



# Agenda Report

February 5, 2018

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council

**FROM:** Planning & Community Development Department

**SUBJECT: DESIGNATION OF THE MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL BUILDING AT 139 SOUTH LOS ROBLES AVENUE (THE LIVINGSTONE) 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 and there are no features that distinguish this project from others in the exempt class and, therefore, there are no unusual circumstances;
2. Find that the building at 139 South Los Robles Avenue meets Criteria "A" and "C" for designation as a landmark pursuant to Pasadena Municipal Code (PMC) Section 17.62.040 because it is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of the history of the City and embodies the distinctive characteristics of a locally significant property type, architectural style and period and represents the work of an architect whose work is of significance to the City. It is a locally significant example of a vernacular brick masonry Italian Renaissance Revival style multi-family residential/hotel building of the pre-World War II era designed by locally significant architect Myron Hunt; and;
3. Adopt the attached resolution approving a Declaration of Landmark Designation for 139 South Los Robles Avenue, Pasadena, California;
4. Authorize the Mayor to execute the attached Declaration of Landmark Designation for 139 South 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 December 5, 2017, the Historic Preservation Commission recommended that the City Council approve the designation of the house and accessory structures at 139 South Los Robles Avenue as a Landmark under Criteria "A" and "C" of PMC Section 17.62.040.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The building at 139 South Los Robles Avenue qualifies for designation as a Landmark under Criteria "A" and "C" because it is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of the history of the City and embodies the distinctive characteristics of a locally significant property type, architectural style and period and represents the work of an architect whose work is of significance to the City. It is a locally significant example of a vernacular brick masonry Italian Renaissance Revival style multi-family residential/hotel building of the pre-World War II era designed by locally significant architect Myron Hunt; and retains integrity.

### **BACKGROUND:**

On September 6, 2017, Carole Lipman, an individual condominium owner, submitted an application for Landmark designation of the building at 139 South Los Robles Avenue. A majority of individual condominium owners of The Livingstone have expressed support in writing for Landmark designation. City staff evaluated the property according to the criteria in Title 17 of the P.M.C. and determined that the building qualifies for designation as a landmark.

### **Property Data**

- Address: 139 South Los Robles Avenue, Pasadena
- Location: West side of south Los Robles Avenue, between Green Street and Cordova Street.
- Date of Construction Completion: 1927 (source: Original Building Permit)
- Original Architect: Myron Hunt and Walter Webber (source: Original Building Permit)
- Original Builder: J.H. Woodworth and Son (Source: Original Building Permit)
- Original / Present Use: Hotel/Multi-family residence
- Property size: 15,280 (source: County Assessor)
- Building size: 32,000 (source: County Assessor)

### **The Site:**

The property is located on a rectangular shaped lot on the west side of South Los Robles Avenue, south of Green Street, within walking distance of the Civic Center and

Paseo Colorado. The building is set closely to the street with a minimal setback and with the adjacent, but separate, Stanley Apartments to the south, adjoins a narrow central courtyard landscaped with trees and groundcover. The property is generally flat and abuts other multi-family residential properties to the north and west. The Livingstone Hotel, along with its adjacent twin, the Stanley Apartments, were formerly the two most massive buildings on the block, although they are now nestled among other similarly scaled buildings in a predominantly multi-family residential and commercial neighborhood.

#### Exterior Features of the Building:

The Livingstone Hotel is a three-story, symmetrical building with a modern penthouse and elevated basement, which shares a center courtyard with the Stanley Apartments, creating a symmetrical composition. The building is generally vernacular masonry construction, with some influence of the Italian Renaissance Revival style. The building is set closely to the street and is constructed of running-bond red brick on a concrete foundation. The elevated basement is fronted by a concrete trench and planter adjacent to the sidewalk. The central building volume is flanked by two smaller sub-volumes that are recessed behind the plane of the front façade. The north elevation has three shallow, unadorned, rectangular bays, while the south courtyard-facing elevation has two. The building has gently sloping side-facing gables on the primary volume with red clay tile roofing, transitioning to a flat roof behind. The building has pier-like heavy corners that appear as brick quoins. A shed dormer with a five-light fixed window is centered on the sloped roof of the main building volume. Multi-paned French doors with wrought iron balconies are found at the first floor, while the remaining windows are multi-paned, two-over-two, wood framed, double hung sash. The windows are slightly recessed with projecting, rowlock-course brick sills and flush, soldier-course brick lintels. Second and third floor recessed balconies have square openings. The deeply recessed front entrance is at the north elevation of the building and is elevated above the street and accessed by a flight of concrete steps. Full height multi-paned double hung windows provide light and air to the basement unit, which is accessed by steps on the south elevation. A roof mounted neon "Hotel Livingstone" sign is included in the City's historic sign inventory.

