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P A S A D E N A H E R I T A G E

September 8, 2014

Pasadena City Council
175 Garfield Avenue
Pasadena, CA 91101



Preservation Concerns for Bungalow Courts and Mansionization Issues

Dear Mayor Bogaard and Honorable Councilmembers,

Pasadena Heritage is pleased Councilman Tornek is raising these important issues to a new level of attention. We offer the following comments for your consideration.

Bungalow Courts

Pasadena Heritage has long been concerned about the vulnerability of bungalow courts because of their attractiveness for more dense development. Councilmember Tornek's facts match our understanding of the issue. Pasadena Heritage completed the first nomination of 27 bungalow courts within the Central District to the National Register for Historic Places in 1981. The City followed in 1993 with an expanded survey of National Register eligible courts and subsequent nomination. While their designation protects these significant properties against inappropriate development and helps retain the historic character for which our City is so well known, many more courts remain undesignated and all are vulnerable in the face of mounting development pressures.

A strategic plan to address the development threat to bungalow courts and related zoning issues is a prudent approach to their preservation. Pasadena Heritage agrees that further study is needed to extend protection to threatened bungalow courts and is happy to assist with the process.

Mansionization

The preservation of neighborhood character is one of this organization's highest priorities. Our great city is rich with quality urban spaces and historic architecture of high integrity, qualities that define Pasadena and make it the desirable location that it is today. It is important to realize that many of the buildings that contribute to this

sense of place do not meet the criteria for historic designation, but are nonetheless older historic structures that establish neighborhood character. Infill construction that radically disrupts this context impacts the entire community.

Landmark Districts are one approach to preventing incompatible new construction but unfortunately nominating a district is a lengthy process that must consider each individual property within the proposed district boundaries and requires property owner participation on a large scale as well as considerable city staff time to respond to individual Landmark District nominations.

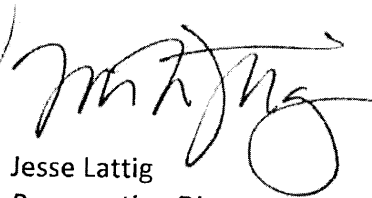
Zoning regulations that are in alignment with the Citywide Design Principles would help protect against unnecessary demolitions and incompatible residential design in neighborhoods characterized by consistent scale and set-backs. Innovative architecture need not be discouraged but should still respect established context, for example, through required compliance with design guidelines.

Pasadena Heritage supports the direction to study potential zoning revisions to address the threat of mansionization and to help protect the architectural character of our neighborhoods. We stand ready to participate and assist in achieving improvements that preserve and enhance our city's extraordinary architectural legacy and sense of place.

Sincerely,



Susan N. Mossman
Executive Director



Jesse Lattig
Preservation Director