

Agenda Report

May 15, 2023

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council
FROM: Planning & Community Development Department
SUBJECT: DESIGNATION OF 420 SOUTH GREENWOOD 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 the single-family residence at 420 South Greenwood Avenue meets Criterion C as a landmark pursuant to Pasadena Municipal Code (PMC) Section 17.62.040.D.2.c because it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a Dutch Colonial Revival style single-family residence of the post-World War I era;
3. Adopt a resolution approving a Declaration of Landmark Designation for 420 South Greenwood Avenue, Pasadena, California;
4. Authorize the Mayor to execute a Declaration of Landmark Designation for 420 South Greenwood Avenue, Pasadena, California; and
5. Direct the City Clerk to record the declaration with the Los Angeles County Recorder.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

On March 21, 2023, the Historic Preservation Commission recommended that the City Council approve the designation of the single-family residence at 420 South Greenwood Avenue as a landmark under Criterion C of PMC Section 17.62.040.

BACKGROUND:

The Site

The property is located on a rectangular-shaped lot on the east side of South Greenwood Avenue, north of San Pasqual Street. The surrounding single-family residential neighborhood features one- and two-story houses in a variety of architectural styles. The residence is set approximately 35 feet from the front, west property line. The property also includes a two-story detached garage at the southeast corner. The rear property line is located along the eastern boundary of the City. The area was annexed by the City of Pasadena in 1946. Before that time, and at the time of construction, the site was under the jurisdiction of the County of Los Angeles.

Exterior Features of the Building

The house is two-stories and was built in the Dutch Colonial Revival style. The house features a side-facing gambrel roof with composite shake shingles, walls clad in wood shakes, and a brick chimney on the north side wall. The primary, west elevation is symmetrical and has three dormers with shed roofs and paired wood-casement divided-lite windows, a central covered entry portico supported by Tuscan columns with a solid paneled door and side lites set below an arched fanlite and flanked by two pairs of double-hung windows with upper-sash muntins and shutters. The side elevations each have attic vents and an arrangement of wood double-hung windows with muntins. The rear, east elevation is asymmetrical and features a partial-width, two-story, projecting volume with a hipped roof and second-story balcony.

The primary, west elevation of the two-story garage features a front-facing gambrel roof with composite shake shingles and a centered pair of casement multi-lite windows with shutters set above a non-original roll-up paneled garage door and a solid-paneled pedestrian door. The walls are clad in wood shakes. The north elevation features a dormer with a shed roof and a pair of small casement multi-lite windows and a non-original pedestrian door. The rear, east elevation abuts the rear property line and features horizontal wood siding, a small casement multi-lite window, and an attic vent.

Documented Changes to the Property

The property has undergone exterior changes since it was originally built in 1926. A permit was issued by Los Angeles County in August 1934 to add a 72 square-foot bathroom at the rear of the first floor. The house was re-roofed in August 1944. Fire damage to the roof was repaired in January 1957. The garage was re-roofed in September 1966. The house was re-roofed again in August 1983 with fiberglass shingles. In August 1987, a deck was added to the rear of the house. The chimney was repaired in May 1988.

Dutch Colonial Revival Architecture¹

According to the Historic Context/Property Type Report entitled “Architectural/Historical Development of the City of Pasadena” prepared by the City of Pasadena in 1993, Dutch Colonial Period Revival architecture was popularized during a brief period in the 1920s as part of the larger wave of twentieth century Period Revival architecture that was popular between 1920 and 1940:

“After World War I, period revival styles for houses grew in popularity. Changes in building technology, such as inexpensive methods to apply brick, stone veneer or stucco to the exterior of the traditional wood-framed house, facilitated the popularity of period revivals. European influences from England, Spain, and France predominated in the design of both humble and elaborate dwellings. Also included in the period form, Dutch Colonial Period Revival was particularly influential for a short time in the early 1920s.”

The character-defining features of a twentieth century Dutch Colonial Revival single-family residence are:

- Rectangular plan
- Symmetrical façade
- Double-hung multi-pane or multi-pane casement windows
- Side gable roof (clipped gable or gambrel on Dutch Colonial)
- Classically inspired entry (usually with hood that reflects primary roof style)

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.

¹ Architectural/Historical Development of the City of Pasadena, page 56.

ANALYSIS:

The building at 420 South Greenwood Avenue is eligible for designation as a landmark under Criterion C of PMC Section 17.62.040.D.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 possesses artistic values of significance to the City.

Under Criterion C, the building at 420 South Greenwood Avenue is significant because it is a locally significant, intact example of a Dutch Colonial Revival style single-family residence. 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 the majority of its form, plan, space, structure, and style, including its massing, exterior cladding, original fenestration and exterior materials, roof form, and entryway.
- Setting: The single-family residential neighborhood is 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 single-family residential construction, and therefore retains integrity of workmanship.
- Feeling: The property clearly expresses the characteristics of the Dutch Colonial Revival architectural style and evokes the feeling of the early residential development of Pasadena.
- Association: The building retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship and feeling, and therefore continues to convey its association with early-20th century single-family residential development in Pasadena.

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 a two-story configuration, simple geometric forms, a moderately-pitched gambrel roof with shingles, shake siding, a symmetrical presentation of multi-paned windows and an elevated, covered Classical entry. All alterations to the building are compatible with the original structure. Contributing structures to this designation include the main house and the original detached garage.

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:

The proposed designation qualifies for a categorical exemption pursuant to Section 15308, Class 8 of the CEQA Guidelines. 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,



JENNIFER PAIGE, AICP
Director of Planning & Community
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Prepared by:

Reviewed by:

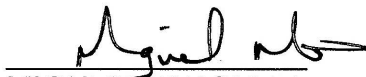


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Approved by:



MIGUEL MARQUEZ
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Attachments (5):

- A. Historic Preservation Commission Staff Report (March 21, 2023), without attachments
- B. Application & Historic Documentation
- C. Vicinity Map
- D. Current Photographs
- E. Effects of Historic Designation