

# Agenda Report

November 5, 2018

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council  
**FROM:** Planning & Community Development Department  
**SUBJECT: DESIGNATION OF THE BUILDING AT 464 EAST WALNUT 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 Guidelines §15308: Class 8 - Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment);
2. Find that the First Congregational Church at 464 East Walnut Street meets Criterion "C" for designation as a landmark pursuant to Pasadena Municipal Code (PMC) Section 17.62.040 because it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a locally significant property type, architectural style and period to the City. It is a locally significant example of an ecclesiastical building designed in the Gothic Revival style by local architects H.M. Patterson and Leon Caryl Brockway;
3. Adopt the attached resolution approving a Declaration of Landmark Designation for 464 East Walnut Street, Pasadena, California;
4. Authorize the Mayor to execute the attached Declaration of Landmark Designation for 464 East Walnut 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 17, 2018, the Historic Preservation Commission recommended that the City Council approve the designation of 464 East Walnut Street as a landmark under Criterion C of PMC §17.62.040.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The First Congregational Church at 464 East Walnut Street is a locally significant example of an ecclesiastical building designed in the Gothic Revival style by local architects H.M. Patterson and Leon Caryl Brockway and retains the majority of its significant character-defining features. Therefore, the property at 464 East Walnut Street qualifies for designation as a landmark under Criterion "C" as a locally significant example of an ecclesiastical building.

### **BACKGROUND:**

On May 8, 2018, Mary Ringhoff, on behalf of the owner, Zadena, LLC, submitted an application for Landmark designation of the building at 464 East Walnut Street. 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: 464 East Walnut Street, Pasadena
- Location: Southeast corner of East Walnut Street and North Los Robles Avenue
- Date of Construction Completion: 1927-28 (source: Original drawings, Photographs of the construction process)
- Original Owner: First Congregational Church of Pasadena
- Original Architect: Leon Caryl Brockway and H.M. Patterson (source: Original drawings)
- Original Builder: William T. Loesch and Son (Newspaper articles)
- Original / Present Use: Church
- Property size: 48,452 square feet (source: Los Angeles County Assessor)
- Building size: 81,931 square feet (source: Los Angeles County Assessor)

### **The Site**

The First Congregational Church of Pasadena is located one block west of the Pasadena Civic Center Historic District, next to the Ford Place Historic District, at the southeast corner of East Walnut Street and North Los Robles Avenue in central Pasadena. This area is largely developed with commercial and institutional properties, including the Fuller Theological Seminary campus, Westin Pasadena hotel, a gas station, offices, and retail properties with surface parking lots. The First Congregational Church occupies a large (1.11 acre), irregular lot with two surface parking lots. The church is surrounded by a narrow strip of lawn, foundation plantings, and immature trees.

### Exterior Features of the Building

The First Congregational Church is a significant example of an ecclesiastical building in the Gothic Revival style constructed in 1927-1928. It is three stories high, with two underground levels and irregular plan and massing. The building has a concrete foundation and reinforced, poured-in-place concrete walls. The roof is both cross-gabled and flat with parapets. The building features highly articulated, Gothic Revival-style decorative elements, including a distinctive square tower with multiple turrets at the building's northwest corner; a Gothic-arch window and door openings with elaborate tracery; paneled or slab wood entrance doors; a large rose window; windows with diamond pane leaded glass and both stained and clear glazing; engaged buttresses with flared bases, gabled caps, pinnacles, and crenellation. A more detailed description is included in the Architectural Report submitted by the applicant (Attachment A).

### Documented Changes to the Property

The documented alterations to the First Congregational Church building include:

- Replacement of original slate roofing material at the gabled roofs with asbestos shingles (1959);
- Replacement of asbestos shingles with composition shingles (1992);
- Replacement of first-story windows at the west façade at the Pilgrim Chapel (1964);
- Post-earthquake repair to the tower's parapet (1990);
- Replacement of a water-damaged cornice at the building's southwest corner (2004);
- Addition of a concrete ramp to the building's east façade, replacement of original doors with double metal doors at the ramp's entry point, replacement of a third-story window, and addition of a few metal window and door awnings (all at an unknown date).

