



HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

APPLICATION: DPR2019-0009

AGENDA ITEM: AR-1

PREPARED BY: John Mayer, AICP
Senior Planner

MEETING DATE: February 27, 2019

TITLE: Determination of Historic Significance
437 West Palm Avenue

APPLICANT: Gary French, Bowden Development, Inc.
212 West Foothill Boulevard
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 applicant has presented staff with a preliminary development plan that would involve the demolition of a one-story, Craftsman style house at 437 West Palm Avenue. Since the house was built over 50 years ago (1922), the proposed demolition requires that the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) first make a determination about the building's potential significance as an historic resource. On January 14, 2019, Gary French (Bowden Development Inc.) submitted a written request to be exempt from the demolition review requirements due to the home's perceived obvious lack of historic significance. According to Monrovia Municipal Code (MMC) Section 17.10.050(B) (3), the HPC may either reject the request or require additional documentation.

Staff determined that the applicant's documentation includes a sufficient assessment of the property's lack of historic significance. The submittal includes: a summary of his research, a written description of the house and its features, a history of the building permits, and a list of structural alterations. Mr. French included photographs of the home's current conditions and copies of the building permits on record with the City. Staff prepared the property's Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR 523A) survey 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 state or local evaluation criteria.

Figure 1. Photo of 437 West Palm Avenue as seen from the street. The structure was constructed in 1922.

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 437 West Palm Avenue was conducted by City staff including 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 (1903-1940) and evaluated the architectural style using the registration requirements of the Craftsman sub-theme period of significance (1905-1930).

Property History

A City-issued building permit shows that the house was built in 1922 for Geo Smyth, the original owner. The architect is unknown; however, the contractor listed on the permit is H. Clark. He built a one-car detached garage in 1923. H. Clark is not listed as a notable builder in the City's Context Statement. Mr. Smyth obtained another building permit in 1931 to build an addition. Staff believes that this construction was added to the east side of the house. A Sanborn Fire Insurance map (dated April 1927) indicates that there was previously a 22-foot side yard setback from the eastern property line. There is a visible seam showing where the original house ended and the 1931 addition began. In 1970, a permit was issued to owner Anthony Mangan to stucco the exterior of the house; three years later he built a screened patio in the back yard. The most recent owner, Charles Wallace, constructed two major additions in the 1980's, including a 480 square foot rear yard addition in 1982 and another 720 square foot living room, bathroom, and den addition in 1987. In 2000, the single car garage was demolished for the construction of a new two-car garage.

According to Mr. French's research, there is no information that indicates that any of the home's owners made any important contributions to local, regional, or state history. Page two of his documentation includes the resources he consulted; page five provides a list of the prior owners.

Current Conditions

The subject building is a single-story house that has some basic elements of the Craftsman architectural style as seen from the street. Several additions were constructed to the rear side of the house that has created a complex, irregular footprint on the lot. The original portion of the house features a low-pitched, cross-gabled roofline with the primary ridge running parallel to the front façade. The secondary ridge runs perpendicular along the rear addition with some cross-gabled features. Original roof elements include a thin wooden fascia and simple, unadorned knee braces. A projecting, partial-width front porch is located to the west on the primary (south) elevation.

The original portion of the house is clad in stucco. Two large openings in the stucco are visible on the rear side of the house which reveals clapboard siding underneath. Several of the original windows were replaced with vinyl and some new wood framed windows. A wooden railing was constructed along the walkway and front entrance steps. The square columns that support the front-gabled porch are clad in stucco and the original railing and

balusters were removed. A rectangular vent under the front gable peak is missing several vertical wooden slats. The exterior surfaces of the 1980's-era additions are primarily vertical wood siding with board and batten siding under the gable peaks. The two-car garage that was constructed in 2000 remains in the rear yard.

