

DRAFT

FINDINGS AND DETERMINATION
OF THE CITY COUNCIL
OF THE CITY OF SANTA MONICA IN THE MATTER OF
THE DESIGNATION OF A LANDMARK
AND STRUCTURE OF MERIT

DENIAL OF A RESIDENTIAL BUILDING
LOCATED AT 1531 GEORGINA AVENUE
AS A CITY LANDMARK AND STRUCTURE OF MERIT

19ENT-0281

SECTION I. On July 15, 2019, the property owner, Real Santa Monica LLC, filed demolition permit application 19BLD-2418 for the residential building located on the subject property and requested a determination on the property's historic status in accordance with Interim Zoning Ordinance Number 2626 (CCS). On August 12, 2019 the Landmarks Commission conducted a preliminary hearing and determined that there was enough credible evidence in the record to conduct a full evidentiary hearing to determine whether the subject property is eligible for Landmark or Structure of Merit designation. The Landmarks Commission, having held a Public Hearing on November 11, 2019 designated the subject residence located at 1531 Georgina Avenue as a City Landmark and the property commonly known as 1531 Georgina Avenue as a Landmark Parcel. On November 21, 2019, the property owner filed a timely appeal of the Landmarks Commission's determination. The City Council, on appeal, having held a Public Hearing on March 10, 2020 hereby finds that the subject property does not meet one or more of the criteria for designation as a City Landmark as enumerated in SMMC 9.56.100 or as a Structure of Merit as enumerated in SMMC 9.56.080 based on the following findings:

Landmark Designation Criteria:

- (1) *It exemplifies, symbolizes, or manifests elements of the cultural, social, economic, political or architectural history of the City.*

The subject property is located in the North of Montana residential neighborhood in a tract adjacent to the earlier developed Palisades Tract and Gillette's Regency Square. By the 1930s, the neighborhood was mostly built out and contained some of the finest and most architecturally significant residences in the City. Currently, the neighborhood remains residential in character and still contains a notable concentration of 1920s and 1930s Period Revival style single-unit houses. The subject property was constructed in 1941, subsequent to the initial construction boom and early development period of residences in the area. Additionally, the building has been considerably altered since its original construction and no longer maintains sufficient integrity to reflect its original design and Period Revival-style architecture. Therefore, the property does not appear to exemplify the cultural, social, economic, political or early architectural development history of this particular area of the North of Montana neighborhood.

- (2) *It has aesthetic or artistic interest or value, or other noteworthy interest or value.*

The subject residence is a vernacular example of the Monterey Colonial-style that is simple in its overall design and includes common features of its architectural style. The building does not possess particular noteworthy concepts of design, or of aesthetic or artistic interest or value. Therefore, the subject property does not appear to satisfy this criterion.

- (3) *It is identified with historic personages or with important events in local, state or national history.*

No evidence was found to suggest that any of the prior owners or occupants of the property were persons of significance or made significant contributions to important events in local, state, or national history. Accordingly, the subject property does not satisfy this criterion.

- (4) *It embodies distinguishing architectural characteristics valuable to a study of a period, style, method of construction, or the use of indigenous materials or craftsmanship, or is a unique or rare example of an architectural design, detail or historical type valuable to such a study.*

The subject residence is a vernacular example of the Monterey Colonial-style that is simple in its overall design and includes common features of its architectural style. The building has been considerably altered since its original construction and no longer maintains sufficient integrity to reflect its original design and Period Revival-style architecture. Additionally, the building is not a unique or rare example of an architectural design, detail, or historical type, and it does not embody distinguishing characteristics valuable to study. Therefore, the subject residence does not appear to satisfy this criterion.

- (5) *It is a significant or a representative example of the work or product of a notable builder, designer or architect.*

Although the subject property was designed by notable architect Edla Muir who is considered a master architect amongst her peers and architectural critics, and is identified with other early female architects, the residence does not appear to be a significant or representative example of the architect's important work. Muir is a recognized female architect and is best known for her rich, evocative interpretations of the mid-century modern ranch style homes of the Post- World War II era, many of which incorporated the use of natural materials and the careful integration of outdoor and indoor spaces. Constructed in 1941, the subject Monterey Colonial Revival-style residence was designed during the early period in her professional career while working with prominent Santa Monica architect John Byers as a partner and associate. Muir would later establish her own architectural firm in 1942 and maintained the practice through the early 1970s, a period when Muir's work is best known for and recognized. The subject residence is not comparably stylistic to Muir's well-established and

recognized work and does not accurately represent a distinguishable phase in her career. Therefore, the subject property is not considered a significant or representative example of the work of Edla Muir, and therefore does not satisfy this criterion.

