



REPORT to the MAYOR and MEMBERS of the CITY COUNCIL
From the CITY MANAGER

DATE: October 11, 2022

SUBJECT: PROJECT 2022-0770 (BINOTTI) – CONSIDERATION OF A REQUEST TO DESIGNATE THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 9190 BRIER ROAD, APN 490-402-72-00 IN THE R1S-BT (SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL / BRIER TRACT OVERLAY) ZONE AS A HISTORIC LANDMARK AND TO ESTABLISH A PROPERTY PRESERVATION (MILLS ACT) AGREEMENT FOR THE SITE

ISSUING DEPARTMENT: Community Development

SUMMARY:

Issues:

Does the property at 9190 Brier Road known as the Stanley and Virginia Scott House qualify for designation as a historic landmark, and should the City enter into property preservation (Mills Act) agreement with the owner?

Recommendation:

The Historic Preservation Commission recommends that the City Council adopt resolutions to 1) designate the Stanley and Virginia Scott House at 9190 Brier Road as a historic landmark (**Attachment A**) and 2) enter into a Mills Act Property Preservation Agreement with the property owner (**Attachment B**).

Fiscal Impact:

The amount of property tax to the City would be reduced by approximately \$600 annually. In exchange for discounted property taxes, the City receives guaranteed property maintenance and improvements to ensure the ongoing preservation, rehabilitation, and restoration of Mills Act properties. Well maintained historic landmarks can increase property values in the neighborhood.

City's Strategic Goals:

- Revitalize neighborhoods and corridors
- Ensure safe and affordable homes for La Mesa's current and future residents

Environmental Review:

This project is categorically exempt from environmental review pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15301 and 15331.

BACKGROUND:

Chapter 25.03 of the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance provides for the designation of historic landmarks by the City Council. A cultural resource may be designated a historic landmark if it meets one or more of eight criteria listed below.

- A. It exemplifies or reflects special elements of the City's cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, or architectural history;
- B. It is identified with persons or events significant in local, state, or national history;
- C. It embodies distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction, or is a valuable example of the use of indigenous materials or craftsmanship;
- D. It is representative of the notable work of an acclaimed builder, designer, or architect;
- E. It is identified with a person or groups who significantly contributed to the culture and development of the City;
- F. It embodies elements of outstanding attention to architectural design, detail materials, or craftsmanship;
- G. It is an archeological or paleontological site which has the potential of yielding information of scientific value; or
- H. It is a geographically definable area possessing a concentration of sites, buildings, structures, improvements, or objects linked historically through location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and/or association, in which the collective value of the improvements may be greater than the value of each individual improvement.

Properties with landmark designation are eligible for a reduced property tax assessment through the Mills Act, and the owners have applied for this benefit in conjunction with the landmark nomination. California Government Code Section 50280 et seq. authorizes cities to enter into property preservation agreements with owners of qualified historical properties to ensure the preservation, maintenance and restoration of historic properties through reduced property tax assessments. This program, known as the Mills Act, provides for a 10-year preservation agreement. Each year, on the anniversary of the effective date of the Agreement, a year is automatically added to the initial term of the agreement unless either party files a notice of non-renewal.

Alterations to historic landmarks are subject to development approval by the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) to ensure that cultural resources are being maintained in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

The owners of 9190 Brier Road have nominated the property to the local historic landmark registry. On September 6, 2022, the HPC voted 4-0 to adopt resolutions recommending that the City Council approve historical landmark designation and enter into a Mills Act Preservation Agreement with the owners. Resolutions memorializing the HPC's actions are provided as **Attachments C and D**.

DISCUSSION:

Located on the east side of Brier Road between Briercrest Drive and Bramble Road, the 1.3-acre site is developed with a single-family residence, attached garage, detached accessory structure, and pool. The improvements are situated on the westerly half of the site, facing the street. Much of the area between the house and the street contains a paved, looped driveway. The rear half of the site slopes downhill towards the east. When the property was originally developed, the lot included an additional 80-foot wide strip of land to the southeast. The southeasterly 80 feet, totaling one-half-acre, was split from the original site by a parcel map recorded in 2020. A vicinity map is shown below, and the Assessor Parcel map is provided as **Attachment E**.

