



Community & Economic Development Department
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Planning Division

CULTURAL HERITAGE BOARD MEETING DATE: APRIL 16, 2025
AGENDA ITEM NO.: 4

PROPOSED PROJECT

Case Numbers	DP-2024-01558 (Historic Designation)	
Request	To consider a Historic Designation request to designate Boyd Residence as a City Landmark	
Applicant	Jo Phelan and Bruce Link	
Project Location	4649 Ninth Street, at the northwest corner of Ninth Street and Loring Drive	
APN	218-142-002	
Ward	1	
Neighborhood	Downtown	
Historic District	Not Applicable	
Historic Designation	Not Applicable	
Staff Planner	Scott Watson, Historic Preservation Officer 951-826-5507 swatson@riversideca.gov	

RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends that the Cultural Heritage Board recommend that the City Council:

- DETERMINE** that Planning Case DP-2024-01558 (Historic Designation) for the designation of the Boyd Residence as a City Landmark is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Sections 15061(b)(3) (Common Sense Rule) 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; and
- APPROVE** Planning Case DP-2024-01558 (Historic Designation), based on the facts of findings, and designate the Boyd Residence as a City Landmark.

BACKGROUND

The Boyd Residence

The Boyd Residence is located at 4649 Ninth Street (Exhibit 1). The Hollywood Regency Style residence and two-car garage was designed in 1957 by architect Charles O. Matcham and constructed in 1959 by notable builder Harry Marsh for Philip and Dorothy Boyd. The pair lived in the residence until 1977. No major alterations have been made to the residence.

Philip and Dorothy Boyd

Philip L. Boyd was born on October 8, 1900, in Richmond, Indiana. His father, Linnaes Cox Boyd, was a lawyer and corporate executive, while his mother, Mary Thomas Spencer, came from a family of prominent businessmen. As a young man, Philip attended Wabash College but was forced to withdraw due to illness. Seeking a healthier climate, his family relocated to Southern California in 1921. It was here that Boyd found his footing in banking and real estate, quickly becoming active in civic affairs. In 1926, he married Dorothy Burrough Marmon, a member of the well-known Marmon automotive family. The couple raised three children while Boyd established himself as a successful businessman and community leader.

Boyd's influence in local politics grew in the 1930s, and he played a key role in the incorporation of Palm Springs, serving as its first mayor from 1938 to 1942. His expanding real estate and development interests eventually led him to Riverside, where he and Dorothy moved in the late 1940s. In Riverside, Boyd continued his political career, representing the 76th District in the California State Assembly from 1945 to 1949 and later serving as chairman of the California Republican Party's central committee. However, it was his dedication to higher education that left the most lasting impact on the region.

Boyd was a founding member and president of the Citizens University Committee (CUC), a grassroots organization that lobbied state officials for the establishment of a University of California campus in Riverside. His efforts, alongside fellow legislators, helped push Senate Bill 512 through the state legislature in 1949, securing funding for what would become UC Riverside. Boyd remained involved in the university's development, serving as a UC Regent from 1957 to 1970 and as Vice Chair in 1967. His leadership and persistence ensured UCR's expansion from a small college to a full-fledged university within the UC system.

Dorothy Boyd was equally devoted to civic and charitable causes. Born in Indianapolis in 1902, she came from a lineage of innovators in the automotive industry. In Riverside, she dedicated her time to organizations such as the American Red Cross, the United Way, the Riverside Art Museum, and the Junior League. While Philip worked publicly to establish UCR, Dorothy played a quieter yet equally important role in advocating for the university and supporting its development. James H. Erickson, Vice Chancellor for University Relations, later described the couple as an "incredible team" whose contributions were instrumental in UCR's founding.

Beyond education, the Boyds left a tangible legacy in conservation and philanthropy. They donated over 3,500 acres of land to create the Philip L. Boyd Deep Canyon Research Center and the Living Desert Reserve in Palm Desert. Their generosity also funded UCR's Carillon and Bell Tower, which remains a centerpiece of the campus today.

In recognition of their contributions, both Philip and Dorothy received Founder Awards from UCR, and the university's first endowed chair was named in Philip's honor.

