



CITY OF GLENDALE, CALIFORNIA REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM

Report: 1559 Grandview Avenue: Consideration of Glendale Register Nomination and Request for a Mills Act Historic Property Contract

1. Resolution to designate the residential property at 1559 Grandview Avenue as a historic resource on the Glendale Register of Historic Resources and authorizing the City Manager to enter into a Mills Act Historical Property Contract with the owner of the property;
2. Motion to deny the request of the property owner to designate the residential property at 1559 Grandview Avenue as a historic resource on the Glendale Register of Historic Resources.

COUNCIL ACTION

Item Type: Public Hearing

Approved for May 3, 2022 **calendar**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The owner of 1559 Grandview Avenue requests that the City Council authorize listing of the property in the Glendale Register of Historic Resources and authorize a Mills Act historical property contract. The house was designed in 1926 and is an excellent example of Spanish Colonial Revival-style residence.

On January 20, 2022, Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) reviewed the nomination and voted 4-0 to recommend to the City Council that the property at 1559 Grandview Avenue be listed in the Glendale Register of Historic Resources as "1559 Grandview Avenue," and that the City Manager be authorized to enter into a Mills Act historic property contract with the property owner under Section 15.20.070A of the Glendale Municipal Code.

COUNCIL PRIORITIES

Environmental Stewardship: the protection of properties through historic preservation is an inherently sustainable practice because the greenest building is the one that's already built.

RECOMMENDATION

That City Council approve designation/listing of the property in the Glendale Register of Historic Resources and authorize the City Manager to enter into a Mills Act historic property contract, with the conditions recommended by HPC, between the City and the property owner under Section 15.20.070A of the Glendale Municipal Code.

BACKGROUND

Historical Background

1559 Grandview Avenue is a two-story, single-family residence, located in the Cumberland Heights neighborhood that was built in 1926 by the general contracting firm Ridenour Brothers. It is an excellent example of Spanish Colonial Revival-style architecture and a striking feature of its neighborhood due to its narrow triangular lot, which forms a kind of peninsula which gives the house two prominent street facades. No architect's name is directly associated with the property and it is likely that the builder, Ridenour Brothers, produced the design in-house.

The house, a speculative project by Ridenour Brothers, was purchased in the year it was constructed by Bessie Cronenweth, who did not live there and instead rented it to William A. Oates, who was involved in manufacturing. Other renters followed until the house was sold to Louise and Donald Dement in 1934, who owned it for only a year before selling to Mordico and Lillian Johnston, who lived there until 1943. Mr. Johnston was the founder and owner of the Johnston Formation Testing Corporation, which developed well testing equipment for the oil and gas industry. There were numerous other owners over the subsequent years. No one associated with the property appears to have made any significant contributions to local, state, or national history and the property does not appear eligible under Criterion 2. The current owners purchased the house in 2020. In addition, the property does not appear to be associated with important events in national, state, or city history nor to exemplify significant contributions to the broad cultural, political, economic, social, or historic heritage of the nation, state, or city and therefore, the residence does not appear eligible under Criterion 1.

Based on the information in the nomination, attached to this report as Exhibit 1 and incorporated by reference, HPC found the property eligible for listing in the Glendale Register under Criterion 3, as detailed in the "Finding of Eligibility" section below. Because of the rapid turnover in early owners and occupants and the lack of historically significant residents, HPC recommends using the street address as the name of the property.

Architectural Description

The residence is located on a triangular corner lot at the three-way intersection of Sonora Avenue, Grandview Avenue, and Bel Aire Drive. The unusual lot forms a sharp triangle and the property is a through-lot, with the primary façade, which features the

entry door and driveway, facing Grandview Avenue and the more secondary façade facing Sonora Avenue. The building is slightly elevated from Grandview Avenue, has an irregular, stepped footprint that gets wider as the lot expands toward the south, and measures 3,078-square-feet. It is mostly two-stories with a large one-story living room wing at the north, which features a large arched picture window facing onto the triangular garden at the north end of the lot. The building is clad in stucco, has a cross-gable roof clad with two-piece red clay tiles, and has interesting cross-shaped attic vents at several gables. The asymmetrical primary façade features a prominent, deeply recessed wood entrance door with a round arched head. The sides of the entry recess are canted and the face of the opening has a tile surround added sometime between 2018 and 2020 that is not stylistically appropriate to the house. The entry arch also features a pair of wrought iron gates with a simple design and a similar single-leaf gate is located at the garage breezeway. These do not appear to be original, but are in keeping with the style of the house. A bold tapered chimney, which was partially reconstructed in 2018, is located to the north of the entrance. The building has recessed wood multi-light casement windows, in various sizes with arched variations along the first-story, and large-scale picture windows, some square and some arched. A large wrought iron window grill is located at a picture window on the south facade. Some of the casement windows have non-original awnings that are appropriate to the style.

The secondary facades of the building are generally simple in design. An additional entrance is located on the west façade and is accessed by a set of wood multi-light French doors with wide wood sidelights. An arched window with decorative leaded glass is located north of this secondary entrance.

The garage is located at the southern end of the lot, fronting towards Grandview Avenue, and is connected to the house by a covered walkway. The walkway is clad in terracotta tiles and has arched openings at the east and west ends to allow access from the front to the rear of the property with single-leaf gates mentioned above. The lot slopes towards the south slightly setting the garage below the residence. The stairwell from the garage door to the walkway is curved and inset into the walkway, a unique feature of the connection to accommodate the slight slope. The paneled aluminum garage door was added in 2011 and does not detract from the overall character of the house. A non-original detached gazebo is located in the rear yard behind the garage and is in poor condition.

