



*City of Arts & Innovation*

# City Council Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL      DATE: JULY 16, 2024

FROM: COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT      WARD: 1  
DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: PLANNING CASE DP-2024-00577 – REQUEST BY VALERIE SILVA TO  
DESIGNATE THE OKUBO RESIDENCE - LOCATED AT 2365 ELEVENTH  
STREET - AS A CITY LANDMARK AND AMEND THE ZONING CODE MAP TO  
APPLY THE CR – CULTURAL RESOURCE OVERLAY ZONE TO THE SUBJECT  
PROPERTY

## **ISSUE:**

Adopt a Resolution to designate the Okubo Residence, located at 2365 Eleventh Street, 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 DP-2024-00577 (Historic Designation), to designate the Okubo Residence 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 DP-2024-00577 (Historic Designation) based on, and subject to, the Cultural Heritage Board facts for findings outlined in the attached Cultural Heritage Board staff report;
3. **Adopt** the attached Resolution designating the Okubo Residence as a City Landmark;
4. **Approve** the attached findings for the Zoning Code Map Amendment to apply the CR — Cultural Resources Overlay Zone to the subject property; and
5. **Introduce, and subsequently adopt**, the attached Ordinance to rezone 2365 Eleventh Street from the R-1-7000-Single Family Residential Zone to the R-1-7000-CR – Single Family Residential and Cultural Resources Overlay Zones.

## **CULTURAL HERITAGE BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS:**

On May 15, 2024, the Cultural Heritage Board (CHB) unanimously voted (6 ayes and 0 noes) to recommend that the City Council approve Planning Case DP-2024-00577 and designate the Okubo Residence 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:**

Property owner, Valerie Silva, is requesting approval of a Historic Designation request to designate the Okubo Residence as a City Landmark.

The circa 1900 residence was rented by the Okubo Family beginning in 1925, In 1930, it was purchased by the family in the name of the oldest child, Yoshi, who was a natural born U.S. Citizen. The ownership of the home was made possible by the 1918 decision in the case of California v. Jukichi Harada, which upheld the American-born Harada children’s 14th Amendment right to equal protection included owning the property.

The family lived at the residence until 1942 when Executive Order 9066 was signed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, causing the forced relocation of Japanese Americans to the War Relocation Authority (WRA) camps. The Okubo family never returned to the residence and rented

it to Valeriano and Mercedes Silva during incarceration. In 1951, the Silva Family purchased the home from the Okubos. The residence has been passed down through the generations and the Silva family still owns the property today.

The residence is also associated with the life of prolific artist Miné Okubo, as her childhood home. Miné received multiple awards and recognition for her work, which provided a first-hand look at life in the internment camps.

As part of the City's Japanese American Historic Context Statement (Japanese American Heritage and the Quest for Civil Rights in Riverside, California, 1890s-1970s) complete in 2011, the residence was found eligible for listing in National Register and California Register Criteria A/1 because it is associated with events that convey the experience of the Japanese American community as a whole, and Criteria B/2 because it is associated with the life of prolific artist Miné Okubo.

Therefore, the residence is eligible for designation under City Landmark Criterion 1 as it showcases the Japanese community experience in Riverside including the fight against the Alien Land Laws and the incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II. The residence is also eligible for designation under Criterion 3 as the remaining home that has the longest period of association with Miné Okubo's childhood. Despite its condition, the Okubo residence still retains a high-degree integrity required for City Landmark designation.

### **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 request is being reviewed during a Public Hearing before the City Council 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.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

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

Prepared by: Scott Watson, Historic Preservation Officer  
Approved by: Jennifer A. Lilley, Community & Economic Development Director  
Certified as to  
availability of funds: Kristie Thomas, Finance Director/Assistant Chief Financial Officer  
Approved by: Rafael Guzman, Assistant City Manager  
Approved as to form: Phaedra A. Norton, City Attorney

**Attachments:**

1. Resolution for Historic Designation
2. Recommended Findings for CR Overlay Zone
3. Ordinance
4. Cultural Heritage Board Staff Report – May 15, 2024
5. Cultural Heritage Board Draft Minutes – May 15, 2024
6. Presentation