

# Agenda Report

November 14, 2016

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council  
**FROM:** Planning & Community Development Department  
**SUBJECT: DESIGNATION OF THE HOUSE AT 1600 SAN PASQUAL STREET 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) pursuant to Section 15308 Class 8 of the CEQA Guidelines pertaining to Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment;
2. Find that main residence, attached garage with chauffeur's quarters, and southern exterior freestanding wall with fountain at 1600 San Pasqual Street meet landmark designation criterion C in Pasadena Municipal Code (P.M.C) Section 17.62.040(C)(2)(c) because they embody the distinctive characteristics of a locally significant property type, architectural style and period. The building and accessory structures are a locally significant, intact examples of a single-family residence property type built in the Mediterranean Renaissance Revival style, designed by two USC trained designers, Frank W. Green and Frederick Hageman, and retain integrity;
3. Adopt the attached resolution approving a Declaration of Landmark Designation for 1600 San Pasqual Street, Pasadena, California;
4. Authorize the Mayor to execute the attached Declaration of Landmark Designation for 1600 San Pasqual Street, Pasadena, California; and
5. Direct the City Clerk to record the declaration with the Los Angeles County Recorder.

### **HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:**

At its regular meeting of July 19, 2016, the Historic Preservation Commission recommended that the City Council approve the designation of the house and accessory structures at 1600 San Pasqual Street as a Landmark under Criterion "C" of PMC Section 17.62.040.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The house and accessory structures at 1600 San Pasqual Street qualify for designation as a Landmark under Criterion "C" because they embody the distinctive characteristics of a locally significant property type, architectural style and period. The building and accessory structures are locally significant, intact examples of a single-family property type built in the Mediterranean Renaissance Revival style, designed by two USC trained designers, Frank W. Green and Frederick Hageman, and retains integrity.

### **BACKGROUND:**

On March 5, 2016, property owner Wilson Abecrombie Trust, represented by Brooke Abercrombie, submitted an application for designation of the property at 1600 San Pasqual Street as a landmark. The staff evaluated the property according to the criteria in Title 17 of the P.M.C. and determined that the main residence, attached garage with chauffeur's quarters, and the southern exterior freestanding wall with fountain qualified for designation as a landmark.

This property was identified in the City's Historic Context Report "Residential Period Revival Architecture and Development in Pasadena from 1915-1942" prepared by Teresa Grimes and Mary Jo Winder in August 2004. The survey identified a grouping of 124 properties east of the Cal Tech Campus eligible for listing as a historic district in the National Register of Historic Places (Criterion C) in the context of Period Revival architecture. The subject property at 1600 San Pasqual Street was identified as a contributing property to the eligible district, which was described in the Period Revival study as the Ninita Parkway/Rose Villa Historic District.

Property owners in the eligible district and additional area to the east of it are actively pursuing formal designation as a landmark district, have collected petition signatures from more than 51% of property owners in the district boundary and have formally applied for landmark district designation. In August of 2014, the current owner purchased the property and began the process of restoring and rehabilitating portions of the property. Four building permits have been issued to the property owner since April 30, 2014: the remodel of two bathrooms, the re-installation of existing roof tiles after the installation of a new weather barrier, an interior remodel with window and door replacement as necessary due to deterioration and structural retrofit of unreinforced masonry walls not visible from the public right-of-way, as well as the demolition and reconstruction of the decorative freestanding perimeter wall with vernacular tile fountain at the west edge of the property. Each of these permits was reviewed by Design &

Historic Preservation staff and none met the threshold requiring review of an application for Certificate of Appropriateness, which is required for major projects that affect contributing properties in an eligible but undesignated historic district (Category 2 review procedures).

