



AGENDA REPORT

TO: Jestin D. Johnson
City Administrator

FROM: William A. Gilchrist
Director, Department of
Planning & Building

SUBJECT: Ordinance Designating the Henry J.
Kaiser Residence as a City Landmark

DATE: September 22, 2023

City Administrator Approval

Date: Sep 27, 2023

RECOMMENDATION

Staff Recommends That The City Council Adopt An Ordinance Designating 664 Haddon Road, The Henry J. Kaiser Residence, A Landmark Pursuant To Section 17.136.070 Of The Oakland Planning Code.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In July 2019, the applicant, Skyler Denniston, representing the property owner, Kaiser Foundation Health Plan, Inc., together, "Applicant," filed an application to initiate a Landmark Designation Eligibility for the private residence located at 664 Haddon Road, known as the Henry J. Kaiser Residence. After reviewing the nomination and supporting documentation, staff found that the 664 Haddon Road residence appears eligible for City of Oakland (City) Landmark designation.

The Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board (LPAB) and the Planning Commission, after holding public hearings on the item as further discussed below, both recommended that the City Council designate the property as a City Landmark. There is no known opposition to the request for Landmark Designation. The final step is for the City Council to conduct a public hearing and adopt an Ordinance designating the 664 Haddon Road residence as a City Landmark property pursuant to the Zoning and Law Change procedure under Chapter 17.144 of the Oakland Planning Code. Staff recommends that the City Council adopt the Ordinance for Landmark Designation.

BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

In 1996, the 664 Haddon Road property, known as the Henry J. Kaiser Residence, was surveyed as part of the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey and assigned a preliminary rating of C1+ (C = secondary importance; 1+ = contributor to the Haddon Hill Area of Primary Importance [API]). Preliminary inventory ratings are based on field observation only and subject to change with additional information or changes to the building.

CED Committee
October 10, 2023

Per Section 17.144.010 of the Oakland Planning Code, the proposal for a Landmark Designation is subject to the Rezoning and Law Change procedure. This procedure applies to all proposals to rezone property; to change the text of the zoning regulations; or to establish, amend, or delete any designated Landmark or Landmark site. The proposal to establish the 664 Haddon Road property as a Landmark Designation is subject to this procedure.

Per Section 17.136.070(A) of the Oakland Planning Code, the proposal is also subject to the special regulations for designated Landmarks, where the City Council may designate as a Landmark any facility which has special character, interest or value of any of the types as referred to in Section 17.07.030(P) of the Oakland Planning Code. The intent of this section is to prevent the unnecessary destruction or impairment of structures, other physical features, site, and areas of special character or special historical, cultural, architectural, aesthetic, educational, or value. The 664 Haddon Road residential property is subject to these regulations.

The application request appeared before the LPAB on January 13, 2020, and again on June 22, 2020. Pertinent information regarding the application that was presented to the LPAB is repeated within this report and attachments, however, the prior LPAB reports may also be viewed in their entirety online at the following links:

January 13, 2020: <https://www.oaklandca.gov/meeting/january-13-2020-landmarks-preservation-advisory-board-meeting>

June 22, 2020: <https://www.oaklandca.gov/meeting/june-22-2020-landmarks-preservation-advisory-board-special-meeting-online-only>

At the January 13, 2020 meeting, the LPAB reviewed the application materials for the Landmark Nomination and the Historic Resource Evaluation, which included the Evaluation Sheet for Landmark Eligibility. After receiving the Applicant's presentation and reviewing the application materials, the LPAB unanimously passed a motion that the Henry J. Kaiser Residence preliminarily appears eligible for City Landmark Designation and voted to direct staff to draft a Resolution formally initiating Landmark Designation for review and consideration at a future meeting of the LPAB.

At their June 22, 2020 public meeting, the LPAB considered the Landmark Designation for the 664 Haddon Road residence and adopted an LPAB Resolution (**Attachment A**) formally initiating Landmark Designation. The LPAB then forwarded the proposal to the Planning Commission for a public hearing, review, and recommendation.