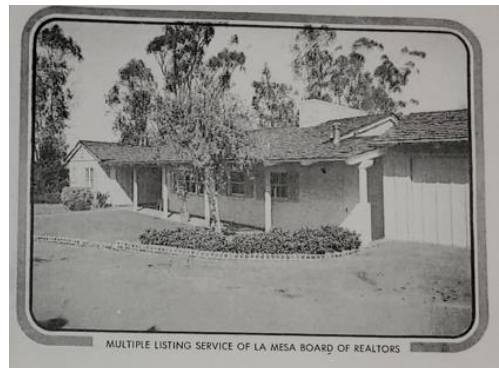


As described in the nomination report, **Attachment G**, the residence is a custom ranch built in 1950 for local developer Stanley Scott and his family. Stanley Scott was a partner in Jackson & Scott Builders, Inc., prolific builders of over 3,000 homes in San Diego County during the post-WWII development boom. The years of residence for the Scott family, 1950-1962, were the peak building period for Jackson & Scott.

The house embodies a typical mid-century aesthetic on both the interior and exterior and is in excellent near-original condition. The house is long and low and sits wide to the street. Exterior character defining features include a low-sloped gable roof with cedar shingles, walls of white brick with weeping mortar and vertical board and batten siding, and a prominent brick chimney. Contributing interior elements include vaulted open beam ceilings, wood parquet flooring, an exposed red brick double-sided fireplace, and unpainted cedar paneling. Contributing site improvements include the pool and basket-weave brickwork in the front and back patios. The driveway layout retains its original configuration as well. Overall, the craftsmanship is of above-average quality and both the house and site improvements retain integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.



The Historic Preservation Commission concluded that based on the architectural description and analysis contained within the statement of significance the property is eligible for landmark designation under four eligibility criteria. As relates to architecture and design, the resource embodies distinctive characteristics of the Custom Ranch sub-style of Midcentury Modern (Criterion C), and embodies elements of outstanding attention to architectural design, detail materials, and craftsmanship (Criterion F). For being associated with persons significant in local history, the property is significant under Criterion B, and for being the work of a locally acclaimed builder, the resource meets Criterion D.



Mills Act Agreement

Planned improvements identified by the owners are listed below. Those improvements would be funded with the Mills Act tax savings and are proposed for inclusion in the Mills Act agreement, with a recommended timeline of five years for completion:

- Replace cedar shake roofing with shake-like tile, similar in size and texture to the existing shakes (by 2023).
- Repair broken brick mortar from wear/sprinklers in front yard and around the pool (by 2023).
- Repair broken brickwork throughout landscaping (by 2023).
- Replace all rotten/falling fencing street-side with like-kind 2x4 white fencing (by 2023)
- Repair and replace deteriorated board and batten siding in-kind as needed (by 2025)
- Maintain original craftsman woodwork including: built-in closets, doors, and unpainted cedar paneling in main living spaces (ongoing)
- Maintain mature citrus and eucalyptus trees that are important to area history. Replace aging citrus trees with new citrus as needed (ongoing)

Public Notice of Project

Notification of the October 11, 2022, public hearing to consider the historic landmark application and preservation agreement was published in the Daily Transcript and mailed to all property owners within 300 feet of the subject property on September 30, 2022. One comment letter in support of the nomination has been received (**Attachment F**).

Environmental Review

The historic landmark nomination request is exempt from environmental review pursuant to categorical exemption Class 1, Existing Facilities, and categorical exemption Class 31, Historical Resource Restoration/Rehabilitation, as provided by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Sections 15301 and 15331, respectively. Section 15301 exempts activities involving negligible or no expansion of use of an existing facility. Section 15331 exempts the preservation and conservation of historical resources when carried out in a manner consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. The project serves to

protect the resource by ensuring that future alterations are subject to the standards described in Section 15331. None of the exceptions in Section 15300.2 apply.

CONCLUSION:

The Historic Preservation Commission recommends that the City Council adopt the draft resolutions provided as **Attachments A and B** to designate the Stanley and Virginia Scott House at 9190 Brier Road as a historic landmark and execute the Mills Act Preservation Agreement.

Reviewed by:



Greg Humora
City Manager

Respectfully submitted by:



Kerry Kusiak
Director of Community Development

Attachments:

- A. Draft Council Resolution for Historic Landmark Designation
- B. Draft Council Resolution for Mills Act Agreement
- C. Resolution HPC 2022-04 Recommending Landmark Designation
- D. Resolution HPC 2022-05 Recommending a Mills Act Agreement
- E. Assessor Parcel Map Sheet
- F. Correspondence
- G. Historic Landmark Nomination Report