



HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

APPLICATION: DPR2019-0012

AGENDA ITEM: AR-1

PREPARED BY: Sheri Bermejo
Planning Division Manager

MEETING DATE: April 24, 2019

TITLE: Determination of Historic Significance
356 North Primrose Avenue

APPLICANT: Kent G. Morgan, Property Owner
356 North Primrose Avenue
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 an exterior remodel and single-story addition.

BACKGROUND: The applicant has presented staff with a preliminary development plan that would involve the exterior remodel and a single-story addition to a one-story, Ranch style house at 356 North Primrose Avenue. Since the house was built over 50 years ago (1949), the proposed alteration requires that the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) first make a determination regarding the building's potential significance as an historic resource. On March 12, 2019, Kent G. Morgan 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(8) (3), the HPC may either reject the request or require additional documentation.

Staff determined that the documentation includes a sufficient assessment of the property's lack of historic significance. The applicant's submittal includes: a summary of his research, a history of the building permits, an ownership history, and both current and historical photos of the subject home. 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 federal, state, or local evaluation criteria.

ANALYSIS: Pursuant to Monrovia Municipal Code (MMC) Section 17.10.030, a home remodel that proposes to alter more than 50% of a residential building's roof area, 50% or more of a building's total exterior wall area, or 25% or more of any exterior wall facing a public street that was constructed over 50 years ago requires a Discretionary Demolition Permit. MMC Section 17.10.060 states that no demolition permit shall be approved or issued until the HPC has made a determination of historic significance. The home improvement project proposed by the applicant would exceed the maximum alteration threshold for exterior wall modification.

A field survey and evaluation of 356 North Primrose 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 (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 located at the southeast corner of North Primrose Avenue and West Hillcrest Boulevard. The lot is currently developed with a single-family Ranch style house and a detached accessory structure that includes two attached garages, a workshop, and a guesthouse.

The City's building permit history indicates that the land was once owned by JF Kerrigan and previously developed with two dwellings built by the Tifal Brothers in 1914. Although a demolition permit does not exist on file, which is not uncommon, building permit history suggests that the 1914 homes were demolished to make way for the residential development that exists on the property today. The following table outlines the significant building permit history relating to new construction.

Building Permit History - 356 North Primrose Avenue

Date	Owner	Contactor	Description
06/04/48	Col. Morris E. Conable	C.G. Jenkins (Architect Unknown)	Garage and Storage Structure
04/27/49	Col. Morris E. Conable	C.G. Jenkins (Architect Unknown)	Dwelling
09/25/83	Mike McComsey	Steven Saylor, Draftsman	Garage Addition (2 additional parking stalls, workshop, and mezzanine)
10/31/95	Kent and Sharon Morgan	Do a Parking Roofing	Re-Roof House and Garage
07/01/96	Kent and Sharon Morgan	J&D Construction	Master Bathroom Addition and Front Entry Remodel (130 SF)
06/17/02	Kent and Sharon Morgan	Thom Construction	Kitchen Remodel and Addition (224 SF)

A review of the permit history reveals that the main dwelling has undergone significant alterations that are visible from the public right-of-way since its original construction. In 1995, the original shake shingle roofing was replaced with composition shingles. In 1996, the front entry was remodeled and a master bathroom was added on the north side of the house.

As illustrated in the photos on page 3, the front entry remodel converted most of the home's original sheltered entry to living area and relocated the front door to the west elevation. The front entry door was previously perpendicular to the primary façade. In addition to the 130 square foot master bath addition, an original jalousie window to the north (left) of the front door was removed and replaced with two double-hung windows. Lastly, all new board and batten siding was installed on the building's exterior.



356 N Primrose - Original Home Circa 1995 (Facing West)



356 N Primrose – Home after 1996 Addition - March 2019 (Facing West)

In 2002, City permits were issued for a 224 square foot kitchen addition and remodel which was located on the east side (rear) of the building. During this project, several doors and windows were removed and updated.

The exemption request includes the ownership history. The current property owners are the third owners of the property, and have resided there for over twenty-five years.

Staff reviewed the City's Directories and the Monrovia Legacy Project files to verify if the early homeowners (Col. Morris E. Conable and Mike McComsey) made any important contributions to local, regional, or state history. The Legacy Project contained a historical outline about Col. Morris E. Conable's parents who resided at 415 North Primrose Avenue and a brief history on Col. Morris E. Conable. However, the historical outline did not yield sufficient information to suggest he made any important contributions to local, regional, or state history. A copy of the historical outline is attached to the report.

