



Historic Preservation Commission

Staff Report

December 4, 2024

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| FILE NO: | DHS-001133-2024 |
| | A request to make a Determination of Historic Significance for 2190 Castle Place. |
| ADDRESS: | 2190 Castle Place |
| APPLICANT: | Doug McKenzie |
| PROJECT PLANNER: | Karina Diaz, Assistant Planner |
| RECOMMENDATION: | Determine that the property located at 2190 Castle Place (File No. DHS-001133-2024) is not historic and adopt Resolution No. 24-046. |

BACKGROUND:

The application was submitted on July 25, 2024, for the purpose of determining any potential significance of the existing structure on the site. There is one single-family home on the property and a detached garage to the rear. Site photographs have been attached for Commission's reference (Attachment 2).

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE:

The structure at 2190 Castle Place has not been surveyed prior to 2024. Staff determined from site observations that major alterations have been made, altering the architectural integrity of the dwelling. According to Chapter XI. Architecture and Design (1837-1980) of the Citywide Context State (2022), the existing building on the site is a rudimentary example of the California Ranch architectural style.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

The existing primary dwelling shows evidence of major alternations made to the exterior northern facade, facing Castle Place. Submitted pictures of the primary residence demonstrate the removal of wood-lap siding, low-pitched gable roof, and exposed rafters along the northern street-facing facade (Attachment 2). Alternations to the facade are linked to fire damage on the primary dwelling, which occurred between 2022-2018. The subject structure lacks multiple character-defining California Ranch style features, such as: exposed rafters, brick chimney, an attached garage, gable roof, and a covered front porch with wood

posts. However, the horizontal massing, single low-pitched roof, stucco facade, and front porch provide significant evidence of the building's Ranch architectural origins.

Relevant Alterations:

1. Fire Damage Repair to the dwelling: repair roof, replace all drywall along the house, and replace all windows throughout the house.
2. Horizontal wood siding removed and replaced with brick and stucco.
3. Extended eaves removed.
4. Exposed rafters removed.
5. Existing wood shutters removed.

Character-Defining Features:

1. One story
2. Horizontal massing
3. Low-pitched hipped or gable roof
4. Large roof overhangs
5. Wood lap siding
6. Covered front porch with wood posts
7. Exposed rafters
8. Attached garage
9. Brick Chimney
10. Details such as wood shutters, dovecotes, scalloped barge boards, etc.

HISTORY:

The property was built in 1957 and based off research from City Directories and building permit history, the building was utilized as a single-family residence. No notable tenants were found to occupy the home and business license records show that no businesses were registered under this address.

Historic Context Statement:

The property is within the "Residential Development" theme of "Postwar Growth, Diversification, and Redevelopment" (1946-1980) section of the Citywide Historic Context Statement. The attached pages from the Historic Context Statement identify criteria and integrity standards in order to be considered historic.

Survey Information:

At the time of the 1992 City-wide survey, the property was not included as a target property with potential historical significance. There are no records of 2190 Castle Place in the city-wide survey and the site was not identified as a potential local or national landmark.

Library Archives:

Research into directories were limited to cross-reference directories and newspaper postings, available for the years 1940-1989. Newspaper postings between the years of 1956 to 1959 identified Pomona Cinderella, INC. as a realtor firm from the City of Claremont. Pomona Cinderella, INC. was involved in the issuance of permits and development of 32 homes in the 1950's. The same firm was listed as the property owner for 2190 Castle Place, per building permit history, between 1957-1959. Ownership of the subject property changes to the Helman family in the 1961 directory, listing MC. Helman as the property owner from 1961-1971 and Malcolm M. Helman from 1975 to 1989. MC. Helman is recorded as the property owner in multiple permits issued between 1958 to 1966. Building permit records are consistent with the property owner information provided in the city directories for both property owners.

| Year | Name |
|-------------------|-------------------------|
| 1957-1959 | Pomona Cinderella, INC. |
| 1961- 1971 | M.C. Helman |
| 1975-1980 | Malcolm M. Helman |
| 1985-1989 | Malcolm Helman |

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps:

The City of Pomona keeps a 1928 Sanborn Map that was updated by the Building and Safety Department approximately up until 1958. No record of the site was identified in the Sanborn Map.

