

Agenda Report

June 5, 2017

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council
FROM: Planning & Community Development Department
**SUBJECT: DESIGNATION OF THE APARTMENT BUILDING AT 1128-1134
NORTH LOS ROBLES 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 property at 1128-1134 N. Los Robles Avenue meets Criterion "C" for designation as a landmark (P.M.C. §17.62.040) because it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a locally significant property type, architectural style and period. It is a rare, intact example of a Tudor Revival style multi-family residence;
3. Adopt the attached resolution approving a Declaration of Landmark Designation for 1128-1134 N. Los Robles Avenue, Pasadena, California;
4. Authorize the Mayor to execute the attached Declaration of Landmark Designation for 1128-1134 N. Los Robles Avenue, 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 March 21, 2017, the Historic Preservation Commission recommended that the City Council approve the designation of 1128-1134 N. Los Robles Avenue as a landmark under Criterion C of PMC §17.62.040.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The apartment building at 1128-1134 N. Los Robles Avenue is a distinctive example of the Tudor Revival architectural style applied to a multi-family residential building in Pasadena and retains all of its significant character-defining features. Therefore, the property at 1128-1134 N. Los Robles Avenue qualifies for designation as a landmark under Criterion “C” as a locally significant example of Tudor Revival architecture applied to an apartment building.

BACKGROUND:

On December 20, 2016 property owners Dominick and Nany Cardella submitted an application for landmark designation of the property at 1128-1134 North Los Robles Avenue. City staff evaluated the property according to the criteria in Title 17 of the P.M.C. and determined that the apartment building with adjoining front terrace and low wall qualifies for designation as a landmark.

Property Data

- Address: 1128-1134 North Los Robles Avenue, Pasadena, 91104
- Location: East side of North Los Robles Avenue, between Douglas Street and Eldora Road
- Date of Construction Completion: 1924 (source: Assessor’s Records)
- Original Owner: J.E. Tyers (source: Original Building Permit)
- Architect: None (source: Original Building Permit)
- Builder: E.A. Larson (source: Original Building Permit)
- Original/Present Use: Multi-Family Residence/Multi-Family Residence
- Property Size: 9,013 square feet (source: County Assessor)
- Building Size: 4,280 square feet (source: County Assessor)

The Site (Existing Conditions)

The .2-acre parcel contains a two-story apartment building and a detached four-car garage. The apartment building is sited near the center of the lot, facing west, and an alley behind the property provides access to a detached garage and surface parking lot. Topography is mainly flat on this parcel; North Los Robles Avenue proceeds from the south with a slight ascending grade. The main apartment building is set back significantly from the street and in line with all of the other building facades on the block. The consistency of the front setbacks along the street creates narrow side yards between the buildings on adjacent parcels, but this parcel’s lack of border fences, shrubbery, or trees allows the side elevations to be visible from the public right-of-way. The garage is situated at the southeast corner of the property. A chain-link fence separates the rear yard from the detached garage, surface parking lot and driveway.

Exterior Features of the Building

A steeply pitched cross-gabled roof with composition shingles caps this asymmetrical, Tudor Revival fourplex. Built in 1924, the two-story building is “L” shaped on its main, east-facing elevation, but rectangular with a crenellated parapet and flat roof at the rear. Painted, false half-timbering, an unadorned bargeboard, and an apex pendant decorate the front gable. Smooth stucco finishes most exterior surfaces. Ribbons of four narrow, wood-framed casement windows are the primary fenestration on the east elevation. Windows on the remaining elevations are a mixture of wood-framed casement and double-hung sash. Applied molding in low relief over first floor windows and doors enlivens the façade. Concrete steps lead to an open porch, set into the “L”, and enclosed by a low, red brick wall. Implied brick buttresses are on either end, with the south buttress supporting one of the brick pedestals of a front gabled portico. Basically a miniature of the main front gable, the portico has decorative half timbering and a pendant at the apex. The portico protects one of four entrance doors, each with Gothic arched openings and solid, wooden doors with four small lights. A wrought iron lamp is between two of the three doors north of the portico. End-wall chimneys, finished in stucco, pierce the gables on the north and south elevations. The broad front lawn is bisected by a concrete entry path.

Garage

Based on City Assessment Records, the garage was built at the same time as the main apartment building. Located at the southeast corner of the property, it is oriented with its four garage doors facing north, and the west wall has four individual storage spaces with wood plank doors. The garage is clad in similarly textured plaster as the main residence but, rather than a gabled roof like the house, it has a flat roof and low parapet with a coping of terracotta barrel tiles.

