

1 RESOLUTION NO.

2 A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF RIVERSIDE,
3 CALIFORNIA, APPROVING THE APPLICATION UNDER PLANNING CASE
4 NUMBER DP-2024-01600 DESIGNATING THE MERCANTILE HALL – ORANGE
5 VALLEY MASONIC LODGE #13 LOCATED AT 2931 TWELFTH STREET, AS
6 CITY HISTORIC LANDMARK #150.

7 WHEREAS, in Planning Case No. DP-2024-01600, an application to designate the
8 Mercantile Hall – Orange Valley Masonic Lodge #13, located at 2931 Twelfth Street, on the north
9 side of Twelfth Street between Howard and Park Avenues, in the City of Riverside, California,
10 Assessor’s Parcel Number 211-203-015, as more particularly described and depicted in Exhibit “A”
11 attached hereto incorporated herein by reference, was found to be eligible for listing as a City
12 Landmark; and

13 WHEREAS, on January 15, 2025, the Cultural Heritage Board of the City of Riverside
14 conducted a duly noticed public hearing on said application and recommended the approval of the
15 designation of a City of Riverside City Historic Landmark for the Mercantile Hall – Orange Valley
16 Masonic Lodge #13 described above; and

17 WHEREAS, this process is exempt from review under the California Environmental Quality
18 Act (CEQA) pursuant to Sections 15061(b)(3) and 15308 of the CEQA Guidelines as set forth in
19 Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations; and

20 WHEREAS, all legal prerequisites to the adoption of this application have been met.

21 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Riverside,
22 California that based on substantial evidence presented to the Cultural Heritage Board during the
23 above-referenced public hearing and thereafter to the City Council, including written and oral staff
24 reports, together with public testimony pursuant to the provisions of Title 20 of the Riverside
25 Municipal Code pertaining to the designation of a Historic Landmark, the City Council hereby finds
26 that the Mercantile Hall – Orange Valley Masonic Lodge #13, located at 2931 Twelfth Street, on the
27 north side of Twelfth Street between Howard and Park Avenues, in the City of Riverside, California,
28 Assessor’s Parcel Number 211-203-015, as more particularly described and depicted in Exhibit “A”
attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference, a Historic Landmark eligible for designation
under criteria set forth in the Riverside Municipal Code Section 20.50.010(U) and based on the
following facts and findings:

1 **FINDINGS:** Criterion 1: Exemplifies or reflects special elements of the City’s
2 cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, architectural,
3 or natural history.

4 **FACTS:** Mercantile Hall was established as an African American owned business
5 in 1905 and served the African American and Latino communities in
6 Riverside’s Eastside Neighborhood. As stated in the *Colored Citizen*
7 newspaper, “This was the biggest enterprise undertaken by the colored
8 people of Riverside.” The structure provided a gathering place for the
9 community and supported Black fraternal orders, social meetings and
10 gatherings, community engagement and education, and local civil
11 activism significant in the broader Civil Rights movement. Further, in
12 1965 the building served as a Freedom School during the boycott of de
13 facto segregation in Eastside public schools.

The building continues to be home of the Orange Valley Mason Lodge
#13, which was established in 1905. Restricted from Caucasian fraternal
organizations and social clubs prior to World War II, the African
American community established their own. By the 1950s, the building
was owned by the Masonic Lodge, who still retains ownership to date.
Thus, the residence is eligible for Landmark designation under Criterion
1.

14 **FINDINGS:** Criterion 2: Is identified with persons or events significant in local, state
15 or national history.

16 **FACTS:** The social hall was originally constructed and operated by David Stokes,
17 a member of an early African American family in Riverside. Joining his
18 uncle Robert, David Stokes came to Riverside for better opportunities
19 than were available in the South at the time. Stokes opened Mercantile
20 Hall in 1905 and operated the African American owned and operated
21 Stokes & Wiley Grocery Store with Aaron Wiley. Stokes was an active
22 and prominent member of the African Americans of the community,
23 serving as the treasurer of the Second Baptist Church and was a member
24 of the Orange Valley Masonic Lodge #13. Through his entrepreneurship
25 and civic engagement, Stokes worked for the betterment of Riverside’s
26 early African American community; therefore, the residence is eligible
27 for Landmark designation under Criterion 2.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT pursuant to Title 20 of the Riverside Municipal Code,
the City Council hereby approves the above-referenced application and designates the Mercantile
Hall – Orange Valley Masonic Lodge #13, located at 2931 Twelfth Street, on the north side of
Twelfth Street between Howard and Park Avenues, in the City of Riverside, California, Assessor’s
Parcel Number 211-203-015, as City Historic Landmark #150.

1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the proposed historic landmark designation is exempt
2 from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to Sections 15061(b)(3)
3 and 15308 of the Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act (Title
4 14, California Code of Regulations, commencing with Section 15000 as it can be seen with certainty
5 that there is no possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment, and said
6 action is intended to preserve the historic character of the building.

7 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the City Clerk of the City of Riverside shall cause a
8 certified copy of this resolution to be recorded in the Office of the County Recorder of Riverside
9 County, California.

10 ADOPTED by the City Council this ____ day of _____, 2025.

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12 _____
13 PATRICIA LOCK DAWSON
14 Mayor of the City of Riverside

14 Attest:

15 _____
16 DONESIA GAUSE
17 City Clerk of the City of Riverside

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1 I, Donesia Gause, City Clerk of the City of Riverside, California, hereby certify that the
2 foregoing resolution was duly and regularly adopted at a meeting of the City Council of said City at
3 its meeting held on the _____ day of _____, 2025, by the following vote, to wit:

4 Ayes:

5
6 Noes:

7 Absent:

8 Abstain:

9 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the official seal of the
10 City of Riverside, California, this _____ day of _____, 2025.

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12 _____
13 DONESIA GAUSE
14 City Clerk of the City of Riverside