



**City of Santa Ana
20 Civic Center Plaza, Santa Ana, CA 92701
Historic Resources Commission Staff Report
September 5, 2024**

Topic: HRCA No. 2024-06, HRC No. 2024-04, HPPA No. 2024-09 – Smith House (2539 French Street)

RECOMMENDED ACTION

1. Adopt a resolution approving Historic Resources Commission Application No. 2024-06 and Historic Register Categorization No. 2024-04 (Exhibit 1).
2. Recommend that the City Council authorize the City Manager and Clerk of the Council to execute the attached Mills Act agreement with François and Roxana Fyad, subject to non-substantive changes approved by the City Manager and City Attorney (Exhibit 2).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

François and Roxana Fyad are requesting approval to designate an existing Minimal Traditional-style residence located at 2539 French Street to the Santa Ana Register of Historical Properties, as well as approval to execute a Mills Act agreement with the City of Santa Ana. The property qualifies for listing in the Santa Ana Register of Historical Properties under Criterion 1 as an intact example of a Minimal Traditional-style house. It is worthy of “Contributive” categorization because it a good example of the Minimal Traditional style, including its compact, irregular plan; moderately rough stucco cladding; asymmetrical façade and double-hung wood-sash windows, among other features.

DISCUSSION

Project Location and Site Description

The subject property is located on the west side of French Street in the Park Santiago neighborhood in Santa Ana. The site contains a 1,508-square-foot, Minimal Traditional-style residence and detached garage, on a 6,662-square-foot residential lot (Exhibit 3).

Analysis of the Issues

Historical Listing

In March 1999, the City Council approved Ordinance No. NS-2363 establishing the Historic Resources Commission and the Santa Ana Register of Historical Properties. The Historic Resources Commission may, by resolution and at a noticed public hearing, designate as a historical property any building or part thereof, object, structure, or site having importance to the history or architecture of the city in accordance with the criteria set forth in Section 30-2 of the Santa Ana Municipal Code (SAMC). This project entails applying the selection criteria established in Chapter 30 of the Santa Ana Municipal Code (Places of Historical and Architectural Significance) to determine if this structure is eligible for historic designation to the Santa Ana Register of Historical Properties. The first criterion for selection requires that the structures be 50 or more years old.

The structure identified meets the selection criteria for inclusion on the Santa Ana Register of Historical Properties pursuant to criteria contained in Section 30-2 of the Santa Ana Municipal Code, as the structure is 72 years old and is a sound example of period architecture. No known code violations exist on record for this property.

The Smith House is architecturally significant as an intact example of Minimal Traditional-style house in Santa Ana. The original building permit is dated February 21, 1952, and indicates it was built as a six-room residence and garage for owner Norman Herzig by contractor Charles Lawrence at a value of \$12,000. The original architect is unknown. Herzig appears to have been affiliated with the property only during the time of the initial building permit, and by May 19, 1952, the property had been transferred to H. Mumper (misspelled on the permit as "Mumfer"). A 1953 city directory listing shows A.F. Mumper as the property's occupant. Mumper continued to reside at that address until at least 1954, when the The Register identified the subject property as his address and identified the property as the site of a meeting of the Orange County Renters Association, of which Mumper was the secretary (The Register June 11, 1953). By 1960, Edward L. Smith was the property's occupant, most likely with his wife Blanche U. and their family (Ancestry.com 2011). Edward was an insurance salesman by profession and owned the Lee Smith insurance agency. While it is unknown when Edward died, at the at the time of Blanche's passing in 1975, she was the sole owner of the property (Anaheim Bulletin August 8, 1975). Sources identifying owners and occupants of the property are not available between 1976 and 2023. By 2023, City planning records show, the property's current owners and residents François and Roxana Fyad took ownership of the property.

The Smith House is a modest, intact example of a one-story, Minimal Traditional-style single-family residence and detached garage. It is characterized by a compact and irregular plan, cross-hipped roof with asphalt shingles and moderately wide boxed eaves, and stucco exterior cladding. The porch and front entrance are located on the front-facing

west façade, adjacent to a short wing. There, the solid wood door is accompanied by a single sidelight with a ribbed pane and sheltered by a porch roof with a wood post and wood railing system with an offset grid design. To the left of the porch, a tripartite focal window consists of a multi-pane fixed wood-sash window, flanked by a pair of double-hung wood-sash windows of similar style. Overall, the series of broad rectangular panes provides a horizontal emphasis to the façade, suggestive of the influence of architectural Modernism. Windows elsewhere on the residence feature double-hung wood sashes of various sizes. There are two entrances at the rear, one facing east, the other facing south from the rear wing. Each is accessed by straight concrete steps leading to glazed wood doors of varied design. The residence has been reroofed and outfitted with rooftop solar panels but generally retains integrity to its historical construction.

