

CITY OF GLENDALE
INTERDIVISIONAL COMMUNICATION
STAFF REPORT

Date: October 25, 2010

To: Historic Preservation Commission

From: Jay Platt, Planner, Historic Preservation and Urban Design

Subject: **North Cumberland Heights Historic District Overlay Zone
Designation Application**

Introduction

The Planning Division of the Community Planning Department has received an application for a historic district overlay zone comprised of 179 single-family homes in the Glenmont neighborhood. The proposed North Cumberland Heights district consists of the northwest portion of the area previously considered by the City as a potential Cumberland Heights historic district. In addition, the eastern edge of the newly-proposed district abuts the Ard Eevin Highlands Historic District, which was also formed from a portion of the Cumberland Heights area and designated in 2009.

The area proposed for designation is bounded by Grandview Avenue on the west, Mountain Street on the north, Ben Lomond Drive on the east, and Cumberland Road on the south. It features housing stock representing most of the Period Revival styles popular in the 1920s and 1930s, along with Minimal Traditional and Ranch style homes that became popular in the 1940s. The neighborhood's developmental history is closely tied to the Campbell brothers, Dan and Arthur, who owned much of the area's land and began subdividing it for development in 1923.

The boundary proposed by the applicants contains properties with the following addresses or address ranges:

- 1709 – 1733 Ben Lomond Drive
- 1645 – 1861 Cleveland Road
- 902 – 1018 Crestview Avenue
- 839 – 1031 Cumberland Road
- 1601 Grandview Avenue
- 1610 – 1770 Grandview Avenue
- 1714 – 1830 Idlewood Road
- 850 – 1027 Matilija Road
- 877 – 1051 W. Mountain Road

The district designation process outlined in the City's Historic District Ordinance requires that the Historic Preservation Commission review the application and make a preliminary determination regarding the area's eligibility as a historic district. This is not a final determination or recommendation. It is only a judgment that the area appears to meet at least one of the criteria established by the ordinance in a meaningful manner that warrants further investigation. If the Commission makes an affirmative determination, it then authorizes district proponents to circulate a petition among property owners within the proposed boundary requesting that the City conduct a historic resources survey for the proposed historic district. The process beyond that point includes the retention of a consultant to conduct the survey, further public meetings and hearings, and a final petition from the proponents containing signatures of owners requesting that the district be designated. Ultimately, City Council must vote in favor of the designation for the zone change to be made. The various steps of the process are established by ordinance (Exhibit B) and are depicted in the historic district designation process flowchart (Exhibit C).

Although Planning staff considers the application to be complete, as the designation process proceeds, the components of the application may change due to new information supplied by the applicants, City staff, the project consultant and/or the public. Any changes to the application, such as adjustment of the boundaries or supplements to the Historic District Design Guidelines, must be made and approved by the Commission prior to its final review and approval of the historic resources survey.

Historic Background and Description

The application provides an overview of the North Cumberland Heights area's history and development. This information comes largely from the survey prepared by Historic Resources Group for the Cumberland Heights neighborhood in 2004. Staff believes that the research conducted for that survey is adequate for the purpose of the present nomination and provides a clear picture regarding the importance of the development and the persons associated with its inception. If the Commission finds merit in the present nomination and the designation process moves forward, the existing survey will be updated to determine whether any changes made since the 2004 survey could affect the area's eligibility for designation and whether the contributing status of any properties has changed.

Much of the land in the proposed district was owned separately by either Dan Campbell or Arthur Campbell, who were close associates of Leslie Brand. Both brothers lived in homes in what is today the Ard Eevin Highlands Historic District. In 1923 and 1924, a flurry of tract subdivisions occurred in the North Cumberland Heights area. One or the other brother owned most of these, with one brother serving as notary on the other's transaction. An exception to this pattern is found at Tract 7697, immediately to the north and west of Dan Campbell's home, Ard Eevin. This tract was owned by Albert Fransess - interestingly, Dan Campbell served as notary. In September 1923, the brothers opened a subdivision called Campbell Heights. While this area appears to have been, at least in part, on land within the boundary of the proposed district, its extent and location remain

unclear. Information regarding the area's early subdivision history, obtained from the Cumberland Heights historic resource survey, is included as Exhibit D.

