

DEPARTMENT OF  
CITY PLANNING  
200 N. SPRING STREET, ROOM 532  
LOS ANGELES, CA 90012-4801

CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION

RICHARD BARRON  
PRESIDENT

GAIL KENNARD  
VICE PRESIDENT

PILAR BUELNA  
DIANE KANNER  
BARRY A MILOFSKY

ROCKY WILES  
COMMISSION OFFICE MANAGER  
(213) 978-1300

CITY OF LOS ANGELES  
CALIFORNIA



ERIC GARCETTI  
MAYOR

EXECUTIVE OFFICES

VINCENT P. BERTONI, AICP  
DIRECTOR  
(213) 978-1271

KEVIN J. KELLER, AICP  
EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
(213) 978-1272

LISA M. WEBBER, AICP  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
(213) 978-1274

<http://planning.lacity.org>

May 9, 2018

Los Angeles City Council  
c/o Office of the City Clerk  
City Hall, Room 395  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Attention: PLUM Committee

Dear Honorable Members:

**CORDARY FAMILY RESIDENCE AND PACIFIC READY-CUT COTTAGE; 1828-1830 SOUTH GRAMERCY PLACE; CASE NO. CHC-2018-1371-HCM, ENV-2018-1372-CE; COUNCIL FILE NO. 18-0141**

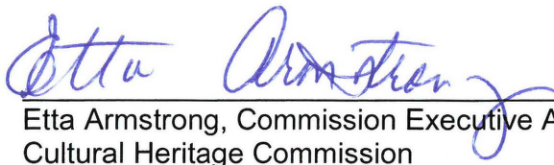
At its meeting of **May 3, 2018**, the Cultural Heritage Commission took the actions below to include the above-referenced property in the list of Historic-Cultural Monuments, subject to adoption by the City Council:

1. **Determined** that the proposed designation is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), pursuant to Article 19, Section 15308, Class 8 and Article 19, Section 15331, Class 31 of the State CEQA Guidelines;
2. **Determined** that the property conforms with the definition of a Monument pursuant to Section 22.171.7 of the Los Angeles Administrative Code; and
3. **Recommended** that the City Council consider and designate the subject property a Historic-Cultural Monument; and
4. **Adopted** the attached staff report findings as the findings of the Commission.

This action was taken by the following vote:

Moved: Kanner  
Seconded: Buelna  
Ayes: Barron, Kennard, Milofsky

**Vote: 5 – 0**

  
Etta Armstrong, Commission Executive Assistant I  
Cultural Heritage Commission

The Cultural Heritage Commission would appreciate your inclusion of the subject property to the list of Historic-Cultural Monuments.

**Time for Council to Act** The Commission action will be transmitted to the City Council for consideration. Pursuant to Section 22.171.10 (f) of the Los Angeles Administrative Code, the Council may approve or disapprove in whole or in part an application or initiation for a proposed designation of a Monument. The Council shall act in 90-days of the public hearing held before the Commission. The 90-day time limit may be extended by the Council for good cause for a maximum of 15 days. If the Council does not act on the application or initiation within this 105-days total time limit, the application or initiation to designate a Monument shall be deemed to have been denied. The Council may override a Commission recommendation of denial of Council initiated designation by a minimum of 10-votes.

Enclosures: Findings

# **THE CORDARY FAMILY RESIDENCE AND PACIFIC READY-CUT COTTAGE**

## **FINDINGS**

**(Adopted by the Cultural Heritage Commission on May 3, 2018)**

The Cordary Family Residence and Pacific Ready-Cut Cottage "reflects the broad cultural, economic, or social history of the nation, state, or community" for its association with early residential development along streetcar commercial corridors at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the 1920s proliferation of kit houses in Los Angeles.

The Cordary Family Residence and Pacific Ready-Cut Cottage "embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural-type specimen, inherently valuable for study of a period, style or method of construction" as an excellent example of the Late Victorian architectural style and the kit house method of construction.

## **CRITERIA**

The criterion is the Cultural Heritage Ordinance which defines a historical or cultural monument as any site (including significant trees or other plant life located thereon) building or structure of particular historic or cultural significance to the City of Los Angeles, such as historic structures or sites in which the broad cultural, economic, or social history of the nation, State or community is reflected or exemplified, or which are identified with historic personages or with important events in the main currents of national, State or local history or which embody the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen, inherently valuable for a study of a period style or method of construction, or a notable work of a master builder, designer or architect whose individual genius influenced his age.