The detached garage, located southeast of the residence, was constructed in a style similar to the residence. It has a rectangular plan, hipped roof with asphalt shingles and closed eaves, and stucco siding. A non-original metal roll-up garage door is located on the main (west) façade, opening toward a concrete-paved driveway leading to French Street. A wood-panel door and double-hung wood-sash window are located on the secondary west façade.

Character-defining features of the Smith House include, but may not be limited to: compact, irregular plan; asymmetrical primary (west) façade; moderately-pitched cross-hipped roof; moderately wide roof overhang with boxed eaves; stucco siding with moderate texture throughout; brick external chimney; wood-frame multi-pane double-hung wood-sash windows; tripartite wood-sash focal window with horizontal emphasis, porch rail with offset grid design, and front door with accompanying sidelight with ribbed pane. The Smith House qualifies for listing in the Santa Ana Register of Historical Properties under Criterion 1 as an intact example of a Minimal Traditional-style home in Santa Ana. Located in Park Santiago, the house cost \$12,000 to build in 1952. The recommended categorization is “contributive” because it is a good example of the Minimal Traditional style and contributes to the history and character of the neighborhood.

Mills Act Agreement

Ordinance No. NS-2382 authorized the Historic Resources Commission to execute Historic Property Preservation Agreements (HPPA), commonly known as Mills Act agreements for eligible properties (Exhibit 2). To be eligible for the Mills Act, the property must be listed on the Santa Ana Register of Historical Properties. The Historic Resources Commission Application and Historic Register Categorization actions proposed for this site authorize the listing of the property on the local register. The agreement provides monetary incentives to the property owner in the form of a property tax reduction in exchange for the owner’s voluntary commitment to maintain the property in a good state of repair as necessary to maintain its character and appearance. Once recorded, the agreement generates a different valuation method in determining the property’s assessed

value, resulting in tax savings for the owner. Aside from the tax savings, the benefits include:

- Long term preservation of the property and visual improvement to the neighborhood
- A mechanism to provide for property rehabilitation
- Incentives for potential buyers to purchase historic structures
- Discouraging inappropriate alterations to the property

The property has no identified unauthorized modifications. Upon consideration of the application, it is recommended that the City enter into a Historic Property Preservation Agreement subject to a completion of future improvements as described in an attached Work Plan.

Overall, future improvements (Work Plan) proposed by the homeowner during the initial ten years of the Mills Act Agreement include the following: repair trim as needed. Staff also proposes the following improvements: continued repair and repainting of roof overhang, repainting of the residence and garage, replacement of the non-compatible south-facing rear door with a more appropriate alternative, and trimming and continued maintenance of front yard shrubs and other landscaping to ensure a clear view of the residence's primary (west) façade from the public right-of-way. Staff will ensure that the proposed work will be done sensitively and will maintain the property's character-defining features as part of the Mills Act Agreement for this property.

As part of the Mills Act approval process, staff will work with the applicant to ensure that a bronze plaque is installed honoring and recognizing the structure. The plaque will include the historic name, address, year built, and local historic register designation. Lastly, the site will be subject to general maintenance and upkeep requirements including, but not limited to, replacement or restoration of damaged character-defining features, landscaping upkeep, painting, etc. Upon consideration of the application, it is recommended that the City enter into a Historic Property Preservation Agreement to enable the Mills Act.

Public Notification

The subject site is located within the Park Santiago Neighborhood Association. The president of this Neighborhood Association was notified by mail 10 days prior to this public hearing. In addition, the project site was posted with a notice advertising this public hearing, a notice was published in the Orange County Reporter and mailed notices were sent to all property owners within 500 feet of the project site. At the time of this printing, no correspondence, either written or electronic, has been received from any members of the public.

HRCa No. 2024-06, HRC No. 2024-04, HPPA No. 2024-09 – Smith House (2539 French Street)

September 5, 2024

Page 5

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines, the project is exempt from further review pursuant to Section 15331 of the CEQA Guidelines (Class 31 – Historical Resource Restoration/Rehabilitation) as these actions are designed to preserve historic resources. Based on this analysis, a Notice of Exemption, Environmental Review No. 2024-67 will be filed for this project.

FISCAL IMPACT

The Historic Property Preservation Agreement will reduce the Property Tax revenue account 01102002-50011 to the City by an estimated \$634.45 annually, for a period of not less than ten years.

EXHIBIT(S)

1. Resolution
2. Mills Act Agreement
3. 500-Foot Radius Map
4. Copy of Public Notice

Submitted By: James Williams, Contract Planner

Approved By: Minh Thai, Executive Director of Planning and Building Agency, Planning and Building Agency