Significance:

Post World War II, development in all sectors increased to cater to the population growth and address the housing crisis prevalent at the time. Majority of the residential development constructed during this time period consisted of single-family tract homes, multi-family residences, and some trailer parks. The most notable tract home communities at the time were Pomona Homes, Pomona Estates, Valwood Estates, Westmont Homes, and Parkview Pomona. These communities are all examples of the mass production of homogenous tract houses that were popularized in Pomona postwar. Majority of the larger tract home developed constructed at the time had a Ranch architectural style. Large Developers, such as Weber-Burns and Kaiser Community Homes, adopted models for quick, cheap tract home construction for communities throughout the country. The construction of custom single-family dwellings was rare for Pomona.

The subject property is located within Tract Map 22868, along the north side of Freda Avenue to the north, to the south of Royal Coach Avenue, and east of Cinderella Way. This tract development was constructed in 1956 and titled "Cinderella Homes" per the Citywide Historic Context Statement (Attachment 6). The resource in question was constructed in 1957 and was part of this Southern California-wide development known as "Cinderella Homes". All dwellings in this tract were intended

to be storybook Ranch-style homes, per the architect Jean Valjean Vandruff. Vandruff was the original designer for the Cinderella Homes. Additionally, the contactors of the subject site, Olin & Lewis, were well known local developers of this time. Olin & Lewis partnered together to create Pomona Cinderella, INC., and developed the Claremont Highlands and Cinderella Homes (Attachment 6).

Overall, the building design for Cinderella Homes consisted of architectural elements such as: long roof overhangs, wide windows with custom shutters, and exposed rafters. However, the subject building has undergone major alterations, resulting in the loss of a plethora of major architectural elements that were common for Ranch style homes.

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).

Research on the site did not produce findings for any events associated with the site. Therefore, the site is not associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

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

Findings made in the City Directories and library archives indicated that the site and building are associated with well known architect Jean Valjean Vandruff and locally known developers Olin & Lewis.

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

The property no longer embodies distinctive characteristics of a type, style, and method of construction significant to a particular time in the history of a particular region, nor does it represent the work of a master, possess high artistic values, nor does it represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction. Major alterations to the dwelling have compromised the architectural integrity of the subject structure.

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.

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).

Through staff research, there have been no events identified that occurred on this property that would have made a significant contribution to National, California, or Pomona's history.

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

Research into the site produced two persons of importance, Pomona Cinderella, INC. (owned by Olin & Lewis) and Jean Valjean Vandruff, therefore the site does have an association with the lives of persons important to local, California or national history. Vandruff was a well-known architect known for being the original designer of storybook Ranch-style dwellings, called Cinderella Homes. This tract model became so popular, over 6,000 Cinderella Homes were built throughout the nation. Pomona Cinderella, INC. was owned by Olin & Lewis, who were well-known local developers, responsible for the construction of over 73 tract homes in the City of Pomona, Claremont, and Covina. Olin & Lewis partnered together to develop Claremont Highlands and were well known at the time for their work in residential development.

3. 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 3).

This property does not have features that would make it similar to other distinctive properties nor is there a common design pattern linking this property to others. This particular structure lacks multiple character-defining features of the Ranch style, such as: exposed rafters, brick chimney, an attached garage, gable roof, and a covered front porch with wood posts. Additionally, the original architectural details that were prevalent in the subject structure have been altered or removed. Therefore, this structure does not represent the work of a master or possesses a high artistic value.

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.

City of Pomona Designation Criteria

1. It exemplifies or reflects special elements of the city of Pomona's cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, architectural, or natural history;

This property does not reflect any special elements of Pomona's history. Staff's research has not identified anything

The property itself does not reflect any special elements of Pomona's history, however, it is located in a tract that was selected to demonstrate the mass residential development that boomed after World War II. Tract 22868 is one of many residential developments referenced that showcased how the population boom post World War II impacted not only development, but the city as a whole. However, the subject property itself does not exemplify or reflect anything special that would make it historic under this criterion.

2. It is identified with persons or events significant in local, state, or national history;

Research into the site produced two persons of importance, Pomona Cinderella, INC. (owned by Olin & Lewis) and Jean Valjean Vandruff, therefore the site does have an association with the lives of persons important to local, California or national history. Vandruff was a well-known architect known for being the original designer of storybook Ranch-style dwellings, called Cinderella Homes. This tract model became so popular, over 6,000 Cinderella Homes were built throughout the nation. Pomona Cinderella, INC. was owned by Olin & Lewis, who were well-known local developers, responsible for the construction of over 73 tract homes in the City of Pomona, Claremont, and Covina. Olin & Lewis partnered together to develop Claremont Highlands and were well known at the time for their work in residential development.