Current Conditions

The subject building is a single-story house that has Ranch architectural design elements as seen from the street. The house features a low-pitched, side-gabled roofline with exposed wood rafters and a narrow eave. The original shake roofing material was replaced with composition shingles. The primary elevation faces North Primrose Avenue, and features a recessed front entryway.

To the right of the entry is a wide brick chimney. The siding on the home is board and batten. Many of the original windows have been replaced with newer wood windows, and several were removed during the 1996 and 2002 additions and remodels.

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 356 North Primrose Avenue has lost several 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 1949. However, the various exterior alterations have compromised the aspects of design, feeling, and association. Although the recent additions have incorporated the original siding and window pattern, the original massing of the home has not been retained. The most notable alterations include the addition on the north side of the dwelling, which is visible on the primary elevation, as well as the remodel of the front entry, windows and roofing material. The Context Statement indicates that given the numerous examples of Ranch homes in the City, individual properties must contain high integrity of design, materials, and workmanship and good integrity of all other aspects. In comparison to other Ranch style homes that have been landmarked in the City, the subject home has simpler Ranch architectural elements. Therefore it would not qualify as a good Ranch example containing high integrity of design and workmanship.

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 356 North Primrose 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 master bathroom addition, the remodel of the front entry, and the replacement of windows and roofing materials.

The homes within the surrounding residential neighborhood were developed between 1916 and 2002, and have a variety of architectural styles including Victorian, Tudor, Spanish Revival, Ranch, Minimal Tradition, and modern construction types.

Given the wide range in construction dates, the neighborhood is not associated with one particular period of significance. Furthermore, the neighborhood does not possess a visual continuity of residential development given the wide range of architectural styles and sizes of homes within this block of North Primrose Avenue. Therefore, the subject neighborhood would not qualify as a potential district.

RECOMMENDATION: The applicant's exemption request demonstrates that the property located at 356 North Primrose 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.

Other Listings
Review Code

Reviewer

Date

Page 1 of 2 *Resource Name or #: 356 North Primrose

P1 Other Identifier: _____

*P2 Location: Not for Publication Unrestricted

a. County: Los Angeles

c. Address: 356 North Primrose Avenue City: Monrovia Zip: 91016

e. Other Locational Data: APN # 8519-010-022

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

The subject property is located at the southeast corner of North Primrose Avenue and West Hillcrest Boulevard in a single family residential neighborhood. This single story (2,539 sq. ft.) house was originally built in 1949 and has some basic elements of the Ranch architectural style. In addition to the single family residence, the lot contains a detached accessory structure that includes two attached garages, an workshop, and an guesthouse.

The house features a low-pitched, side-gabled roofline with exposed wood rafters and a narrow eave. The original shake roofing material was replaced with composition asphalt shingles. The primary elevation faces North Primrose Avenue, and features a recessed front entryway. To the right of the entry is a wide brick chimney. The siding on the home is board and batten. Many of the original windows have been replaced with newer wood windows, and several were removed during the 1996 and 2002 additions and remodels.

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 East, March 2019

P6 Date Constructed: 1949

Source: Building Permit

P7 Owner and Address:

Kent and Sharon Morgan

356 North Primrose Avenue
Monrovia, CA 91016

P8 Recorded by:

City of Monrovia

P9 Date Recorded: 04/2019

P10 Survey Type: Individual

P11 Report Citation: None

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):

B1 **Historic Name:** _____

B2 **Common Name:** _____

B3 **Original Use** Single Family Residence

B4 **Present Use** Single Family Residence

B5 **Architectural Style** Ranch

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

- 1948 – Permit issued to owner Col. Morris E. Conable to construct residence and attached garage.
- 1949 – Permit issued to owner Col. Morris E. Conable to construct dwelling.
- 1983 – Permit issued to owner Mike McComsey to construct a garage addition (2 additional parking stalls, workshop, and mezzanine).
- 1996 – Permit issued to owners Kent and Sharon Morgan to construct a master bathroom addition and front entry remodel.
- 2002 – Permit issued to owners Kent and Sharon Morgan to construct kitchen addition and remodel.

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

B8 **Related Features:** None

B9a **Architect:** _____ **b. Builder:** C.G. Jenkins

B10 **Significance:** **Theme:** Residential Development, 1941-1967 **Area:** City of 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.

According to the City of Monrovia Historic Context Statement, the Ranch House was one of the popular architectural styles of single-family homes between 1935 and 1975. To be eligible for historic significance, the house must retain all of its character-defining features, retain the essential aspects of integrity, and represent the best of its kind compared to similar properties.