### Property Data

- Address: 1600 San Pasqual Street, Pasadena, California, 91106
- Location: Southeast corner of South Sierra Bonita Avenue and San Pasqual Street.
- Date of Construction Completion: 1928 (source: Original Building Permit, LA County Assessor)
- Original Owner: Edmund A. Gray (source: Original Building Permit, LA County Assessor)
- Designers: Frank W. Green and Frederick Hageman (source: Original Building Permit, City of Pasadena records)
- Original/Present Use: Single Family Residence/Single Family Residence
- Property Size: 33,369 square feet (source: County Assessor)
- Building Size: 5,045 square feet (source: County Assessor)

### Site Features

The .76-acre parcel is located on the southeast corner of South Sierra Madre Avenue and San Pasqual Street. It contains a two-story house with attached garage and chauffeur's quarters in an irregular L-shaped plan. The main residence is set back from the street in alignment with an almost uniform front setback for residences evident along the entirety of the block. The main residence and primary elevation are oriented toward San Pasqual Street. The attached garage and driveway entrance are oriented toward South Sierra Madre Avenue. A detached garage with living quarters was constructed on the southern portion of the site in 1934. The southern portion of the property was subdivided in 1971, and a new residence was constructed there in 2008.

### Main House Features

This two-story single-family residence is designed in the Mediterranean Renaissance Revival style. The main residence consists of a central two-story rectangular volume with a symmetrical placement of window and door openings along the street-facing elevation. This central volume is flanked by one-story volumes, and the irregular L-shaped plan continues by extending southeast to the attached three-car garage. The residence is clad in smooth stucco and the roof is a truncated hipped roof clad in red tile roofing with decorative wooden exposed rafters.

The north-facing elevation features a prominent main entrance, an arched opening with cast stone surround. The irregular cast stone panels are arranged in a continuous arch around the opening with a lunette accenting the keystone, engraved with the site address. The original arched and paneled main entry door is still present within the

opening. The remaining openings on the north-facing elevation consist of punched, rectangular door and window openings on the first and second floor. The first floor features a series of original restored pairs of three-light wood doors flanked by operable shutters. The door openings feature simple cast stone surrounds and are located at the first floor dining room, living room, and family room, providing each with access to the exterior. The second floor window openings are intact, although the wood window sashes have deteriorated and been replaced in-kind based on the extant wood window sashes and frames. The new windows are wood framed casements with three true-divided light patterns. Each window opening is accented with a plaster surround matching the existing exterior cladding material in color and texture.

The single-story sub-volume to the west of the central volume is programmed as a family room. The single-story sub-volume to the east of the central volume is programmed as a kitchen with bedrooms and laundry. Both volumes are set back from the main central volume. The setbacks create courtyard spaces in front of both the family room and the kitchen and maid's quarters. The spaces are enclosed by freestanding walls. The east-facing elevation of the main residence features a perforated stucco screen, and three window openings, each with operable shutters and wood framed windows, with casement operating wooden, three-light sashes.

#### Attached Garage Features

The attached garage was constructed at the same time as the house but is distinguishable by its distinct side-gable roof form with red roof tiles. It is clad in the same smooth stucco coat as the main residence. It features a triad of ornately bevel-paneled original garage doors. Framing each garage opening is a non-structural simple column supporting a non-structural lintel which stretches across the top of each garage door opening. The garage also features elaborate exposed rafter tails, particularly beneath the eaves that extend the length of the garage door openings. The garage also has a small living space designed to house a chauffeur.

#### South Wall and Fountain

There is a freestanding wall built along a portion of the southern edge of the property which features a fountain. The cherubic head and water spout are surrounded by a rectangular installation of glazed ceramic tile. A catch basin is molded out of the same material as the freestanding wall.

#### Documented Changes to the Property

The property has only been occupied by two previous owners since its construction in 1928. Not only have many of the exterior features been preserved, but many of the interior fixtures remain intact. The subdivision of the southern portion of the site in 1971, and the demolition of the second garage and larger Chauffeur's quarters that was designed and constructed by designer Frank Green in 1934 are the only changes to setting that have occurred.

### Current Conditions, Use, and Proposed Plans

Building maintenance has been an issue and historic materials have deteriorated as a result. The new owners have taken pro-active steps in advance of the landmark designation in order to address building and safety issues, as well as preservation issues. Four building permits have been issued to the property owner since April 30, 2014: the remodel of two bathrooms, the re-installation of existing roof tiles after the installation of a new weather barrier, an interior remodel with window and door replacement as necessary due to deterioration and structural retrofit of unreinforced masonry walls not visible from the public right-of-way, as well as the demolition and reconstruction of the decorative freestanding perimeter wall with vernacular tile fountain at the west edge of the property. Each of these permits was reviewed by Design & Historic Preservation staff and none met the threshold requiring Certificate of Appropriateness, which are required for major projects that affect an eligible resource (Category 2). The owner has submitted an application for a Historic Property Contract (Mills Act).

