



PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

STAFF REPORT

DATE: OCTOBER 18, 2022

TO: HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

FROM: JENNIFER PAIGE, AICP, ACTING DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: APPLICATION FOR DESIGNATION AS A LANDMARK
353 ANITA DRIVE (TOAD HALL)

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 the single-family residential building at 353 Anita Drive, historically known as "Toad Hall," meets Criterion "C" for designation as a landmark pursuant to Pasadena Municipal Code (PMC) Section 17.62.040.D.2 because it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a locally significant property type, architectural style and period and represents the work of an architect whose work is of significance to the City. It is a locally significant example of a Tudor Revival style single-family residence designed by locally significant architect Donald R. Wilkinson; and,
3. Recommend that the City Council approve the designation of the property at 353 Anita Drive as a landmark.

BACKGROUND:

On August 4, 2022, Kelly Sutherlin McLeod of Kelly Sutherlin McLeod Architecture, Inc., on behalf of the property owners, submitted an application for historic monument designation of the building at 353 Anita Drive. City staff evaluated the property according to the criteria in Title 17 of the P.M.C. and determined that insufficient information was submitted to determine the building's eligibility for designation as a historic monument but that it does qualify for designation as a landmark. The applicant subsequently modified their application to request landmark, rather than historic monument, designation.

DESCRIPTION:

Property Data

- Address: 353 Anita Drive, Pasadena
- Location: West side of Anita Drive, between Glenullen Drive and Capinero Drive
- Date of Construction Completion: 1926 (source: Original Building Permit)
- Original Architect: Donald R. Wilkinson (source: Original Building Permit)
- Original Builder: William R. Myers Company (source: Original Building Permit)
- Original Owner: W. D. Jones (source: Original Building Permit)
- Original / Present Use: Single-family residence
- Property size: 21,613 (source: County Assessor)
- Building size: 5,819 (source: County Assessor)

Architectural Description:

The Site:

The property is located on an irregular shaped lot on the west side of Anita Drive within the hillside Cheviotdale Heights neighborhood of the City. The building is set above and back from the street and is accessible by an up-sloping driveway. A brick and stone retaining wall is located at the front of the property along the street and in line with the driveway, which is flanked by brick pillars that support a wrought iron gate, which appears to be original to the property. The property contains various paved pathways to access the mostly terraced rear yard, including some paved patios, along with decorative wrought iron gates. Within the front yard is a paved area that includes a covered barbeque and fireplace, which is not original to the property. At the northwest side of the property is a one-story detached 660 square-foot garage, which was constructed ca. 1938. Immediately to the rear (west) of the property is a vacant lot that was historically joined with the subject property to form one lot but has since been subdivided. The surrounding context includes single-family residences in a variety of architectural styles built roughly between 1926 and 1995.

The building has historically, and presently, been called “Toad Hall,” named after the home from the children’s novel *The Wind in the Willows* by Kenneth Grahame. The children of the owners who took possession of the house in and around approximately 1963, named the house.

Exterior Features of the Building¹:

The existing residence is sited in the center of the parcel and is two-stories in height with a sub-grade basement. The building has an irregular footprint that distinguishes three volumes: a central rectangular primary volume, a northern wing and a southern wing, which are splayed from the central volume at different angles. The building has a complex and asymmetrical massing that conforms to the topography of the site and is designed in the Tudor Revival architectural style and its exterior features a combination of brick cladding and stucco with exposed half-timbering and multiple gable-on-hip roofs, with the gabled portions being small in

¹ Description based on nomination report dated August 1, 2022.

relation to the hipped forms and accommodating louvered attic vents. The roofs are finished with a shake-effect concrete roofing material and have moderate overhanging eaves.

The primary elevation faces east, though the southern wing is sited at an angle facing northeast. The main entrance to the building is located in the northern wing accessed from the ascending driveway by way of stone steps and pathways. The entry door is a solid wood door with decorative glazing and iron strap hinges and is set back within a small porch and approached from a deep one-story projecting arcade supported by bracketed, paired squared hand adzed posts under an extension of the main roof form. The primary elevation also features a secondary entrance in the southern wing, with French doors approached by way of steps and a patio. The prominent feature of the primary elevation is the central volume. While the southern and northern wings are clad in red brick from the ground to the eaves, the central wing is clad in painted half-timbering and stucco infill above the red brick on concrete foundation. Tall multi-paned steel-framed casement windows installed off-center also distinguish this central volume on the main floor. Second floor dormers with hipped roofs and groupings of windows are features of each of the three volumes. The building maintains red brick arched door and porch surrounds throughout.

The side elevation facing southeast is one room deep, clad in red brick and features a bank of multi-paned, steel-framed casement windows under a moderate roof overhang.