#### Documented Changes to the Property:

The property has undergone few major exterior changes since it was originally built in 1927. Neon signage to the roof and wall were added to the building in the 1940's, which have since been listed in the City of Pasadena's historic sign inventory and remain on site today. A complete rehabilitation of the building, and the expansion of a rooftop penthouse (not visible from the street) was completed in 2011. The rehabilitation included window restoration, brick re-pointing, utility upgrades and structural reinforcement. Prior alterations, such as louvered windows in some of the third story balconies, were also removed as part of the building restoration. The original basement restaurant has been remodeled into a medical office, and ADA accessible lifts were

installed. The rehabilitation work of the building received a City of Pasadena Historic Preservation Award in 2011.

#### Current Conditions, Use, and Proposed Plans:

The exterior of the building is currently in good condition and it is used as a multi-family residential condominium building, with a small commercial space at the basement level (currently occupied by a medical office). No significant changes to the property are proposed at this time.

#### Historical Overview

##### *Hotels and Tourism in Pasadena*

According to the Historic Context/Property Type Report prepared by the City of Pasadena in 1993 entitled: "Architectural/Historical Development of the City of Pasadena", tourism and hotel trade played a significant role in the development of the early built environment in Pasadena as part of the era of tourism that occurred in Pasadena from 1890 to 1930.

Pasadena's era of resort hotels included the development of the Green Hotel at the corner of Raymond Avenue and Green Street in 1887. The Green Hotel continued in operation until the 1960s when it was converted to condominiums. The Hotel Maryland opened in 1903 on Colorado Boulevard between Los Robles and Euclid Avenues, just east of the business district and near where the Livingstone was eventually constructed. The Hotel Maryland was also designed by Myron Hunt, and featured elegant shops fronted by a distinctive vine-covered pergola walkway (along Euclid Avenue). The Maryland initiated the concept of the hotel bungalow, free-standing, private accommodations, with full hotel services. Although a fire struck the hotel in 1914, an enlarged and more dazzling hotel was designed by Hunt. The hotel's popularity waned in the 1920s but it continued operations until financial problems resulted in its closure in 1935.

However, the Great Depression devastated the tourism industry, and by 1939 most of Pasadena's grand resort hotels were closed and either demolished or converted to other uses. Pasadena would never again enjoy the same level of tourism as it had in the early 20th century. However, because Pasadena's economy was based on tourism and not industry, the effects of the Depression caused little blight on the architectural landscape created by closed factories and abandoned worker housing that plagued other more industrial cities.

The Livingstone Hotel was built in 1927, two years after the completion and demonstrated success of the adjacent Stanley Hotel and Apartments and prior to the Great Depression. The Livingstone Hotel originally contained sixty rooms and a dozen kitchens, and was constructed for \$160,000. The hotel was representative of moderately-priced, furnished accommodations for tourists. The

Livingstone Hotel survived the Great Depression by converting into apartments and boarding rooms, as well as offering dining opportunities to residents and visitors. The property is significant as part of the era of tourism that occurred in Pasadena from 1890 to 1930, and is easily identifiable as a hotel from this period.

### *Italian Renaissance Revival Style*

The “Development of Pasadena & Key Influences” section of the Cultural Resources of the Recent Past Historic Context Report describes the context in which Period Revival Architecture and the City Beautiful Movement gained in popularity:

“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 19th 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 Gordan 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.”

The character-defining features of early 20<sup>th</sup> Century vernacular masonry Italian Renaissance Revival style multi-family development/hotels are:

- Multi-story configuration
- Simple geometric forms
- Combination of pitched and flat rooflines with shallow overhanging eaves
- Unadorned wall surfaces of stucco, brick or stone
- Recessed, wood framed, wood sash double hung or casement style multi-paned windows
- Exterior balconies

- Little or no exterior decorative detailing

Character-defining features are those visual aspects and physical features or elements constructed during the property's period of significance that give the building its character. In general, a property that retains its character defining features continues to convey its significance and therefore retains integrity as an historic resource. Removal or alteration of just one character-defining feature does not necessarily alter the integrity of an historic resource. Impacts to historic integrity can result from a single major change or from many incremental changes over time.

