



*City of Arts & Innovation*

# City Council Memorandum

**TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL      DATE: JULY 15, 2025**

**FROM: COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT      WARD: 5**  
**DEPARTMENT**

**SUBJECT: PLANNING CASE DP-2025-00302 – REQUEST BY CALIFORNIA BAPTIST UNIVERSITY TO MODIFY THE HAWTHORNE HOUSE CITY LANDMARK (#123) DESIGNATION AND REMOVE THE EUCALYPTUS TREE AS CONTRIBUTING FEATURE – LOCATED AT 3697-3747 MONROE STREET**

## **ISSUE:**

Adopt a Resolution to modify the Hawthorne House City Landmark (#123) designation and remove the Eucalyptus Tree as contributing feature, located at 3697-3747 Monroe Street.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

That the City Council:

1. **DETERMINE** that Planning Case DP-2025-00302 (Historic Designation) for the modification of the Hawthorne House City Landmark Designation is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Sections 15061(b)(3) (Common Sense Rule) and 21084.1 (Historical Resource), as it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment; and
2. **APPROVE** Planning Case DP-2025-00302 (Historic Designation), based on the facts of findings, removing the eucalyptus tree from the Hawthorne House City Landmark Designation, and subject to the recommended conditions of approval.

## **CULTURAL HERITAGE BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS:**

On May 21, 2025, the Cultural Heritage Board (CHB) with unanimously voted (7 ayes and 0 noes) to recommend that the City Council approve Planning Case DP-2025-00302, modifying the Hawthorne House City Landmark (#123) designation to remove the Eucalyptus Tree as contributing feature (Attachments 2 and 3). Additionally, CHB included a Condition of Approval that the eucalyptus tree be repurposed to create furniture for around the Hawthorne House upon removal (Attachment 2, Exhibit 7).

## **LEGISLATIVE HISTORY:**

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

- A. 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
- B. 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:**

On January 17, 2012, the City Council approved a request by California Baptist University (CBU), based on the recommendation of the Cultural Heritage Board, to designate the Hawthorne House as City Landmark #123. As part of the designation, a Eucalyptus Tree, which was the last remaining tree of windrow for the A.C.E. Hawthorne citrus grove, was included as contributing feature. As part of the 2019 CBU Specific Plan, the Hawthorne House, with the Eucalyptus tree as associated feature, were acknowledged as being previously designated. The plan indicated that removal of the tree would require an EIR, unless it died of natural causes, in which case it could be removed with staff-level approval.

In February 2022, a 100-foot pine tree on the CBU campus failed near its base, damaging a nearby student residential building. This incident prompted a broader inspection of campus trees, including the Hawthorne Eucalyptus tree. In 2024, Monarch Environmental completed a Risk Assessment Report which found that the tree was in fact not in good health. The report concluded, “it is possible – not necessarily probable – that the tree could fail within a one-year timeframe, which renders it a Moderate risk. If we were to extend the assessment timeframe out to three- to five years, the tree would potentially be bumped up into the probable failure likelihood level, which is highly concerning and puts the tree in the High-Risk category.” Therefore, it was recommended that the tree be removed within the next year to prevent a risk to property and life-safety.

In addition to the Tree Risk Assessment report, a Cultural Resources (CR) Analysis was completed by Bill Wilkman of Wilkman Historical Services, because of the determination that the tree's health was in a rapid decline. The CR analysis found that although the tree was historically related to the Hawthorne House, the distance (approximately 870-feet) and development between the two renders its relationship to the residence very weak and fails to qualify as a contributing feature to a historic resource. The report recommended that the tree may be removed from the Hawthorne House Landmark Designation as an associated feature.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Prior to the CHB and City Council meetings, 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 the Envision Riverside 2025 City Council 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 the following Cross-Cutting Threads:

1. **Community Trust** - This Landmark Designation modification request is being reviewed during a Public Hearing before the Cultural Heritage Board and the public is able to provide comments.
2. **Equity** - The updated historic property information associated with this designation will be added to the City's Historic Resources Inventory, which will be available to the public. This will allow information about the historic property to be available to all residents.
3. **Fiscal Responsibility** - No City funds are being allocated as part of this Landmark Designation modification.
4. **Innovation** - This Landmark Designation modification request made use of current research practices and looks at historic integrity based on best practices approaches.
5. **Sustainability and Resiliency** - This Landmark Designation modification will help to preserve the City's collective history for future generations without causing impacts to historic resources.

### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact resulting from the City Landmark designation modification.

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| Prepared by:           | Scott Watson, Historic Preservation Officer                   |
| Approved by:           | Jennifer A. Lilley, Community & Economic Development Director |
| Certified as to        |   |
| availability of funds: | Kristie Thomas, Assistant Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer   |
| Approved by:           | Mike Futrell, City Manager                                    |
| Approved as to form:   | Jack Liu, Interim City Attorney                               |

Attachments:

1. Resolution for Historic Designation
2. Cultural Heritage Board Staff Report – May 21, 2025
3. Cultural Heritage Board Draft Minutes – May 21, 2025
4. Presentation