



HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

APPLICATION: DHS2019-0010

AGENDA ITEM: AR-5

PREPARED BY: Austin Arnold
Planning Technician

MEETING DATE: March 27, 2018

TITLE: Determination of Historic Significance
1018 Norumbega Drive

APPLICANT: Mark Houston for Mark Houston Associates, Inc.
517 South Myrtle Avenue, Suite 201
Monrovia, CA 91016

REQUEST: Determine the historic significance of a residential building built within the historic period (50 years or older) that is proposed for total demolition.

BACKGROUND: The City's demolition review standards are set forth in Chapter 17.10 of the Monrovia Municipal Code and apply to main residential buildings in any zone that are fifty (50) years old or older proposing total demolition or significant alteration or removal of exterior building wall area and/or roof area. The demolition application requires the submittal of either documentation from a historic survey that indicates a California Historical Resource Status (CHRS) code for the subject building and other site data, a historic assessment and determination of CHRS code for the property by a qualified historic preservation consultant, or a written request for an exemption due to perceived obvious lack of historic significance.

The evaluation and determination made by the Historic Preservation Commission is in the form of approval of a Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR 523A) survey form which includes the assignment of a CHRS code.

The applicant has presented staff with a preliminary development plan that would involve the demolition of a one-story, Ranch house at 1018 Norumbega Drive that was built over 50 years ago (1950). Due to a perceived lack of historic significance, the applicant submitted a written request to be exempt from the demolition review requirements that was prepared by Jeanette A. McKenna, a professional historic preservation consultant.



Staff has determined that the documentation provided by McKenna includes a sufficient assessment of the property's lack of historic significance. The submittal includes: a summary of her research, a written

description of the house and its features, a history of the building permits, ownership history, and a list of structural alterations. McKenna also included photographs of the home's current conditions. Staff prepared the property's DPR form which assigned a status code of 6Z. A California Resources Historic Status (CRHS) code of 6Z means that the property is not eligible for listing or designation under federal, state, or local evaluation criteria.

ANALYSIS: Pursuant to Monrovia Municipal Code (MMC) Section 17.10.030, the demolition or removal of a main residential building that was constructed over 50 years ago requires HPC review. The purpose of this review is to encourage the preservation of potentially historic residential buildings and protect against the loss of potential historic landmarks. MMC Section 17.10.060 states that no demolition permit shall be approved or issued until the HPC, or the City Council on appeal, has made a determination of historic significance.

A field survey and evaluation of 1018 Norumbega was conducted by City staff, which included a review of the applicant's documentation and an inspection of the site and existing structure. This information was used to document its current conditions and evaluate the property for historic significance. Staff used the City of Monrovia's Historic Context Statement to establish a historic background and understand the property's place in the City's history. Staff referenced the Residential Development Theme (1941-1967), Housing Developments sub-theme and evaluated the architectural style using the registration requirements of the Ranch House period of significance (1935-1975).

Property History

The subject property is developed with a Ranch home and an attached two-car garage that was built in 1950. The 1,612 square foot home was constructed off a private driveway within the hillside and is not visible from Norumbega Drive. Based on the building permit history and Los Angeles County Assessor records that were provided by McKenna, there have been no additions made to the home since its original construction date. Records indicate that a swimming pool was added to the property in 1957 and a detached carport, with an attached accessory room, was constructed in 1962.

The available records provide limited information regarding the home ownership. William I. Gorham is listed as the original homeowner and architect/builder, and owned the property until 1953. William I. Gorham is not listed as a notable builder in the City's Context Statement. McKenna's documentation further indicates that Edmund W. Pitzer owned the home between 1953 and approximately 1974. David Heltsey, the current homeowner, acquired the property in 2011. There is no indication that these people were associated with any significant events important to Monrovia's history.

Current Conditions

The subject building is a one-story Ranch home, with a sprawling L-shape floor plan. The attached two-car garage is located on the northeast side of the structure. The home has a low-pitched gable and hipped roof that is clad in newer composition shingles. The roof has a narrow fascia and overhanging wood eaves. The entrance is located on the north elevation. To the west of the entrance is an original brick chimney.

Although the original massing of the structure is intact, staff's site inspection revealed that there has been significant exterior alterations to the structure's exterior wall finishes and windows. The primary façade of the home is currently clad in a combination of rough stucco, original board and batten and horizontal wood siding, as well as a non-original composite horizontal siding. The fenestration has also been substantially altered. All the original

windows were replaced with vinyl units. Furthermore, large spans of exterior wall area have been removed and replaced with oversized floor to ceiling windows. Several window and door openings have also been boarded up with plywood.

Historic Integrity

Staff assessed the property under the seven aspects of historic integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Staff further verified these integrity thresholds using the City's Historic Context Statement, which states that given the numerous examples of Ranch homes in the City, architecturally significant properties must possess a high integrity of design, materials, and workmanship.

The property does retain the integrity of location and setting since the house exists on its original site since construction. However, the integrity aspects of design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association have been lost due to the extensive alterations to the exterior wall area and fenestration. The only original exterior elements that remain include a small portion of wood siding which is in severe disrepair and the original brick chimney.

