



PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

STAFF REPORT

DATE: NOVEMBER 16, 2021

TO: HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

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

SUBJECT: CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS – CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW WOOD ENTRY ARBOR AT THE FRONT YARD GATE
1144 E. ELIZABETH STREET
(DESIGNATED HISTORIC HIGHLANDS LANDMARK DISTRICT)

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Find that the proposed project is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15303, Class 3 of the CEQA guidelines pertaining to new construction of small structures such as fences, and there are no features that distinguish this project from others in the exempt class; therefore, there are no unusual circumstances;
2. Find that no protected native, specimen, or landmark trees under the tree protection ordinance, Pasadena Municipal Code (PMC), Ch.8.52, will be removed for the project;
3. Find that the project complies with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings and the Design Guidelines for Historic Districts; and
4. Approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the wood entry arbor located at the front yard gate as illustrated in Attachment A.

BACKGROUND:

This one-story, single-family, California Bungalow style house was constructed in 1918 by J.R.R. Riley and is a contributing property to the Historic Highlands Landmark District. The property, located at the southeast corner of East Elizabeth Street and North Mar Vista Avenue, features multiple gable roofs with exposed purlins along both its street frontages, a large ¾-width cross-gabled front porch facing Elizabeth Street, supported by heavy timber porch posts, and a brick chimney along Mar Vista Avenue. The house is clad in non-original stucco,

however, it retains integrity in form and detailing. A Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) was issued for the construction of new wooden front and side yard fencing and gates in July 2021 to coincide with the property owner's proposed grey-water landscaping project.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

At the existing central, front yard walkway, the applicant is proposing to construct a new entry arbor located at the front yard entry gate. The gate was approved by staff under the Certificate of Appropriateness described above. The proposed arbor will be constructed of two, 6"x6" square wood posts with a head clearance of seven feet, and an overall height of approximately eight feet. Flanking the tops of each post are proposed 2"x6" tapered beams, capped by two, 2"x10" tapered parallel beams, which are then capped by 2"x2" trellis rafters. The arbor structure is proposed to be constructed of redwood, and be stained to match the new fencing and connections are shown using lag screws without visible metal brackets. The total width of the proposed arbor will be 3'-10," measured at the posts.

ANALYSIS:

Pursuant to PMC, Section 17.62.030(U)(9), the construction of an accessory structure in front of the primary structure is considered a major project, subject to Commission level review on designated properties. Additionally, pursuant to PMC Section 17.62.090(E)(4)(b), approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness shall be based on the following finding:

If a project is an alteration or new construction, the project complies with the Secretary's Standards or adopted guidelines based on the Secretary's Standards.

The project was reviewed using the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and the Design Guidelines for Historic Districts, which are based on the Secretary's Standards. The applicable standards and guidelines include:

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

- Standard 1: A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces and spatial relationships.*
- Standard 2: The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.*
- Standard 9: New additions, exterior alterations or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.*
- Standard 10: New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.*

Design Guidelines for Historic Districts:

The Design Guidelines for Historic Districts do not include specific guidelines for entry features such as the proposed arbor; however, a combination of the guidelines for fencing and those for accessory structures would be appropriate to utilize in this evaluation, as follows:

- 10.32: *Construct an accessory structure that is subordinate in size with and similar in character to the primary structure.*
- *In general, accessory structures should be unobtrusive and not compete visually with the house.*
 - *An accessory structure should remain subordinate, in terms of mass, size and height, to the primary structure.*
- 10.33: *An accessory structure should be similar in character to those seen traditionally.*
- 10.34: *Maintain the traditional range of building materials on accessory structures.*
- 10.35: *Maintain the simple detailing found on accessory structures.*
- *Ornate detailing on accessory structures is inappropriate.*
 - *Avoid details that may give an accessory structure a residential appearance. New accessory structures should not mimic primary structures.*
- 10.7: *Where a new fence is needed, it should be similar in character with those seen historically.*
- *New fence design and materials that are similar to those used historically are appropriate.*
 - *The design and materials of a new fence should be compatible with the character of the house and neighborhood.*

The proposed project complies with the applicable guidelines. The proposed arbor will provide a visual point of interest at the property's point of entry, while being compatibly designed in style and material with the expressive roofing and Craftsman detailing of the house.

A cursory survey of the designated Historic Highlands Landmark District revealed several properties with arbor structures, however, it is unknown if these site features were existing prior to the district formation as no records exist for them. Though entry arbors are not common site features in this designated district, they were part of the general City lexicon of garden structures on residential properties from this period, and, therefore, would not be out of context with the residential nature of the historic district. Additionally, given that 1144 E. Elizabeth Street is a corner property, the proposed entry arbor is modest in size, simple in detailing and, therefore, appropriate to the scale of the property, while also being compatible with the character of the district. Following Secretary's Standard No.10, the arbor is physically separated from the house and therefore would allow the essential form and character of the property and district to be unimpaired if it is removed in the future. It is subordinate to the house, similar to entry structures seen traditionally on larger lots with Craftsman-style houses and utilizes materials used traditionally for such structures. Finally, the project was reviewed by

staff of the Current Planning Section for consistency with Zoning Code, and the project was found to comply with the Code.

CONCLUSION:

The proposed project complies with the guidelines, and is also compatible with the house and the landmark district. Therefore, staff recommends the Certificate of Appropriateness for the arbor structure be approved.

Respectfully Submitted,



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Attachments:

- A. Proposed Project Plans
- B. Site Photographs