The Landmark Designation request appeared before the Planning Commission on May 3, 2023. After receiving the Applicant's presentation and reviewing the application materials and Staff report, the Commission voted unanimously to direct staff to draft an Ordinance to Designate the property as a City Landmark for consideration by the City Council. Pertinent information regarding the application that was presented to the Planning Commission is repeated within this report and attachments, however, the prior report may also be viewed in its entirety online at the following link: <https://www.oaklandca.gov/meeting/planning-commission-meeting-19-2>

In the fall of 2020, the Applicant requested to place the landmark designation application on hold. However, they have now requested to continue the landmark designation process, which

is why it has taken two plus years to appear before the Planning Commission and City Council since the passing of the LPAB Resolution in June of 2020.

ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES

PRELIMINARY EVALUATION OF LANDMARK ELIGIBILITY

The 5,000-square-foot, single-family residence at 664 Haddon Road was constructed in 1924 for Henry J. Kaiser. It occupies a roughly rectangular, moderately sloped parcel that measures 8,056 square feet parcel located at the southeast corner of Haddon Road and Hillgirt Circle. The two-story-over-raised-basement residence was designed in the Italian Renaissance Revival style of architecture and embodies many distinctive characteristics of the style. The primary façade faces west and is set back from and elevated above the street; the primary entrance is accessed by a compound concrete staircase with a concrete balustrade. The parcel includes mature vegetation on the north, west, and south sides of the residence.

There are five findings of architectural and historical significance for 664 Haddon Road:

1. It is a high-style representation of the Italian Renaissance Revival style in Oakland. The period of significance for this finding is 1924, which corresponds to the construction date of the building.
2. It was designed by master architect William E. Schirmer. The period of significance is 1924-32, which corresponds to the construction date through all additions designed by Schirmer.
3. It is closely associated with the productive life of Henry J. Kaiser, a prominent American industrialist. The period of significance is 1924-46, which corresponds to the years of Kaiser's residence in the home.
4. It was the site of an important conference hosted by Kaiser during which a plan was developed that would open the Kaiser employee health care plan to community enrollment. The period of significance is 1943, which corresponds to the year the conference was held.
5. It is associated with Clausen House, a system of care for developmentally disabled adults. The period of significance is 1967-77, which corresponds to the years of Clausen House operation at 664 Haddon Road.

664 Haddon Road is a very good example of the Italian Renaissance Revival style as it exhibits many character-defining features of this architectural style. Character-defining features of the building identified in the Landmark nomination include:

- Simple, rectangular massing;
- Two-story building height;
- Low-pitched hipped roof with ceramic roof tiles;
- Moderate overhanging eaves supported by a compound cornice molding;
- Flat primary façade;
- Stucco cladding;
- Symmetrical arrangement of fenestration at the primary façade;
- Recessed primary entrance;
- Full-height windows on the first floor;

- Round arches above doors and first-floor windows;
- Smaller and less elaborate windows on the second floor;
- Balustrades at the entry staircase; and
- Decorative façade articulation including quoins and molded cornices.

The property retains a relatively high degree of integrity and maintains its character as a contributor to the Haddon Hill Area of Primary Importance (API). Alterations, most of which are located on the rear and south (off-street) elevations, do not detract from the original design of the building. While interior photos have been included for reference, no evaluation points were allocated to interior spaces because they are not open to the public. For more information, see the Applicant's Oakland Landmark, S-7/S-20 Preservation Combining Zone and Heritage Property Application Form (included within **Attachment A**).

EVALUATION SHEET FOR LANDMARK ELIGIBILITY

A Historical Resource Evaluation (HRE) was prepared by SWCA Environmental Consultants in February 2019 (**Attachment B**), which was commissioned by the Applicant. The HRE included historic analysis of the property with the City standards and the criteria for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and the California Register of Historic Places (CRHP); and also prepared a Landmarks Board evaluation sheet for preliminary determination of Landmark eligibility. The LPAB concurred with the HRE findings that the 664 Haddon Road residence appears eligible for the NRHP, the CRHP, and for Landmark designation with an "A1+" rating, signifying that the building is of the highest importance (A) and is a contributor to the Haddon Hill Area of Primary Importance (1+). Item ratings are highest (i.e., "excellent") for Designer/Builder, Person/Organization, Event, Site, and Condition. Additionally, Exterior/Design, Interior, Style/Type, Patterns, and Continuity are all rated "very good." A Landmarks Board evaluation differs somewhat from the Cultural Heritage Survey system in giving greatest weight to history and somewhat less to architecture. In order for a property to be eligible for Landmark Designation it must receive a rating of "A" (35+ points) or "B" (23 -34 points) on the eligibility sheet. The preliminary evaluation sheet included a score of 49 points as prepared by the consultant. However, the score is limited to a maximum of 60 points for "History" where a score of 75 points was awarded. After adjusting the total score to reduce the 15 extra points that were awarded, the property receives a score of 34 points, which still qualifies the property for Landmark Designation.