### Historical Overview

#### *History of the Neighborhood & Site*

The historic context statement for Residential Period Revival Architecture and Development in Pasadena from 1915-1942 describes the development of the area stating:

Like most of Pasadena, the Ninita Parkway/Rose Villa Historic District had been part of the old Rancho San Pasqual. On May 10, 1869, James Craig purchased five thousand acres in the northeast portion of the old rancho San Pasqual from J.S. Griffin and B.D. Wilson. This land, called the Craig Tract, was surveyed for subdivision in 1876. On November 13, 1878, Wilson repurchased eight hundred acres to create a subdivision called the Lake Vineyard and Water Association." In 1870, Craig issued promissory notes to William and Alexander Grogan to raise money to purchase water rights for the land. With the death of William Grogan in 1881, Alexander Grogan foreclosed on the mortgages and took over the lands as payment. Thereafter the land was known as the Grogan Tract. When Grogan died in 1886, portions of his tract were sold by the executors of his estate. Maria Jesus de Shorb purchased 184 acres of land along East California Avenue. The south half of the district (where the subject property is located) was owned by Shorb until the 1920's. The vast majority of the lots were

built upon from the late teens through the late twenties. Period Revival architecture was at its zenith during this time.

### Italian/Mediterranean Architecture

In the “Development of Pasadena & Key Influences” section of the Cultural Resources of the Recent Past Historic Context Report it states:

Following the First World War, as enthusiasm for the Arts & Crafts movement waned, Pasadenans turned to Period Revival styles for their homes and major civic buildings. The wealthy population continued to draw some of the most prominent architects of the period to work in Pasadena, ensuring that the City would continue to be a place where trends in California architecture happened. Along with Santa Barbara, Pasadena emerged as a major center of Mediterranean Revival design.

The use of architectural elements and designs indigenous to the countries surrounding the Mediterranean Sea first emerged in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and played an important role in the search for a regional architecture for Southern California because of similarities in landscape and climate. Local residents were also attracted to the Mediterranean Revival as a way to identify with California's Spanish and Mexican past. This trend is exemplified by the 1915 San Diego Panama-California Exposition.

This resulted in a proliferation of the style by some of the period's most renowned architects, known loosely as the California school. Architects such as Gordon Kaufman, Myron Hunt, Reginald Johnson, Roland Coate, and Wallace Neff worked to capture the uniqueness of California as a place by using traditional influences in innovative ways. [Their's was] a prodigious output of graceful, picturesque structures with red tile roofs, thick walls, and plain stuccoed surfaces.

According to the City's context report entitled “Period Revival Architecture in Pasadena, CA, 1915-1942:”

“The Renaissance Revival style is based on the architecture of Italy, with additional elements borrowed from Ancient Greek and Roman architecture. In Pasadena, the...Renaissance Revival style was popular during two separate phases...The second phase from 1915 to 1930

was characterized by more refined details than the preceding phase. By this time, many architects and their clients had visited Italy and thus had some first-hand familiarity with the original models. Improved printing technology provided ready access to excellent photographic documentation of these models. The identifying features of the second phase of the Italian Renaissance Revival is a symmetrically arranged facade, a low-pitched hipped roof usually fit with clay tiles, upper story windows smaller and less elaborate than those below, full-width porches with massive square piers, large arched openings on the ground level, entrance areas accented by small classical columns or pilasters, and stuccoed walls accented with quoins.”

The two-story Mediterranean Renaissance Revival house has the following character-defining features, as described in ““Period Revival Architecture in Pasadena, CA, 1915-1942.”

- Symmetrically arranged facade,
- A low-pitched hipped roof usually fit with clay tiles,
- Upper story windows smaller or less elaborate than those below,
- Large arched openings on the ground level,
- Entrance areas accented by small classical columns or pilasters, and
- Stuccoed walls accented with quoins

#### Frederick Hagemen & Frank W. Green

Frederick Hageman was born in Los Angeles in 1905 and graduated from the University of Southern California in 1928 with a Bachelor’s Degree in architectural engineering. He also attended the University of California at Los Angeles for one year studying advanced architectural design. After completion of the property at 1600 San Pasqual Street, he apprenticed with Los Angeles architect A.B. Sturges to earn the necessary experience for his state examination. In 1934 he was retained to assist with the restoration of the La Purisima Mission in Santa Barbara.

