



Staff Report

City of Pomona Historic Preservation Commission

June 4, 2025

FILE NO: DHS-000329-2025

A request for a Determination of Historic Significance

ADDRESS: 835 N. Myrtle Avenue

APPLICANT: Abel De Alba

PROJECT PLANNER: Irene Mouré, Assistant Planner

RECOMMENDATION: Determine that the property located at 835 N. Myrtle Avenue (File No. DHS-00329-2025) is not historic and adopt Resolution No. 25-013 (Attachment No. 1).

Property Background:

An application was submitted on April 1, 2025, to determine any potential significance on the property. Site photographs have been attached for review and reference (Attachment No. 2).

Architectural Style:

According to Chapter XI. Architecture and Design (1837 – 1980) of the Citywide Context Statement (2022), the existing primary dwelling can be classified as having an Early Post-War Tract style.

Architectural Description:

The primary dwelling displays Early Post-War Tract detailing, such as the one-story configuration with a medium pitch, hip roof with shallow eaves and a noticeable lack of decorative exterior detailing. Moreover, there is a distinctive shallow entry porch. However, at some point, the original slender wood supports were replaced with wrought iron railing and support beams. Lastly, the exterior walls are of smooth stucco with minimal wood lap detailing.

RELEVANT ALTERATIONS:

1977 – Attached covered patio of aluminum

Date Unknown – Removal of entry porch wood support beam with wrought iron railing

Date Unknown – Replacement of original windows with vinyl windows

Character-Defining Features:

1. One-story configuration

2. Medium pitch, hip roof with shallow eaves
3. Shallow entry porch
4. Lack of decorative exterior detailing
5. Smooth stucco with wood lap detailing

HISTORY:

The primary dwelling was first added to the City Directory in 1945, five years after the approximate date of construction. Staff was unable to locate original construction permits because Building and Safety permit records for the site are scarce and limited to plumbing (year-1957), an attached patio (year-1977), and the addition of a satellite dish (year-1996). However, library archives identified Martin J. Jaska, a local and regional building contractor, as being responsible for the construction of several homes on North Myrtle Avenue, including the subject property.

Historic Context Statement:

The property is aligned with the historical background presented in Chapter IX. Pomona During World War II (1941 – 1945), Theme: Residential Development (Attachment No. 3).

Survey Information:

The 1993 Citywide Survey estimated that the dwelling was constructed in 1940 and was categorized as Early Post-War Tract Style with moderate additions/alterations. Although the survey deemed the condition of the structure as “good”, it was rated “N” for non-contributing due to exterior alterations, such as the replacement of wood support beams with wrought iron railings, that removed character defining features (Attachment No. 4).

City Directories:

835 N. Myrtle Avenue first appeared in the 1945 directory listing a George and Marie Helen Spence as the property owners. According to City directories for 1948 and 1951, it appears the Spence’s maintained ownership from 1945 to at least 1951.

Library archives identified Thomas J. McCarthy as an occupant of the dwelling in 1955. Then in 1961, archives also identified Calvin Charles Bass as a possible property owner (Attachment No. 5).

Year	Name
1945	George and Marie Helen Spence
1948	George and Marie Helen Spence
1951	George and Marie Helen Spence
1955	Thomas J. McCarthy
1961	Calvin Charles Bass

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps:

The subject property was not included in the City's Sanborn Maps, only the 100 to 300 blocks of North Myrtle Avenue were captured.

Significance:

Pomona experienced a residential and commercial development boom on par with many major cities during the post-World War II period. Intense suburbanization, increase in leisure activities, and shifting car culture influenced these development spurs away from Pomona's downtown core. The residential sprawl mirrored the population growth that spread throughout Pomona. 835 N. Myrtle Avenue is typical of this residential development.

This property was constructed by local and regional builder, Martin John Jaska. Jaska is considered one of Pomona's leading contractors. Originally from Toledo, Ohio, Jaska founded the Jaska Paint and Glass Company in 1931. He is noted for building several residential and commercial structures throughout the Pomona Valley. His efforts include subdivision, development of tracts, construction of Park Manor (a 32-unit apartment building) and war housing units during World War II. In addition, his wife, Henrietta Jaska was a freelance artist in Pomona and designed labels for the California Fruit Wrapping Company (Attachment No. 6).

