



Agenda Report

October 30, 2023

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council
FROM: Planning & Community Development Department
SUBJECT: DESIGNATION OF THE LANGFORD RESIDENCE AT 627 S. EUCLID 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 Langford Residence at 627 S. Euclid Avenue meets Criterion C as a landmark pursuant to Pasadena Municipal Code Section 17.62.040.D.2 because it embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Queen Anne architectural style;
3. Adopt a resolution approving a Declaration of Landmark Designation for 627 S. Euclid Avenue, Pasadena, California;
4. Authorize the Mayor to execute a Declaration of Landmark Designation for 627 S. Euclid Avenue, Pasadena, California; and
5. Direct the City Clerk to record the declaration with the Los Angeles County Recorder.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

On August 15, 2023, the Historic Preservation Commission recommended that the City Council approve the designation of the Langford Residence at 627 S. Euclid Avenue as a landmark under Criterion C of Pasadena Municipal Code (PMC) Section 17.62.040.D.2.

BACKGROUND:

The Site

The property is located on a rectangular shaped lot on the west side of South Euclid Avenue, south of East California Boulevard. The building is set back from and is elevated above the street due to a change in grade. Due to the difference in grade, the front of the site is supported by a brick retaining wall at the street edge. The site includes a heavily landscaped front yard with fencing and gates, a driveway to the north, and a detached garage, with an attached non-original guest house, at the northwest corner of the site.

Exterior Features of the Building

The Langford Residence is a three-story-over-basement, asymmetrical building with an irregular plan that exhibits many features illustrative of the Queen Anne architectural style. The residence is characterized by a steeply pitched roof comprised of irregularly shaped hipped forms with shallow boxed eaves, cornices and a third-floor, front-facing dormer, cut-out wood bargeboard and sunburst detail in the gable end. The primary entrance includes a projecting, covered porch that extends across a portion of the front façade and wraps around the northeast corner. The primary entryway consists of a single wood door with paneling, vertically oriented stained-glass panels and a matching sidelight to the right. Above the entry door and sidelight is a wood-framed transom window with leaded glass in a diamond pattern design. The primary cladding of the exterior is wood clapboard with a band of fish scale shingles forming a visual break between floors. The front porch posts and railings are simple and square, but originally were more decorative. Original extant materials include the wood clapboard siding, the band of wood fish-scale shingles, and wood double-hung and casement windows.

Accessory Structures

The property also includes a one-story, two-car, garage constructed ca. 1910. The garage is simple in design but related to the Queen Anne style of the residence. It is oriented east-west and is capped with a side gabled roof form with two separate front-gabled roof forms above each opening. Its exterior is clad in clapboard siding similar to the house and the carriage style garage doors are solid wood with an applied wood design at the exterior.

There is a guest house attached to the west side of the garage, creating an L-shape plan, that is not original to the property's development and was constructed in 1923.

Documented Changes to the Property

No original building permit for the residence is available, as the City of Pasadena did not begin issuing permits until 1902. Based on permit records and physical inspections, the property has undergone few major exterior changes since it was originally built ca. 1886 as follows:

- Enclosure of south-facing porch with glass (1915)
- Garage addition (1923)
- Interior remodel including some changes to window openings (1930)
- Removal of cement step – possibly front steps – and replacement with brick step and brick foundation finished in plaster (1945)
- Dormer added to roof (1970)
- Pool added (1986)

Some original details that have been removed since original construction (without permit documentation) include roof cresting and finials and spindle-work balustrades.

Queen Anne Architecture

Relative to American architectural history, the Victorian era refers to the architectural styles that grew from the last decades of Britain's Queen Elizabeth's reign, particularly the period of 1860 to 1900. During this time in Pasadena, there was uncommonly high demand for high-style residential architecture and the style iterations of the Victorian era, in part due to an influx of wealthy residents.

According to the "Late 19th and Early 20th Century Development and Architecture in Pasadena" historic context statement, "the Queen Anne style was developed by Scottish architect Richard Norman Shaw, which referenced medieval building forms with dramatic, steeply-pitched gabled roofs; asymmetrical plans; and multi-textured, multi-colored walls". Furthermore, there are four common subtypes of this style pertaining to decorative architectural detailing, including Spindework, Free Classic, Half-timbered, and Patterned Masonry. For more information regarding the Queen Anne architectural style, including typical character-defining features of the style, please refer to Attachment A.

Character-Defining Features of 627 South Euclid Avenue

- Three-story configuration with basement
- Steeply pitched hipped roof
- Irregular plan
- Asymmetrical facades
- Use of integrated polygonal forms with bay windows

- Porches
- Original wood windows in punched patterns
- Decorative exterior detailing such as the band of fish-scale shingles, cut-out wood barge boards, and sunburst detailing

ANALYSIS:

The Langford Residence at 627 S. Euclid 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 627 S. Euclid Avenue is significant because it is a locally significant, intact example of a Queen Anne style single-family residence built ca. 1886. 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, mostly original fenestration and exterior materials, roof form, entryway and front porch.
- Setting: The setting surrounding the existing residence has developed since its early construction and includes a combination of single-family and multi-family residential developments from many time periods, including current day. However, the changes to the surrounding setting of the subject site are common in urban environments and does not significantly impact the significance of this property.
- 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 late 19th-century single-family residential design and construction, and therefore retains integrity of workmanship. Those features that are missing from the original design are not crucial to the understanding of the house as an example of the Queen Anne architectural style.
- Feeling: The property clearly expresses the characteristics of the Queen Anne architectural style and evokes the feeling of the early residential development within the larger context of the history of Pasadena.
- Association: The property at 627 S. Euclid Avenue retains integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship and feeling, and therefore continues to convey its association with late 19th-century residential development in Pasadena.

The residence retains a majority of its original character-defining features and retains sufficient integrity to qualify for designation as a landmark under Criterion C as a prime example of the Queen Anne architectural style. The period of significance for the Langford Residence is ca. 1886, the year of construction of the residence. The contributing features to this designation include the residential building and its exterior Queen Anne features only. Due to their later construction and lack of defining characteristics of the Queen Anne style, the garage and guest house are non-contributing features.

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,



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Attachments (5):

- A. August 15, 2023 Historic Preservation Commission Staff Report without Attachments
- B. Application & Supplemental Research
- C. Vicinity Aerial Map
- D. Current and Historic Photographs
- E. Effects of Historic Designation