(6) *It has a unique location, a singular physical characteristic, or is an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community or the City.*

The subject residence is located in the North of Montana residential neighborhood that is currently developed with similar scale single-unit residence. It does not have a unique location or singular physical characteristic and is not an established or familiar visual feature of the neighborhood. Therefore, the subject property does not satisfy this criterion.

Structure of Merit Designation Criteria:

9.56.080(a). The structure has been identified in the City's Historic Resources Inventory.

The subject property is identified on the current Historic Resources Inventory (HRI) as a contributor to the potential Georgina Avenue Residential Historic District (5D3). The Georgina Avenue Residential Historic District is identified in the HRI based on its concentration of Period Revival residential architecture in Santa Monica. Upon further research and evaluation of the building permit history and existing building conditions of this particular property, the residence has been considerably altered since its original construction. While the property may retain its integrity of its location and setting, the property no longer maintains integrity of its design, materials, and workmanship. Based on the inappropriate alterations, the residence no longer maintains sufficient integrity to reflect its original design and Period Revival-style architecture. Based on this evaluation, the residence does not warrant its current listing on the City's Historic Resources Inventory and therefore is ineligible under this criterion.

9.56.080(b). The structure is a minimum of 50 years of age and meets the following criteria:

The subject property is a minimum of 50 years of age as it was constructed in 1941. Therefore, the structure is eligible for further consideration under the following criteria:

9.56.080(b)(1). Structure is a unique or rare example of an architectural design, detail or historical type.

The subject residence is a vernacular example of the Monterey Colonial-style that is simple in its overall design and includes common features of its architectural style. The building has been considerably altered since its original construction and no longer maintains sufficient integrity to reflect its original design and Period Revival-style architecture. Additionally, the building is not a unique or rare example of an architectural

design, detail, or historical type, and it does not embody distinguishing characteristics valuable to study. Therefore, the subject residence does not satisfy this criterion.

9.56.080(b)(2). It is representative of a style in the City that is no longer prevalent.

The subject property is not considered a representative example of a style in the City that is no longer prevalent. The property does not reflect the Monterey Colonial Revival-style due to the loss of integrity. Considering there are several other stylistic representative examples of the Monterey Colonial Revival-style remaining in the City, including along Georgina Avenue and in the greater North of Montana neighborhood, the subject residence does not appear to be a rare example of its style and therefore does not satisfy this criterion.

9.56.080(b)(3). The structure contributes to a potential Historic District.

The subject property is identified on the current Historic Resources Inventory (HRI) as a contributor to the potential Georgina Avenue Residential Historic District (5D3). The Georgina Avenue Residential Historic District is identified in the HRI based on its concentration of Period Revival residential architecture in Santa Monica. Upon further research and evaluation of the building permit history and existing building conditions of this particular property, the residence has been considerably altered since its original construction. While the property may retain integrity of its location and setting, the property no longer maintains integrity of its design, materials, and workmanship. In evaluating the integrity of the property as a whole, the residence does not appear to accurately reflect its Period Revival-style architecture that is identified as the significant feature of the potential district. Based on this evaluation, the residence does not warrant its current listing as a district contributor on the City's Historic Resources Inventory and therefore does not satisfy this criterion.

SECTION II. I hereby certify that the above Findings and Determination accurately reflect the final determination of the City Council of the City of Santa Monica on March 10, 2020 as determined by the following vote:

AYES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

NAYES:

Each and all of the findings and determinations are based on the competent and substantial evidence, both oral and written, contained in the entire record relating to the decision. All summaries of information contained herein or in the findings are based on the substantial evidence in the record. The absence of any particular fact from any such summary is not an indication that a particular finding is not based in part on that fact.

NOTICE

If this is a final decision not subject to further appeal under the Landmark and Historic District Ordinance of the City of Santa Monica, Santa Monica Municipal Code Chapter 9.56, the time within which judicial review of this decision must be sought is governed by Code of Civil Procedure Section 1094.6, which provision has been adopted by the City pursuant to Municipal Code Section 1.16.010.

Respectfully Submitted
March 10, 2020

Kevin McKeown, Mayor