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# CITY OF POMONA

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION

## COMMISSION REPORT

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**DATE:** APRIL 4, 2018

**TO:** HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

**FROM:** PLANNING DIVISION

**SUBJECT:** SINGLE HISTORIC LANDMARK DESIGNATION REQUEST (SHISTORIC 7984-2017) FOR THE SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY LOCATED AT 1195 WASHINGTON AVENUE (APPLICANT AND PROPERTY OWNER: RAY ADAMYK)

### SUMMARY

**Issue** – Should the Historic Preservation Commission recommend approval of the Single Historic Landmark Designation (SHISTORIC 7984-2017) for the “Lassie House”, a single-family residential property, at 1195 Washington Avenue?

**Recommendation** – Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission adopt the attached resolution to recommend the approval of Single Historic Landmark (SHISTORIC 7984-2017) by City Council.

**Applicable Codes** – Zoning Ordinance Section .5809-13—Historic Preservation. Secretary of Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. Historic Preservation Design Guidelines dated July 19, 1999.

**Public Noticing Requirements** – At a minimum of ten (10) days prior to the public hearing notice was published on Daily Bulletin. Further, a sign was posted at the subject property for at least ten (10) days prior to the public hearing date.

**Environmental Determination** – Pursuant to the Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the project is categorically exempt per Section 15308 – Class 8 (Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment).

**Case History** – The project was continued from the Historic Preservation Commission meeting on March 7, 2018, which was cancelled.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Historic Preservation Commission Review of Application for Landmark Designation**

On July 3, 2017, Ray Adamyk, owner of the residential property located at 1195 Washington Avenue, submitted an application requesting a single historic landmark designation for the property. Once deemed complete, the application was placed on the Historic Preservation Commission agenda, as Zoning Ordinance Section .5809-13 (Historic Preservation) requires that the Historic Preservation Commission review all applications for single historic landmark designation and make a recommendation on the request to the City Council.

As stated in Paragraph .5809-13.E.1, “the application for designation shall contain sufficient documentation and information indicating how the building meets the criteria for designation.” Therefore, before making a recommendation to the City Council, the Commission must determine whether the application demonstrates that the subject property meets the specified criteria and, thus, merits designation.

### **Property Description**

#### *Overview*

The subject property is located on the southeast corner of Lincoln Avenue and Washington Avenue, within the R-1-7,200 Single-Family Residential zoning district. It is commonly known as the “Lassie House” due to the fact that famed Hollywood actor Jon Provost lived in the house while filming the acclaimed CBS primetime TV series “Lassie”. The property is surrounded by single-family uses to the north, east, and south. To the west of the property and across the street on Washington Avenue is the Kingsley Elementary School. The property is not located within any historic district of the City and is not listed on the 1993 Citywide Historic Resources Survey.

City of Pomona and Los Angeles County Assessor records indicate that the subject single-family residence was constructed in year 1900. The house was originally located along Holt Avenue in Pomona, and was moved to its present location in 1927. A detached guesthouse with garage and a detached workshop were built on the property in the 1950s; additions to the guesthouse and the main house were constructed 1977 and 2005, respectively.

#### *Setting*

The 4,425 square foot residence is located on a rectangular corner lot that is approximately 0.4 acres. The lot is accessed via a gated driveway on its Lincoln Avenue frontage in the rear portion of the lot. The front façade of the home faces east with the front entrance situated atop a raised front yard at the top of several cement steps. When the house was built in 1990, the area was largely orange groves. An abandoned well on the subject property had served to irrigate the

orange groves. Over the years, the area transitioned into a single-family residential neighborhood characterized by homes generally built throughout the 1950s.

### *Architectural Style*

The original architect or designer for the house is unknown. The house was built in the year 1900 which marks the very early stages of the Arts and Crafts movement. Since the house was built early in the period of significance, it appears less of a prototypical Craftsman and more of a transitional or vernacular Craftsman that incorporates elements and references from multiple architecture styles. The Craftsman features include: low-pitched hipped roof, prominent porch piers, large, wide recessed covered front porch, recessed double hung windows with wood sash and sill, and its use of natural building materials such as and river stones and wood siding. These features embody distinctive American Craftsman architecture characteristics that were popular in the early 20th century.

Building permits show that additions to the detached guesthouse and garage were done in 1977, and that a minor addition (under 500 square feet) to the main house was completed in 2005. Despite this and the enclosure of the second floor open-air porch along the front elevation (date unknown), the original architectural integrity of the property appears largely intact.

