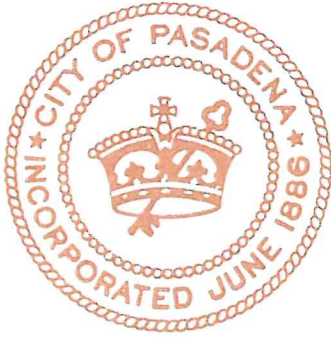




Agenda Report

August 17, 2026

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council
FROM: Planning & Community Development Department
SUBJECT: **DESIGNATION OF THE ARBOLEDA DRIVE LANDMARK DISTRICT
AND A ZONING MAP AMENDMENT TO ESTABLISH THE ARBOLEDA
DRIVE (LD-29) LANDMARK OVERLAY ZONING DISTRICT**

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council:

1. Find that the designation of a historic resource and zoning map amendment to establish a landmark overlay zoning district are categorically exempt from environmental review pursuant to the guidelines of the California Environmental Quality Act, Section 15308: Class 8, Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment), and there are no features that distinguish the project from others in the exempt classes, and therefore, there are no unusual circumstances, and no other exception to the exemption applies;
2. Adopt the findings in Attachment A to find that the proposed Arboleda Drive Landmark District meets the criteria for designation as a Landmark District and to approve the proposed Zoning Map Amendment; and
3. Adopt an ordinance to amend the official Zoning Map to establish the Arboleda Drive (LD-29) Landmark Overlay Zoning District.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

On March 3, 2026, the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) determined that the proposed Arboleda Drive Landmark District meets the criteria for designation and recommended, by a vote of 8-0, that the City Council adopt the environmental determination and landmark district designation.

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

On June 10, 2026, the Planning Commission (PC) recommended, by a vote of 5-0, that the City Council adopt the environmental determination and approve the Zoning Map

Amendment to establish the Arboleda Drive Landmark District (LD-29) Overlay Zoning District.

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 an informational meeting, as required by the Zoning Code, which was noticed to all property owners within the district boundary, on September 4, 2025.

On December 2, 2025, the applicant submitted an application for Formal Review of the designation of the Arboleda Drive Landmark District. Staff reviewed the material submitted and confirmed that the district meets the applicable criteria for approval. As detailed above, both the HPC and PC have reviewed the application and recommend that the City Council approve the designation.

ANALYSIS:

Description of the Proposed Landmark District

Boundaries: The proposed boundaries of the district encompass a grouping of intact Spanish Colonial Revival houses along Arboleda Drive, south of East California Boulevard, roughly midblock between South Oak Knoll Avenue to the east and El Molino Avenue to the west (Attachment B). Within these boundaries there are 12 properties; the addresses include 696, 698, 700, 702, 704, 706, 708, 710, 712, 714, 716, and 718 E. California Boulevard.

Construction Dates: All of the 12 buildings in the proposed district boundary were built in 1929. See Attachments C and D for construction information and photographs of each specific property.

Architects and Builders: All of the houses in the district 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.

Unifying Characteristics of the District: The district is locally significant in the context of Period Revival architecture as an excellent collection of Spanish Colonial Revival

single-family residences. All the residences have stucco exteriors and tiled roofs and feature a wealth of detail which include arched doorways, wrought iron window grills and balustrades, French doors, second story balconies, stained wood posts, and multi-paned casement windows. Garages are single car attached, and four detached double garages are shared parking with a common wall. All the buildings in the development avoid the repetition and monotony of many planned developments while retaining their architectural integrity and contribute to the significance of the district.

Contributing Properties to the Landmark District: All 12 of the buildings in the district remain largely intact on their street-facing elevations (100% contributing).

Criteria for designation

Pursuant to Pasadena Municipal Code Section 17.62.040.G, the criteria for designation of a Landmark District are as follows:

- a. Within its boundaries, a minimum of 60% of the properties qualify as contributing;
- b. A simple majority (51%) of property owners support the designation at the time of designation by the City Council; and
- c. The grouping represents a significant and distinguishable entity of Citywide importance that is united historically by past events or aesthetically by plan or development...and represents one or more of a defined historic, cultural, development and/or architectural context(s) (e.g., 1991 Citywide historic context, as amended, historic context prepared in an intensive-level survey or historic context prepared specifically for the nominated landmark district).

All of the buildings in the district qualify as contributing. All of the property owners (100%) 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. The district is locally significant in the context of Period Revival architecture as an excellent collection of Spanish Colonial Revival single-family residences, all designed by notable architect Kurt Meyer-Radon. For additional analysis, please refer to Attachment E.

Zoning Map Amendment

Landmark District Overlays

A Zoning Map Amendment is required 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. The properties that directly abut East California Boulevard would be depicted as RM-16-LD-29 (Multi-Family Residential, 0-16 du/ac, Landmark District 29) and the other properties

would be depicted as RS-6-LD-29 (Single-Family Residential, 0-6 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. For additional analysis, please refer to Attachment F.

There are 12 properties in the proposed LD Overlay. Table 1 below identifies existing zoning district, land use designation, and current use of each property within the proposed overlay.

Table 1. List of Properties

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

Results of designation

The landmark district designation protects the historic and architectural character of a neighborhood through the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) process. The Zoning Code requires an application for COA, reviewed by the Director of Planning & Community Development for minor projects such as the removal of non-original insignificant exterior features, the replacement of doors and windows that match the originals, alterations to garages, and new fences. Major projects, such as demolitions, relocations, significant exterior alterations, major changes to original windows and doors or their openings and changes to exterior cladding, require review by the HPC.

The landmark district designation also allows owners of properties to apply for a Historic Property Contract (Mills Act) which allows a reduction of property tax in exchange for the continued preservation of the property. Typical Mills Act improvements have included (but are not limited to), repair and replacement of original architectural features, new roofing and gutters, electrical and plumbing upgrades, termite repair, water damage, and painting.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

The proposed landmark designation and Zoning Map Amendment qualify for a categorical exemption pursuant to Section 15308, Class 8 of the CEQA Guidelines, and there are no features that distinguish the project from others in the exempt classes, and therefore, there are no unusual circumstances, and no other exception to the exemption

applies. Class 8 exempts 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. The establishment of a landmark district will include procedures by which new structures, or changes to existing structures that contribute to the historic character, or environment, of the district, are reviewed for consistency with the character of the district.

COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:

The proposed project is consistent with multiple goals and policies of the Land Use Element of the General Plan including the following Guiding Principle:

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."

Additionally, the project is consistent with Goal 8 (Historic Preservation), Policy 8.1 (Identify and Protect Historic Resources) and Policy 8.2 (Historic Designation Support).

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact as a result of this action. In some instances, owners of designated 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 percentage of the City's overall property tax revenue.

Respectfully submitted,



Jason Mikaelian, AICP
Acting Director of Planning & Community
Development Department

Prepared by:



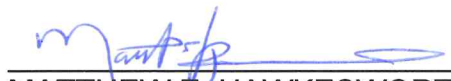
Priyanka Agarwal
Associate Planner

Reviewed by:



Kevin Johnson
Principal Planner

Approved by:



MATTHEW E. HAWKESWORTH
Interim City Manager

Attachments: (6)

- Attachment A – Findings
- Attachment B – Map of Proposed Landmark District
- Attachment C – Inventory of Properties
- Attachment D – Photographs of Buildings in Proposed Landmark District
- Attachment E – HPC Staff Report dated March 3, 2026, without attachments
- Attachment F – PC Staff Report dated June 10, 2026, without attachments