



Community & Economic Development Department

Planning Division

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CULTURAL HERITAGE BOARD MEETING DATE: FEBRUARY 21, 2018

AGENDA ITEM NO.: 3

LANDMARK DESIGNATION

I. CASE NUMBER(S): P18-0058

II. PROJECT SUMMARY:

- 1) **Proposal:** Proposed historic designation of the Riverside Public Library – Main Branch as a City Landmark
- 2) **Location:** 3581 Mission Inn Avenue
- 3) **Ward:** 1
- 4) **Applicant:** City of Riverside – General Services Department
- 5) **Case Planner:** Scott Watson, Assistant Planner

III. RECOMMENDATION:

That the Cultural Heritage Board recommend that the City Council:

1. **DETERMINE** that Planning Case P18-0058, City Landmark Designation, is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per Sections 15061(b)(3) and 15308 of the CEQA Guidelines as it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment, said action is intended to preserve the historic character of the building and site, and to provide notice of the historic status; and,
2. **APPROVE** Planning Case P18-0058, based on the attached facts for findings and thereby designate the Riverside Public Library – Main Branch as a City Landmark.

#### **IV. BACKGROUND:**

In 2009, the City completed a CLG Grant funded Modernism Context Statement and Survey. Due to the scale of the project, the survey was a focused Intensive-Level survey, in which twenty buildings were evaluated for designation under the newly developed context. The Main Branch was found eligible for listing on the California Register and as a City Landmark, and was given the status codes 3CS (Appears eligible for CR as an individual property through survey evaluation) and 5S3 (Appears eligible for local listing or designation through survey evaluation). The context statement and survey were submitted to the State Office of Historic Preservation on September 30, 2009, and was subsequently accepted. On January 20, 2010, the context statement and survey were presented to the Cultural Heritage Board and was unanimously recommended for approval by the City Council. The Land Use Committee unanimously recommended City Council approval on February 11, 2010. City Council approved the context statement and survey on the May 4, 2010 Consent Calendar, thereby accepting the findings of the survey and adopting it.

Building upon the 2009 Modernism Context Statement and Survey, the City conducted a CLG Grant funded citywide survey in 2013, known as Modernism II. The Modernism II survey confirmed the findings of the previous survey with regards to the Main Branch. Modernism II was submitted to the State Office of Historic Preservation on September 30, 2013. Although Modernism II, has not been taken to the Cultural Heritage Board, nor City Council, the findings related to the Main Branch were accepted under the 2009 Modernism Context Statement and Survey.

#### **V. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:**

The Riverside Public Library - Main Branch was constructed between 1963 and 1965. It features the New Formalism style of architecture. Some of the character-defining features of the style which can be found in this building include monumentality, elevated podium, symmetrical plan, emphasis on structure, carefully organized hierarchy, site integration, and the use of traditional historical references in new ways. This is expressed in the library building through the wide overhanging flat roof, pilasters, sculptural perforated screens, an elevated podium entry with centrally located stairs, and a centrally located entry with a projecting half barrel-shaped canopy with broken arched ends. For more detail see attached DRP Forms (Exhibit 5)

#### **VI. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:**

The Riverside Public Library - Main Branch retains all seven aspects of integrity and continues to convey its historic significance. It was found eligible under the Modern Architecture theme of the Modernism Context statement as an excellent and rare example of New Formalist civic architecture in Riverside. It is also found eligible under the Architects of Modernism theme as the work of the significant local architectural firm Moise, Harbach and Hewlett. For more information about the New Formalism style of architecture and the architectural firm Moise, Harbach and Hewlett, please refer to the attached DPR Forms (Exhibit 5).

The 2013 survey found that the Library appears to meeting National Register Criterion C, "That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant

and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.” However, at the time it was determined that it did not meet National Register Criterion Consideration G of “exceptional importance” required for properties that are less than fifty years old, and therefore it was not found eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the time. Just over four years have passed since the completion of the survey, and the Main Branch is now over 50 years old. Therefore, Criterion Consideration G is no longer necessary, and in accordance with the assessment made in the 2013 Modernism II survey, the Library appears to be eligible for listing on the National Register.

## **VII. PUBLIC NOTICE AND COMMENTS:**

Public notices were published in one newspaper of general circulation within the City, and mailed to property owners and occupants within 300 feet of the site, at least ten (10) days prior to the scheduled hearing. No responses were received to date.

## **IX. EXHIBITS:**

1. Staff Recommended Findings
2. Aerial/Location Map
3. Designation Application
4. 2009 & 2013 Survey DPR Forms
5. General Services Department Memo
6. Site & Historic Photos



# CITY OF RIVERSIDE

COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

PLANNING DIVISION

## EXHIBIT 1 – STAFF RECOMMENDED FINDINGS

**CASE NUMBER:** P18-0058

**MEETING DATE:** February 21, 2018

**FACTS FOR FINDINGS:** (From Section 20.25.050 of the Riverside Municipal Code)

The Board and Historic Preservation Officer shall make findings of the following standards when applicable to approving or denying a Certificate of Appropriateness.

**FINDINGS:** Criterion 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.

**FACTS:** The Riverside Downtown Public Library is an excellent and rare example of the New Formalism style of civic architecture in the City of Riverside. New Formalism emerged in the 1950s as a rejection of the strict glass-and-steel vocabulary of International Style and Mid-century Modernism. The style was predominantly applied to public and institutional buildings from the late 1950s through the 1970s.

**FINDING:** Criterion 4: Represents the work of a notable builder, designer, or architect, or important creative individual.

**FACTS:** The Downtown Public Library was designed by the architect firm Moise, Harbach and Hewlett, a significant local architectural firm. Bolton Moise was a notable local architect. He is responsible for the design of many prominent buildings in Riverside between 1947 and 1970, including numerous public (Former Fire Station #1, and educational buildings (Polytechnic High School).