

# Agenda Report

April 26, 2021

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council  
**FROM:** Planning & Community Development Department  
**SUBJECT: DESIGNATION OF THE HOUSES AT 840-842 N. FAIR OAKS 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) 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 Doane and Pinney Houses at 840-842 N. Fair Oaks Avenue 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 historic resource property types, periods and architectural styles and the Pinney House represents the work of an architect whose work is significant to the City. The Doane House is an example of a Queen Anne style single-family residence and the Pinney House is an example of a Mission Revival Arts & Crafts Period single-family residence designed by Charles W. Buchanan;
3. Adopt the attached resolution approving a Declaration of Landmark Designation for 840-842 N. Fair Oaks Avenue, Pasadena, California;
4. Authorize the Mayor to execute the attached Declaration of Landmark Designation for 840-842 N. Fair Oaks 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 1, 2021, the Historic Preservation Commission recommended that the City Council approve the designation of the houses at 840-842 N. Fair Oaks Avenue as a Landmark under Criterion “C” of PMC Section 17.62.040.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The houses at 840-842 N. Fair Oaks Avenue qualify for designation as a Landmark under Criterion “C” because they embody the distinctive characteristics of historic resource property types, periods and architectural styles and the Pinney House represents the work of an architect whose work is significant to the City. The Doane House is an example of a Queen Anne style single-family residence and the Pinney House is an example of a Mission Revival Arts & Crafts Period single-family residence designed by Charles W. Buchanan.

## **BACKGROUND:**

On July 20, 2020, MBC Enterprises, LLC (property owner), submitted an application for Landmark designation of the Doane and Pinney Houses located at 840-842 N. Fair Oaks Avenue. City staff evaluated the property according to the criteria in Title 17 of the P.M.C. and determined that the property qualifies for designation as a landmark.

### Property Data

- Address: 840-842 N. Fair Oaks Avenue, Pasadena
- Location: East side of Fair Oaks Avenue between Painter Street and Mountain Street (Pinney House originally located at 180 S. Euclid Avenue – east side of Euclid Avenue between Green Street and Cordova Street; relocated to current location and rehabilitated in 2019-2020)
- Date of Construction Completion: ca. 1895 (Doane House; source: Assessment Records & City Surveys); 1906 (Pinney House; source: Original Building Permit)
- Original Architect: None (Doane House); Charles W. Buchanan (Pinney House)
- Original / Present Use: Single-family residences / Doane House: Mixed-use (office and 2 residential units); Pinney House: Duplex
- Property size: Appx. 14,000 sf (source: City mapping system - iMap)
- Building size: Doane House: 2,960; Pinney House: 2,090 (source: Building Plans)

### Site Features

The property is located on a rectangular shaped lot on the east side of Fair Oaks Avenue between Painter Street and Mountain Street. It contains two separate two-story buildings (the Doane House and the Pinney House) and two newly constructed three-

story apartment buildings behind them. Prior to the recent construction project, the Doane House was set further back on the property with a one-story non-historic single-family residence to the south of it and set further back from the street than the Doane House. The Doane House was recently moved closer to the street and closer to the northerly property line and the non-historic house was demolished.

The Pinney House was relocated to the site from the property at 180 S. Euclid Avenue (east side of Euclid Avenue between Green Street and Cordova Street). As part of the relocation project, two one-story wings on the rear of the house were demolished. The house now sits to the south and east of the Doane House, in a similar position as the non-historic house that previously existed on the site. The front of the site is landscaped and there is a new freestanding sign for the development within the front yard area.

The two new three-story apartment buildings are located behind the two houses and are mostly obscured from street view by the two historic houses. They are designed with parking at the ground floor and residential units above, with driveway access between them.

### Exterior Features of the Buildings

#### *Doane House:*

The Doane House is designed in the Queen Anne architectural style and has an asymmetrical façade presentation. It is two-stories in height with an irregular, roughly L-shaped, plan with an Arroyo stone foundation and a covered wrap-around front porch at the southwest corner. The massing and roof forms are relatively complex and include a street-facing gable roofed volume at the north end of the house, a street-facing gable-on-hip-roofed volume adjoining and set back slightly from the northerly volume and a cross-gabled volume extending to the south and set back substantially from the front two volumes. All gable-ends are boxed (as are all of the eaves) and have barge boards with carved-wood medallions, fish-scale shingle cladding and rectangular louvered attic vents. The house is clad in wood tongue-and-groove siding and has tall, narrow wood double-hung and fixed windows with wood trim and sills and carved wood skirts. The wrap-around front porch has a hipped roof supported by turned posts with curved brackets at the top and a solid wood railing. A former sleeping porch at the second floor of the south wing was enclosed with fixed divided-light windows at some point in the past and this condition was retained in the recent rehabilitation.

