



PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

STAFF REPORT

DATE: JUNE 10, 2026

TO: PLANNING COMMISSION

FROM: JASON MIKAELIAN, AICP, ACTING DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: ZONING MAP AMENDMENT TO DESIGNATE A LANDMARK DISTRICT OVERLAY FOR THE ARBOLEDA DRIVE LANDMARK DISTRICT FOR 696, 698, 700, 702, 704, 706, 708, 710, 712, 714, 716, and 718 E. CALIFORNIA BOULEVARD

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Planning Commission:

1. **Recommend** that the City Council find that the proposed project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15308 (Class 8, Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment) and that there are no features that distinguish this project from others in the exempt class and, therefore, there are no unusual circumstances; and
2. **Recommend** that the City Council adopt the findings to approve the Zoning Map Amendment (Attachment A).

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

On March 3, 2026, the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) considered a Landmark District Designation application to designate the proposed Arboleda Drive Landmark District. The HPC recommended, by a vote of 8-0, that the City Council find that the application is categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15308 (Class 8, Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment) and find that the application meets the criteria for designation pursuant to Pasadena Municipal Code (PMC) Section 17.62.040.G. Please refer to Attachment B, HPC staff report, for a detailed analysis of the landmark designation.

BACKGROUND:

On June 30, 2025, Shauna Clark, on behalf of supporting property owners in the proposed landmark district, submitted an application for eligibility review of the designation of the Arboleda Drive Landmark District. The staff evaluated the district according to the landmark district designation criteria and on September 8, 2025 issued a Notice of Decision that determined that the district meets the applicable criteria for approval. Prior to the decision being made, staff conducted a virtual informational meeting on September 4, 2025, and sent notices to all property owners within the district boundary.

On December 2, 2025, Shauna Clark submitted an application for formal review of the designation of the Arboleda Drive Landmark District. Staff reviewed the material submitted and confirmed that the application meets the applicable criteria for approval. On March 30, 2026, the Historic Preservation Commission reviewed the application, determined that it meets the applicable criteria, and recommended that the City Council approve the application.

ANALYSIS:

Designation Process

Landmark District Designation applications require the following steps as part of the approval process:

1. Eligibility review, by the Director of Planning & Community Development, to determine if the application meets the criteria for designation. This step was completed on September 8, 2025.
2. Formal review of the landmark designation application, by the HPC, to determine if the application meets the applicable criteria and make a recommendation to the City Council. This step was completed on March 3, 2026.
3. Zoning Map Amendment review by the Planning Commission, to designate a Landmark District Overlay, and make a recommendation to the City Council on the amendment. This step is being considered by the Commission at this meeting.
4. Recommendations on the landmark designation from the HPC and the Zoning Map Amendment from the Commission will be considered by the City Council at a public hearing. If approved, the Council would adopt an ordinance for the Zoning Map Amendment. This final step would occur later in the landmark designation process at a separately noticed public hearing.

Support from Property Owners

The Zoning Code states that the Commission may consider the Zoning Map Amendment application only if the application is accompanied by a final petition with signatures from at least 51 percent of the property owners. In the final petition (Attachment C), 100 percent of the property owners in the district boundaries have signified their support for district designation in writing. No formal opposition to the Landmark District Designation application has been received as of the date of this report writing.

Landmark District Overlays

As outlined above in Step 3, the Commission's role in the Landmark District Designation process is to consider a Zoning Map Amendment to establish a Landmark District (LD) Overlay zoning district for the proposed Arboleda Drive Landmark District. LD Overlay zoning districts are depicted on the Zoning Map by adding the suffix "LD" to the base zoning district designation, followed by the number of the LD district based on order of adoption. For example, this application would be the 29th landmark district and could be depicted as RS-6-LD-29 (Single-Family Residential, 6 du/ac, Landmark District 29). The LD Overlay would not change the land uses allowed in the base zoning district or the applicable development standards.

Proposed Landmark District Description

There are 12 properties in the proposed LD Overlay. The proposed boundaries of the district are along Arboleda Drive, south of California Boulevard, roughly midblock between Oak Knoll Avenue to the east and El Molino Avenue to the west, and extends to the rear property line of each property (see Attachment D). The table below identifies existing zoning district, land use designation, and current use of each property within the proposed overlay.

Address	Existing Zoning	Existing Land Use Designation	Current Use
696 E California Blvd.	RM-16	Medium Density Residential	Single-Family
698 E California Blvd.	RS-6	Low Density Residential	Single-Family
700 E California Blvd.	RS-6	Low Density Residential	Single-Family
702 E California Blvd.	RS-6	Low Density Residential	Single-Family
704 E California Blvd.	RS-6	Low Density Residential	Single-Family
706 E California Blvd.	RS-6	Low Density Residential	Single-Family
708 E California Blvd.	RS-6	Low Density Residential	Single-Family
710 E California Blvd.	RS-6	Low Density Residential	Single-Family
712 E California Blvd.	RS-6	Low Density Residential	Single-Family
714 E California Blvd.	RS-6	Low Density Residential	Single-Family
716 E California Blvd.	RS-6	Low Density Residential	Single-Family
718 E California Blvd.	RM-16	Medium Density Residential	Single-Family

All buildings in the proposed district boundary were built in 1929 and all of the houses were designed by architect Kurt Meyer-Radon (1884–1962). Meyer-Radon was born in Berlin, Germany, and later immigrated to the United States, where he became a significant and active architect during the early 20th century. Working during a period of rapid residential development, he contributed notably to the architectural character of Southern California through his use of revival styles popular in the 1920s and 1930s. All the houses in the proposed district were built by contractor Ray J. Ustick of the Pasadena Building & Construction Company. See Attachments E and F for construction information and photographs of each specific property.

Results of Designation

Landmark District designations protect the historic and architectural character of a neighborhood by requiring submittal of an application for Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) for exterior changes that are visible from the street. Demolitions, relocations and new construction are also reviewed in landmark districts. Reviews of alterations and demolitions of non-contributing structures are required, as well as of contributing structures; however, according to the guidelines, more changes are permitted on non-contributing structures because they have few, if any, features that need to be preserved. All of the 12 buildings within the proposed district boundary are contributing structures.

The COA application ensures that exterior changes to the buildings within the district are consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and the Design Guidelines for Historic Districts, which will ensure compatibility with the historic character of the district and preservation of important publicly visible exterior historical features of the buildings within the district. Finally, as demonstrated in the submitted petition, a majority of the property owners within the district boundaries support the designation. Based on this analysis, staff finds that the proposal will not be detrimental to the public interest, health, safety, convenience, or general welfare of the City.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:

The proposed Zoning Map Amendment 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.

CONCLUSION:

All of the property owners support the Landmark District Designation application and the findings for the Zoning Map Amendment can be made. Staff recommends that the Planning Commission recommend that the City Council find that the proposed project is exempt CEQA and that the findings be adopted to approve the Zoning Map Amendment to designate an LD Overlay for the proposed Arboleda Drive Landmark District.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Attachments (6):

- A. Findings for Zoning Map Amendment
- B. HPC Staff Report dated March 3, 2026
- C. Final Petition
- D. Map of Proposed District
- E. Inventory of Properties
- F. Photographs