The rear elevation that faces south is also asymmetrical with varying roof heights. The basement of the residence is exposed here and is approached by a patio surrounded by a hedge and other foliage. Wall cladding is a combination of red brick, half-timbering with stucco infill, and flat surfaces of painted stucco. Notable features include a French door entry deeply set back under a wide, rounded arch framed in red brick, and a Juliette balcony with iron railings on a wood deck supported by wooden corbels.

The rear elevation that faces west is also asymmetrical with a varied roof line and hipped roof dormers. Wall cladding is a combination of red brick, half-timbering and stucco infill, and flat surfaces of painted stucco. Among the notable features are two arches clad in red brick. They shelter a porch and door under the main roof and are accessed by means of a concrete staircase. Featured just below the roof overhang is a long bank of 3 x 3 casement windows with steel frames.

The rear elevation facing northwest has an asymmetrical layout and varied roof form and is fully clad in red brick. A notable feature is the prominent red brick chimney that tapers inward as it extends from the ground upward past the gable. Above the roof, a brickwork pattern forms two chimney shafts displaying ornamental clay pots. The elevation also features an entry set in below the roof line and approached by way of a staircase.

On its west and northwest facing elevations, the residence maintains its elevated siting and is approached at a steep incline from the property line by a series of retaining walls, brick lined paths, and steps designed around garden foliage.

The north facing elevation (living room wing) is one room deep and is distinguished by a large bay of multi-paned and steel-framed casements windows. The red brick wall cladding terminates under a moderate overhang below the roof gable. Historical drawings and photographs are included in Attachment B. In comparing the historical drawings and current aerials and photographs, the building does not appear to have been expanded from its original footprint in 1926 and has not been substantially altered from its original appearance.

Description of Detached Garage:

The driveway charts a curve from the east side to the north side of the property terminating at the two-story garage situated immediately adjacent to the residence on its northwest side. Two double-width non-original metal garage doors are at grade and face east. The building has a hipped roof and a concrete foundation and is clad in painted stucco. A painted wood half-timbering effect is evident on the side and rear elevations on the upper level. The garage's hipped roof is capped with an additional gabled pitched above and a cupola with weathervane at the center.

Documented Changes to the Property:

The property has undergone few major exterior changes since it was originally built in 1926. Permit records indicate that a 660 square-foot garage with a bedroom was permitted in 1938, which is currently the existing detached garage at the northwest side of the property. In 1939, a permit was issued for the application of 90 square yards of exterior stucco on lath. Other alterations that have been documented through permits include re-piping the house with copper pipes (1996) and re-roofing with cedarlite concrete shakes (2007).

Current Conditions, Use, and Proposed Plans:

The exterior of the building is currently in good condition and it continues to be used as a single-family residence. No significant changes to the property are proposed at this time. However, the applicant has concurrently applied for acceptance into the Mills Act program.

Historical Overview:

Tudor Revival Architecture²

Tudor Revival is generally used to describe residences that display half-timbering at exterior facades. The style draws influence from early 16th century English architecture, although most homes were inspired by building techniques from the Elizabethan era. The style began to appear in Pasadena in the 1910s and was typically used for single-family residences and larger estates. However, by the 1920s, the style began to be utilized by developers wanting to incorporate more decorative styles into multi-family residential developments to attract buyers and tenants looking for affordable housing options.

Tudor Revival homes typically feature decorative timbers, including half-timbering, which reference medieval building techniques. Half-timbering in Tudor Revival homes usually is

² Residential Period Revival Architecture and Development in Pasadena from 1915 – 1942, page 33.

combined with stucco or patterned brick in between the timbers. Other common features of Tudor Revival homes include steeply pitched side gabled roof forms, facades dominated by one or more prominent front-facing gables, and windows usually in multiple groups with multi-pane glazing. Examples of Tudor Revival residences in Pasadena include 880 La Loma Road (1915, Marston & Van Pelt), 160 South San Rafael Avenue (1923, Paul Williams); 901 S. San Rafael Avenue (1928, David Ogilvie, designated historic monument), 2045 Monte Vista Street (1927, Glenn Elwood Smith, designated landmark) and 141 North Grand Avenue (1922, Joseph J. Blick & the Postle Company, designated landmark).

Character-defining features of the Tudor Revival architectural style include:

- Asymmetrical facades
- One to two-story massing
- Steeply pitched gabled roof forms, sometimes with hipped or clipped variations
- Single- and multi-pane wood or metal sash windows in casement and/or double hung operations
- Decorative half-timbering
- Stucco or brick finished exterior between the half-timbering

Donald R. Wilkinson (1891-1975)

Donald Reuben Wilkinson is one of Southern California's most prolific architects whose Southern California career spanned from approximately 1912 until his death in 1975 and whose commissions can be found in various cities throughout the region. Wilkinson was born in Chicago in 1891 and attended the Chicago Art Institute in the early 1900s. Post-completion of his coursework in 1910, he apprenticed with D. H. Burnham & Company until he moved to Los Angeles in 1912. Upon arriving to Los Angeles, he worked as a draftsman for local architects Robert Farquhar and Reginald Johnson. He eventually went on to travel and study in Europe following World War I and received a diploma from Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris in 1919. In the same year, Wilkinson entered a submission for a Spanish Colonial Revival residential design into a competition sponsored by the Los Angeles Pressed Brick Company and won third place.