Interestingly, each owner of 835 N. Myrtle Avenue from 1945 to 1961 made appearances in the Progress Bulletin. Two of the property owners seem to have shared a flair for criminality. Archived Progress Bulletin newspaper clippings identify the original owner, George Spence, as a bookmaker or a "bookie" who was arrested on bookmaking charges. The other inhabitant, Calvin Charles Bass also made the Progress Bulletin for driving under the influence that led to a three-car accident. However, unlike Spence and Bass, Thomas J. McCarthy's only appearance in the Bulletin was in the form of an obituary (Attachment No. 7).

However, despite archived documents specifically identifying this property and previous owners, Staff was unable to locate any building permits for both the primary and the accessory structure.

Designation Criteria:

Staff reviewed the National Register, California Register, and local designation criteria to determine whether the property is historic.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CRITERIA

1. Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history (Criterion A).

There are no events specifically related to this property significant in our history. This site is typical of the general suburbanization patterns within Pomona. However, this site is not associated with significant events related to that suburbanization. Therefore, the property does not meet this criterion.

2. Is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past (Criterion B).

The property is not associated with people significant in our history to qualify for the National Register. It is associated with a leading Pomona contractor and builder at the time, Martin John Jaska, but only at a local level. Therefore, the property does not meet this criterion.

3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction (Criterion C).

The property is of Early Post-War Tract Style and has retained a few distinctive characteristics of the site. However, the modifications have removed key elements of Early Post-War Tract Style and therefore, does not meet this criterion.

4. Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory (Criterion D).

This criterion relates to archaeological resources and there is no information that this site could have been important to Native American tribes in the area. Therefore, the property is not likely to yield any information, and the property does not meet this criterion.

CALIFORNIA REGISTER OF HISTORICAL RESOURCES

1. Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history or the cultural heritage of California or the United States (Criterion 1).

There are no events specifically related to this property significant in our history. This property is typical of the general suburbanization patterns within Pomona. However, this site is not associated with significant events related to that suburbanization. Therefore, the property does not meet this criterion.

2. Associated with the lives of persons important to local, California or national history (Criterion 2).

The property is not associated with people significant in our history to qualify for the California Register. It is associated with a leading Pomona contractor and builder at the time, Martin John Jaska, but only at a local level. Therefore, the property does not meet this criterion.

3. 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 (Criterion 3).

The property is of Early Post-War Tract Style and has retained a few distinctive characteristics of the site. However, the modifications have removed key elements of Early Post-War Tract Style and therefore, does not meet this criterion.

4. Has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California or the nation (Criterion 4).

This criterion relates to archaeological resources and there is no information that this site could have been important to Native American tribes in the area. Therefore, the property is not likely to yield any information, and the property does not meet this criterion.

CITY OF POMONA LANDMARK DESIGNATION CRITERIA

Architecture / Physical Features

1. It embodies distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction, or is a valuable example of the use of indigenous materials or craftsmanship (Criterion 3 in previous ordinance);

The property is of Early Post-War Tract Style and has retained a few distinctive characteristics of the site. However, the modifications have removed key elements of Early Post-War Tract Style and therefore, does not meet this criterion.

2. It is the work of a notable builder, designer, landscape designer or architect (Criterion 5 in previous ordinance);

The construction of the property is associated with a leading Pomona contractor and builder at the time, Martin John Jaska. Archived newspaper articles have identified Jaska as the person responsible for building this residence as well as other ones within Pomona and the larger regional area. Jaska not only built several single- and multi-family residential projects, his wife, Henrietta was a freelance artist in Pomona and designed labels for the California Fruit Wrapping Company. Jaska is credited with building several single-family and multi-family residences in Pomona and other nearby cities, such as Ontario. Therefore, the property does meet this criterion.