### Current Condition, Use, and Proposed Plans

The building was used for the needs of the First Congregational Church of Pasadena until now, with several other small congregations and non-profit organizations using the halls of the church on certain days of the week. The basement gymnasium space has been used by a gymnastics school for decades.

In February 2018, the First Congregational Church sold the property to a new owner, Zadena, LLC, but continues to use the sanctuary for ceremonies. All current users will be required by the owner to leave the property not later than February 2019. The new owner is considering plans to use the sanctuary as an event venue, and the educational facilities as rented apartments or a hotel. No significant exterior changes to the property are proposed at this time.

The building is currently in fairly good condition and retains nearly all of its original exterior materials, including board-formed concrete cladding; wood leaded glass windows; steel divided light windows; paneled wood doors; cast stone ornamental details; metal wall-mounted signage; and decorative metal light fixtures. It also retains many original interior materials, including concrete and plaster walls and ceilings; concrete and wood flooring; plaster, brick, and tile fireplaces; wood doors; wood casework and built-ins; and ornamental details of wood, cast stone, plaster, and stained glass.

A Technical Review Report submitted with the application states that there is inadequate seismic support and years of deferred maintenance. The current owner has filed a Mills Act contract application for a substantial material restoration including: creation of a lateral force resisting system; enforcing of the concrete and wood frames; repair or replacement of electrical, heating, air conditioning, ventilation, fire suppression and alarm systems; repair of historic elevator, membrane roofs, concrete walls, wood doors, leaded stained glass windows, steel-framed windows and skylights, interior column capitals, exterior stairs, retaining walls; and, finally, emergency stabilization and restoration of the sanctuary including the wood trusses in the ceiling.

### Historical Overview

#### *Early Religious Organizations in Pasadena*

From the mid-1880's to 1910's, Pasadena saw the establishment of all the major Christian denominations with grand wood church buildings being built for many of them. In the early 1920's, on the wave of the second economic and population boom, many congregations were looking to expand and to replace the buildings that they had outgrown, some of which had been damaged by windstorms. Within a decade, new larger brick, stone or concrete buildings were erected for First Presbyterian Church, Westminster Presbyterian Church, Knox Presbyterian Church, First Baptist Church, First Methodist Episcopal Church, All Saints Church, Saint Andrews Catholic Church, Saint Philip the Apostle Catholic Church, Throop Unitarian Universalist Church and Swedish Lutheran Tabernacle. They were mostly designed in medieval Gothic Revival or Romanesque styles.

#### *First Congregational Church of Pasadena*

The first building for the First Congregational Church of Pasadena, with a 120' spire, was designed by architect B.H. Brown and constructed at the corner of Pasadena Avenue and California Boulevard in 1886-1887. The building later served as the Unitarian / Neighborhood Church and was demolished in 1972 due to the planned construction of the 710 freeway. The second building for a major part of the congregation was erected on the corner of Marengo Avenue and Green Street in 1898-1902. It lost its spire around 1910 after a windstorm and was demolished in 1927 when

the congregation moved to the new building that is the subject of this report. The current building, with its abundant space for social and recreational uses, is one of the largest churches in the city, reflecting both the economic and spiritual optimism of 1920's congregations in Southern California and the centrality of religious institutions in the social and community life of Pasadena.

### *Gothic Revival Style*

The Gothic Revival style was a “period revival” style that was popular in Southern California during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It first appeared in institutional architecture in the United States in the early 19th century continuing through the 1940's. The character-defining features of early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Gothic Revival style are:

- Vertical emphasis
- Concrete, masonry, or wood construction
- Steeply pitched front or cross gable roof with towers, turrets, pinnacles, spires, and finials
- Corbeled or crenellated gable ends and decorative details
- Buttresses on side elevations, usually engaged
- Windows and doors set in pointed arched openings
- Leaded and/or stained glass windows, sometimes with tracery (churches often have rose, lancet, and clerestory windows)

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.

