor design similarities to the house (arched brackets, polygonal shape, wood roof), as a whole, the structure is not strongly related to the house in style and does not reflect the character of architecture of its period. As such, staff recommends that the pavilion be considered non-contributing to the landmark designation.

Staff considered whether the house would also be significant under Criterion B for association with the life of a person who is significant in the history of the City, region or state. Because Warren C. Earle's ownership of the house did not occur at the same time as his involvement in early city planning efforts, but, rather, at the end of his tenure as a City official, staff finds that the house is not significant under Criterion B. Although the scandal that resulted in his dismissal and incarceration was "the city's first case involving the integrity of a department head" (according to a 1929 article in the Los Angeles Times) and occurred during his ownership and construction of the house, the house is not strongly associated with Earle's accomplishments as City Engineer and staff believes that his indictment for fraud would not be considered historically significant.

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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Attachments (4):

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