Documented Changes to the Property

A number of minor changes have occurred since the original construction of the apartment building and garage. In 1939, the original parapet and roof of the garage were replaced, and the terracotta tiles were added as coping. In 1994, the owners pulled permits to add almost 1300 square feet including a bedroom, bathroom and TV room to apartment number 1130 along with central air. A permit was obtained in 2000 to replace the main building’s roof with fiberglass, and permits for house bolting for seismic retrofit were pulled in 2002.

Current Condition, Use, and Proposed Plans

The property is currently in good condition. The owners intend to apply for a Mills Act contract to pay for repairs and maintenance to the brickwork at the front terrace and the replacement of the four garage doors, none of which appear original, among other projects.

Historical Overview

History of the Neighborhood & Site

The Los Robles Corridor was part of the 1882 Painter and Ball Tract and was annexed to the City in 1906 as part of the North Pasadena Annexation. While there were a few Victorian-era houses at that time on the street, most of the houses there were built between 1900 and 1930. The street developed with large substantial houses because it was a main thoroughfare from the downtown to Altadena. Architectural styles found in the corridor represent twentieth century residential development patterns in Pasadena. This section below Washington Blvd. developed earlier with a number of Craftsman bungalows; the section north of Washington developed in subsequent decades with the later Spanish Colonial and other Period Revival styles. Multiple-family residences date primarily from the 1920s through the 1960s. The street is lined with mature trees of many varieties including camphor, oak, and palms. Because the street slopes up to the north, many properties are bordered with retaining walls often with arroyo stone or of concrete. Generous front yard setbacks with broad lawns and landscaping contrast with the denser postwar multiple-family developments built closer to the street.

English Revival and Tudor Architecture in Pasadena

According to the City's context report entitled "Residential Period Revival Architecture and Development in Pasadena from 1915-1942," English Revival styles including Tudor developed naturally from Pasadena's pervasive Arts and Crafts culture of 1903 to 1928:

Domestic English architecture was a source of inspiration for Period Revival architects during the 1920s and 30s. There were several versions of the English Revival style since both simple country cottages and grand Tudor manors were used as models. Distinguishing characteristics include multigabled roofs with overhanging eaves and exposed rafters, slate roofing, diamond-paned leaded glass windows, chimneys and retaining walls with decorative brickwork and stonework.

And, of its subtype, Tudor Revival:

Tudor Revival is a term usually reserved for houses with half-timbering...As in many Queen Anne and Stick Style homes, Tudor Revival style houses often feature striking decorative timbers. These timbers hint at, but do not duplicate, medieval building techniques. In medieval houses, the timber framing was integral with the structure. Tudor Revival style houses; however, merely suggest the structural framework with false half-timbering. This decorative woodwork comes in many

different designs, with stucco or patterned brick between the timbers.

The report goes on to say that brick or stone entryway decoration was a common way to depict the style in buildings of a more modest budget.

Multi-family Residential Development in Pasadena

Although Pasadena grew rapidly and was a prosperous town in the 1920s, not every citizen could afford one of the many types of single-family homes being developed. Bungalow courts, garden apartments, and four-unit apartment buildings were three popular types of multi-family development during this period. They allowed developers to more densely develop their land in a booming local economy and provided housing for a wider range of citizens.

This property embodies both the period form of the multifamily apartment building subtype and the Tudor style both prominent in this era of Pasadena's architectural history and mentioned in the City's 1993 *Historic Context/Property Type Report*.

ANALYSIS:

The main apartment building with attached terrace and wall at 1128-1134 North Los Robles Avenue is eligible for Landmark 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.

The apartment building on this property is an intact example of the Tudor Revival subtype of the English Revival architectural style, and is a rare example of this style in a multi-family residential building. It features many of the character-defining features of the property type including steep roof pitch, front gable with extended eaves and exposed rafters, barge boards with pendants, and decorative half-timbers. The building was previously identified as being eligible for designation as a landmark in the City's 2002 historic resources survey of multi-family residential properties.

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

- Location: The apartment building is in its original location.