## **SUMMARY**

The Cordary Family Residence and Pacific Ready-Cut Cottage consists of a 1905 two-story multi-family residence and a 1923 one-story single-family residence, located on the east side of Gramercy Place between Washington Boulevard and 18<sup>th</sup> Street in the Arlington Heights neighborhood of Los Angeles. There is also a one-story wood garage with a side-gabled roof at the southeast corner of the property dating from 1920. The 1905 structure is designed in the Late Victorian architectural style, and the 1923 structure is a Pacific-Ready Cut kit home designed in the Craftsman architectural style with American Colonial Revival elements. Constructed by Peter Marion, a postal worker and real estate speculator, the 1905 residence was one of the first homes in the Angelus Vista Tract residential development. In 1908, the residence was purchased by M.A. Cordary, whose family remained at the 1828 Gramercy Place address until 1920. Although originally constructed as a single-family dwelling, the 1905 residence was converted to a boarding house in 1938.

Though promoted in 1902 as one of Los Angeles's elite residential neighborhoods, the Angelus Vista Tract was not an initial success, as most of the wealthy targeted by the developers were already living in grand houses in other new developments. Between 1908 and 1910 the city's population had more than doubled, leading to a building explosion. Most homes in Angelus Vista date from this period. Washington Boulevard, envisioned as the future grand boulevard from Los Angeles to the Pacific Ocean, played a key role in the development of the community. In September 1902 the Washington Boulevard rail line was extended through West Adams Heights,

prompting developers to lay out residential tracts along the main thoroughfare to Santa Monica and the sea. By the mid-1920s, Washington Boulevard was lined with thriving retail businesses, and by 1923 the Arlington Heights business district, between Western and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, was one of the city's prime shopping destinations, serving locals and residents from Culver City and Palms. In the early 20th century, tens of thousands of Americans of modest means could build homes thanks to mail order catalogs of kit house companies. Although Sears is the most widely-known national company, Los Angeles-based Pacific Ready-Cut Homes Inc. was the largest supplier in Southern California, dominating the market for pre-cut, assembly homes. Between 1908 and 1940, the company sold 40,000 kit homes, with 1,800 different architectural plans, mostly for one-story bungalows. At one point, the company produced kits for up to 25 houses per day; one every twenty minutes. Driven by the local population boom following World War I, sales multiplied, peaking in 1923. The typical 12,000 pieces that made up a house kit included lumber, nails, built-in furnishings, windows, screens, paint, hardware, and instructions. The houses were shipped out and assembled on site, usually in just two days.

Irregular in plan, the Cordary Family Residence is constructed of wood with wood clapboard and shingle cladding and a cross gabled roof with composition shingles. The primary, west-facing elevation features a one-and-a-half-story projecting front gable with tripartite arched attic vents and a bowed window outlined with a dentil molding. The primary entry way is off-centered and accessed via a protruding porch with a hipped roof and square columns. A large window above the porch features an arcade of small arched windows over a single fixed pane. Decorative brackets support the wide, over-hanging eaves on all elevations. The south-facing elevation features a first-story bay window and second-story double-hung windows. Original interior features include the staircase and newel post, five-panel doors, built-in china cabinet, patterned leaded windows, coved ceilings, and a variety of hardware. Alterations include the division of the house into three units in 1938, a 120 square-foot addition at the rear in 1945, and the enclosure of the northern portion of the original wrap-around porch, the addition of an exterior staircase on the rear, east-facing elevation, the removal of the mantle, a kitchen remodel, and the addition of a security door, all at unknown dates. In 2017, doors to two upstairs bedrooms were plastered over.

Rectangular in plan, the Pacific Ready-Cut Cottage is constructed of wood with wood clapboard cladding and a clipped side-gabled roof with composition shingles. Three steps lead to a cement platform in front of the centered primary entrance on the west-facing elevation. The door is flanked by rectilinear, hinged, sidelite windows and covered by a canopy with a gambrel roof and arch supported by scrolled corbels atop fluted pilasters. Stationary picture windows beneath awnings are on both sides of the front entry door. Fenestration on other elevations consists of a variety of double-hung wood windows. Original features on the interior include a built-in breakfast nook and china cabinet, a medicine cabinet, and nickel-plated and dull brass hardware. Besides the 1945 addition of a rear bedroom, the minimal alterations include the addition of a security door, the replacement of the front entry door, the removal of a built-in bed and dining room buffet, and the covering of the ceiling with acoustic stucco, all at unknown dates.

