



Community & Economic Development Department
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Planning Division

CULTURAL HERITAGE BOARD MEETING DATE: MAY 17, 2023
AGENDA ITEM: 4

PROPOSED PROJECT

Case Numbers	Not Applicable	
Request	To receive and file a presentation on the status of the architectural design for Harada House, Phase I, and the Harada House Interpretive Center (formerly known as Robinson House).	
Applicant	Not Applicable	
Project Location	3356 and 3342 Lemon Street, situated on the east side of Lemon Street between Third and Fourth Streets	
APN	213121005; 213121004	
Ward	1	
Neighborhood	Downtown	
Historic District	Heritage Square Historic District	
Historic Designation	National Register of Historic Places; National Historic Landmark; City Landmark #23; Structure of Merit; Historic District Contributor	
Staff Planner	Not Applicable	

RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends that the Cultural Heritage Board receive and file this presentation on the status of the architectural design for Harada House and the Harada House Interpretive Center (formerly known as Robinson House).

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The National Historic Landmark Harada House

Harada House is a two-story wood-framed house in its original neighborhood in Ward 1 of downtown Riverside, California. The feel of the neighborhood is middle class residential rather than urban. The lot is 4,135 square feet. The house was built in the mid-1880s as a single-story house over an unfinished masonry cellar. The Haradas added a second floor in 1916 shortly after their December 2015 purchase of it. It is a straightforward building with no extraordinary architectural styling. The current

appearance of the house reflects the Haradas' 1916 addition of the second floor and no significant additional modifications. It totals 1,862 square feet. The only alteration in the last century visible at street level was enclosing the upper front sleeping porch, which was done shortly after World War II. Virtually all of the historic plaster, wallpaper, fixtures, and hardware remain. The chain-link fence was installed around the perimeter of the site at an unknown date presumed to have been late in the life of the last Harada resident, Sumi, who died in 2000.

The house was donated by Harada heirs to the City of Riverside/Museum of Riverside in 2003 with its original contents. The contents were immediately cataloged, packed, and removed; the house has stood empty of furnishings since that time. Interventions since 2003 have included interior and exterior bracing and shoring of foundations and plaster, roof repairs, and minor emergency responses to address site drainage. The landscaping has been removed; the site is not presently irrigated due to concerns regarding foundation stability. In 2017-2018, all the original siding was removed to facilitate an engineer's structural survey; the siding was fumigated, encapsulated, and removed to secure storage. The house currently presents temporary fiberboard siding painting the original color of the house. The house and its contents are accessioned into the Museum of Riverside's permanent collection.

Harada House earned its NHL status because it was the subject of a civil rights court case in 1916-1918, the People of the State of California v. Jukichi Harada et al., in which the Superior Court of California upheld the Fourteenth Amendment rights of the American-born children of Japanese immigrants Jukichi and Ken Harada against California's Alien Land Law targeting Asians. The Harada case was the first test in the United States of the constitutionality of exclusionary and explicitly racist alien land and property laws; the house derives its core significance from the successful outcome of this case. Harada House is the physical embodiment of an event that was ultimately positive and triumphant for the Haradas and the Japanese American community, in contrast to many of the narratives associated with World War II-related commemorative sites. It illustrates a key turning point in the social and civil rights history of the nation as well as standing as a significant legacy relating to the ethnic heritage of Asian immigrants and Asian Americans in California.

Harada House exhibits a high degree of historic integrity and a low degree of structural integrity, the one correlating directly to the other. Sumi Harada, the youngest daughter of Jukichi and Ken Harada, occupied the house alone from the mid-1940s until 2000, shortly before the family donated the house to the City of Riverside. Sumi had no interest in altering the house and had, in any case, no financial means to undertake changes. Thus, a combination of outdated construction methods (including engineering issues with the second story added in 1916), decades of deferred maintenance while Sumi occupied the house, and extensive termite and water damage have created the current compromised structural conditions. However, because the house itself was the subject of the landmark judicial decision in 1918, and because it has been so little altered since then, the house—as an artifact—assumes importance exceeding what might be true of a historic house serving primarily as an example of an architectural style. The decades of neglect render the structure unsafe, but paradoxically this same neglect today gives the house its high degree of historic integrity. Original historic building fabric remains in place that would long since have been replaced by regular maintenance.

The structure formerly known as Robinson House is a single-story wood-framed house converted into a duplex in 1996. The lot is 4,791 square feet, and the house is 1,276 square feet. It was built circa 1884. The name "Robinson House" stems from the occupant at the time the Harada family moved next door, Cynthia Robinson, who initiated the effort to remove the Haradas from the neighborhood. Robinson House is part of the Heritage Square Historic District. It was acquired in 2014 by the Museum after a private fundraising campaign with the intention of its being used as the Harada House Interpretive Center. Its physical condition is very poor, and the structure was

red-tagged in 2020. It will be demolished and reconstructed according to the Secretary of the Interior's standards for the treatment of historic property.

The architect for both structures is IS Architecture of La Jolla. The project nears completion of the design development phase. Completion of 100% CDs is expected by fall 2023.

STRATEGIC PLAN

This item contributes to the Envision Riverside 2025 City Council Strategic Priority 1, Arts, Culture and Recreation, specifically goal 1.1 (strengthening Riverside's portfolio of arts, culture, recreation, senior, and lifelong learning programs and amenities), goal 1.2 (enhancing equitable access to arts, culture, and recreational service offerings and facilities), and goal 1.5 (supporting programs and amenities to further develop literacy, health, and education of children, youth, and seniors throughout the community).

This item aligns with the cross-cutting threads as follows:

1. **Community Trust** – A status report on the Harada House project familiarizes the Cultural Heritage Board with progress to date, invites Cultural Heritage Board input, and demonstrates commitment to restore access to this important cultural amenity to the public.
2. **Equity** – This status report is offered in a public forum, available to all, in order to seek broad input transparently. The project itself prioritizes equitable access and equitable representation of the community's many histories and cultures.
3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – This status report notes staff and design team efforts to make responsible use of taxpayer dollars while striving to achieve a memorable cultural landmark.
4. **Innovation** – This status report notes ways in which the design team is reconciling historic preservation with future needs for public access and dynamic programming.
5. **Sustainability & Resiliency** – This status report notes design team's efforts to consider the site's environmental footprint and offer exhibitions and programs that address cultural and social sustainability.

EXHIBITS LIST

1. Aerial/Location Map

Prepared by: Robyn G. Peterson, Museum Director
Reviewed by: Scott Watson, Historic Preservation Officer
Approved by: Maribeth Tinio, City Planner