Historic Integrity

Staff assessed the property under the seven aspects of historic integrity including: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The house at 437 West Palm Avenue has lost many of the seven essential physical aspects of its original integrity. The property does have some integrity of location and setting in that the house has remained on its original site since construction in 1922, and the neighborhood setting is still single-family residential. However, the various exterior alterations have compromised the aspects of design, feeling, and association. The most notable alterations include the stucco siding, the replacement windows, and the removal of original porch details. The property has not retained integrity of materials and workmanship in that the only remaining elements, such as the eave features and front gable vent, are in poor condition.

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 house at 437 West Palm Avenue is not identified with persons or events that are significant in local, regional, state, or national history. It does not represent the work of a notable builder, designer, or architect. The house was substantially altered with the application of stucco siding, the removal of original windows and porch details, and the deteriorated condition of surviving Craftsman-style elements. Even if the house was restored, there are superior examples of the Craftsman style architecture throughout Monrovia.

The surrounding residential neighborhood was primarily developed between 1903 and 1940. During this residential development era, houses filled in the undeveloped, subdivided lots in an irregular manner and in some cases over more than a decade. Except for the Victorian style house at 415 West Palm Avenue (constructed in 1888), most of the homes in the surrounding neighborhood were built between 1904 and 1949. The subject house is surrounded by residences of various architectural styles including Craftsman, Victorian, Bungalow Cottage, and Minimal Traditional homes. Major alterations to the homes in the surrounding neighborhood are so significant that there is no association with the historic theme of residential development (1903-1940). As a result, the house at 437 West Palm Avenue does not represent an area of historic interest in the City.

RECOMMENDATION: The applicant's exemption request demonstrates that the property located at 437 West Palm Avenue 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 attached DPR form and assign a CHRS Code of 6Z to the property. If the Historic Preservation Commission concurs with this recommendation, then the following motion is appropriate:

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

EXHIBIT “A”

437 West Palm Avenue (DPR2019-0009)

DPR Form (DPR 523A)

Other Listings
Review Code

Reviewer

Date

Page 1 of 2 *Resource Name or #: 437 West Palm Avenue

P1 Other Identifier: _____

*P2 Location: Not for Publication Unrestricted

a. County: Los Angeles

c. Address: 437 West Palm Avenue City: Monrovia Zip: 91016

e. Other Locational Data: APN # 8505-009-027

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

The subject property is located on the north side of West Palm Avenue in a multi-family residential neighborhood. This single story (2,429 sq. ft.) house was originally built in 1922 and has some basic elements of the Craftsman architectural style. Several additions were constructed to the east side and rear of the house creating a complex, irregular footprint on the lot. The home features low-pitched, cross-gabled rooflines with the primary ridge running parallel to the front façade and the secondary ridge running perpendicular along the rear addition. Roof elements include a thin wooden fascia and simple, unadorned knee braces. A projecting, partial-width front porch is located to the west on the primary (south) elevation. Two square columns support the front-gabled porch where there is a rectangular vent with missing vertical slats under the gable peak. A wooden railing (without balusters) was constructed on each side of the entry sidewalk, the porch steps, and it runs parallel along the width of the porch. Within the porch area, the primary entrance consists of a metal screen door and a wooden door. There is a pair of double sash, six-over-one, wood-framed windows to the west of the front entrance and a pair of three-over-one, wood-framed casement windows to the east of it, just outside the porch area. Other windows on the front façade include a wood-framed rectangular eyebrow window and a set of three, two-over-one, wood-framed windows. The house is clad in stucco, which has covered the original clapboard siding.

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: (view, date)

Facing North, December 2018

P6 Date Constructed: 1922

Source: Building Permit

P7 Owner and Address:

Bowden Development Inc.