3. It embodies elements of architectural design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship that represent a significant structural or architectural achievement or innovation (Criterion 7 in previous ordinance);

The Early Post-War Tract style was a style created for expediency in order to produce new homes quickly to deal with the demand. Nothing in the style would represent a significant structural or architectural achievement or innovation. Therefore, the property does not meet this criterion.

4. It is similar to other distinctive properties, sites, areas, or objects based on an historic, cultural, or architectural motif (Criterion 8 in previous ordinance);

The property is similar to other post-war houses, but these similarities are not based on any motif. Therefore, the property does not meet this criterion.

5. It has a unique location or singular physical characteristics or is a view or vista representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community, or the city of Pomona (Criterion 6 in previous ordinance);

The property is typical of post-war development. There is no view or vista or familiar feature in this neighborhood. Therefore, the property does not meet this criterion.

6. It reflects significant geographical patterns, including those associated with different eras of settlement and growth, particular transportation modes, or distinctive examples of park or community planning (Criterion 9 in previous ordinance);

This property is typical of the general suburbanization patterns within Pomona. However, this is just one of hundreds for subdivisions during the post-war building boom and does not reflect any significant pattern. Therefore, the property does not meet this criterion.

7. It is one of the 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 property is just one of thousands of properties built during the post World War II building boom in Pomona. It is not one of the few remaining examples of the Early Post-War Tract architecture. Therefore, the property does not meet this criterion.

Person(s) and Events Important in Our History

1. It is identified with persons or events significant in local, state, or national history (Criterion 2 in previous ordinance);

There are no person or events significant in Pomona's history associated with this property. The builder is significant and is covered in Architecture Criterion 2. Therefore, the property does not meet this criterion.

2. 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);

There are no special elements of the City of Pomona's history reflected in this property. Therefore, the property does not meet this criterion.

Archaeology

1. Has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California or the nation.

This criterion relates to archaeological resources and there is no information that this site could have been important to Native American tribes in the area. Therefore, the property is not likely to yield any information, and the property does not meet this criterion.

CITY OF POMONA HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGNATION CRITERIA

1. It is a contiguous area possessing a concentration of eligible historic resources or thematically related grouping of structures which contribute to each other and are unified by plan, style, or physical development; and (b) embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction; represents the work of a master; or possesses high artistic values (*Criterion 4 in previous ordinance*);

The neighborhood is not identified as an area that could be a potential historic district. In addition, it is one of thousands of homes built during this time period. Therefore, the property does not meet this criterion.

2. It reflects significant geographical patterns, including those associated with different eras of settlement and growth, particular transportation modes, or distinctive examples of a park landscape, site design, or community planning (*Criterion 9 in previous ordinance*); and

This property is typical of the general suburbanization patterns within Pomona. However, this is just one of hundreds for subdivisions during the post-war building boom and does not reflect any significant pattern. Therefore, the property does not meet this criterion.

Meets at least one of Landmark Designation Criteria as follows:

- a. Architecture / Physical Features Criteria 1, 2, 3, or 4; and/or
- b. Person and Events Criteria 1 or 2.

As discussed above, the property does meet the Architecture Criterion 2, but that the property does not meet district Criteria 1 or 2 required to be designated as a contributing structure to a historic district. Therefore, the property does not meet this requirement.

Integrity

The property is identified as Early Post-War Tract style, but there have been significant alterations. The windows and the decorative porch features have been removed. The 1993 Citywide Historic Survey determined it as "noncontributing" due to the alterations. Therefore, while the buildings embody Early Post-War Tract elements, too many modifications to the exterior have removed distinguishable elements from other dwellings in this area.

Conclusion:

While the property is associated with a significant builder, the property is not significant to Pomona's history due to the lack of architectural integrity. Therefore, based on the information reviewed, the structures are not determined to be significant.

Attachments:

1. Historic Preservation Commission Resolution No. 25-013
2. Photographs of site and surrounding area

3. Chapter IX. Pomona During World War II (1941 – 1945)
4. 1993 Citywide Survey Form
5. City Directory Images
6. Excerpts from Pomona Valley Community Book Edited by Roy L. Driscoll
7. Archived Progress Bulletin Clippings