Evaluation Criteria

In order to be eligible for designation as a local landmark, the property would need to meet at least one of the seven criterion listed in MMC Section 17.40.060. The property would not meet any of those standards. The property at 1018 Norumbega Drive does not appear to be the product of a notable builder, designer, or architect, nor is it identified with persons or events that are significant in local, regional, state, or national history. The Context Statement notes that for a Ranch house to be considered for individual listing, it should retain all of its character-defining features, as there are numerous examples that exist in the City. The subject home does not retain its character defining features that are common to the Ranch architectural style. Furthermore, since the home is not visible from the public right-of-way due to its location within the hillside it would not be considered a contributor to potential district.

RECOMMENDATION: The applicant's exemption request demonstrates that the property at 1018 Norumbega Drive does not have architectural or known historic value that meets the criteria for local landmark status and is not a contributor to a potential historic district.

Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission approve the DPR and assign a CHRS Code of 6Z to the property. If the Historic Preservation Commission concurs with this recommendation, then the motion is appropriate:

Approve the DPR Form with a Status Code of 6Z.

Other Listings
Review Code

Reviewer

Date

Page 1 of 2 *Resource Name or #: 1018 Norumbega Drive

P1 Other Identifier: _____

*P2 Location: Not for Publication Unrestricted

a. County: Los Angeles

c. Address: 1018 Norumbega Drive City: Monrovia Zip: 91016

e. Other Locational Data: APN # 8523-009-007

P3a Description: (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries)

1018 Norumbega Drive was built in 1950 and is a 1,612 SF single-story, single-family, vernacular Ranch style home is located on a 1.11 acre lot that is accessible via private road off of Norumbega Drive and is not visible from the street. The home has a sprawling L-shaped footprint. The home has retained its low pitched, gable and hipped shape roof lines. The roof is clad with newer composition shingles. Roof elements include a simple narrow fascia and wood eave overhangs. The entrance is located on the north elevation. To the west of the entrance is an original brick chimney. There has been significant exterior alterations to the structure's exterior wall finishes and windows. The primary façade of the home is currently clad in a combination of rough textured stucco, original board and batten and horizontal wood siding, as well as a non-original foam/composite horizontal siding. The fenestration has also been substantially altered. All the original windows were replaced with vinyl units. Furthermore, large spans of exterior wall area have been removed and replaced with oversized floor to ceiling windows. Several window and door openings have also been boarded up with plywood. The property has a rock grotto to the west of the residence and a swimming pool at the rear of the residence.

P3b Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) HP2. Single family property

*P4 Resources Present: Building Structure Object Site District Element of District Other

P5a Photograph



P5b Description of Photo:

Facing South, February 2019

P6 Date Constructed: 1950

Source: LA County Assessor

P7 Owner and Address:

David Heltsey and Hong Li
1018 Norumbega Drive
Monrovia, CA 91016

P8 Recorded by:

City of Monrovia

P9 Date Recorded: February 2019

P10 Survey Type: Individual

P11 Report Citation:

Attachments: NONE Location Map Sketch Map Continuation Sheet Building, Structure, and Object Record
 Archaeological Record District Record Linear Feature Record Milling Station Record Rock Art Record
 Artifact Record Photograph Record Other (List):

Page 2 of 2 *Resource Name or #: 1018 Norumbega Drive

- B1 **Historic Name:** N/A
- B2 **Common Name:** N/A
- B3 **Original Use** Single-family Residence
- B4 **Present Use** Single-family Residence
- B5 **Architectural Style** Vernacular Ranch

B6 Construction History (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations)

1950 – Construction permit issued to owner William I. Gorham to construct residence and attached garage
 1953 – Permit issues to owner Edmund W. Pitzer for installation of a Cesspool
 1957 – Permit issues to owner Edmund W. Pitzer for in-ground Swimming Pool
 1962 – Permit issues to owner Edmund W. Pitzer for carport/Accessory Room Addition
 1974 – Permit issues to owner Edmund W. Pitzer for re-roofing of Residence and Garage

B7 **Moved:** No **Date Moved** N/A **Original Location** N.A

B8 **Related Features:**
None.

B9a **Architect:** William I. Gorham **b. Builder:** William I. Gorham

B10 **Significance:** **Theme:** Single-Family Residential, 1941-1967 **Area:** Monrovia

Period of Significance: 1935-1975 **Property Type** HP2 - Single Family Property

Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as well as integrity.

This structure does not appear to eligible for local landmark status or as a contributor to a potential historic district due to the significant alterations and deterioration to the property. The property at 1018 Norumbega Drive does not appear to be the product of a notable builder, designer, or architect, nor is it identified with persons or events that are significant in local, regional, state, or national history. The remaining design of the original home does not rise to the level necessary to be considered for local landmark status or as a contributor to a potential district. The City has numerous examples of properties that better reflect this era including homes that still convey popular architectural themes such as the mid-century modern inspired Ranch and the Cinderella Ranch houses.

B11 Additional Resource Attributes:

B12 **References:**
LA County Assessor's Records
City of Monrovia Building Permits

B13 Remarks

B14 **Evaluator/Date** City of Monrovia February 2019