The citywide historic resources survey, SurveyLA, identified the Cordary Family Residence as eligible for designation at the local and state levels as a Contributor to a potential Angelus Vista Historic District, which is an important representative of a residential suburb with a significant concentration of Craftsman and Period Revival dwellings exhibiting quality of craftsmanship and

distinctive features. The identified district is also an excellent example of early 20<sup>th</sup> century streetcar suburbanization. The survey notes that the status of the Pacific Ready-Cut Cottage was unable to be determined since it is not fully visible from the street.

## **DISCUSSION**

The Cordary Family Residence and Pacific Ready-Cut Cottage successfully meets two of the Historic-Cultural Monument criteria.

The subject property “reflects the broad cultural, economic, or social history of the nation, state, or community” for its association with early residential development along streetcar commercial corridors at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the 1920s proliferation of kit houses in Los Angeles. As one of the few remaining structures of the early years of the Angelus Vista Tract, the Cordary Family Residence represents Los Angeles’ rampant real estate speculation and development trend of the first years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as well as the impact of the expansion of the streetcar. The 1923 addition to the property of the Pacific Ready-Cut Cottage reflects the city’s solution for the post-World War I housing shortage, while the transformation of the Cordary Family Residence to a boarding house during the 1930s, which was typical for many large Victorian-era homes of the time, addressed the city’s need for affordable housing during the Depression. Both properties are examples of how construction techniques influenced design and lifestyle and demonstrate how that affected broad patterns of development throughout the city.

The subject property also “embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural-type specimen, inherently valuable for study of a period, style or method of construction” as an excellent example of the Late Victorian architectural style and the kit house method of construction. The 1905 Cordary Family Residence captures the transition between the Victorian and Craftsman eras. Typical Victorian vertical fenestration and Craftsman-style horizontal fenestration are seen side-by-side, and the Victorian steeply pitched cross gabled roof is tempered by the low pitch of the hipped front porch roof. The brackets beneath the eaves also split the difference between Victorian ornateness and Craftsman simplicity. The Pacific Ready-Cut Cottage is an excellent example of the mass-produced single-family homes that filled Los Angeles in the 1920s. The factory mass production developed by Pacific Ready-Cut helped meet the country’s post-World War I surge in housing needs and was a forerunner to the many mass-produced housing tracts addressing the post-World War II housing crisis 25 years later.

Despite the previously mentioned alterations, the subject property appears to be intact and retains a sufficient level of integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association to convey its historic significance.

**CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (“CEQA”) FINDINGS**

State of California CEQA Guidelines, Article 19, Section 15308, Class 8 *“consists of actions taken by regulatory agencies, as authorized by state or local ordinance, to assure the maintenance, restoration, enhancement, or protection of the environment where the regulatory process involves procedures for protection of the environment.”*

State of California CEQA Guidelines Article 19, Section 15331, Class 31 *“consists of projects limited to maintenance, repair, stabilization, rehabilitation, restoration, preservation, conservation or reconstruction of historical resources in a manner consistent with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic buildings.”*

The designation of the Cordary Family Residence and Pacific Ready-Cut Cottage as an Historic-Cultural Monument in accordance with Chapter 9, Article 1, of The City of Los Angeles administrative Code (“LAAC”) will ensure that future construction activities involving the subject property are regulated in accordance with Section 22.171.14 of the LAAC. The purpose of the designation is to prevent significant impacts to a Historic-Cultural Monument through the application of the standards set forth in the LAAC. Without the regulation imposed by way of the pending designation, the historic significance and integrity of the subject property could be lost through incompatible alterations and new construction and the demolition of an irreplaceable historic site/open space. The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation are expressly incorporated into the LAAC and provide standards concerning the historically appropriate construction activities which will ensure the continued preservation of the subject property.

The use of Categorical Exemption Class 8 in connection with the proposed designation is consistent with the goals of maintaining, restoring, enhancing, and protecting the environment through the imposition of regulations designed to prevent the degradation of Historic-Cultural Monuments.

The use of Categorical Exemption Class 31 in connection with the proposed designation is consistent with the goals relating to the preservation, rehabilitation, restoration and reconstruction of historic buildings and sites in a manner consistent with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

Categorical Exemption ENV-2018-1372-CE was prepared on April 12, 2018.

**BACKGROUND**

On March 6, 2018, the Los Angeles City Council, acting upon a motion introduced by Councilmember Herb Wesson, initiated consideration of the subject property as a potential Historic-Cultural Monument. On March 29, 2018, a subcommittee of the Cultural Heritage Commission consisting of Commissioners Buena and Kanner visited the property, accompanied by staff from the Office of Historic Resources.