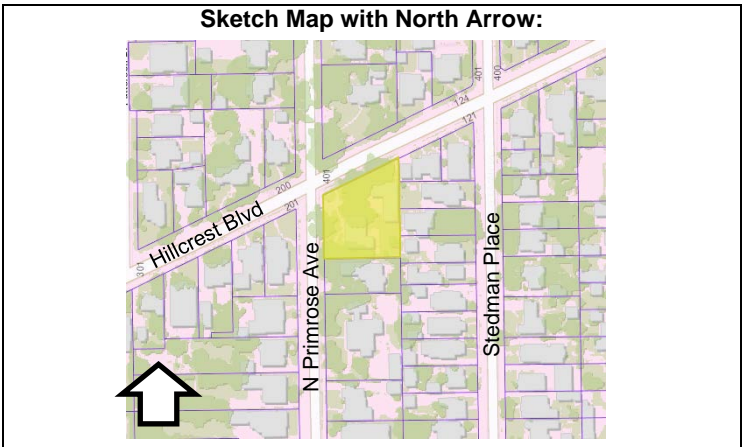
The house at 356 North Primrose Avenue has retained very few of its character defining features. The property does have some integrity of location and setting in that the house has remained on its original site since construction in 1949. However, the various exterior alterations have compromised the aspects of design, feeling, and association. Although the recent additions have incorporated the original siding and window pattern, the original massing of the home has not been retained. The most notable alterations include the addition on the north side of the dwelling, which is visible on the primary elevation, as well as the remodel of the front entry, windows and roofing material. In comparison to other Ranch style homes that have been landmarked in the City, the subject home has simpler Ranch architectural elements. Therefore it would not qualify as a good Ranch example containing high integrity of design and workmanship.

B11 **Additional Resource Attributes:** None

B12 **References:**
 City Building permits, Los Angeles County Tax Assessor

B13 **Remarks**

B14 **Evaluator/ Date** City of Monrovia
 April, 2019





MONROVIA

CALIFORNIA

Request for Exemption from Discretionary Demolition Review

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
Building Neighborhood and Business Services Planning

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.

KENT MORGAN (applicant/property owner) have investigated the available resources as outlined in the City of Monrovia House Research Guide. The information has been gathered as follows:

Property Address:

356 NORTH PRIMROSE AVE

Applicant Name: KENT MORGAN Title:

OWNER

Address:

SAME

Phone:

818 424 8091

Email: KENTMORGAN@VERIZON.NET

1. Year Built: 1950
Source (check applicable boxes):

- Los Angeles County Assessor
- City Building Permit 233
- City Permit Book
- Sanborn Map
- Other _____

2. Location. Attach vicinity map. LOT 63 & 64 MONROVIA HEIGHTS TRAC
MB 11-105

3. Architectural/Design Description.
Check the appropriate box. Attach pictures of all four sides of the home:

- Victorian
 - Stick Style
 - Queen Anne
 - Shingle Style
 - Folk Victorian
- American Foursquare
- Transitional Craftsman
- Craftsman
- Spanish Colonial Revival
- Mediterranean Revival
- Tudor Revival
- Art Deco
- Streamline Moderne
- Minimal Traditional
- Mid-Century Modern



MONROVIA

CALIFORNIA

Request for Exemption from Discretionary Demolition Review

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
Building Neighborhood and Business Services Planning

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 requested by the City of Monrovia.

Signature: 

Date: 3/10/2019

Print Name: KENT MORGAN Title: OWNER

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RECEIVED

MAR 12 2019

Dept of Community Development
City of Monrovia

3/12/2019

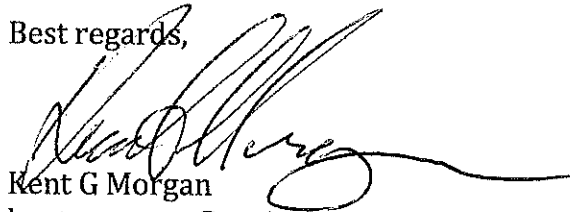
Monrovia Community Development

RE: Residential Demolition Review Exception Request
356 North Primrose Ave
Monrovia, CA 91016

After reviewing the supporting documents outlined in the exemption request, our property located at 356 North Primrose Ave in Monrovia is void of any discernable features or historical significance.

- The house was constructed in 1950 as a generic single story residence. There are no unique features as to its construction.
- Having researched the available permits for the property, we could not identify the architect but we did identify the builder using the permit history.
- Being the third owner of the property for 25 years , we completed three significant remodels to the main residence that altered its original appearance. Documentation attached.
- Based on the fact that our property does not have any historical significance, we would like to request approval of our demolition review exemption request.