3. 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;

This property does not have features that would make it similar to other distinctive properties nor is there a common design pattern linking this property to others. This particular structure lacks multiple character-defining features of the Ranch style, such as: exposed rafters, brick chimney, an attached garage, gable roof, and a covered front porch with wood posts. It is not a valuable example of use of indigenous materials or craftsmanship. The architectural integrity of the subject structure has been compromised due to renovations.

4. It contributes to the significance of a historic area, being a geographically definable area possessing a concentration of historic or scenic properties or thematically related grouping of properties which contribute to each other and are unified aesthetically by plan or physical development;

The site does not possess any significance that may contribute to the historical value and theme of the surrounding neighborhood. This determination is made due to the building's simplistic design and lack of relation to the architecture style of adjacent residential dwellings.

5. It is the work of a notable builder, designer, landscape designer or architect;

The builder of the home, as shown on the building permit, is Olin and Lewis. Per Pomona's Historic Context Statement, Pomona Cinderella, INC. / Olin and Lewis are listed as developers for selected tract maps during for the year 1956. Robert A. Olin and Ralph Lewis were both influential local developers who partnered together to create Claremont Highlands and Pomona Cinderella, INC. Their firm is linked to Tract 22868 known as "Cinderella Homes" residential development. This is the residential community where the subject site resides in. Additionally, the plans for the subject structure were drafted by Vandruff Bros, which was linked to the architect Jean Vandruff. Vandruff is well-known for being the original designer of "Cinderella Homes", storybook Ranch-style homes. Based on this information, staff determined the subject dwelling is the work of a notable developer and architect, however the integrity of the dwelling has been compromised and is no longer a distinguishable example of both the builder and architect's original work.

6. 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;

The site is located in a unique location, given that Tract 2868 is a small tract of 73 homes that was a part of the "Cinderella Homes" development. The development of Cinderella Homes is identified in the Pomona Context Statement as under "Selected Tract Developments in Postwar Pomona". However, there are larger and more well-known residential neighborhoods developed at the time that serve as a better representation of residential development for the era, such as the Westmont Homes and Pomona Homes.

7. It embodies elements of architectural design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship that represent a significant structural or architectural achievement or innovation;

Due to major alterations to the subject structure, it no longer embodies the character defining elements of the California Ranch style. Given the lack of articulation, change to street-facing facades, and simple massing theme, the building is not defined as representing an example of architectural achievement or innovation.

8. It is similar to other distinctive properties, sites, areas, or objects based on an historic, cultural, or architectural motif;

Since the building on site has been through major modifications, it no longer contains major distinctive architectural elements of the California Ranch Style. Therefore, the building does not present any features that are especially unique and exemplary of notably significant examples of the style.

9. 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;

The property was one of many residential developments taking place during the postwar era and showcases how the population following the war impacted the city as a whole. It is a rudimentary example of tract home development that became popular during this time period due to its cost effectiveness and quick construction.

10. 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.

The site is not one of a few remaining distinguishable examples of the Ranch style in the city of Pomona, region, state, or nation. Pomona has a variety of distinguishable and rarer examples of the style that are extant in the Pomona, many of which can be found within the City's historic districts.

INTEGRITY:

The structure on the site was originally a Ranch-style residential building, however it has not retained major architectural elements that this architectural style is known for. Staff observed a number of alterations that have been made over the years, such as window changes, removal of siding, removal of gable roof, and the removal of exposed knee braces. Alterations to the site appear to be linked to fire damage, resulting in a failure to maintain any architectural integrity reminiscent of the original Ranch-style dwelling. The subject structure does not embody distinctive characteristics of the period or architectural style.

CONCLUSION:

Despite applicability with various federal, state, and local criterion of historic designation, staff determined that the property is not historic and is not eligible to be designated as a local historic landmark. Staff's determination is guided by the building's use of a rudimentary version of the Ranch style, the presence of buildings in Pomona that better highlight rare and key architectural elements of the Ranch style, and limited relevance to the architectural character to the surrounding neighborhood.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Historic Preservation Commission Resolution No. 24-046
2. Site Photos
3. Library Archives
4. Preserving Pomona Historic Architecture – California Ranch Architecture
5. Historic Context Statement – Postwar Growth, Diversification, and Redevelopment (1946-1980)

6. Historic Context Statement – Architecture and Design: Ranch Style
7. Staff Report