



CITY OF POMONA COUNCIL REPORT

July 21, 2025

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Anita D. Scott, City Manager

Submitted By: Betty Donovanik, Development Services Director

SUBJECT: PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER AN APPEAL OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION DECISION DETERMINING THAT THE COMMERCIAL STRUCTURE LOCATED AT 2250 NORTH GAREY AVENUE IS HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT (CASE FILES: DHS-000278-2025, APL-000487-2025)

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council take the following actions:

- 1) Conduct a public hearing and receive public testimony; and
- 2) Uphold the decision of the Historic Preservation Commission and approve the following Resolution (Attachment No. 1):

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-87 – A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF POMONA, CALIFORNIA, DENYING APPEAL REQUEST FOR A DETERMINATION OF HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE (DHS-000278-2025) AND UPHOLDING THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION’S DECISION DETERMINING THAT THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 2250 NORTH GAREY AVENUE (APN: 8365-015-052) IS HISTORIC

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

On May 7, 2025, at its regularly scheduled meeting, the Historic Preservation Commission held a public hearing and made findings determining the property located at 2250 N. Garey Avenue, the former Arby’s drive-thru restaurant structure, is historically significant. (*Case File: DHS-000278-2025, APL-000487-2025*) (6-1-0-0). The applicant, Satwinder Singh, has appealed the Historic Preservation Commission’s decision. The City Council may either uphold the Historic Preservation Commission’s decision or determine that the structure at 2250 North Garey Avenue is not historically significant.

SB1439/GOVERNMENT CODE §84308 APPLICABILITY:

☒ When this box is checked, it indicates the agenda item is subject to the Levine Act SB1439 requirements. Councilmembers are reminded to check their campaign contributions and determine whether they have received a campaign contribution of \$500 or more that would require disclosure and/or recusal from discussing or acting on this agenda item. Campaign contributions of \$500 or more made 1) by any person or entity who is identified in the agenda report as the applicant or proposer or 2) on behalf of the applicant or participant, including a parent, subsidiary or otherwise related business entity, or 3) by any person who has a financial interest in the agenda item requires a councilmember to comply with SB1439.

FISCAL IMPACT:

No Fiscal Impact at this time.

PUBLIC NOTICING REQUIREMENTS:

A public hearing notice was published in the Inland Valley Daily Bulletin on July 7, 2025 (Attachment No. 2).

PREVIOUS RELATED ACTION:

On May 7, 2025, at its regularly scheduled meeting, the Historic Preservation Commission held a public hearing and determined the property located at 2250 N. Garey Avenue, the former Arby's drive-thru restaurant structure, is historically significant to the City of Pomona's local history (Attachment No. 5). During this discussion item, the Historic Preservation Commission made findings that the property holds significance to Pomona's history and connection to Roadside or Programmatic Architecture commercial development paralleling the rise of the independent automobile driver, California car culture, North Pomona suburbanization development patterns, and the population boom in the post-World War II era on a 6-1-0-0 vote.

On May 20, 2025, the applicant, Satwinder Singh, filed an appeal of the Historic Preservation Commission's decision (Attachment No. 3).

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT:

Pursuant to the CEQA Guidelines, this action is not a project. Section 15060 of the Guidelines exempts actions from CEQA that would not result in either an indirect or direct impact on the environment and that do not meet the Section 15378(a) definition of a project. Section 15378(a) defines a project as one that has the potential for resulting in a physical change to the environment. No physical change to the environment is anticipated with the determination of historic significance.

DISCUSSION:

Overview

The Historic Preservation Commission reviewed the Determination for Historic Significance application for 2250 North Garey Avenue. Based on on-site inspections Staff recommended that the Commission determine that the property has historic significance to the local history of Pomona per findings set forth in Section .800 Historic Preservation of the Pomona Zoning and Development Code. The Commission considered staff's report and all pertinent testimony and, ultimately, deemed the property historic for meeting all policies and criteria contained in the codified City documents.

The structure is one of the few remaining examples of commercial development in the City of Pomona that contains distinguishing characteristics of Roadside/Programmatic Architecture. These structures were intentionally designed to resemble objects and, essentially, serve as large-scale advertisements to attract passing motorists. This structure is designed to be a covered chuckwagon or Conestoga wagon and is an intact example of these commercial developments that were popularized after World War II because of a significant population boom, suburbanization patterns, and expansion of commercial development within the city. Furthermore, this structure is specifically identified in Pomona's Historic Context Statement for being an "early example of iconic fast-food restaurants from the postwar period." (Attachment No. 4).

The Commission agreed with staff's recommendation and determined that the property was historically significant on a 6-1-0-0 vote.

Process

The Determination of Historic Significance is the first step in the review of impacts to historic structures. There is a misconception that a determination that a property is historic means that nothing can be done to the property. However, that is not the case. The Determination of Historic Significance establishes the process an applicant would have to go through to review potential impacts to the resource. If a historic structure is proposed for demolition, then a Certificate of Deconstruction is required and the project must comply with CEQA, which would typically require a focused EIR on the historic issue. The Commission and ultimately the City Council on appeal, could still decide to demolish the historic resource and require measures like documenting the site, to mitigate the loss. The process allows the Commission (and Council) to evaluate if the loss of the historic resource is outweighed by the benefits of a new project.

Staff Analysis

Applicable Code Sections

Pursuant to Section 1130.C.2 of the Pomona Zoning Ordinance, which establishes appeal procedures for Determination of Historical Significance applications, decisions of the Commission may be appealed to the City Council. In addition, the following code sections of the Pomona Zoning Ordinance apply to the project:

- Section 800.C. – Historic Preservation Standards
- Section 800.C.9 – Demolition Review of Structures 50+ Years Old
- Section 1190.C. – Determination of Historic Eligibility

A Determination of Historical Significance is required to comply with the sections referenced above. Staff reviewed the National Register, California Register, and local designation criteria to determine whether the property is historic (Attachment No. 4).