EFFECTS OF LANDMARK DESIGNATION

Benefits of Landmark designation for property owners include, but are not limited to:

- Eligibility for various incentives listed in the General Plan - Historic Preservation Element Policy 2.6:
 - Contracts through the Mills Act Property Tax Abatement Program
 - Use of the State Historical Building Code and other related alternative codes for older buildings
 - Conservation easements to reduce property tax assessments

Benefits for the City include, but are not limited to:

- Enhancement of property values, stabilization of neighborhoods and areas of the City, increase of economic and financial benefits to the City and its inhabitants, and promotion of tourist trade and interest (Planning Code, Chapter 17.07.030.P.3)
- Special regulations for designated Landmarks (Planning Code, Chapter 17.136.070; Historic Preservation Element Policy 2.4)
- Special procedures to establish, amend, or delete any designated Landmark or Landmark site (Planning Code, Chapter 17.144)

Significant exterior changes to Landmark properties are referred to the LPAB for recommendations (Oakland Planning Code Section 17.136.060) before a decision on the design review application is made by the Director of Planning or the Planning Commission. Minor exterior changes to a Landmark building can be processed administratively by the Director of Planning, who may seek input from the LPAB as needed. There are special design review findings for Landmarks, including, “that the proposal will not adversely affect the exterior features of the designated Landmark...” and “that the proposal will not adversely affect the special character, interest or value of the landmark and its site, as viewed both in themselves and in their setting...” (Oakland Planning Code Chapter 17.136.070(c)).

Staff recommends that the City Council adopt the Ordinance to designate the Henry J. Kaiser Residence as a City Landmark as it meets the required criteria and advances the City Priority of maintaining **cultural security** by adding further regulatory protection to enhance the retention of a City historic resource. If the Council were to reject the Ordinance, the property would not be designated as a City Landmark and would not include the protections to the building that are included within the Planning Code for all designated Landmarks.

FISCAL IMPACT

The landmark designation of the Henry J. Kaiser Residence does not require any additional budget allocation. No additional staffing is required.

PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST

The application for Landmark Designation has appeared at three public hearings, two before the LPAB and one before the Planning Commission, all of which included the required public notice for hearings. Staff has received minimal correspondence from the public on this application, and the public that has chosen to participate in the hearings has been supportive of the request.

COORDINATION

This report was created in coordination with the Bureau of Planning, City Administrator’s Office, Budget Bureau and the Office of the City Attorney.

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

Economic: Landmark designation encourages maintenance and careful rehabilitation of buildings, which helps to stabilize and enhance property values and can also stimulate economic revitalization of the surrounding neighborhood. Building maintenance and rehabilitation also creates skilled employment opportunities.

Environmental: Landmark designation encourages the maintenance and re-use of existing historic buildings and therein helps to conserve the materials and energy used to construct those buildings.

Race & Equity: There are no Race & Equity opportunities associated with this report.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT

The project proposal is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review requirements pursuant to Sections 15331 for Historical Resource Restoration / Rehabilitation; and 15183 for Projects consistent with the Community Plan, General Plan or Zoning.

ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Staff recommends that the City Council adopt an Ordinance designating 664 Haddon Road, the Henry J. Kaiser Residence, a Landmark pursuant to Section 17.136.070 of the Oakland Planning Code.

For questions regarding this report, please contact Pete Vollmann, Planner IV, at (510) 238-6167.

Respectfully submitted,



WILLIAM A. GILCHRIST

Director, Department of Planning & Building

Reviewed by:

Ed Manasse, Deputy Director

Bureau of Planning

Prepared by:

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Bureau of Planning

Attachments (2):

A. LPAB Approved Resolution (including application and evaluation sheet)

B. Historic Resource Evaluation, prepared by SWCA consultants