Frank W. Green also attended the University of Southern California and graduated in 1927. Both of the students were active in the Alpha Rho Chi society of architects and opened their partnership shortly after graduation. The firm of Green & Hageman did not endure and their careers diverged as they searched for work. Frank W Green came to reside and practice Glendale, experimenting with modest, lower cost housing designs in the 1930’s.

## **ANALYSIS:**

The main residence, garage with chauffers quarter and south wall with fountain at 1600 San Pasqual Street are eligible for designation under Criterion C, (PMC 17.62.040(C)(2)(c)), 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.

1600 San Pasqual Street is an excellent example of single-family construction in the Mediterranean Renaissance Revival style, demonstrating many of the character-defining features of the style including a symmetrical facade, a truncated hipped roof, smooth textured stucco walls, a prominent entry door and with accented surround, and recessed windows with operable shutters. The garage door and chauffeurs quarters also demonstrate exceptional craftsmanship and materiality including the paneled garage doors and the decorative rafter tails. The free-standing exterior south wall and tile fountain are individual features and elements that exemplify the quality of craftsmanship and integrity of materiality that the property retains.

It has architectural integrity (its ability to demonstrate why it is significant) through its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship and feeling, as follows:

- **Location:** The main residence and garage with chauffeur's quarters are in their original location.
- **Design:** The building retains a large extent of its exterior character-defining features. Its symmetrical façade, rectangular punched openings, truncated hipped roof, and elaborate main entry are all stylistically consistent with the Mediterranean Renaissance Revival style.
- **Setting:** The original setting has been slightly altered by the property's subdivision in 1971. But the remainder of the site and its relationship with adjacent properties is largely unaltered. Surrounding properties remain unaltered with setbacks, sidewalk widths and abundance of mature street trees that contribute to an idyllic single-family neighborhood.
- **Materials:** The main residence and garage have undergone the replacement of original deteriorated materials, but a majority of the exterior door and windows have been repaired and restored. Those that were deteriorated beyond repair have been replicated based on extant door panels and window sashes.
- **Workmanship:** The building demonstrates the defining characteristics of a distinct architectural movement and the craft of two highly talented designers.
- **Feeling:** The property retains a definitive sense of the single-family setting that existed historically, and retains a large portion of the open space that characterizes many of the adjacent parcels.

Based on the above, the property retains sufficient integrity to qualify for designation as a landmark under Criterion C.

**COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:**

The General Plan Land Use Element – Guiding Principle 2: “Pasadena’s historic resources will be preserved. Citywide, new development will be in harmony with and enhance Pasadena’s unique character and sense of place. New construction that could affect the integrity of historic resources will be compatible with, and differentiated from, the existing resource;” and Goal 8: “Preservation and enhancement of Pasadena’s cultural and historic buildings, landscapes, streets and districts as valued assets and important representations of its past and a source of community identity, and social, ecological, and economic vitality.”

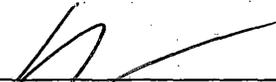
**ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:**

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.

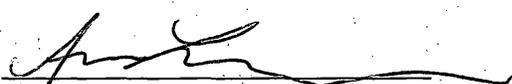
**FISCAL IMPACT:**

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,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
DAVID M. REYES  
Director of Planning & Community  
Development Department

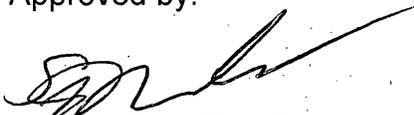
Prepared by:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Amanda Landry, AICP  
Planner

Reviewed by:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Leon E. White  
Principal Planner

Approved by:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
STEVE MERMELL  
City Manager

Attachments (4):

- A. Vicinity Map
- B. Application & Historical Documentation (Building Description Blank; Sanborn Map)
- C. Current Photographs
- D. Effects of Historic Designation