



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

Topic: HPPA No. 2024-12 – The Whitten House (1106 South Parton Street)

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Recommend that the City Council authorize the City Manager and City Clerk to execute a Historic Property Preservation Agreement (Mills Act) with Jennifer Schutza for the property located at 1106 South Parton Street, subject to non-substantive changes approved by the City Manager and City Attorney (Exhibit 1).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Jennifer Schutza is requesting approval to execute a Mills Act Agreement with the City of Santa Ana at an existing residence located at 1106 South Parton Street that is currently listed on the Santa Ana Register of Historical Properties.

DISCUSSION

Project Location and Site Description

The subject property, known as the Whitten House, consists of an existing one-story Craftsman bungalow style residence that is approximately 1,125 square feet in size on a 6,100-square-foot residential lot. The Whitten House was added to the Santa Ana Register of Historical Properties ("Register") in 2003 and categorized as "Key."

Analysis of the Issues

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. The property is listed on the Register and categorized as Key, making it eligible for a Mills Act Agreement. 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
- Allows for a mechanism to provide for property rehabilitation
- Provides additional incentive for potential buyers to purchase historic structures
- Discourages inappropriate alterations to the property

In 2003, the Historic Resources Commission placed the Whitten House on the Register and within the “Key” category for its distinctive architectural style and quality as an example of Craftsman styling. Character-defining exterior features of the Whitten House that should be preserved include, but may not be limited to: materials and finishes (wood, clapboard, stucco); roof configuration and treatment; massing and composition; original doors and windows; porch and porte-cochere; and architectural detailing (porch supports, beams and braces, window surrounds).

The property was briefly owned by the City of Santa Ana in 2009. In August 2009, residential alteration applications were approved by the Planning and Building Agency (PBA) for the following exterior modifications: reroof house and attached garage, removing existing composition shingles and replacing them in-kind; change-out (11) windows and front and rear doors; and wood porch posts replaced with redwood or pressure-treated wood. All work was finalized in September 2009 and all exterior modifications were consistent with the Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation. The property was subsequently sold the current property owner in April 2010. It was noted during the 2024 site visit that all aforementioned items were implemented to staff's satisfaction at the subject property.

Additional future improvements proposed by the homeowner during the initial ten years of the Mills Act Agreement include the repair of all deteriorated areas of the wood eaves and repainting of the residence. 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 required Work Plan, staff is recommending additional improvements, including landscape improvements (e.g., trimming of all of the trees around the property, trim overgrown foliage throughout the front yard and rear yard, etc.), preserve/restore exterior wood elements, and repair wood siding along the north elevation of the detached garage, located towards the rear of the 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. These improvements will be subject to review and approval by staff. Upon consideration of the application, it is recommended that the City enter into a Historic Property Preservation Agreement.

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. 2024-70, 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 \$407.48 annually, for a period of not less than ten years.

EXHIBIT(S)

1. Mills Act Agreement
2. Vicinity Map – 1106 South Parton Street
3. Site Photos – 1106 South Parton Street
4. Action Minutes HRC (1106 South Parton Street)

Submitted By:
James Williams, Contract Planner

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