Notable character-defining features of 1559 Grandview Avenue include:

- Irregular footprint
- Triangular corner lot location
- Two-story massing with one-story wing projecting to the north
- Stepped footprint responsive to triangular lot shape
- Gabled roof forms
- Two-piece red clay tile roof cladding
- Decorative attic vents
- Deeply-recessed canted entrance surround

- Arched paneled wood door
- Stucco cladding
- Breezeway between garage and residence
- Wood multi-light casement windows and French doors, many with deep recesses
- Single-light, arched and square picture windows at the east, north, and west facades
- Wrought iron window grills
- Decorative leaded glass window at rear

Alterations and Integrity

The residence at 1559 Grandview Avenue retains a high degree of integrity with minimal alterations occurring since original construction. In 2011, the original garage door was replaced with the current aluminum garage door. Based on size, shape, glass detail, and hardware that differs from the rest of the residence, one casement window facing Grandview Avenue in the kitchen and the casement windows at the rear family room were replaced, though they are compatible with the building and original windows. In 2018, the chimney was re-built from the throat up with a scope that states “to matching the existing design.” Based on previous real estate listing photographs, the tile surround at the entrance was added between 2018 and 2020. The gates at the main entry and the breezeway arch do not appear to be original but are in keeping with the overall character of the house. Additionally, at an unknown date, the building appears to have been re-stuccoed, though the current pebbled stucco is compatible with the architectural style. None of the listed minimal alterations deter from the building’s integrity of materials, design, or workmanship except for the tiles around the entrance surround, which are not appropriate to the style.

HPC and staff therefore recommend the following Mills Act conditions:

1. Remove the non-original tile surround at the front entrance and restore the simple stucco surround with painted detailing that is seen in photographs taken before the tile was added.
2. Remove the compass artwork on the chimney at the front facade.
3. Remove or replace the gazebo in the rear yard.
4. Repair stucco on the building where needed.

ANALYSIS

Finding of Eligibility

After reviewing the nomination submitted by the owner and its supporting documentation, as well as visiting the site, HPC found that, pursuant to Section 15.20.050 of the Glendale Municipal Code, the property meets Criterion 3 of the eligibility criteria for listing in the Glendale Register of Historic Resources, as follows:

Architectural Significance [Criterion 3]

To meet Criterion 3, a property must “embody the distinctive and exemplary characteristics of an architectural style, architectural type, period, or method of construction; or represent a notable work of a master designer, builder or architect whose genius influenced his or her profession; or possess high artistic values.”

1559 Grandview Avenue is an excellent example of Spanish Colonial Revival-style architecture constructed on a prominent and unusual lot. The property is sited on two lots which come to a point at the north giving the single-family residence two highly visible street facades. The one-story wing fronts to the narrow, deep setback at the north and the building continues to rise to two-stories to the south giving the building a diversity of massing and scale that builds off its location. The house features simple but detailed character-defining features including the deeply recessed and canted arched entryway, many deeply recessed windows, detailed wrought iron window grills, decorative gable vents, and inset stairs at the garage that provide an interesting solution to the sloping topography. The building is an excellent and prominent example of the Spanish Colonial Revival-style, retains a high level of integrity of design, materials, and workmanship, and retains many character-defining features of its style. Based on this determination, HPC found the property to be eligible for the Glendale Register under Criterion 3.

Staff recommends that City Council consider HPC’s recommendation and find the property eligible for designation as a historic resource on the Glendale Register under Criterion 3, and authorize the City Manager to enter into a Mills Act contract, with the recommended conditions, between the City and the property owner.

STAKEHOLDERS/OUTREACH

There are no stakeholders other than the property owner.

FISCAL IMPACT

Listing historic properties in the Glendale Register has no fiscal impact. However, future property tax savings to private owners of listed historic properties under Mills Act contracts will slightly reduce City property tax revenues from the general County tax levy received from each Mills Act property.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW (CEQA/NEPA)

The project is exempt from CEQA review as Class 31 (“Historical Resource Restoration/Rehabilitation”) and Class 8 (“Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment”) exemptions pursuant to Sections 15331 and 15308 of the State CEQA Guidelines because it involves the designation and protection/preservation of a historic resource.

CAMPAIGN DISCLOSURE

The names and business addresses of the members of the board of directors, the chairperson, CEO, COO, CFO, Subcontractors and any person or entity with more than

10% interest in the company proposed for contract in this Agenda Item Report are attached in Exhibit 4, in accordance with the City Campaign Finance Ordinance No. 5744.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1: Designate 1559 Grandview Avenue as a historic resource on the Glendale Register of Historic Resources, finding that the property meets designation Criterion 3, and authorize the City Manager to enter into a Mills Act contract, with conditions, between the City and the property owner.

Alternative 2: Reject designation/listing of 1559 Grandview Avenue on the Glendale Register of Historic Resources, finding that the property does not meet Criterion 3 or any other criteria.

Alternative 3: Any other alternative not proposed by staff.

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

Prepared by:

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Reviewed by:

Jay Platt, Principal Planner

Approved by:

Roubik R. Golanian, P.E., City Manager

EXHIBITS/ATTACHMENTS

Exhibit 1 Glendale Register Nomination

Exhibit 2 Photographs

Exhibit 3 Mills Act Application

Exhibit 4 Campaign Disclosure