



City of Arts & Innovation

City Council Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL DATE: FEBRUARY 7, 2023

FROM: COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WARD: 3
DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: PLANNING CASE DP-2022-00914 – REQUEST BY ROBERT VEGA AND MICHELLE ARASIM TO DESIGNATE THE POWELL-WHEELER RESIDENCE – LOCATED AT 3860 EL HIJO STREET – AS A CITY LANDMARK AND AMEND THE ZONING CODE MAP TO APPLY THE CR – CULTURAL RESOURCE OVERLAY ZONE

ISSUE:

Adopt a Resolution to designate the Powell-Wheeler Residence, located at 3860 El Hijo Street, as a City Landmark and adopt an Ordinance amending the Zoning Code Map to apply the CR - Cultural Resources Overlay Zone.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the City Council:

1. Determine that Planning Case DP-2022-00914 (Historic Designation) to designate the Powell-Wheeler Residence as a City Landmark is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), pursuant to Sections 15061(b)(3) (Common Sense Exemption) and 15308 (Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment), as the proposal will have no significant effect on the environment, identifies the structure as a cultural resource, and preserves the historic character of a cultural resource;
2. Approve Planning Case DP-2022-00914 (Historic Designation) based on, and subject to, the Cultural Heritage Board facts for findings outlined in the attached Cultural Heritage Board staff report;
3. Adopt the attached Resolution designating the Powell-Wheeler Residence as a City Landmark;
4. Approve the attached findings for the Zoning Code Map Amendment to apply the CR — Cultural Resources Overlay Zone to the subject property; and
5. Introduce, and subsequently adopt the attached Ordinance to rezone 3860 El Hijo Street from the R-1-7000-Single Family Residential Zone to the R-1-7000-CR – Single Family Residential and Cultural Resources Overlay Zones.

CULTURAL HERITAGE BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS:

On November 16, 2022, the Cultural Heritage Board (CHB) unanimously voted (7 ayes and 0 noes) to recommend that the City Council approve Planning Case DP-2022-00914 and designate the Powell-Wheeler Residence as a City Landmark (Attachments 4 and 5).

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY:

A “Landmark” is defined in Section 20.50.010 (U) of Title 20 of the Riverside Municipal Code as:

“Any improvement or natural feature that is an exceptional example of a historical, archaeological, cultural, architectural, community, aesthetic or artistic heritage of the City, retains a high degree of integrity, and meets one or more of the following criteria:

1. Exemplifies or reflects special elements of the City's cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, architectural, or natural history;
2. Is identified with persons or events significant in local, state or national history;
3. Embodies distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period or method of construction or is a valuable example of the use of indigenous materials or craftsmanship;
4. Represents the work of a notable builder, designer, or architect, or important creative individual;
5. Embodies elements that possess high artistic values or represents a significant structural or architectural achievement or innovation;
6. Reflects significant geographical patterns, including those associated with different eras of settlement and growth, particular transportation modes, or distinctive examples of park or community planning, or cultural landscape;
7. Is one of the last remaining examples in the City, region, state, or nation possessing distinguishing characteristics of an architectural or historical type or specimen; or
8. Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory.”

DISCUSSION:

Property owners, Robert Vega, and Michelle Arasim, are requesting approval of a Historic Designation request to designate the Powell-Wheeler Residence as a City Landmark.

The Monterey Revival Style residence was designed by local designer Henry L.A. Jekel and constructed in 1930 for Percy and Margaret Powell. By 1946 the residence was purchased by Doctor Omer Wheeler, who added on to the residence a detached garage in the 1950s. The former Powell-Wheeler Residence is historically significant because it is an excellent and relatively rare example of the Monterey Revival Style of architecture within the City.

The residence is also significant as it represents the work of a notable local designer, Henry L.A. Jekel, who is recognized for his work in the Spanish Colonial Revival style of architecture. Jekel is credited with the design of over 40 homes and 15 businesses during the 41 years he worked as a designer and engineer.

Therefore, the residence is eligible for City Landmark designation under Criterion 3 of Section 20.50.010 (U) of Title 20, as it embodies the character-defining features of the Monterey Revival Style of architecture. The residence is also eligible for designation under Criterion 4, as it represents the work of the prominent local designer Henry L.A. Jekel.

Despite a small addition on the northwest side of the residence constructed in 1946 and other minor alterations to the detached garage, the Powell-Wheeler Residence retains a high degree of integrity required for Landmark designation.

Prior to the CHB and City Council meeting, public notices were mailed to property owners within 300 feet of the site.

As of the writing of this report, no responses have been received by staff regarding this historic designation request.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This item contributes to **Strategic Priority 2 – Community Well-Being (Goal 2.3 – Strengthen neighborhood identities and improve community health and the physical environment through amenities and programs that foster an increased sense of community and enhanced feelings of pride and belonging citywide).**

This item aligns with each of the five Cross-Cutting Threads as follows:

1. **Community Trust:** The Landmark Designation request is being reviewed during a Public Hearing before the City Council and the public is able to provide comments.
2. **Equity:** The Landmark Designation will require a landmark plaque be placed so that they are visible from the public right-of-way, providing information about the historic property to all residents.
3. **Fiscal Responsibility:** The Landmark Designation will require no City General Funds.
4. **Innovation:** The Landmark Designation request includes a historic property from the recent past, which relates to new clarifications of historic properties.
5. **Sustainability and Resiliency:** The Landmark Designation will help to preserve the City's collective history for future generations.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact resulting from the Landmark designation.

Prepared by: Jennifer A. Lilley, Community & Economic Development Director
Certified as to
availability of funds: Edward Enriquez, Interim Assistant City Manager/Chief Financial Officer/City Treasurer
Approved by: Rafael Guzman, Assistant City Manager
Approved as to form: Phaedra A. Norton, City Attorney

Attachments:

1. Resolution for Historic Designation
2. Recommended Findings for CR Overlay Zone
3. Ordinance
4. Cultural Heritage Board Staff Report – November 16, 2022
5. Draft Cultural Heritage Board Minutes – November 16, 2022
6. Presentation