The Boyds lived at 4649 Ninth Street from 1957 to 1977, a period during which their home became a hub for civic, political, and philanthropic gatherings. Philip passed away in 1989, followed by Dorothy in 1995, but their impact on Riverside—particularly through their role in shaping UCR—remains undeniable.

Hollywood Regency

The 2009 City of Riverside Modernism Context statement and the 2012 survey did not include discussion related to the Hollywood Regency style as it is very rare within the City of Riverside. The following excerpt from the *SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement: Architecture and Engineering/L.A. Modernism, 1919-1980* (dated August 2021) discusses the architectural style as follows:

The Hollywood Regency style, also sometimes referred to as Regency Moderne, charted a parallel course to the Art Deco and Moderne styles. It shares contextual roots with the associated Deco/ Moderne movement in that it aspired to be “conservatively modern,” taking well-established architectural precedents and updating them with simple volumes, stripped-down surfaces, attenuated ornament, and other features that reflected the influence of the burgeoning Modern movement. It charted a new path forward without completely abandoning the past. However, Hollywood Regency's visual vocabulary differed from that of its Deco/Moderne counterparts in that it drew more explicitly on Neoclassicism and thus assumed a more historicist appearance. The style, then, is perceived as something akin to a “distant cousin,” loosely derived from, yet differentiated from the Deco/Moderne.

Hollywood Regency architecture enjoyed a relatively long shelf life, remaining popular from the early 1930s until about 1970. However, its development was stymied by World War II and the abrupt halt of new construction at this time. After the war, the style was melded and adapted in new ways, relying less on Neoclassical precedent and making more explicit reference to the Modern movement that was redefining the Southern California landscape. Hollywood Regency buildings that post-date World War II are readily identifiable as such, but took on a different visual character than their pre-war antecedents.

As discussed in the *City of Palm Springs Citywide Historic Context Statement & Survey Findings* (dated December 2018) by Historic Resources Group, discusses the Regency Revival (or Hollywood Regency), as follows:

The Regency Revival style, also known as Hollywood Regency, is seen almost exclusively in the design of single-family and multi-family residential architecture from about the mid-1930s until about 1970; most examples in Palm Springs date to the 1960s. The style references in part the architecture and design that developed in Britain in the early 19th century. Like the original Regency style, Regency Revival includes elements of Neoclassical and French Empire design; however, its attenuated classical ornament and simple surfaces reflect the influence of the Modern Movement. The style first appeared in the United States in the mid-1930s

as a stripped-down version of Neoclassicism that exhibited both the influence of Streamline Moderne and the simplified yet exaggerated qualities of Hollywood film sets. Its early development was interrupted by World War II and the resulting halt of private construction. It resumed after the war with the work of architects such as John Elgin Woolf, whose designs emphasized symmetry, privacy, exaggerated entrances and prominent mansard roofs. Post-World War II Regency Revival buildings are characterized by theatrical arched entrances with an exaggerated vertical emphasis, usually positioned in projecting pavilions with high, steep roofs; symmetrical, largely blank primary façades; and eccentrically detailed, unconventionally proportioned Classical columns and ornamentation juxtaposed against large expanses of blank wall.

Character-defining features of the Hollywood Regency style include:

- Symmetrical façade
- Tall, steeply pitched mansard, hipped or gable roofs, especially over entrance; frequently a flat roof over remainder
- Blank wall surfaces veneered in smooth plaster; some examples may have brick veneer or wood
- Vertically exaggerated arched entrance doors, sometimes set in projecting pavilions
- Tall, narrow windows and doors, often with arched or segmental arched openings
- Eccentrically detailed and unconventionally proportioned Neo-Classical features including double height porticoes, thin columns, pediments, fluted pilasters, niches, and balconettes with iron railings
- Exaggerated applied ornament, such as large lanterns or sconces

Harry Marsh

Harry Marsh was born in Burlington, Kansas in 1895. His family moved to Southern California in the 1920s. Not long after the relocation to California, Marsh settled in Riverside and began doing carpentry work with some of his relatives. Marsh then met his wife Leathe Lee, the daughter of furniture store owner Charles Lee, and the pair were married on July 2, 1932. They first lived at 6505 Brockton Avenue where they raised three children. It was during this time that Marsh began a construction business and built custom residences.