As with many of Glendale's other subdivisions dating to the 1920s, the North Cumberland Heights area was a success for its developers. Today, 72% of the existing homes date to the 1920s and 1930s, reflecting the city's tremendous growth during that era despite the construction slowdown resulting from the Depression. These homes reflect the various Period Revival styles associated with most of Glendale's historic neighborhoods. As is typically the case, the Spanish Colonial Revival style is particularly well represented, along with Tudor Revival, Colonial Revival, Mediterranean Revival, and French-Influenced Revival. A few earlier Craftsman-style houses remain in the proposed district. The neighborhood continued to be built out through the end of the 1940s, and homes in the Minimal Traditional style typify this era's construction. The Ranch style was often used for post-1950 construction. The applicants propose a period of significance for the district of 1923 through 1950, when most of the subdivisions' lots were sold and built upon.

The North Cumberland Heights area is strongly associated with Dan and Arthur Campbell, though their personal residences were built just outside the area currently proposed for designation. As the active developers of the neighborhood, they were undoubtedly involved in determining qualities such as lot size and the street layout; this is probably especially true in the Campbell Heights subdivision. As with other portions of the neighborhood, several well-known people chose to live in the North Cumberland Heights area, including baseball legend Casey Stengel (1663 Grandview) and noted theater entrepreneur Robert Jensen (1770 Grandview).

Preliminary Staff Determination of Eligibility

In addition to assessing the nomination with regard to the eligibility criteria established by the Historic District Ordinance, Planning staff also considers the apparent appropriateness of the district boundary, period of significance, and name proposed by the applicants. Staff also reviewed the 2004 Cumberland Heights historic resource survey to estimate the number of potential "contributors" within the boundary proposed for North Cumberland Heights. Contributing structures are those that were built within the period of significance and maintain enough physical integrity to continue to convey their historic associations and original architectural design.

Proposed Boundary

The boundary proposed by the applicants encompasses a large portion of the area identified in 2004 as a potential historic district. This was also the case with the Ard Eevin Highlands Historic District, which the Historic Preservation Commission and City Council felt was appropriate for designation because it was a portion of the larger district that was previously identified. The proposed North Cumberland Height District is over twice as large as Are Eevin Highlands (which contains 87 properties); together they would represent over half of the area originally proposed for Cumberland Heights.

The North Cumberland Heights boundary is contiguous with the one identified in the 2004 survey at its north, west, and east edges, and abuts Ard Eevin Highlands at the north property line of Dan Campbell's house, Ard Eevin. The boundary southern boundary includes both sides of Cumberland Road, conforming to standard preservation practice. *Staff believes the proposed boundary is appropriate.*

Proposed Name

The 2004 Cumberland Height survey established an appropriate name for the neighborhood it surveyed. The proposed historic district occupies the northernmost portion of the previously-identified area, making North Cumberland Heights a meaningful name in the context of the larger historic neighborhood.

Staff believes the proposed name is appropriate.

Proposed Period of Significance

The applicants have proposed a period of significance of 1923 to 1950. The initial date is clearly appropriate because it was at that time that Arthur and Dan Campbell, along with others, began subdividing their land holdings in the area and selling lots for new home construction. The latter date differs from that established for the period of significance of the Ard Eevin Highland Historic District and the Cumberland Heights area. In both cases, the consultant chose 1955 as the termination date for the period of significance, finding that the areas were largely built out by that date. At this time, it is not known whether the proposed 1950 date or, perhaps, the 1955 date is most appropriated for North Cumberland Heights. A closer analysis of the construction dates of the area's homes would be required to make this assessment. A change in the ending date could affect the ultimate number of contributing resources in the proposed district. .

Staff believes that 1923 is the appropriate starting date for the period of significance; a future historic resources survey update will include research to help definitively establish an ending date appropriate to the proposed historic district. Finalizing this date is not a requirement for considering the district's eligibility for designation.

Contributing Structures

The 2004 Cumberland Heights historic resource survey encompassed the entire area currently under consideration as a historic district. At that time 150 out of the 179 properties (84%) were determined to be "contributors" to a potential historic district. This number is likely to change based on information discovered if this survey is updated and/or if the period of significance ultimately differs from the period proposed. Nonetheless, *staff believes it is highly likely that the proposed district will meet the 60% threshold.*

Eligibility Criteria

A proposed district must meet at least one of the nine criteria established by the historic district ordinance in order to be considered for designation.

Staff believes that the proposed North Cumberland Heights Historic District appears to meet five of the nine criteria, as follows:

A. Exemplifies or reflects special elements of the City’s cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, architectural, or natural history.

The proposed district contains excellent examples of homes built between the 1920s and the 1940s, with a particularly strong representation of properties developed during the 1920s when the city’s growth was skyrocketing. The character and quality of its homes reflect the taste and cultural aspirations of both middle-class and wealthy citizens over the course of several decades. The area’s association with the Campbell family also enhances its connection to the social and economic development of Glendale during its boom years.

