



Legislation Text

File #: 16-0411, **Version:** 1

Recommendation to request City Attorney to prepare an ordinance to designate the property located at 6509 Gundry Avenue as a Long Beach Historical Landmark. (District 9)

On January 4, 2016, updated Cultural Heritage Ordinance No. 15-0038 took effect and streamlined the process for designation of new landmarks within the City. Among other changes, the updated Ordinance uses the four California Register criteria for landmark designation and allows nominations to proceed from a Cultural Heritage Commission recommendation directly to the City Council for consideration.

This is the third landmark nomination to be considered by the City Council under the updated Cultural Heritage Ordinance. The application was initiated by the Development Services Department based on past input from the Cultural Heritage Commission and Long Beach Heritage. Creating a local landmark protects the City's cultural and architectural heritage by assuring that the building is retained and rehabilitated over time.

The subject property is located on the northwest corner of Gundry Avenue and 65th Street between Brayton Avenue and Falcon Avenue (Exhibit A - Site Map). The site is located within the R-1-N zone (Single Family Residential District with Normal Lots). The property is the site of the former Fire Station No. 12, which was previously utilized by the City's Fire Department until 2013 when it was decommissioned and a new fire station was constructed blocks away. On April 11, 2016, the Cultural Heritage Commission recommended the City Council designate the property as a Long Beach local historic landmark (Exhibit B -Cultural Heritage Commission staff report).

The building is designed in the Spanish Colonial Revival architectural style which is influenced by Spanish, Baroque, Moorish and other European styles. The popularity of this style grew during the 1920s and 30s and its use was widely spread throughout Southern California. During this period, the Spanish Colonial style was applied to a variety of building types including residential, commercial and institutional buildings.

Character-defining features typical of this architectural style may include: asymmetrical primary elevations, smooth stucco walls, clay tile roofs, flat or low-pitched gabled roof forms, exposed rafter tails and/or brackets beneath the eaves, round or square towers and cupolas, wood paneled doors accented with spiral columns, pilasters, carved decorations, or decorative tiles, wood or metal double-hung or casement windows, wrought iron or pierced stucco window grates, balconies with wood or wrought iron railings; tiled accents on walls, stairs, or fountains; wrought iron lanterns and hardware.

Fire Station No. 12 is a modest example of the Spanish Colonial Revival style, but is a well preserved building that retains the essential form and character of the Spanish Colonial Revival style. The one-story building has an asymmetrical front façade with an irregular floor plan. The station is capped by a medium-pitched cross-gabled roof with barrel clay tiles, and has slightly overhanging eaves with exposed rafter tails. Round clay tile attic vents are visible beneath some of the roof gables. The building is clad in contemporary textured stucco.

The updated Cultural Heritage Ordinance contains four California Register criteria for designation: Criteria A - associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; Criteria B - associated with the lives of persons important to the City's past; Criteria C - embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic values; or Criteria D - has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

The subject property is eligible for Long Beach Historic Landmark designation under Criteria A and C. The historic building is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of the City's history. The discovery of oil in Signal Hill in 1921 led to rapid population growth and the need for public services in the area. The development of a permanent fire station in 1929 is significant under Criteria A because it is evidence of a development pattern that was caused by the discovery of oil.

Fire Station No. 12 has a unique history in that the building was completed in 1930, but never occupied until 1933 due to the Great Depression and the City's limited funding to staff the fire station. Fire Station No. 12 served the City as a sewing depot under the Works Progress Administration (WPA), providing jobs to hundreds of unemployed women. The structure is significant because of its association with the New Deal operations of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration in Long Beach and was one of the last remaining operating pre-1930s fire stations located within a residential neighborhood.

The building is also eligible under Criteria C. The building exemplifies the Spanish Colonial Revival style with its asymmetrical façade, cross-gabled clay tile-clad roof, rounded rafter tails, clay tile attic vents, stucco exterior, and deeply recessed window frames. The building retains its essential form and character from its period of significance.

Several of the 1920s public buildings that were constructed using the City's oil revenues were designed in a Spanish Colonial Revival or Mediterranean style. Many of these public buildings found throughout the City include libraries, fire stations, beach and park bathrooms, golf course clubhouses and park bandshells. The collection of remaining institutional buildings exemplifies the era and are representative of a period of municipal growth in this style. Therefore, Fire Station No. 12 is significant under Criteria C for embodying distinctive characteristics of the Spanish Colonial Revival style of architecture.

This matter was reviewed by Principal Deputy City Attorney Michael J. Mais on April 25, 2016 and by Budget Management Officer Victoria Bell on April 22, 2016.

SUSTAINABILITY

Establishing 6509 Gundry Avenue as a Long Beach Historical Landmark will assure its continued use and existence, reducing construction waste as compared to new construction.

City Council action on this matter is not time critical.

There is no fiscal or local job impact associated with this recommendation.

Approve recommendation.

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AMY J. BODEK, AICP
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APPROVED:

PATRICK H. WEST
CITY MANAGER