



PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

STAFF REPORT

DATE: APRIL 6, 2021

TO: HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

FROM: DAVID M. REYES, DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: COMMENTS TO CITY COUNCIL ON THE NOMINATION OF THE PASADENA AVENUE HISTORIC DISTRICT FOR LISTING IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Historic Preservation Commission:

- Forward a recommendation to the City Council in support of the listing of the Pasadena Avenue Historic District in the National Register of Historic Places (prepared and submitted by Shannon L. Papin of Common Bond Preservation on behalf of Pasadena Heritage), with technical comments outlined in this report.

BACKGROUND:

The City recently received notification from the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) about the review of the Pasadena Avenue Historic District by the State Historical Resources Commission (SHRC). In accordance with the requirements of the National Park Service, the SHPO routinely notifies local officials and property owners about nominations to the National Register. The purpose of the notification is to allow time for public comment before the SHRC holds a public hearing on the nomination and the SHPO forwards a recommendation to the National Park Service.

SHPO also notifies historic preservation commissions in local jurisdictions, such as Pasadena, which participate in the Certified Local Government program. Letters from the SHPO (dated February 24, 2021) ask the City to provide comments on the nominations through the City's Chief Elected Official and City Council no later than 15 days before the meeting of the State Historical Resources Commission (SHRC) at which the nominations will be considered (scheduled for a virtual meeting on April 30, 2021).

Results of National Register Listing

Currently, for projects affecting properties in historic districts determined eligible for listing or officially listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance (Zoning Code Chapter 17.62) requires review and approval of applications for Certificate of Appropriateness for proposed demolitions, relocations or exterior alterations that are visible from a public or private street.

ANALYSIS:

The National Register registration form that has been prepared for the Pasadena Avenue Historic District (Attachment A) provides a thorough description of the proposed district, its historic context and all of the recommended contributing and non-contributing resources it contains. Following detailed review, staff recommends that the following comments be transmitted to the State Historic Resources Commission to consider in its review of the nomination:

Recommended Comments:

1. Location: Section 2 on page 1 of the registration form identifies the City of the proposed district as Pasadena; however, a small portion of the district also extends into the City of South Pasadena. As such, both cities should be noted.
2. District Period of Significance/Mid-Century Architecture Inclusion: The justification for the proposed period of significance terminating in 1938 is unclear in the registration form. It identifies three early Ranch style and Minimal Traditional buildings built in or prior to 1938 as being contributing and similar buildings built after 1938 as non-contributing. The properties at 216 Arlington Drive, 181 Columbia Street, and 1100 S. Pasadena Avenue, all Ranch or Minimal Traditional style houses built in 1937 and 1938, are identified as contributing and 1171 Avoca Avenue; 180 West Glenarm Street (incorrectly classified as Tudor Revival); 926-966, 1062, 1128, 1141, 1151 and 1175 S. Pasadena Avenue; and 240 W. State Street are all Ranch or Minimal Traditional style houses identified as non-contributing due to post-1938 construction. While some of these post-1938 buildings may be altered from their original appearance, other Ranch style houses listed as non-contributing are intact and architecturally similar to those identified as contributing. In addition, there are houses representing period revival-era architectural styles that were built in 1938 (231, 269 and 1105 Columbia Street) and none built after that date, which may be the reason this date was identified as the end of the period of significance, although this is not clearly stated. The registration form should include further analysis of the potential significance of examples of architectural styles from the mid-twentieth century to further justify the proposed end date of the period of significance and determine whether architectural styles from this period are contributing to the district.
3. District Boundaries: Further justification for the proposed district boundaries should be provided. For example, it is unclear as to why additional properties built within the period of significance, of similar architectural style and apparently architecturally intact, along Arlington Drive east of the proposed boundary are not included in the district. In addition, there are four properties at the southern end of the district boundaries (and

within the City of South Pasadena) that are listed in the district description but are not shown within the district boundaries on the Sketch Maps in Section 9 (1200-1220 S. Pasadena Avenue).

4. Description/Sketch Map Agreement: The Sketch Map on page 107, Section 9 outlines in different colors the contributing properties (light blue), properties with contributing primary structures and non-contributing secondary structures (pink) and non-contributing properties (salmon), which correlate to the architectural descriptions of each property in Section 7. The following properties have conflicts between the description and the map:
 - a. 1183 Avoca Avenue (property number 26-27, Section 7 page 13) is shown on the Sketch Map in pink but described as having two contributing structures, one of which is a turn-of-the-twentieth-century carriage house. As such, this property should be rendered in light blue.
 - b. 232 West State Street (property number 167-168, Section 7, page 60) is described as having two contributing structures, but it is rendered in pink rather than light blue on the Sketch Map.
 - c. 261 Wigmore Drive (property number 185-186, Section 7, page 66-67) is described as having one contributing structure and one non-contributing structure, but it is rendered in light blue rather than pink on the Sketch Map.
5. Recommended Contributing Status Change: 1210 Avoca Avenue (property number 38-39, Section 7, page 16) is described as having two contributing structures; however, 1949 additions and alterations to the front façade (including a projecting bay window and application of wood siding) significantly elongate the original volume of the house to give it a Ranch style appearance that confuses its original historical configuration and character. Staff recommends this property be changed to non-contributing due to these inappropriate alterations.
6. Alterations: The description of the property at 1171 Avoca Avenue does not include several apparent alterations from its original appearance, and the description of 866 S. Pasadena Avenue references “many alterations” that are not fully described.
7. Summary Table: It would be helpful for the City’s future administration of the district if the summary table starting on page 71, Section 7 could also include construction date, architectural style and architect information.

CONCLUSION:

Staff has reviewed the registration form for the Pasadena Avenue Historic District and recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission recommend that the City Council submit a letter of support for the nomination with technical comments outlined in this report.

Respectfully Submitted,



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Development Department

Prepared by:



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Reviewed by:



For Leon E. White
Principal Planner

Attachment:

- A. Draft Pasadena Avenue Historic District National Register of Historic Places Registration Form