212 W Foothill Boulevard
Monrovia, CA 91016-2147

P8 Recorded by:

City of Monrovia

P9 Date Recorded: 02/2019

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 #: 437 West Palm Avenue

- B1 Historic Name:** _____
- B2 Common Name:** _____
- B3 Original Use** Single Family Residence
- B4 Present Use** Single Family Residence
- B5 Architectural Style** Craftsman Bungalow
- B6 Construction History** (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations)

1922 – Permit issued to owner Geo Smyth to construct a single family house.
 1923 – Permit issued to owner Geo Smyth to add a detached garage.
 1931 – Permit issued to owner Geo Smyth to build an addition.
 1943 – Permit issued to owner Carl Crockett to build a landing 2' off ground with two steps in front and two steps in back.
 1970 – Permit issued to owner Anthony J. Mangan to stucco exterior.
 1973 – Permit issued to owner Charles Wallace to build a screened patio on north end of building.
 1982 – Permit issued to Charles Wallace to build a 480 square foot addition to the rear side of house.
 1987 – Permit issued to Charles Wallace to build a 720 square foot living room, bathroom, and den addition.
 2000 – Permit to demolish single car garage and construct a new 2-car garage.

B7 Moved: No **Date Moved** _____ **Original Location** _____

B8 Related Features: None

B9a Architect: Unknown **b. Builder:** H. Clark (House & Garage)
Hotchkiss (1931 House Addition)

B10 Significance: **Theme:** Residential Development, 1903-1940 **Area:** City of Monrovia
Period of Significance: 1905-1930 **Property Type** HP2 - Single Family Property
 Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as well as integrity.

According to the City of Monrovia Historic Context Statement, the Craftsman Bungalow was one of the popular architectural styles of single-family homes between 1903 and 1940. To be eligible for historic significance, the house must retain most of its character-defining features, retain the essential aspects of integrity, and represent the best of its kind compared to similar properties. The house at 437 West Palm Avenue has retained very few of its character defining features. It possesses a few aspects of integrity including location and setting. However, the design, workmanship, material, and feeling/association are aspects of the property's integrity that have been diminished by deterioration and major alterations conducted after the property's period of significance. Deterioration includes the missing vertical slats in the gable peak of the front porch and weathered wooden knee braces under the eaves. Major alterations include the addition of stucco material to the exterior walls, removal of front porch details, replacement of original windows, and a large addition to the rear side of the house. Examples of Craftsman architecture are found throughout Monrovia that better exemplify the tenets of this style. Therefore, this building appears ineligible for designation at any level.

B11 Additional Resource Attributes: None

B12 References:
 City Building permits, Sanborn Fire Maps, Los Angeles County Tax Assessor

B13 Remarks

B14 Evaluator/Date City of Monrovia
February, 2019

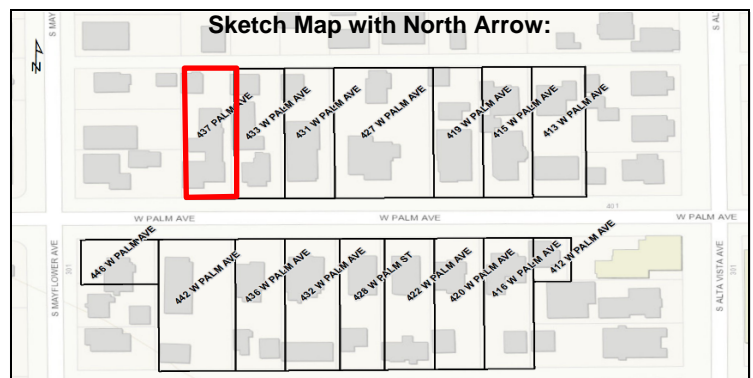


EXHIBIT “B”

Applicant Documentation

Determination of Historic Significance (437 W Palm Ave.)

To: City of Monrovia Planning Department

Subject: Request for Exemption for Historic Significance Assessment



437 W. Palm Avenue Monrovia, CA 91016

Architectural Description:

The property was investigated for any historic value through City Permits. The home was constructed in 1922 with no unique building materials on design. Over the years, the property has been altered numerous times, with and without permits.

The home is currently in major despair. The exterior of the house has water and termite damage as well as many building code violations.



The interior has exposed electrical wiring, there is no drywall on the plaster and the ceilings have numerous areas that lead into the attic areas. In addition to that, the water heaters are without venting, and there are trees growing into the structure and foundation.

Neighborhood:

437 W. Palm Ave. is not part of any historic area. However, there are 3 properties on Palm with historic value and they are: 323 W. Palm Ave., 328 W. Palm Ave., and 340 W. Palm Ave.