#### *Pinney House:*

The Pinney House is a one-and-one-half-story house designed in the Mission Revival Arts & Crafts style with a symmetrical presentation. It is designed in a single volume and has a steep side-gabled roof with a central gabled dormer facing the street, in front of which is an uncovered balcony surrounded by a Mission style parapet. The ends of the front porch also have Mission style parapet details that engage the sloping roof of

the house. The roof is clad in red clay barrel tiles with articulated peaks and has exposed rafters in the eaves and knee braces in the gable-ends. The full-width front porch is recessed within the main roof of the house with access steps at the center, flanked by metal downspouts with articulated leader boxes and tall, metal light fixtures with globe shades. An open wood pergola is at the south end of the front porch. The house sits on an Arroyo stone foundation except at the front of the house where it has a granite foundation with raised mortar and a concrete cap. It is coated in heavy-dash coat stucco and has wood windows with wood trim and sills. Windows on the front façade include leaded-glass transoms; second-floor windows have lozenge-shaped divided lights in the upper sash. The wood-paneled front door has an arched window at the top.

### Documented Changes to the Property

As previously noted, the Doane House was recently moved to a new location on the property and was rehabilitated, the non-historic house on the site was demolished and the Pinney House was moved to the site, with the exception of two rear one-story wings, and was also rehabilitated. Staff approved an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the project, with assistance from professional consultants Architectural Resources Group, and also monitored the project during construction. A condition of approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness required the applicant to submit an application to designate the property as a landmark upon completion of the rehabilitation project.

### Current Conditions, Use, and Proposed Plans

The exterior of the buildings are currently in recently restored condition and they are being used for housing and office space. No significant changes to the property are proposed at this time.

### Historical Overview – Doane House

#### *Late 19<sup>th</sup>/Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Development & Architecture*

The late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century development period in Pasadena occurred generally between 1883 and 1904. This period was marked by a residential building boom caused by the extension of rail lines to the area as well as technological advancements that were reflected in the designs of buildings such as balloon framing and mass production of construction products including windows, doors, siding, roofing and decorative details. During this period, Pasadena had a large number of businesses devoted to the building trades including lumber yards, brick-making factories and planing mills. Pattern books geared toward contractors, builders and designers also affected vernacular residential designs of this era in the City's history.

### *Queen Anne Style*

The Queen Anne Style was developed by Scottish architect Richard Norman Shaw and, as indicated in the multiple property documentation form “Late 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Development and Architecture in Pasadena” (Teresa Grimes & Laura Vanaskie, 2010), “referenced medieval building forms and displayed dramatic roofs with steep gables, half-timbering, asymmetrical plans, and multi-textured, multi-colored walls.” Character-defining features include:

- Irregular plans with asymmetrical massing
- Wood clapboard and/or shingle siding
- Tongue-and-groove base skirting, sometimes on the diagonal in framed panels
- Hipped and/or gabled roof forms
- Half-width or wrap-around front porches
- Narrow, tall double-hung windows
- Decorative millwork

### Historical Overview - Pinney House

#### *Arts & Crafts Period Development & Architecture*

The Arts & Crafts movement began in England around the year 1860 as a response to industrialization and mass production of goods. Its focus was one of promoting manual craftsmanship rather than machine production, which was believed to result in a harmonious society where producers and consumers could take pride in their work and, thereby, enhance their lives. Works were simple and designed to show evidence of construction methods. William Morris is widely cited as being the movement’s primary proponent in England, with his Red House being one of the earliest pieces of English Arts & Crafts architecture. The movement included many other forms of craft including printmaking, decorative objects, wallpaper, textiles, furniture and stained glass.

In America, Elbert Hubbard and Gustav Stickley, who both organized Arts & Crafts guilds, were the movement’s primary proponents. Stickley’s magazine *The Craftsman* was influential in spreading the ideals of the movement throughout the country. The American Arts & Crafts architectural movement was centered in three primary locations: Oak Park, Illinois; Berkeley and Pasadena, each drawing on local materials. In Pasadena, the primary architectural tenet of the movement was to enhance the connection between house and landscape. This was achieved through large roofed front porches, use of wood exterior cladding materials and other locally available materials such as stones from the Arroyo Seco, elimination of ornament, and planning of the house around natural features of the site (contours, trees, etc.). Architectural details were frequently handcrafted by local artisans.