Myron Hunt, FAIA (1868 – 1952):

Myron Hubbard Hunt was one of the most influential architects in Southern California prior to World War II. He was born in Massachusetts in 1868 and received his education at Northwestern University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In 1893 he married Harriette Hollond Boardman. They spent two years abroad while Hunt studied architecture in Europe. After returning from Europe, Hunt joined the architectural firm of Hartwell & Richardson in Boston, before going to Chicago with Shepley, Ruten & Coolidge. Early in his career he also briefly worked for and studied under Frank Lloyd Wright, as they shared an office space in Chicago. In 1903, the Hunts moved to California hoping the climate would help Harriette's health. Hunt entered a partnership with the leading architect, Elmer Grey, from 1903 to 1908, had his own office from 1908 to 1920, and then joined H. C. Chambers from 1920-1947. The important role that Myron Hunt played in the development of Southern California can be seen in the list of a few of the buildings he designed: The Huntington Library, the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles, the Rose Bowl, the Pasadena Public Library, the Huntington Hospital, buildings at Caltech, Occidental College and Pomona College, in addition to many other public buildings and private residences. In 1928, the City of Pasadena awarded him the Arthur Noble Medal for outstanding civic service. The Architecture and Design Collection of the University Museum of the University of California, Santa Barbara, and the Huntington Library in San Marino maintain archival documents and collections of his work.

Walter Webber:

Walter Webber was known for Period Revival residential architecture and, with his firm Webber, Staunton & Spaulding, designed the Malaga Cove Plaza in Palos Verdes and the Casino at Avalon.

**ANALYSIS:**

The building at 139 South Los Roble Avenue is eligible for designation as a landmark under Criterion A of PMC Section 17.62.040.C.2, which states:

[The property] is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of the history of the City, region, or State.

Under this criterion, 139 South Los Robles Avenue is significant as an example of the tourist hotel property type constructed in a significant period in the City's history under the historic context theme of tourism. As opposed to the more well-known resorts, the Livingstone was planned and built as a more economical option that was so popular, as evidenced by the construction of its older adjacent twin, The Stanley. The City currently only has one other property designated under the historic context theme of tourism, which is the Constance Hotel at 940 East Colorado Boulevard. Other properties in Pasadena that fit within this context are the Stanley Apartments at 141-149 South Los Robles Avenue, Le Chateau at 34 South Mentor Avenue, and the Brookmore Hotel at 189 North Marengo Avenue. Others, like the Hotel Green, the former Vista del Arroyo Hotel and Bungalows, the Maryland Hotel and the Mira Monte Hotel are either already listed individually in the National Register or are contributors to National Register-listed Historic Districts.

In addition to being eligible under Criterion A, the building at 139 South Los Robles Avenue is also eligible for designation as a landmark under Criterion C of PMC Section 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.

Generally, in order to qualify under Criterion C, a property type would display most of the character-defining features of its style. It must retain high integrity of design, materials and workmanship 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. Under Criterion C, the building at 139 South Los Robles is significant because it is a locally significant, intact example of a Vernacular Masonry hotel/multi-family residential building with Italian Renaissance Revival influences, designed by Myron Hunt.

The building has a high level of architectural integrity (its ability to demonstrate why it is significant) as it relates to both Criterion A and C, through its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship and feeling, as follows:

- **Location**: The building and other site features are in their original locations.
- **Design**: The building retains the majority of its form, plan, space, structure, and style, including its simple massing, exterior brick cladding, original fenestration and exterior materials, roof form, entryway and basement.
- **Setting**: The multi-family and commercial neighborhood, including the Stanley apartments built two years prior to the Livingstone, are intact.
- **Materials**: The building retains a majority of its original exterior materials.
- **Workmanship**: The building retains the majority of its exterior materials and features that reflect the craftsmanship of early-20th century multi-family and hotel design and construction, and therefore retains integrity of workmanship.

- **Feeling:** The property clearly expresses the characteristics of the vernacular masonry Italian renaissance revival architectural style and evokes the feeling of the early tourism based development in Pasadena.
- **Association:** The property at 139 South Los Robles Avenue retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship and feeling, and therefore continues to convey its association with early-20th century hotel and multi-family residential development in Pasadena.

Based on the above, the property retains sufficient integrity to qualify for designation as a landmark under Criterion C. The building retains all of its original character-defining features, including three-story configuration with an elevated basement, simple geometric forms, shallowly pitched roof with red clay tile, brick cladding with a concrete basement, multi-paned, recessed French doors with wrought iron balconies on the first floors, recessed multi-paned, wood multi-paned double hung windows, and an elevated, recessed entryway. All alterations to the building, including structural reinforcement and ADA accessibility upgrades and construction of a penthouse dwelling unit (not publicly visible) are compatible with the original structure.

Contributing features to this designation include the exterior of the main building.

#### **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 and there are no features that distinguish this project from others in the exempt class and, therefore, there are no unusual circumstances.




**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)

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