



PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

STAFF REPORT

DATE: OCTOBER 19, 2021

TO: HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

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

SUBJECT: APPLICATION FOR DESIGNATION AS A LANDMARK
801 SOUTH SAN RAFAEL AVENUE

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Historic Preservation Commission:

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 pertaining to Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment such as designation of historic resources.
2. Find that house at 801 South San Rafael Avenue meets Criterion "B" for designation as a landmark pursuant to Pasadena Municipal Code (PMC) Section 17.62.040, because it is associated with the life of a person that is significant in the history of the City. It is associated with former prominent resident, John Van de Kamp; and,
3. Recommend that the City Council approve the designation of the property at 801 South San Rafael Avenue as a landmark.

BACKGROUND:

The application for Landmark Designation of the house at 801 S. San Rafael Avenue was submitted by Andrew Salimian on behalf of Pasadena Heritage. City staff informed the current property owner, This Old House, LLC (represented by Deborah Rachlin Ross) that the application was submitted and the owner has indicated that they do not support the application. However, the PMC does not require property owner consent for a property to be designated as a landmark.

Upon review of the application, staff determined that the provided information is sufficient to demonstrate that the house is eligible for designation as a landmark under Criterion B for its association with former resident John Van de Kamp, a well-known politician and attorney.

DESCRIPTION:

Property Data:

- Address: 801 South San Rafael Avenue, Pasadena
- Location: West side of South San Rafael Avenue between San Rafael Terrace and Hillside Terrace
- Date of Construction Completion: 1947 (source: original building permit)
- Original Architect: Unidentified (source: original building permit)
- Original Builder and First Owner: Homs P. Tuttle (Source: original building permit)
- Original / Present Use: Single-family residence
- Property size: 0.79 acres (source: County Assessor)
- Building size: 4,337 square-feet (source: City of Pasadena property record)

Architectural Description:

The Site

The site is a 0.79 acre irregularly shaped lot located in the South San Rafael neighborhood. A recently constructed one-story, three-car garage is located closest to the street and is accessed by a circular driveway. Beyond the garage is the two-story primary single-family residence oriented toward South San Rafael Avenue. Behind the house, not significantly visible from the street, is a one-story attached building volume, one-story detached accessory dwelling unit and a large in-ground pool and spa. The site is also heavily landscaped, and several large mature trees are found throughout the property.

Exterior Features of the Building

This two-story Monterey Colonial style residence was completed in 1947. Although the original architect is unknown, the first owner, Holms P. Tuttle, is identified in the permit records as the owner and contractor. Character defining features of this house include a 2-story rectangular massing with a one-story appendage with a wide street frontage, a low-pitched side-facing gable roof, a cantilevered balcony set under the main roof the house that spans the entire primary façade and is enclosed with a wooden railing, flat stucco walls along the ground-floor level and wood siding on the second level walls. The primary street facing elevation is predominantly symmetrical. A main entry door is centered on the façade, surrounded with classical trim detailing, and flanked by a pair of double hung windows on either side. In addition, two French door openings and two double hung windows are symmetrically composed along the second floor level.

Documented Changes to the Property

Multiple changes were made to the property prior to John Van de Kamp purchasing it, including small room additions, construction of an additional chimney, construction of a patio cover, conversion of garage space to habitable space, and other miscellaneous interior remodeling. However, only a few alterations were made during his tenure there, including a roof replacement with an alternative roofing material (wood shingles to fiberglass shingles), and an interior kitchen remodel.

After his passing in 2017, the house and grounds were extensively remodeled. Significant alterations include the addition of a spa to the existing pool (BMN2019-01226), a 466 square foot rear addition, exterior remodeling at the sides and rear of the primary structure, interior remodeling throughout, and the new construction of an accessory structure (three-car garage) directly in front of the residence (BLD2019-01654). Other alterations included window and door replacements (BLDSFR2020-10498), paving to accommodate a circular driveway leading to the new three-car garage (ZON2021-00065), major remodeling of the rear playroom (BLDSFR2021-01175), and the new construction of an accessory dwelling unit in the rear yard (BLDSFR2021-01263).