By the late 1930s, Marsh had become a prominent home builder in the City and was known for quality craftsmanship. Through the mid-20th Century Marsh built many of Riverside's higher-end custom homes. Marsh's sons joined the business in the 1950s, having graduated with degrees in architecture. In the 1960s, the custom home business began to slow as large housing tracts began to be developed and Marsh began to shift from residential to commercial construction. Beyond single-family residential, Marsh is credited the design and construction of many buildings throughout Riverside and the Inland Empire, including the First Baptist Church on Alessandro Boulevard, First Free Methodist Church on Diana Street (no longer extant), the Medical Square on Brockton Avenue, and midcentury Magnolia Presbyterian Church (no longer extant). The list of Marsh's contributions to Riverside is vast. Marsh passed away in December 1985 at 90-year-old.

Charles O. Matcham

Charles O. Matcham, a distinguished architect known for his contributions to Southern California's built environment, was born on April 24, 1903, in Allentown, Pennsylvania. He pursued his education at Yale University, earning his undergraduate degree in 1925 before graduating from the Yale School of Architecture in 1928. Shortly after, Matcham moved to Los Angeles, where he established his career amid the region's rapid architectural growth.

Throughout his career, Matcham was responsible for several significant projects, including the J.W. Robinson's Store in Beverly Hills (1950-52), Wrigley Field Los Angeles (1925), the U.S. Navy Naval Air Base in San Pedro (1936), the Olympic Theater remodel (1942), and the Santa Anita Race Track grandstand addition (1959). Although much of his work was concentrated in Los Angeles and Palm Springs, Matcham also contributed to Riverside's architectural landscape through the design of several schools, including Longfellow School and Riverside Junior High. His involvement in the region extended to lobbying for the commission to design the UC Riverside campus in 1949, though he was not selected.

Beyond his design work, Matcham played an influential role in the architectural community, serving as Regional Director of the American Institute of Architects, Vice President of the California Council of Architects, and a board member of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. His work was widely recognized and featured in publications such as *Architectural Digest*, *Architectural Record*, *Arts and Architecture*, and *House Beautiful*, which highlighted his design for the Boyd Residence in 1962.

Matcham's architectural career left a lasting impact on the region, particularly in Los Angeles and Palm Springs, where he completed many of his notable projects. He passed away on August 18, 1980, in Los Angeles County, leaving behind a legacy of influential designs that continue to define Southern California's architectural history.

ANALYSIS

The applicant is requesting approval of a Historic Designation to designate the Boyd Residence as a City Landmark.

The applicant has provided an architectural description, statement of significance, photographs documenting the architecture and building setting, and copies of primary and secondary sources as summarized below (Exhibit 3).

Architectural Description

The Boyd Residence is situated at the northwest corner of Ninth Street and Loring Drive at the base of Mt. Rubidoux. The residence sits above the street level, built into the hillside with the primary entrance facing west, and is surrounded by mature trees and landscaping. The two-story Hollywood Regency-style home is wood-framed with a white-painted brick and stucco exterior.

The residence features an irregular ground plan and capped with a slate topped steeply pitched cross-hipped roof flanked on the north and south with flat roofs. The main entrance is symmetrically composed, featuring a tall, recessed door flanked by narrow arched windows, all sheltered beneath a flat-roofed carport supported by decorative

wrought-iron posts. The elevations along Loring Avenue is dominated by a large, curved bow window. Additional character-defining features include tall windows with arched shutters, a wood-railed balcony, and multiple patios enclosed by low curved brick walls. A detached two-car garage is situated to the west of the residence.

Retaining a high level of integrity, the home remains a striking example of the Hollywood Regency style in Riverside, characterized by its symmetrical composition, decorative ironwork, and refined classical influences blended with mid-century modern design principles.

Statement of Significance

The Boyd Residence is historically significant because it is an excellent example of Hollywood Regency style residential architecture in the City. The residence is also significant as it represents the work of notable regional architect, Charles O. Matcham, and local builder, Harry Marsh. It is further significant for its association with Philip and Dorothy, a regionally prominent businessman, who commissioned the construction of the house as his final residence and often used the residence to conduct his business.

