

# Agenda Report

November 18, 2024

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council  
**FROM:** Planning & Community Development Department  
**SUBJECT: DESIGNATION OF THE PASADENA ELKS LODGE NO. 672 BPOE AT  
400 WEST COLORADO BOULEVARD 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 Pasadena Elks Lodge No. 672 BPOE located at 400 West Colorado Boulevard 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 historic resource property type, period and architectural style and represents the work of an architect whose work is significant to the City;
3. Adopt a resolution approving a Declaration of Landmark Designation for 400 West Colorado Boulevard, Pasadena, California;
4. Authorize the Mayor to execute a Declaration of Landmark Designation for 400 West Colorado Boulevard, Pasadena, California; and
5. Direct the City Clerk to record the declaration with the Los Angeles County Recorder.

## **HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:**

On September 3, 2024, the Historic Preservation Commission recommended that the City Council approve the designation of the Pasadena Elks Lodge No. 672, BPOE located at 400 West Colorado Boulevard as a landmark under Criterion C of PMC Section 17.62.040.D.2. The Historic Preservation Commission staff report is included as Attachment H.

## **BACKGROUND:**

### The Site

The site is an irregularly-shaped lot, with street frontages along West Colorado Boulevard to the north, South Orange Grove Boulevard to the west, West Green Street to the south, and Terrace Drive to the east. A majority of the subject property is utilized as paved surface parking with the Elks Lodge building located at the northeasterly portion of the property. The front setback of the lodge along West Colorado Boulevard is comprised of a sloping lawn and concrete retaining walls which feature inverted corners at the centralized concrete steps and the drive approach entry for the porte-cochere. A Montessori School was constructed in the 1950s, which is located downslope, at the property's southeast corner. The Montessori School is part of a land lease with the Lodge and is not a part of the Lodge's operations.

### Exterior Features of the Building

The Pasadena Elks Lodge building is an example of Classical Colonial Revival style architecture, specifically the Neoclassical Revival style, originally designed by Myron Hunt. A ballroom addition was constructed in 1928 and designed by Cyril Bennett and Fitch Haskell (Bennett and Haskell). The building is two stories in height from the exterior; however, in the interior, there are several intermediate floor levels including a basement, and a full-height attic space with dormer windows. Character-defining features of the building include the following:

- A symmetrical front façade.
- A centralized full-height projecting front porch that nearly spans the full-width of the front façade.
- Rounded full-height non-fluted Tuscan columns with Doric capitals.
- A third-floor terrace at the flat roof of the front porch with iron railing.
- Wooden shutters.
- Double-hung wood windows with divided lites and a simple projecting header crown.
- A centralized single-swing front door with full transom and simple projecting frame .
- An entablature consisting of a simple architrave and frieze with a dentil cornice.
- Doric pilasters at the flanking façade planes of the projecting front porch.
- An inset porte-cochere and side entry at the west elevation.
- A hipped primary roof with gabled attic dormers.

### Documented Changes to the Property

While the interior of the building has undergone periodic remodeling, the building remains significantly intact with minimal exterior alterations. Building permit records show that a 47' x 70' clubroom was constructed in 1928, designed by Bennett and Haskell. Changes to the site have occurred, primarily with the surrounding land uses and development context, as the surrounding area has evolved from single-family housing to commercial and institutional buildings.

### **Historical Overview:**

#### The Benevolent Protective Order of the Elks and Pasadena Lodge:

The Order of the Elks was originally founded as the “Jolly Corks” in 1868 in New York City by a group of 15 theatrical entertainers as a fraternal organization. The Order promotes acts of charity and community-minded programs including scholarships, drug awareness, supportive programs for veterans and patriotic endeavors.<sup>1</sup> The Grand Lodge was originally located in New York City and was approved by the New York Legislature in allowing the Order to establish charter clubs throughout the country.<sup>2</sup> The Pasadena chapter of the BPOE was established in 1908 and retained the services of Myron Hunt to design their clubhouse which remains in existence today.