Current Conditions, Use, and Proposed Plans

The house is currently in good condition and is used as a single family residence. No significant changes to the property, such as demolition, subdivision, or other “major projects” that may affect its potential historical significance are proposed at this time.

Historical Overview:

John Van de Kamp

John Van de Kamp was born on February 7, 1936, and during his early youth resided in Altadena before moving to Pasadena with his family. He attended the private Trailfinders School for Boys in Altadena for his early education and then attended John Muir High School in Pasadena. He then graduated from Dartmouth College and Stanford Law School and spent a short time in the military.

Professionally, he served as the 37th District Attorney for the County of Los Angeles from 1975 to 1981 and as the 28th Attorney General for California from 1983 to 1991. He unsuccessfully campaigned for the Democratic nomination for Governor of California in 1990, losing to Diane Feinstein. He subsequently retired from public office in 1991 and continued to practice law as a private attorney. He served on the Board of Governors of the State Bar of California from 2001 to 2005, and was the President of the Board from 2004 to 2005. Other notable accomplishments from his time as a private attorney include serving as the independent reform monitor for the City of Vernon, the Getty Trust, and various cases related to environmental protection.

Aside from his professional accomplishments, John Van de Kamp was also involved in multiple local activities after his retirement from politics, including involvement with the Norton Simon

Museum, Pasadena Education Foundation, St. Andrews Church, and helped fundraise for the Jackie and Mack Robinson memorial located in front of Pasadena's City Hall.

A more detailed list of professional and personal accomplishments was included in the application submittal package, which is included as part of this report (Attachment B).

ANALYSIS:

Designation Criteria:

The applicant has requested to designate the property under Criterion B. As specified in PMC Section 17.62.040.C.2, Criterion B states:

"[The property] is associated with the lives of persons who are significant in the history of the City."

The application requests to designate the property due to its association with the productive life of John Van de Kamp, an important person in Pasadena's history. Although the City of Pasadena does not have a formal context report that identifies important persons or classes of persons or local standards for how to evaluate for significance, the City's status as a Certified Local Government means that the City has a well-established local survey and designation program that is consistent with federal and state standards and regulations. The City also has a qualified historic preservation commission, with qualified staff capable of identifying, evaluating and managing the preservation of historic properties at the local level.

However, Section 17.62.040.A of the PMC specifies that when evaluating historic resources: "...the Director, Historic Preservation Commission, and City Council shall apply the criteria below according to applicable National Register of Historic Places Bulletins for evaluating historic properties, including the seven aspect of integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association (National Register of Historic Places Bulletin #15 [NRB15]: "How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation")".

NRB15 specifies that Criterion B applies to properties associated with individuals whose specific contributions to history can be identified and documented. From the NRB15:

"Persons "significant in our past" refers to individuals whose activities are demonstrably important within a local, state or national historic context. The criterion is generally restricted to those properties that illustrate (rather than commemorate) a person's important achievements."

Therefore, to determine whether a property is significant for its associative value under Criterion B, the NRB15 states that the importance of the individual must be established as well as the length and nature of their association with the property and any other properties associated with the individual. Once that is completed, the property may be further evaluated under Criterion B as described in the bulletin.

Significance of the Individual

To determine the significance of an individual, NRB15 specifies that:

“Persons associated with the property must be individually significant within a historic context. A property isn’t eligible if its only justification for significance is that it was owned or used by a person who is a member of an identifiable profession, class, or social or ethnic group. It must be shown that the person gained importance within his or her profession or group... A property is not eligible under Criterion B if it is associated with an individual about whom no scholarly judgement can be made because either research has not revealed specific information about the person’s activities and their impact or there is insufficient perspective to determine whether those activities or contributions were historically important”

The NRB15 also clarifies that status as a well know public official or being associated with public figures are not considered sufficient to determine that a property is eligible for designation under Criterion B. Further, properties associated with living persons are not eligible, and sufficient time must have elapsed after a person’s death in order to assess both their professional field and their contributions to that field.