### *Association with Persons Important in History*

Jon Provost, who is among the most famous residents of the Pomona Valley in the Hollywood film and TV history, lived in this house from 1954 to 1959, including several years during the filming of the famed primetime TV series “Lassie”. He had attended Kingsley Elementary School across the street intermittently from kindergarten to 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. At that time, his father was an engineer at Convair, which later became General Dynamics.

It was the post WWII period when this part of Pomona transitioned from orange groves into residential neighborhoods. With just over half of American families owning televisions, it was also the same period when television gained momentum and popularity to replace the radio as a mainstream media and overtook the theatre as the primary source for entertainment.

In 1957, the then 7-year old Jon Provost was cast in the famous CBS primetime TV series “Lassie” as Timmy – the canine star’s master. Prior to being transformed into a TV series, Lassie the dog had already been casted in seven widely successful MGM films and was well-known to American families. When Mr. Provost joined the cast, he was the main human cast along the canine star. His work contributed to the show winning two Emmy Awards and gaining its highest ratings (in 1964). At that time in the American popular culture, the adventures of Lassie and Timmy filled the living rooms of millions of American families; it also helped to shape television’s prominence in the American culture. The TV series lasted for seventeen years, and remains to date the 4<sup>th</sup> longest running primetime TV series in history.

“Lassie” the TV series was the most iconic work in Jon Provost’s acting career. Mr. Provost, as

well as Lassie the canine character, both received a star at the Hollywood Walk of Fame for their accomplishments. Lassie remains one of the only three canines to be honored with a star at the Hollywood Walk of Fame, signifying the show's cultural impact.

## **ANALYSIS**

### **Age Requirement for Designation**

Zoning Ordinance Section .5809-13.D presents the criteria for historic landmark designation. This section begins by stating that a building proposed for designation must be at least 50 years old or of exceptional quality if less than 50 years old. In the case of the residence located at 1195 Washington Avenue, the Los Angeles County Assessor records indicate that the structure was constructed in 1900 and is 118 years old (see Attachment 5).

### **Additional Criteria for Designation**

In addition to the age requirement, Section .5809-13-D lists ten criteria and indicates that a proposed landmark must meet one or more of them to qualify for designation. As can be seen in Attachment 2, the application submitted requesting designation for the single-family residential property located at 1195 Washington Avenue contains documents that clearly support criteria number 2 as follows:

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

The two-story American Craftsman style house located at 1195 Washington Avenue, commonly known as the "Lassie House", was the childhood home of famed Hollywood actor Jon Provost, who played the character Timmy on "Lassie". As a young actor Jon Provost lived in the subject house while filming the TV series. "Lassie" was an acclaimed television series on CBS network. To this day it remains the 4<sup>th</sup> longest-running U.S. primetime television series, lasting 17 years from 1954 to 1973. With just over half of American households owning televisions in 1954, the period that "Lassie" was aired represented a transitional time in American popular culture where the television gained momentum as the mainstream media over radio and over the theatre as a source for entertainment. Therefore, "Lassie" and its successful 17 seasons on primetime television had a lasting cultural impact. Mr. Provost was part of the cast that brought the show to its two Emmy Awards and highest ratings in 1964. In 1994, Mr. Provost received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame largely for his role in "Lassie". The character "Lassie" received a star on Hollywood Walk of Fame in 1960.

## **CONCLUSION**

The application requesting landmark designation for the single-family residential property located at 1195 Washington Avenue provides sufficient documentation and information to indicate that the residence is at least 50 years old and meets at least one of the criteria for designation, as is required by the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance, Zoning Ordinance

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Section .5809-13. In fact, the applicant has provided convincing evidence that the property meets one of the five criteria namely that the property is identified with Jon Provost the Hollywood actor who lived at the property while filming “Lassie” the famed TV series. Therefore, staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission adopt the attached Resolution recommending City Council approve the Historic Landmark Designation (SHISTORIC 7984-2017) for the property located at 1995 Washington Avenue.

Respectfully submitted,

Emily Stadnicki, AICP  
Development Services Manager

Prepared by,

Catherine Lin, AICP  
Senior Planner

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- Attachment 1 – Draft HPC Resolution
- Attachment 2 – Application for Single Historic Landmark Designation & Supporting Documents  
Provided by the Applicant
- Attachment 3 – Additional Supporting Documents
- Attachment 4 – LA County Accessor Documentation
- Attachment 5 – Vicinity Map and Aerial Photo of the Project Site
- Attachment 6 – Photographs of Project Site