With no major alteration, the Boyd Residence retains a high degree of integrity required for Landmark designation.

TITLE 20 EVALUATION

Under Title 20 (Cultural Resources), "Landmark" means: "Any improvement or natural feature that is an exceptional example of a historical, archaeological, cultural, architectural, community, aesthetic or artistic heritage of the City, that retains a high degree of integrity." Based on the applicable criteria from Chapter 20.50 of Title 20, Boyd Residence qualifies for Landmark Designation as follows:

FINDING: Criterion 2: Is identified with persons or events significant in local, state or national history;

FACTS: The Boyd Residence is closely associated with Philip L. Boyd and Dorothy M. Boyd, both of whom played significant roles in shaping the civic, educational, and philanthropic landscape of Riverside and beyond. Philip Boyd was an influential public figure, serving as the first mayor of Palm Springs, a California State Assembly member (1945–1949), and a University of California Regent (1957–1975). His contributions were instrumental in the founding and expansion of UC Riverside, advocating for its transition from a small liberal arts college into a full-fledged research university. His leadership in regional water conservation efforts and wildlife preservation, particularly through the establishment of the Boyd Deep Canyon Desert Research Center, further solidified his legacy in California history.

Dorothy Boyd was an equally influential figure in Riverside's civic life. She was deeply involved in numerous charitable and cultural organizations, including the Riverside Art Museum, the Junior League, and the establishment of scholarships supporting local students. Together, the Boyds transformed their residence into a hub for political discussions, social

gatherings, and philanthropic initiatives, making it a focal point of Riverside's mid-20th-century civic life.

FINDING: 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 Boyd Residence is an excellent example of the Hollywood Regency style, a rare architectural style in Riverside. The residence exhibits character-defining features of the style, including a symmetrical façade, a steeply pitched crossed-hipped roof flanked by flat roofs, projecting pavilions (patios and a porte-cochere), brick veneer and smooth stucco cladding, tall and narrow windows and panel doors, decorative wrought-iron details, and classical-inspired ornamentation blended with modernist simplicity. With no major alterations the building retains a high degree of integrity.

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

FACTS: The Boyd Residence was designed by Charles O. Matcham, a recognized architect known for his contributions to mid-century Southern California architecture. Matcham's portfolio includes high-end custom homes and commercial projects in Los Angeles, Palm Springs, and Riverside. His designs often reflected a refined modernist approach, integrating classical influences with contemporary elegance. His work was featured in major architectural publications, highlighting his influence on the region's built environment. The Boyd Residence stands as a testament to his skill in blending Hollywood Regency aesthetics with modern California sensibilities.

The home was constructed by Harry Marsh, a prominent Riverside builder responsible for numerous high-quality residential and commercial projects during the mid-20th century. Marsh was known for his attention to detail and craftsmanship, particularly in custom home construction for influential figures in the community. His contributions to the built environment of Riverside helped define the City's architectural character during the postwar period.

The collaboration between Matcham and Marsh resulted in a residence that not only showcases high architectural value but also reflects the craftsmanship and innovation of two highly regarded professionals.

STRATEGIC PLAN

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 request is being reviewed during a Public Hearing before the Cultural Heritage Board and the public is able to provide comments.
2. Equity: 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 General Funds are being allocated as part of this Landmark Designation.
4. Innovation: This Landmark Designation request made use of current research practices and looks at historic integrity based on best practices approaches.
5. Sustainability and Resiliency: This Landmark Designation will help to preserve the City's collective history for future generations.

PUBLIC NOTICE AND COMMENTS

A public hearing notice was 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 proposal.

APPEAL INFORMATION

Actions by the Cultural Heritage Board, including any environmental finding, may be appealed to the City Council within ten calendar days after the decision. Appeal filing and processing information may be obtained from the Planning Division by calling 951-826-5800.

EXHIBITS LIST

1. Aerial/Location Map
2. Historic Designation Application
3. Current Photos
4. Excerpt from SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement: Architecture and Engineering/L.A. Modernism, 1919-1980
5. Excerpt from City of Palm Springs Citywide Historic Context Statement & Survey Findings

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Approved by: Maribeth Tinio, City Planner