Resource Used:

- Davis – Picturesque Monrovia. Reference 917 – 9493 (No reference to property address)
- Monrovia Heritage – An Architectural Perspective (No reference to property address)
- Monrovia Centennial Review (No reference to property address)
- Home & Home Tours File Index (No reference to property address)
- Monrovia Blue Book (No reference to property address)

Historical Persons or Events:

No records of anyone with historical interest.



Notable Builders or Architect:

No records of anyone with historical interest.

Historical Grouping:

No records of any historical grouping.

437 W. Palm Avenue in Monrovia is not listed on any local, state, or federal registrar. The property does not have any recorded historical value connected to it. With the research having been done on 437 W. Palm Ave. and the result of no historical value, Bowden Development is asking for an exemption from providing a written Historical Assessment as required for the application for Discretionary Demolition.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Gary French', is written above the printed name.

Gary French

Bowden Development Inc.



Request for Exemption from Discretionary Demolition Review

Pursuant to Monrovia Municipal Code (MMC) Section 17.10.050(B)(3), please accept this written request to be exempt from providing a written historic assessment and prepared by a City-approved historic preservation expert for main residential buildings 50 years and older proposed for demolition. Based on the information provided in this written request, there is an obvious lack of historic significance.

I, Bowden Development Inc., have investigated the available resources as outlined in the City of Monrovia House Research Guide. The information has been gathered as follows:

Property Address: 437 W. Palm Ave. Monrovia, CA 91016

Applicant Name: Bowden Development, Inc. (Gary French) Title: Project Manager

Address: 212 W. Foothill Blvd. Monrovia, CA 91016

Phone: (626) 824-2925 Email: gfrench@bowdendevlopment.com

1. Year Built: 1922

Source:

- Los Angeles County Assessor
- City Building Permit

2. Location. Attach vicinity map.

3. Architectural/Design Description.

- Minimal Traditional

4. Roof.

Style:

- Gable

OFFICE (626)303-7917 FAX (626)358-1930

WWW.BOWDENDEVELOPMENT.COM

Material:

- Composition Shingles
- Rolled Roofing

5. Exterior Wall Material.

- Siding
 - > Wood
 - > T-111, Board & Bat
- Stucco Finish
 - > Sand

6. Windows.

- Altered. Windows material and/or openings have been replaced or modified.

Window Material:

- Wood
- Vinyl
- Aluminum

7. Unique Features.

- No unique features.

8. Other Important Property Description.

- Property has been added on multiple times. There has been stucco over siding.



9. Building Permit History.

- Builder: H. Clark

Date	Description	Property Owner	Architect/Builder
1/27/22	Build Type 5 Residential	Geo Smyth	H. Clark Builder
8/23/43	Front Back Porch Addition	Carl Crockelt	Owner Builder
6/10/64	100 AMP Electrical Service	Richard Walp	E. F. Lindeurauc
6/22/70	Stucco Exterior	Anthony J. Mangan Jr.	Owner Builder
11/2/78	Build Screened Patio	Charles N. Wallace	Owner Builder

10. Ownership History

Date	Name	Occupation	Source
1/27/22	Geo Smyth	N/A	City Permit
8/23/43	Carl Crokelt	N/A	City Permit
6/10/64	Richard Walp	N/A	City Permit
6/22/70	Anthony J. Mangan Jr.	N/A	City Permit
11/2/78	Charles N. Wallace	N/A	City Permit




11. Alterations.

Date	Description of Alteration
6/22/70	Stucco Exterior – Building Permit Provided
11/2/78	Screen Patio – Building Permit Provided

12. Sources List of sources of information uses to complete this form. Attach additional sheets.

I hereby certify under penalty of perjury that the information provided herein is to the best of my knowledge and belief, a true and complete statement. I understand that this written request is not considered approval and additional information may be request by the City of Monrovia.

Signature:  Date: 1-14-19

Print Name: GARY FRENCH Title: PROJECT MANAGER
(626) 824-2925