



CITY OF LONG BEACH

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND BUILDING

C-7

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CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION

November 17, 2005

CHAIR AND CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
City of Long Beach
California

SUBJECT: Consideration of a Mills Act Historic Property Contract for the Property
Located at 365 Temple Avenue (Council District 2)

APPLICANT: Ilesbill Wolfe
365 Temple Avenue
Long Beach, CA 90814

RECOMMENDATION

The Cultural Heritage Commission recommends that the City Planning Commission recommend that the City Council approve the execution of a Mills Act Historic Property Contract for 365 Temple Avenue, located in the Bluff Heights Historic District.

BACKGROUND

The Mills Act Historic Property Contract is a state law allowing a property tax reassessment and reduction for designated historic landmarks and contributing buildings in designated historic districts in return for certain historic preservation obligations. A legal contract is executed between the City and a property owner, and is recorded on the property title. The Mills Act Historic Property Contract is the only opportunity the City has to support a preservation-minded homeowner who needs financial assistance to restore and maintain an historic property. The tax savings helps to alleviate the extra financial costs of historic restoration and contributes to the public good by preserving the heritage of the community.

Since 1993, when the City adopted the Mills Act Historic Property Contract program, a total of approximately 30 contracts have been enacted with individual owners of designated historic properties. Almost all of these are owner-occupied single-family homes; three are apartment buildings. The number of contracts enacted each year has been small, from two to four contracts annually.

The subject property located at 365 Temple Avenue was constructed in 1919 and is owned by Ms. Ilesbill Wolfe. This Craftsman bungalow features classic character-defining features and materials of the style, including clapboard siding, low pitched gable roof with wide overhanging eaves, exposed rafter tails, open porch area with decorative (false) beams under the gables,

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and a large tripartite window along the front elevation. Located in the Bluff Heights Historic District, it is a contributing structure to the district. The Bluff Heights Historic District was designated a Long Beach historic district by the City Council in July 2004. Attached are photos of the property.

Since purchasing the house, the applicant has already begun to rehabilitate the property. Ms. Wolfe is very appreciative of the historical and architectural qualities of the house, and has applied for a Mills Act contract in order to be able to afford the proper standards for historic restoration and preservation. The age and materials of the house make it a challenge to preserve and maintain. As part of the Mills Act contract, the owner anticipates the following work program over the next ten years:

- Paint exterior of house with appropriate colors of the style and era
- Restore wood frame windows and surrounds
- Restore original hardwood floors and built-in furniture throughout house
- Landscape with appropriate plantings and install unobtrusive sprinkler system
- General upkeep and maintenance to preserve and enhance the historic character of the building

The commitment of the owner to historic preservation and the building's contributing significance to the Bluff Heights Historic District makes it a good candidate for a Mills Act contract. Endorsement of this Mills Act application by the Planning Commission would allow it to continue through the approval process with ultimate submission to the Los Angeles County Recorder's office by the end of the year.

The Mills Act contracts run for ten years; however, they are automatically renewed each year and can potentially continue in perpetuity, unless cancelled by either an owner or the City. There is a revenue loss for the City, equal to its share of the property tax. The County assumes most of the property tax loss. The concept behind the Mills Act is that the revenue loss is compensated by the public benefit obtained in maintaining and restoring a historic resource.

The Cultural Heritage Commission approved the execution of a Mills Act Historic Contract between the property owner and the City at their meeting of November 16, 2005.

The City Council must approve the execution of the Mills Act contracts. The City's Budget Officer considers the fiscal impacts of the action at that time.

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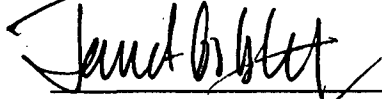
IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION

Recommend that the City Council approve the execution of Mills Act Historic Property Contracts between the City and the owner of 365 Temples Avenue.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

LAYNE JOHNSON
CHAIR, CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION

By:



Janet Ostashay
Historic Preservation Officer

Attachments