Project Information

The subject site consists of a single parcel approximately 0.52 acres in size. This parcel is in the northwest quadrant of Pomona and is approximately 420 feet south of the North Garey Avenue and East Arrow Highway intersection. The structure on the property is a one-story configuration that was constructed in 1970 and is 1,560 square feet in size. In 1985, the Planning Commission authorized the drive-thru addition. The building is currently vacant, but it previously operated as a retail outlet after Arby's fast-food restaurant use ceased.

Table 1: General Plan and Zoning for Subject Site

GENERAL PLAN DISTRICT:	Neighborhood Edge	ZONING:	Pomona Corridors Specific Plan – Workplace Gateway Segment
TRANSECT:	T4-B	OVERLAY(S):	N/A
GENERAL PLAN DENSITY:	40 DU/AC	CURRENT LAND USES:	Vacant

Business license records indicate the subject site has operated as an Arby's fast-food restaurant since 1971. While ownership of Arby's changed over time, the business license remained active until 2012. From 2015 to 2023, the site operated as a retail outlet for cell phones and accessories. Currently, the site is not occupied and there is no record of an active business license.

Architectural Style

The commercial structure was not surveyed until 2025. The Citywide Historic Context Statement was completed in 2022. The Context Statement is the foundation for future surveys and identifying property types and locations that may have historic significance. This former Arby's structure was identified as a potential historic resource because of its Roadside/Programmatic architecture style.

Staff determined from on-site observations that no major alterations have been made that could have possibly compromised the architectural integrity of this structure. Besides minor exterior alterations, such as paint and the removal of outdoor dining picnic tables, the existing building on the site has remained largely intact. For instance, the following character-defining elements have been maintained: the covered chuckwagon/Conestoga wagon style building with the curved roof, large overhang on the east elevation, broad windows Mid-Century modern style windows, and the rock-like exterior siding dominating the north, east, and south elevations.

Furthermore, it is an example of Roadside/Programmatic architecture style that intentionally designed commercial buildings to serve as advertisement to draw in motorists. The covered wagon

or covered Conestoga wagon was a horse drawn wagon used during the westward expansion of the United States. Moreover, Wiley Christian Riedel is credited as the sole architect that designed the covered wagon or Conestoga wagon for Arby's restaurant during the franchise expansion in the United States from the 1960s to the late 1970s.

Historical Significance

The Historic Preservation Commission discussed the historical significance of the structure during the hearing. Commissioners determined the existing commercial structure is eligible for historic designation by meeting the following City of Pomona Landmark Designation criteria:

1. **Architecture / Physical Features:** It is one of a few remaining examples in the city of Pomona, region, state, or nation possessing distinguishing characteristics of an architectural or historical type or specimen (Criterion 10 in previous ordinance).

The Historic Preservation Commission determined the existing covered chuckwagon commercial structure possesses distinguishing characteristics and is one of the few remaining examples of auto-oriented development showcasing Pomona's postwar automobile culture and the rapid expansion of fast-food restaurants with distinguishable architectural elements. This structure is one of two existing former Arby's restaurants located within the City that is still standing. Lastly, there is only one architecture directly associated with this architectural specimen.

2. **Person(s) and Events Important to Our History:** It exemplifies or reflects special elements of the City of Pomona's cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, architectural, or natural history (Criterion 1 in previous ordinance).

The Historic Preservation Commission determined that the existing commercial structure reflects special elements of the City of Pomona's cultural, social, and economic history. The subject structure was constructed postwar during an increase in population and an influx of commercial and residential development. Moreover, North Garey Avenue is a primary arterial street that runs the entire length of Pomona, from North to South and the subject property sits near the East Arrow Highway intersection, where portions of Arrow Highway run parallel to the former Route 66, now Foothill Boulevard. Both streets have been identified as an area in the city where commercial development rapidly boomed and expanded into. Additionally, it functioned first as a fast-food restaurant, a development of that postwar era, and later as a drive-through restaurant when the automobile became the primary transportation mode. Overall, this structure is an intact remnant of North Pomona's early suburbanization patterns, rise in suburban leisure activities, and the increasing popularity of car culture.

COUNCIL PRIORITIES & GOALS:

Upholding the Historic Preservation Commission's decision and determining that the property is historically significant would be consistent with the following General Plan goals for Historic Preservation:

- Goals 7F:G8 Protect historic and cultural resources from demolition, inappropriate alterations, and incompatible development.*
- Goals 7F:G9 Promote public awareness of the history of Pomona and historic preservation in the City.*

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council adopt Resolution No. 2025-87 and uphold the Historic Preservation Commission's decision based on the finding that the existing structure has historic significance per the City of Pomona Landmark Designation criteria and is consistent with the General Plan Goals 7F:G8 and 7F:G9.

ALTERNATIVE:

1. City Council overturns the Historic Preservation Commission's decision and makes written findings, based upon a preponderance of evidence in the record, to deem the property as *not* historically significant for Determination of Historic Significance (DHS-000278-2025).

Prepared by:

Irene Mouré
Assistant Planner

ATTACHMENT(S):

- Attachment No. 1 – Draft CC Resolution No. 2025-87
Attachment No. 2 – Public Hearing Notice
Attachment No. 3 – Appeal Form
Attachment No. 4 – Historic Preservation Commission Staff Report & Attachments 4-2-2025
Attachment No. 5 – Historic Preservation Commission Resolution No. 25-11
Attachment No. 6 – Staff Presentation