### *Leon Caryl Brockway*

Leon Caryl Brockway was born in Vermont in 1877 and moved to Pasadena sometime before 1900. The minimal information that could be found on Brockway's body of work indicates that he worked almost exclusively in Pasadena, mostly designing single-family residences in Period Revival styles during the 1920's. He also designed a crematorium, a wing of an elementary school, an addition to the Pilgrim Congregational Church Parish House (1924), and several low-scale commercial block designs, including his earliest known work: the Crown Building at 32-38 N. Marengo Avenue (constructed in 1907 and remodeled by Brockway in 1928). Brockway does not seem to have been particularly prolific or influential within Pasadena or the larger region. His best-known work by far is the First Congregational Church, designed in collaboration with H.M. Patterson.

*H.M. (Henry Martin) Patterson (1856-1928)*

Henry Martin Patterson was born in Ohio to Scottish-born parents in 1856. Patterson opened his first architectural practice in Butte, Montana in 1881 and soon became a prominent designer of residential, commercial, and institutional properties in Butte and neighboring Anaconda (most of which are now part of the Butte-Anaconda National Historic Landmark). Sometime between 1902 and 1905, Patterson and his family moved to Los Angeles, where he again established his own practice and rose to prominence as a prolific architect. Patterson was an American Institute of Architects (AIA) member from 1911 until his death in 1928, and he was president of the AIA's Southern California chapter. He worked mostly in the Gothic Revival style (with other Period Revival examples including Neoclassical, Romanesque Revival, and Spanish Colonial Revival). Patterson designed a number of commercial and residential buildings, some of which are locally designated historical resources including:

- Fessenden House at 1051 N. Avenue 64 (1905, contributor to the Highland Park-Garvanza Historic Preservation Overlay Zone),
- The Merrill House at 815 Elyria Drive (1908, Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) #483)
- Pasadena's landmark Washington Theater (1924, in association with Clarence L. Jay)
- Grand View Presbyterian Church (Los Angeles, 1904, contributor to the Adams-Normandie Historic Preservation Overlay Zone),
- Santa Ana's United Presbyterian Church (1911, Santa Ana Landmark #14),
- Glendora Methodist Episcopal Church (1913),
- The First Congregational Church of Long Beach (1914, a Long Beach landmark),
- The First Presbyterian Church of Monrovia (1920),
- The Japanese Union Church (1923, Los Angeles HCM #312),
- The Vermont Avenue Presbyterian Church (now the African American Unity Center) (Los Angeles, 1924),
- The First Presbyterian Church of Hollywood (1924),
- Immanuel Presbyterian Church (1928, in association with C.F. Skilling, Los Angeles HCM #743).

**ANALYSIS:**

The building at 464 East Walnut Street is 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 464 East Walnut Street is significant because it is a locally significant, intact example of a Gothic Revival style ecclesiastic building, designed by H.M. Patterson and Leon Caryl Brockway. The building has a high level of architectural integrity (its ability to demonstrate why it is significant) 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 its original form, plan, structure, and style, including its exterior board-formed concrete finish, original fenestration, roof form, and entryway.
- Setting: The First Congregational Church was constructed in a mix of institutional, residential, and commercial properties dominated by the 1920's Civic Center complex. Some of the buildings, such as All Saints Church and the Fuller Theological Seminary campus, are still there; some are gone, such as Hotel Maryland; some were constructed recently, such as the Plaza Las Fuentes complex. As a result, the building's integrity of setting has been compromised.
- Materials: The building retains its original exterior materials.
- Workmanship: The building retains the integrity of materials and features that reflect the craftsmanship of early-20<sup>th</sup> century ecclesiastical design and construction, and therefore retains integrity of workmanship.
- Feeling: The property clearly expresses the characteristics of the Gothic Revival architectural style and continues to convey its association with 1920's ecclesiastical design and with historic patterns of development in Pasadena during this time.

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. All alterations to the building are compatible with the original structure.

#### **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:**

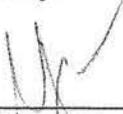
In some instances, owners of designated historic properties may apply to the City for a Historic Property Contract (Mills Act), which allows an alternative and often lower property tax assessment. The City Council reviewed the projected loss of property tax revenue from this program in 2002 when it adopted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



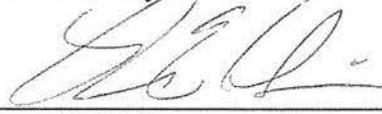
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Attachments: (2)

Attachment A – Application (including Vicinity Map, Historical Documentation & Photographs)

Attachment B – Effects of Landmark Designation