- **Design**: The apartment building features many of the character defining features of the Tudor style including asymmetrical facade with multiple gables; faux half-timbering, decorative brickwork, while featuring some less-used but well-known Tudor style details like Gothic arched entryways, stucco cladding, label molds over narrow grouped windows and castellated parapets.
- **Setting**: The original setting remains relatively unchanged since the development of the property and the district surrounding it. Setbacks with wide lawns, the residential nature of the properties, and one or two story surrounding properties, many original to the period, are still intact.
- **Materials**: The apartment building retains virtually all of its original materials including four original main entrance doors and windows frames and sashes throughout. Details such as dentils adorning the large gable's half timbers and pendants on both gables' barge boards have been retained.
- **Workmanship**: Excellent workmanship is evident in the proportions and durability of the exterior façade details.
- **Feeling**: The property clearly expresses and evokes the same feeling that pervaded when it was developed.

Based on the above, the property retains sufficient integrity to qualify for designation as a landmark under criteria C: an architecturally intact example that represents important historic context of Pasadena's notable architects of grand homes popularizing period styles that trickled down to housing stock appropriate to its significant middle class population.

Although it is common for garages associated with Tudor Revival buildings to have flat roofs, the garage on this property has been substantially altered since its original construction, as described above, and, therefore, no longer retains sufficient integrity to be deemed contributing to this designation.

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:

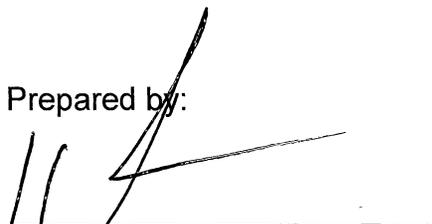
In some instances, owners of designated historic properties may apply to the City for a Historic Property Contract (Mills Act), which allows an alternative and often lower property tax assessment. The City Council reviewed the projected loss of property tax revenue from this program in 2002 when it adopted 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:



Kevin Johnson
Senior Planner

Reviewed by:



Leon E. White
Principal Planner

Approved by:



STEVE MERMELL
City Manager

Attachments (4)

- Attachment A – Application Materials
- Attachment B – Vicinity Map & Historical Documentation
- Attachment C – Photographs
- Attachment D – Effects of Landmark Designation

RESOLUTION NO. _____

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PASADENA
ADOPTING A DECLARATION OF LANDMARK DESIGNATION OF 1128-1134
N. Los Robles Avenue, PASADENA, CALIFORNIA**

WHEREAS, the City Council has found that 1128-1134 N. Los Robles Avenue meets criterion "C", as set forth in Section 17.62.040(C) of the Pasadena Municipal Code; and

WHEREAS, the property at 1128-1134 N. Los Robles Avenue is significant because it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a historic resource property type, period, architectural style or method of construction, or represents the work of an architect, designer, engineer, or builder whose work is significant to the City or to the region, or that possesses high artistic values that are significant to the City or to the region;

WHEREAS, the application for Landmark designation is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15308;

WHEREAS, Dominick & Nany Cardella, the property owners, submitted the application for landmark designation;

WHEREAS, the City Council may designate a Landmark and evidence such approval by adopting a declaration executed by the Mayor pursuant to Subsection 17.62.050 (C) of the Pasadena Municipal Code;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Pasadena that the attached declaration of Landmark designation for 1128-1134 N. Los Robles Avenue is hereby adopted.

Adopted at the _____ meeting of the City Council on the _____ day of _____, 2017 by the following vote:

AYES:

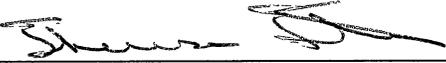
NOES:

ABSENT.

ABSTAIN:

MARK JOMSKY, CMC, City Clerk

Approved as to form:



Theresa E Fuentes
Assistant City Attorney

DECLARATION OF LANDMARK DESIGNATION FOR:

1128-1134 N. Los Robles Avenue
PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 17.62.050 of the Pasadena Municipal Code, the City Council of the City of Pasadena by this declaration hereby designates as a Landmark certain real property described as:

LOT 24 OF JENNIE WATTS TRACT IN THE CITY OF PASADENA, COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, STATE OF CALIFORNIA AS PER MAP RECORDED IN BOOK 23, PAGE(S) 26, OF MAPS IN THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY RECORDER OF SAID COUNTY

Under Pasadena Municipal Code Section 17.62.090, all work affecting designated Landmarks, except ordinary maintenance and repair, such as but not limited to new construction and additions, exterior alterations, relocation, and demolition, is subject to review by the City of Pasadena.

DATED: _____

ATTEST:

CITY OF PASADENA
A municipal corporation

Mark Jomsky, City Clerk

By: _____
Terry Tornek, Mayor