John Van de Kamp passed on March 14, 2017. Although formal scholarly judgement has yet to be made about the significance of John Van de Kamp’s contributions to the field of politics or the law compared to others who held the title of Attorney General of California or Los Angeles County District Attorney or maintained a private law practice, the applicant has submitted extensive documentation about his professional accomplishments in time period between 1987 and 2017 when he lived in the house at 801 S. San Rafael Avenue. The applicant has indicated that the body of work from this time is the most significant part of his career, and not his time in public office. The application materials also indicate that his work as a private attorney after his retirement from politics in 1991 are also distinguished from other professionals and that his work made significant contributions to the understanding and practice of law.

Association with the Property and Comparison to Other Related Properties

The NRB15 specifies that properties eligible under Criterion B are usually those associated with a person’s productive life, reflecting the time period when they achieved significance. This could be their home, business location, office, laboratory or studio. Properties that pre or postdate their significant accomplishments are usually not eligible.

Property records demonstrate that John Van de Kamp lived at 801 S. San Rafael Avenue from 1987 until his passing in 2017. This time is identified by the applicant as the most productive period of his professional life, and also coincides with the time when he became more involved in local affairs.

John Van de Kamp lived at 489 Prospect Terrace in Pasadena just prior to moving to 801 South San Rafael Avenue. He resided at this location during the time when he first rose to political prominence and during the majority of his tenure in public office. However, the timeframe of his residence at that location does not align with the period of

significance identified by the applicant as his most productive and significant period. In addition, the residence at 489 Prospect Terrace has been altered and no longer retains integrity.

Properties That Have Achieved Significance Within the Last Fifty Years:

The NRB15 also provides guidance for understanding the significance of a property that has achieved significance within the last fifty years. Generally, a property is only considered for eligibility if it has achieved significance a minimum of 50 years ago. Properties that only achieve significance within the past 50 years are not eligible, unless it is of exceptional importance.

In practice, the City of Pasadena adheres to this general standard, but has established that only a minimum time span of 45 years needs to have passed before a property can be evaluated to determine if it has achieved significance. However, these time spans are only a general estimate of the time needed to develop historical perspective and evaluate significance.

John Van de Kamp passed in 2017, and it has been less than five years since he resided at 801 South San Rafael Avenue. As he first began living in the house in 1987, it has also been less than 45 years that he has been associated with the property. However, the applicant has indicated that enough time has passed to establish the significance of John Van de Kamp and that designation of this property is of exceptional importance, as it may be the only remaining residence that can convey association with his productive period.

Integrity

A property must also retain integrity (its ability to demonstrate why it is significant) with respect to the physical condition of the property in order to qualify for landmark designation. While most buildings undergo alterations over time, in order to retain integrity, the alterations should not have significantly changed the historic appearance and character defining features of the building or site.

The following is an assessment of the seven established aspects of integrity as applied to the property located at 801 South San Rafael Avenue:

- **Location:** Location is the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred. The primary structure at 801 South San Rafael Avenue is in its original location and therefore retains integrity of location.
- **Design:** Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property. Although some aspects of the overall design and appearance of the house have been altered over time, including; conversion of the original garage, a façade remodel including the replacement of much of the original historic building fabric on the front elevation, including original windows, original cladding material, original balcony

railing, and the replacement of most of the windows and doors, enough of the existing structure remains to reflect the original design of the house. Therefore, the building retains integrity of design.