Best regards,


Kent G Morgan
kentgmorgan@verizon.net
818-424-3091

356 North Primrose Building Permit History

DATE	OWNER	SOURCE	Description
6/4/48	M. E. Conable	City Permit 1276	Garage and Storage Structure
4/27/50	M. E. Conable	City Permit 233	House Construction Final
9/25/73	M.E. Conable	City Permit see copy	Re Roof Main House
10/3/83	Mike McComsey	City Permit 17287	Garage & Shop Addition
6/1/95	Kent & Sharon Morgan	City Permit 1296-7-102	Master Bathroom Addition
10/31/95	Kent & Sharon Morgan	City Permit see copy	Re Roof Main House & Guest House
9/1/96	Kent & Sharon Morgan	City Permit DRC95-91	Property Fence Reconstruction
6/2/99	Kent & Sharon Morgan	City Permit B9900611	Re Roof Main House
12/11/02	Kent & Sharon Morgan	City Permit BLD2002-06057	Kitchen Remodel & Addition

356 North Primrose Ownership History

DATE	OWNER	SOURCE	Description
6/4/48	M. E. Conable	City Permit 1276	Garage and Storage Structure
4/27/50	M. E. Conable	City Permit 233	House Construction Final
11/21/86	Mike McComsey	LA County Assessor	
4/30/93	Kent & Sharon Morgan	LA County Assessor	Current owners

415 N. Primrose Avenue

Morris Robinson Conable was born December 9, 1852, the son of Frederick and Fidelia Doud Conable. He grew to maturity in Cortland County, New York, and completed his education at Cornell University, graduating in 1876. He began teaching after graduation, first in Cortland County and later in Canton, New York, where he married his first wife, Jeannette Perry, in 1882. She died from complications of childbirth in 1883, and their baby daughter Jeannette was entrusted to his parents.

By 1886, Morris Conable was living in Philadelphia, employed as a teacher. Here he met Florence Easton, also a teacher, and they were married in Philadelphia in 1888. Florence was born October 19, 1858 in Detroit, Michigan. Shortly afterward the newly-married couple moved to St. Paul, Minnesota, where their son Morris Easton Conable was born February 18, 1889. Jeannette Conable became part of her father's household in 1892.

In 1904 Morris R. Conable moved his family to Monrovia. The exact reason for the move is not known, but it may well have been for health reasons. Monrovia was becoming known as a center for the treatment of tuberculosis, and Dr. Francis Pottenger opened his sanitarium here in 1903. Morris R. Conable died September 15, 1907 in Monrovia, and was buried at the Cortland Rural Cemetery near his childhood home in Cortland County, New York.

After her husband's death, Florence Conable decided to remain in Monrovia. The Conable family had apparently been renting, as there is no indication in the tax records of property ownership prior to 1909, when Florence Conable owned the south half of Lot 6 in Block N of the Monroe Addition. That lot was improved with a small house. Two years later the tax records indicate the existence of the much larger house there today.

Jeannette Conable married William Bovee, a member of an early Monrovia family, in 1910. After their marriage, they lived in San Francisco and Tulare County, California. They were the parents of three daughters. After William Bovee's death Jeannette followed her parents' profession of teaching.

Morris E. Conable graduated from Monrovia High School in the Class of 1907. For a while he attended Throop Polytechnic Institute, now Cal Tech, in Pasadena, and then he went to work, first for the Monrovia Electric Company and later for the American National Bank, the predecessor to the Monrovia Office of Bank of America. Morris married Leska Littlefield in 1916. With the outbreak of World War I, he enlisted in the Army and became a career military man, returning to Monrovia occasionally between assignments. After his retirement, Morris and Leska made Monrovia their permanent home, living down the street from Florence Conable at 356 N. Primrose.

With the exception of the years 1923 and 1924, when she rented the house and lived at 234 N. Canyon, Florence Conable spent the rest of her long life in the house. She was active in the life of her community as a member of the Woman's Club, the Monrovia

Library Board, and the local branch of the American Red Cross. She died August 28, 1948 at nearly ninety years of age. Her choice was to be buried next to her husband in the Cortland Rural Cemetery. Leska Conable died in Monrovia July 14, 1950, and Morris E. Conable died in Monrovia April 7, 1971. They too are buried in the Cortland Rural Cemetery.

After Florence Conable's death, 415 N. Primrose became the home of Erastus E. Miller and his wife Robina, both natives of Missouri. They apparently moved to Monrovia because their son, Malcolm, was already living here with his wife, Ruth. The senior Millers spent the rest of their long lives in the house as well. Erastus Miller died May 15, 1971 at the age of 89 years, and Robina Miller died June 21, 1974 at the age of 91 years. The present owner, who has owned the property since May of 1984, has a longevity challenge to meet!