At the time of the commission for 353 Anita Drive, Wilkinson was a practicing architect with the firm Meyer & Holler Architects, Engineers and Builders, whose presence became well-known among the design-build field throughout Southern California. Wilkinson remained as a practicing architect with the firm from 1920 to 1932. His name became tied to some of the firm's high-profile projects including the Grauman's Chinese Theater (1926), the Hollywood Athletic Club (1927), and at least three churches for the Christian Science Church in Los Angeles and Glendale among others.

After departing Meyer & Holler in approximately 1932, Wilkinson joined Ralph Mitchell Crosby in two different periods, from 1932 to 1942 and from 1952 to 1959. During his partnership with Crosby, Wilkinson specialized in residential designs and later churches. Between 1949 and 1952, Wilkinson briefly worked as a staff architect in the office of the California State Architect and after the end of his second term with Crosby, he joined Welton Becket and Associates.

ANALYSIS:

The building at 353 Anita Drive is eligible for designation as a landmark under Criterion C of PMC Section 17.62.040.D.2, which states:

[The property] embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, architectural style, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of an architect, designer, engineer, or builder whose work is of significance to the City or, to the region or possesses artistic values of significance to the City or to the region.

Generally, in order to qualify under Criterion C, a property type would display most of the character-defining features of its style. It must retain high integrity of design, materials and workmanship that convey its period of construction. While most buildings undergo alteration over time, these alterations should not significantly change the historic appearance of the building.

Under Criterion C, the building at 353 Anita Drive is significant because it is a locally significant, intact example of a Tudor revival style single-family residence, designed by Donald R. Wilkinson. The building has a high level of architectural integrity (its ability to demonstrate why it is significant) through its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship and feeling, as follows:

- Location: The building and other site features are in their original locations.
- Design: The building retains its original form, plan, space, structure, and style, including its massing, exterior brick cladding and stucco with half timbering, original fenestration and exterior materials, roof form, and entryway.
- Setting: The surrounding context includes single-family residences that were constructed around the same time as the subject property, which remain intact.
- Materials: The building retains a majority of its original exterior materials. Although the original wood roof was replaced, the new material is designed to simulate wood shakes while retaining a fire rating that will better protect the house given its location in a hillside fire hazard zone.
- Workmanship: The building retains the majority of its exterior materials and features that reflect the craftsmanship of the Tudor Revival architectural style, and therefore retains integrity of workmanship.
- Feeling: The property clearly expresses the characteristics of the Tudor Revival architectural style and evokes the feeling of an early residential development within the context of the surrounding neighborhood.
- Association: The property at 353 Anita Drive retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship and feeling, and therefore continues to convey its association with the Tudor Revival architectural style and as a work of locally significant architect Donald R. Wilkinson.

Based on the above, the property retains sufficient integrity to qualify for designation as a landmark under Criterion C. The building retains all of its original character-defining features, including:

- Two-story configuration with a basement
- Complex and asymmetrical massing that conforms to the topography of the site
- Irregular plan with multiple volumes
- High-pitched, gable-on-hip intersecting roof forms with dormers, shake-effect concrete roofing material, and moderate eaves overhang
- Massive brick chimney tapering inward and extending past the gable where brickwork pattern forms two shafts displaying ornamental clay pots
- Red brick (on concrete) foundation, stucco and red brick wall cladding with decorative half-timbering on stucco wall surfaces
- Recessed primary entrance accessed from prominent rustic wood porch with square hand-adzed posts
- Solid wood primary entrance door with decorative glazing and iron strap hinges
- Banks of steel and multi-paned casement windows, and multi-paned bay window
- Red brick arched door and porch surrounds
- Juliette balcony with iron balustrade on wood deck supported by wood corbels
- Two-car garage with gable-on-hipped roof with stucco wall surface and decorative half-timbering

Contributing features to this designation include the main single-family residence, the front retaining wall aligned with the street and driveway, the driveway gates and associated pillars, the varied pedestrian pathways and gates found winding throughout the property and the one-story detached garage structure.

CONCLUSION:

The building at 353 Anita Drive qualifies for designation as a landmark under Criterion C as an intact, locally significant example of a Tudor Revival style single-family residence, designed by local architect Donald R. Wilkinson.

Respectfully Submitted,



for Jennifer Paige, AICP
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Prepared by:



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Attachments:

- A. Vicinity Map
- B. Application & Historical Documentation
- C. Current Photographs
- D. Effects of Historic Designation