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**Title:** RESOLUTION - Approve the Second Amendment to Resolution No. 2015-83 to add the property located at 3504 E. Huntington Blvd. to the existing Historic District upon request of the property owner (Council District 7)

**Sponsors:** Planning and Development Department

**Indexes:**

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**Attachments:** 1. 24-601 Original Resolution - No. 2015-83, 2. 24-601 First Amendment - Resolution No. 2015-140, 3. 24-601 Second Amendment - an Amendment to Resolution 2015-83, 4. 24-601 Letter of Owner Authorization, 5. 24-601 DPR Form for 3504 E. Huntington Boulevard, 6. 24-601 Photos Showing Current Condition

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
5/23/2024	1	City Council	ADOPTED	Pass

**REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL**

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Planning and Development Department

**SUBJECT**

RESOLUTION - Approve the Second Amendment to Resolution No. 2015-83 to add the property located at 3504 E. Huntington Blvd. to the existing Historic District upon request of the property owner (Council District 7)

**RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the City Council adopt the second amendment to Resolution No. 2015-83 to include the property located at 3504 E. Huntington Boulevard as a contributor to the Huntington Boulevard Historic District.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Out of 121 residential properties initially assessed within the Huntington Boulevard district for the period of 1914-1977, 116 were considered contributors. Upon the request of homeowners, 2 were excluded from the district boundary for the designation. The City Council approved the designation of the Huntington Boulevard Historic District in 2015, allowing further opt-outs, which reduced the

number of contributing properties to 80 out of 84.

The property located at 3504 E. Huntington Boulevard, which was previously excluded, has changed ownership. The new owner has requested the inclusion of the property as a contributor to the district. Following an evaluation, it was determined that the building retains its historic significance and integrity, warranting its inclusion as a contributor. This change has been reflected in Attachment A of the second amendment to Resolution 2015-83.

## **BACKGROUND**

Huntington Boulevard, renowned as the focal point of one of Fresno's most architecturally significant neighborhoods, comprises a mix of grand homes and modest bungalows from various periods. Established as the "Alta Vista Tract" and first platted in 1911, this boulevard has been home to Fresno's most influential residents, spanning business, education, and political sectors for over a century. It has been described as one of the world's great boulevards by Berkeley Professor and San Francisco architect, Daniel Solomon.

### **Huntington Boulevard as a Local Historic District**

Fresno Municipal Code (FMC) 12-1607(b) stipulates that at least fifty percent of the resources within the proposed district must be fifty years of age or older.

The period of significance for Huntington Boulevard Historic District therefore extends to 1977, to include a contemporary style residence which has been evaluated as a contributor, based on its architectural merit. Huntington Boulevard was designated as a historic district under FMC 12-1607(b) Criteria i, ii, iii, and iv.

- Criterion i: Huntington Boulevard was the first subdivision on the eastern edge of Fresno's parent grid and was platted in 1911 as a streetcar suburb as part of the Alta Vista Tract. The Sunnyside-S.P. Depot line ran down the middle of the boulevard beginning in 1907 and was a component of the streetcar system that was financed by Henry E. Huntington, for whom the new boulevard was named.
- Criterion ii: By the 1920s, the boulevard had become the chosen address for many of Fresno's distinguished professionals, such as Albert Wishon.
- Criterion iii and iv: The boulevard showcases an eclectic architectural panorama, popular from 1911 through the 1960s, featuring Craftsman bungalows and period revival structures. Notably, it also reflects socio-economic diversity, ranging from luxurious mansions to modest middle-class residences.

When it was designated, 121 residential properties were evaluated for their potential as contributors to the proposed Local Register Historic District with a period of significance of 1914-1977. Of the 121 properties, five were found to have lost integrity due to inappropriate alterations. It was recommended that two properties, both "contributors" and historically significant, be excluded from the district boundaries due to the formal request of the property owners. With the removal of these two homes, the district includes 119 parcels, of which 114 are "Contributors to a Local Historic District," as defined at FMC 12-1603(g). On May 21, 2015, the City Council unanimously approved the designation of Huntington Boulevard Historic District. Pursuant to FMC 12-1613(b) the Council used its discretion to modify the recommendation of the City's Historic Preservation Commission by stipulating that any boulevard property owners wishing to "opt out" of the district could do so by

stating their intent on the record or by submitting a notarized form to the city. By June 30, 2015, 38 property owners, representing 37 residential buildings and one vacant parcel, had responded with a notarized request to be excluded. These properties were henceforth removed from the district which has been redrawn to include 84 parcels, of which 80 are contributors and 4 are non-contributors. Resolution No. 2015-140, the first amendment to Resolution 2015-83, reflecting these changes has been approved on July 30, 2015.

### **3504 E Huntington Boulevard**

The property located at 3504 E. Huntington Boulevard with assessor's parcel number 461-182-01, was previously evaluated and found as a contributor due to its contribution to the significance of the Huntington Boulevard Historic District.

3504 E. Huntington Boulevard, historically known as The J.B. and Maria Cella Home, is a prime example of the Italian Renaissance architectural style that enriches the fabric of the Huntington Boulevard Historic District. Completed in 1939 and designed by the renowned San Francisco architect Louis Franceschi, this stately two-story residence commands a .34-acre corner lot at the intersection of East Huntington and Fifth Street. Its distinctive multi-gabled tile roof, asymmetrical layout, and elaborate stucco detailing including quoins, a dental cornice, and arched windows with hand-carved stucco medallions, exemplify the elegance and attention to detail typical of the era.

The property's historical significance is further underscored by its original owner, J.B. Cella, an influential figure in America's wine industry and a key community contributor. The house also used to be home to Penny and Larry Raven, notable for their business acumen and civic engagement. The Ravens have contributed significantly to the community through their involvement in local business ventures and cultural events, including the establishment of California's first commercial fuel alcohol distillery and leading the annual Candlelight Christmas on Huntington Boulevard. This home not only reflects the architectural diversity and cultural depth of the district but also stands as a testament to the prominent individuals who have shaped the community's legacy, making it a vital contributor to the historic district.

It was previously excluded per the request of the property owner. As it has changed ownership, the new owner has requested the inclusion of the property as a contributor to the district. Following an evaluation, it was determined that the building retains its historic significance and has not undergone significant inappropriate alterations, but it still retains a high degree of integrity, warranting its inclusion as a contributor.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL FINDINGS**

The amendment to the resolution to include the property located at 3504 E. Huntington Boulevard as a contributor to the Huntington Boulevard historic district is not a "project" for the purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA"), as it will not result in a direct or indirect change in the environment.

### **LOCAL PREFERENCE**

Local preference was not considered because the amendment to the resolution does not entail a bid or award of a construction or services contract.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no additional impact beyond the expenditure of staff time.

## **CONCLUSION**

Staff recommends that the City Council adopt the second amendment to Resolution No. 2015-83 to include the property located at 3504 E. Huntington Boulevard as a contributor to the historic district.

### Attachments:

- Original Resolution - No. 2015-83
- First Amendment - Resolution No. 2015-140
- Second Amendment - an Amendment to Resolution 2015-83
- Letter of Owner Authorization
- DPR Form for 3504 E. Huntington Boulevard
- Photos Showing Current Condition