- **Setting:** Setting is the physical environment of a historic property. Some aspects of the site have been significantly altered. Although the shape and size of the site are unchanged, a new pool and accessory dwelling unit are under construction in the rear yard, and a detached one-story, three-car garage was constructed in the middle of what was previously an expansive open front yard. A new circular driveway has also been recently constructed in the front yard, where previously only single driveway existed. The surrounding single family residential neighborhood retains its original residential character, although many of the homes in the vicinity have been physically altered over time, including several instances of demolition and new construction. Due to the significant alterations to the site, including construction of an accessory structure that obstructs some views of the primary structure, the site does not retain integrity of the setting.
- **Materials:** Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property. The building does not retain the majority of its original exterior materials, including exterior cladding and windows, as a building permit was issued for these alterations. Although the replacement materials are compatible with the original materials used on the exterior of the house, the building does not retain integrity of materials.
- **Workmanship:** Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory. City records and documentation describe the interior finishes and built-ins as “detailed,” however, no photographic documentation was found about what this would have looked like. A physical inspection of the exterior of the house by staff showed that the house currently does not exhibit any significant evidence of historic workmanship. Based on the available information, the building does not retain integrity of workmanship.
- **Feeling:** Feeling is a property’s expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time. It results from the presence of physical features that, taken together, convey the property’s historic character. Although the building and site have been significantly remodeled, they continue to express the feeling of a single family residential neighborhood and the original 1947 construction date of the house. Therefore, the property retains integrity of feeling.
- **Association:** Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property. A property retains association if it is the place where *the* event or activity occurred and is sufficiently intact to convey that relationship to an observer. John Van de Kamp resided at 801 South San Rafael Avenue from 1987 until 2017. As the property remains a private residence in a residential neighborhood and the basic building form and appearance are intact, it is sufficiently intact to retain integrity of association as the residence of John Van de Kamp from 1987 until 2017.

As noted above, the property does not retain all seven aspects of integrity. However, because this property is being considered for designation under Criterion B, not all of the physical features of the house or the aspects of integrity are essential for determining eligibility. With respect to Criterion B, NRB15 indicates that the essential physical features of a property should be defined and then evaluated to determine that they are visible enough to convey the significance of the property. Only the aspects of integrity related to those features need to be considered when evaluating the property.

In this case, the house has no architectural significance and is being considered for landmark designation as the residence of John Van de Kamp. The most important physical features of the property necessary to convey association as the residence of John Van de Kamp are the publicly visible shape of the building, including the two-story massing, roof form, general composition of the publicly visible windows and doors, and the design and appearance of the full width second level balcony, which reflect to the general appearance of the residence when John Van de Kamp lived there. As all of these significant physical features are intact, the property retains integrity of location, design, feeling and association. The aspects of integrity related to materials, workmanship, and feeling are not applicable for this review.

However, as also noted above, the new construction of a detached three-car garage and circular driveway directly in front of the house in what was the front yard significantly alters the arrangement of structures on the site and the historical appearance of the property, as the garage is now the building that is closest to the street and partially obstructs visibility of the primary structure behind it. Due to this alteration to the site, the property does not retain integrity of setting. However, the house is still somewhat visible, and, although unlikely, it may be possible to demolish the garage and restore the original public views to the house if the required parking can be provided elsewhere on the property. Therefore, this alteration is considered reversible and does not impair the ability of the property to convey its significance as the residence of John Van de Kamp from 1987 until 2017.

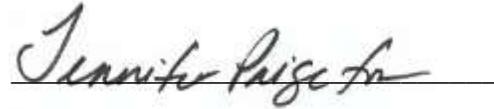
Overall, the house retains sufficient integrity to clearly convey that it is a single family residential structure and was once the home of John Van de Kamp.

CONCLUSION:

As a Certified Local Government, Pasadena is qualified to make local determinations with respect to the evaluation and designation of historical resources. The applicant has submitted adequate documentation to demonstrate that the building at 801 South San Rafael Avenue is eligible for designation as a landmark under Criterion B for its association with John Van de Kamp. Although the current property owner is opposed to the designation, the PMC does not require property owner consent.

Therefore, staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission recommend to the City Council that the primary structure at 801 South San Rafael Avenue be designated as a landmark under Criterion B, for its association with John Van de Kamp. Contributing resources to the designation include the basic publicly visible building form, massing, fenestration and street facing second floor balcony.

Respectfully Submitted,



David M. Reyes
Director of Planning & Community
Development Department

Prepared by:



Amanda Landry, AICP
Senior Planner

Reviewed by:



Leon E. White
Principal Planner

Attachments:

- A. Vicinity Map
- B. Application & Historical Documentation
- C. Photo of Property from 2011 and Current Photograph
- D. Effects of Historic Designation