*Staff believes the proposed district **appears to meet** Criterion A.*

B. Is identified with persons or events significant in local, state, or national history.

Dan and Arthur Campbell owned and subdivided much of the land that comprised the proposed historic district. Their role in the city’s physical development, as well as their involvement in transportation and banking, helped create the city we know today. Though they lived just outside the proposed boundary, their deep involvement in the development of the entire area spreads their significance beyond the confines of their residences. While other well-known people, such as Casey Stengel and Robert Jensen, made their home in the neighborhood, it appears their significant associations are primarily with their homes rather than the larger neighborhood.

*Staff believes the proposed district **appears to meet** Criterion B for its association with the Campbell brothers.*

C. Embodies distinctive characteristics of a style, type, or method of construction, or is a valuable example of the use of indigenous materials or craftsmanship.

The proposed historic district contains homes reflecting the stylistic range typical of residences built between the 1920s and 1940s in Southern California. Many properties in the area embody the character-defining features associated with the major Period Revival styles associated with the 1920s and 1930s (Spanish Colonial, Tudor, Colonial, and Mediterranean). The area is particularly notable for its fine collection of Spanish Colonial Revival homes, as well as the quality of the construction and design of its homes, regardless of style.

*Staff believes the proposed district **appears to meet** Criterion C.*

D. Represents the work of a notable builders, designers, or architects.

Though subdivided by the Campbells, among others, the lots in the proposed district were sold to either individual homeowners or speculative builders, whose work was not guided by any singular vision. It was typical during that time period for homes to be built by local and regional architects and builders, but more research about individual properties would be necessary to evaluate further significance under this criterion.

*Staff believes that the proposed district **does not appear to meet** Criterion D.*

E. Has a unique location or is a view or vista representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood community or of the city.

The proposed district's situation at the base of the Verdugo Mountains is striking and was clearly an important component of early marketing efforts, but its overall setting is similar to other neighborhoods built along the base of Glendale's hills.

*Staff believes that the proposed district **does not appear to meet** Criterion E.*

F. Embodies a collection of elements of architectural design, detail, materials or craftsmanship that represent a significant structural or architectural achievement or innovation.

While there are many fine homes in a variety of historic styles in the North Cumberland Heights area, the overall application of the designs, details, materials, and craftsmanship associated with these Period Revival styles is not strikingly different from that of other neighborhoods. The overall collection of homes cannot be seen as a significant architectural achievement or innovation when viewed as a totality.

*Staff believes that the proposed district **does not appear to meet** Criterion F.*

G. Reflects significant geographical patterns, including those associated with different eras of settlement and growth, transportation modes, or distinctive examples of park or community planning.

The proposed historic district is significant as a reflection of Glendale's skyrocketing growth during the 1920s and 1930s. Residential development during that period was largely driven by the availability of public transportation that linked Glendale directly with downtown Los Angeles, making the city, particularly its foothill areas, particularly desirable for middle-class families. The Campbell brothers were, through their business partnerships with Leslie Brand, directly tied to the transportation enhancements that made Glendale a thriving suburban community. The scale, setting, and styles of the homes and overall feel within the proposed district continue to reflect this period of Glendale's development as a streetcar suburb.

*Staff believes that the proposed district **appears to meet** Criterion G.*

H. Conveys a sense of historic and architectural cohesiveness through its design, setting, materials, workmanship or association.

North Cumberland Heights conveys a sense of cohesiveness due to the complementary scale and massing of the individual homes, as well as their mostly-uniform setback from the street. The homes located within the proposed historic district reflect the design, materials, and craftsmanship that was expected by buyers of higher-end homes during the decades when the neighborhood achieved its highest rate of growth.

Staff believes that the proposed district appears to meet Criterion H.

I. Has been designated a historic district in the National Register of Historic Places or the California Register of Historical Resources.

The area has not been previously designated or determined eligible for the National or California Registers. *The proposed district does not meet Criterion I.*

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Based on the information submitted with the nomination and the assessment above, staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission preliminarily find that the proposed North Cumberland Heights Historic District is eligible as an historic district overlay zone and authorize the circulation of a petition among property owners within the proposed boundary requesting a historic resources survey.

EXHIBITS

Exhibit A: Historic District Application

Exhibit B: Chapter 30.25 of the Glendale Municipal Code

Exhibit C: Flow Chart Summarizing Historic District Designation Process

Exhibit D: Supplementary material regarding the area's early subdivision history