



Legislation Text

File #: 16-0198, **Version:** 1

Recommendation to request City Attorney to prepare an ordinance designating the Alamitos Neighborhood Library located at 1836 East Third Street as a Long Beach Historical Landmark. (District 2)

On January 4, 2016, an amended Cultural Heritage Ordinance (15-0038) took effect and streamlined the process for designation of new landmarks within the City. Among other changes, the amended Ordinance allows nominations to proceed directly from a Cultural Heritage Commission recommendation to a full City Council consideration. On January 11, 2016, the Cultural Heritage Commission recommended that the City Council designate the Alamitos Neighborhood Library at 1836 East Third Street as a Long Beach Historical Landmark (Exhibit A).

Since its construction in 1928, the Alamitos Neighborhood Library has continuously been utilized as a public library building. Today it is operated by the Library Services Department and is the oldest remaining branch within the City network of libraries. The building was designed by a team of City "Department Engineers" and the design leader was not discovered in the historic record. The library's history; however, dates to 1895 when leading residents of Alamitos Beach organized the Alamitos Library Association. The Alamitos Neighborhood Library is the oldest building remaining in the City's library system and is associated with the development of Alamitos Beach and greater Long Beach during the 1920s.

The subject property is located on the south side of Third Street between Hermosa Avenue and Cherry Avenue (Exhibit B). The site is located within the R-2-N zone (Two Family Residential District with Normal Lots). The two-story library building consists of the main reading room, second floor offices, second floor community room and exterior courtyard behind the building.

The Alamitos Neighborhood Library is eligible for Long Beach Historical Landmark designation under Criteria A and Criteria C of the Cultural Heritage Ordinance. The historic building is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history (Criteria A), and the building embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or it represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic value (Criteria C).

The historic building is located in the Alamitos Beach Town site laid out by John Bixby; it also embodies the history of library development and the importance of civic life during the early development of the City of Long Beach. It is an excellent example of Spanish Colonial

Revival style applied to an institutional building. The building is also significant because it retains its historic purpose as a library building and for its unique neighborhood scale. The Spanish Colonial Revival style is directly tied to architecture's attempt to embrace and promote the California environment and lifestyle during the 1920s.

The building's hand-painted ceiling beams, wrought iron railings, window grates, courtyard with tile fountain and terra cotta tile are all remarkable examples of the Spanish Colonial Revival style. While many residential structures of this style remain in Long Beach, civic buildings are more rare. This scarcity and the pristine condition of the library is particularly compelling in terms of its significance.

The exterior of the library structure is a critical piece of Long Beach's shared cultural and architectural history. Its preservation meets the criteria for designation and will assure that the library continues to connect Long Beach residents and visitors to the civic history and long traditions of the public library system. This designation will allow the library to continue its operations and make necessary changes to the interior, all while protecting the exterior and preserving it for generations to come.

This matter was reviewed by Deputy City Attorney Linda T. Vu on February 11, 2016 and by Budget Management Officer Victoria Bell on February 5, 2016.

SUSTAINABILITY

Establishing the Alamitos Neighborhood Library 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 impact associated with this recommendation.

Approve recommendation.

AMY J. BODEK, AICP
DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

APPROVED:

PATRICK H. WEST
CITY MANAGER

