



City of Arts & Innovation

City Council Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL DATE: AUGUST 11, 2026

FROM: COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WARD: 3
DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: PLANNING CASE PC-2026-00388 – REQUEST BY JEN MERMILLIOD OF JM
RESEARCH & CONSULTING ON BEHALF OF MALISSA MCKEITH TO
DESIGNATE THE LIONHEAD - LOCATED AT 2881 RUMSEY DRIVE - AS A CITY
LANDMARK

ISSUE:

Adopt a Resolution to designate the Lionhead, located at 2881 Rumsey Drive, as a City Landmark and adopt an Ordinance amending the Zoning Code Map to apply the CR - Cultural Resources Overlay Zone to the subject property.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the City Council:

1. Determine that Planning Case PC-2026-00388 (Historic Designation), to designate the Lionhead 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 PC-2026-00388 (Historic Designation) based on the facts for findings outlined in the attached Cultural Heritage Board staff report; and,
3. Adopt the attached Resolution (Attachment 1) designating Lionhead as a City Landmark.
4. Approve the attached findings for the Zoning Code Map Amendment (Attachment 2) to apply the CR — Cultural Resources Overlay Zone to the subject property; and
5. Introduce, and Subsequently Adopt, the attached Ordinance (Attachment 3) to rezone 2881 Rumsey Drive from the R-1-13000 – Single-Family Residential Zone to the R-1-13000-CR – Single-Family Residential and Cultural Resources Overlay Zones.

CULTURAL HERITAGE BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS:

On June 17, 2026, the Cultural Heritage Board (CHB) unanimously voted (5 ayes, 2 absent) to recommend that the City Council approve Planning Case PC-2026-00388 and designate the Lionhead as a City Landmark (Attachments 4 and 5).

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:

The property owner, Malissa McKeith, is requesting approval of a request to designate Lionhead as a City Landmark.

Located at 2881 Rumsey Drive, Lionhead is a Spanish Eclectic estate designed and constructed in 1926 by architect Henry L.A. Jekel for developer and orchardist Howard G. Heisler. The property occupies terraced hillside site within the Victoria neighborhood and includes a two-story residence, detached gatehouse, perimeter walls, landscaped grounds, patios, terraces, and remnant features associated with an earlier citrus grove development.

Lionhead is historically as an outstanding example of Spanish Eclectic residential architecture in Riverside. Constructed in 1926, the residence embodies the defining characteristics of the style through its asymmetrical massing, smooth stucco wall surfaces, red clay tile roofs, decorative wrought iron features, carved wood detailing, leaded-glass windows, balconies, patios, pergolas, and integration of architecture with the surrounding terraced landscape. The detached gatehouse, perimeter walls, mature landscaping, and associated site features further reinforce the property's estate-like character and architectural significance. Therefore, Lionhead is eligible for City Landmark designation under criterion 3.

The property is also significant as the work of notable architect Henry L.A. Jekel. Lionhead

demonstrates Jekel's mastery of Spanish Eclectic and Mediterranean-inspired residential design through its sophisticated composition, high level of craftsmanship, and careful relationship to its hillside setting. The residence represents one of the finest and most intact examples of Jekel's work in Riverside. Therefore, Lionhead is also eligible for City Landmark designation under criterion 4.

Despite limited alterations over time, Lionhead retains a high degree of integrity required for Landmark designation. As of the writing of this report, no responses have been received by staff regarding this historic designation request.

FISCAL IMPACT:

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

Prepared by: Scott Watson, Historic Preservation Officer
Reviewed by: Miranda Evans, Community & Economic Development Director
Certified as to
availability of funds: Julie Nemes, Finance Director
Approved by: Edward Enriquez, Interim City Manager
Approved as to form: James Johnson, City Attorney

Attachments:

1. Resolution for Historic Designation
2. Recommended Findings for CR Overlay Zone
3. Ordinance
4. Cultural Heritage Board Staff Report – June 17, 2026
5. Cultural Heritage Board Draft Minutes – June 17, 2026
6. Presentation