#### Colonial Revival and Neoclassical Style:

The Neoclassical Revival style, or Classical Colonial Revival style, was a style based on the combined elements of early Colonial Revival and Greek Revival styles. This style is noted for its common features of full-height porches, classical columns, and symmetrical and monumental front facades.<sup>3</sup> Earlier examples often featured Roman detailing of Tuscan columns and a narrower, less detailed entablature and cornice in comparison to the more detailed Greek style. A secondary upper balcony, independent of the porch columns, or engaged with them is a common feature on Neoclassical buildings.<sup>4</sup> Greek stylistic features often included detailed door surrounds, often with a rectangular transom and sidelites, and simplified window surrounds.<sup>5</sup>

#### Myron Hunt, FAIA (1868–1952):

Myron Hubbard Hunt was one of the most influential architects in Southern California prior to World War II. Hunt's portfolio includes: The Huntington Library, Rose Bowl, Pasadena Central Library, Huntington Hospital, buildings at Caltech, and Occidental College. In 1928, the City of Pasadena awarded him the Arthur Noble Medal for outstanding civic service.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.elks.org/who/missionStatement.cfm>; accessed 8/15/2024

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.elks.org/who/ourHistory.cfm>; accessed 8/15/2024

<sup>3</sup> Residential Period Revival Architecture and Development in Pasadena 1915-1942; pp. 26, 28

<sup>4</sup> A Field Guide to American Houses; McAlester, Virginia Savage; 2015; pp. 235-238

<sup>5</sup> A Field Guide to American Houses; McAlester, Virginia Savage; 2015; pp. 247-252

Bennett and Haskell<sup>6</sup>:

J. Cyril Bennett (1891-1957) and Fitch Haskell (1883-1962) established their architectural partnership in 1923, and together, they designed notable commercial and civic buildings. These buildings include the Pasadena Masonic Temple, Raymond Theatre, Pasadena Civic Auditorium (with George Bergstrom), and a majority of the commercial building facades along Colorado Boulevard when the city widened the street in 1929.

**ANALYSIS:**

The Pasadena Elks Lodge building located at 400 West Colorado Boulevard 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 400 West Colorado Boulevard is significant because it is a locally significant, intact example of a Neoclassical Revival style building, initially designed by Myron Hunt, with later additions by Bennett and Haskell. The building has a high level of architectural integrity (its ability to demonstrate why it is significant) through its location, design, 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 structural and architectural form, plan, and style, particularly its symmetrical front façade, and use as a clubhouse lodge with its associated interior spaces and programming.
- Materials: The building retains a majority of its original exterior materials including its windows.
- Workmanship: The building retains the majority of its exterior materials and features that reflect the design talents of Myron Hunt and the classical architectural style and its construction of an extant clubhouse lodge type structure, and therefore retains integrity of workmanship.
- Feeling: The property clearly expresses the characteristics of the Neoclassical architectural style and evokes the turn of the century lodge house construction due to the growth and establishment of fraternal organizations in the City.
- Association: The property retains integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship and feeling, and therefore continues to convey its association with the establishment and growth of fraternal organizations at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Pasadena.

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<sup>6</sup> Residential Period Revival Architecture and Development in Pasadena 1915-1942; pp. 12-13.

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, and although the building has lost integrity of setting, pursuant to National Register Bulletin #15, this aspect of integrity is not essential for conveying significance under Criterion C. The 1928 clubroom addition designed by Bennett and Haskell is considered a contributing feature, along with the original structure, and its front yard retaining walls.

**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 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, 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 (8):

- A. Application
- B. Vicinity and Subdivision Maps
- C. Historical Documentation and Archived Permits
- D. Sanborn Maps
- E. Historical Photographs
- F. Current Photographs
- G. Effects of Historic Designation
- H. Historic Preservation Commission Staff Report (September 3, 2024), without attachments