The two-story Arts and Crafts period house has the following character-defining features, as described in “Residential Architecture in Pasadena 1895-1918: Influence of the Arts and Crafts Movement” (1998):

- Rectangular or complex plan
- Larger than one- or one-and-one-half-story bungalow
- Horizontal lines
- Low-pitched gabled roofs with wood or composition shingles
- Wide eaves with exposed rafters
- Sometimes shed or gabled dormers
- Full-width front porches, sometimes limited to entry area only, supported by battered or straight-sided stone or wood piers
- Foundations, chimneys and retaining walls of Arroyo stone

### *Mission Revival Arts & Crafts Style*

The City's "Residential Architecture in Pasadena 1895-1918: Influence of the Arts and Crafts Movement" Multiple Property Documentation Form (1998) identifies Mission Revival as having a particular connection to the Arts & Crafts movement in its representation of harmony with nature and separation from industrialization. In addition to the architectural features noted above, these houses also featured:

- Stucco clad walls
- Tile roofs
- Squared belvideres or towers
- Arcaded porches
- Arched windows
- Decorative plasterwork

### *Charles W. Buchanan (1852-1921)*

Charles Wesley (C.W.) Buchanan was born in Indiana where he was trained in carpentry and the mill supply trade while training to become an architect. For health reasons, he moved to Pasadena in 1885 where he began a design and construction business. He designed a large number of houses and commercial buildings throughout the City, a large number of which are in designated landmark and historic districts including Old Pasadena, Markham Place, Lower Arroyo Seco, Bungalow Heaven, Pasadena Playhouse, Ford Place (he designed 5 of the 11 properties in this district), Garfield Heights, South Marengo, Craftsman Heights, Raymond-Summit, Raymond-Esther, and New Fair Oaks. Reinway Court at 380 Parke St. is currently the only individually designated property designed by Buchanan; a total of 58 designated and surveyed properties in the City's database are attributed to him. His work spans both the late 19<sup>th</sup>/Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century period and the Arts & Crafts Period; in the latter part of the Arts & Crafts Period, he joined with architect Leon C. Brockway to form the firm Buchanan & Brockway. He was also president of the Pasadena City Railway Company and a Director of the North Pasadena Land and Water Company.

## **ANALYSIS:**

The property at 840-842 N. Fair Oaks Avenue 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 property type or 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 Doane house is significant because it is an intact example of a Queen Anne style single-family residence and the Pinney House is significant because it is an intact example of a Mission Revival Arts & Crafts Period House designed by prolific and significant architect Charles W. Buchanan. Both houses exhibit virtually all of the character-defining features of their respective architectural styles and have been rehabilitated in a manner that complies with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. As a work of Charles W. Buchanan, the Pinney House is notable for its skillful combination of two architectural styles into a single composition.

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

- Design: The two houses retain their form, plan, space, structure, and style, as described above. A missing pergola at the south end of the Pinney House's front porch was restored as part of the project.
- Materials: The two houses have been restored using all of the original materials used in its construction, based on documentary and physical evidence.
- Workmanship: The restoration was conducted using techniques of the original time of the houses' construction.
- Feeling: The two houses clearly express the characteristics of their architectural styles, as detailed above.

The property lacks integrity of location, setting and association as described below:

- Location: The Doan House retains integrity of location; however, the Pinney House does not, as it is not in its original location. Based on National Register Bulletin 15, "How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation," integrity of location is not essential to properties that are representative of a property

- type or architectural style, provided the essential components that make up the type or style remain represented, which is the case for this property.
- **Setting:** In addition to the relocation affecting the houses' settings, the Fair Oaks Avenue neighborhood has transformed from being largely residential at the time the Doane House was built to a commercial/industrial corridor. In addition, the former context of the Pinney House was mixed and included residential, commercial and institutional building. Based on National Register Bulletin 15, if the setting in the resource's new location is comparable to its original setting, it may still be eligible for designation under criterion C. In this case, although integrity of setting has been lost, the new location of the Pinney House is comparable to its original mixed setting.
  - **Association:** "Association" is defined as "the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property." This aspect of integrity does not apply to the property because it is not significant as the location of a historical event or person.

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

It should also be noted that both houses were determined eligible for historical designation in previous historic resources surveys that were conducted by the City.

Contributing structures to this designation include the Doane and Pinney Houses only.

**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 consist 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.

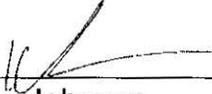
**FISCAL IMPACT:**

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.

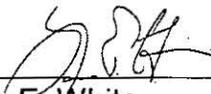
Respectfully submitted,

  
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Attachments (4):

- A. Vicinity Map
- B. Application
- C. Current Photographs of Doane & Pinney Houses & Historical Photograph of Pinney House
- D. Effects of Historic Designation