

CITY OF OJAI

RESOLUTION NO. 17-44

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF OJAI
APPROVING THE LANDMARK DESIGNATION FOR
THE SMITH HOBSON HOUSE, STRUCTURES, AND ESTATE, WITH THE
EXCEPTION OF THE BUILDINGS COMPRISING HELP OF OJAI
AS CITY OF OJAI HISTORIC LANDMARK NO. 23
LOCATED AT 401 S. VENTURA STREET,
ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NUMBER 023-0-090-010**

WHEREAS, on June 23, 2015, the HPC requested funds from the City Council for Fiscal Year 2015-2016, to contract with a historic resource consultant to conduct Phase One Historic Report Resource reports to potentially initiate the landmarking process for two properties: The Smith-Hobson House/Ojai City Hall and Ojai Grammar School/Chaparral School; and

WHEREAS, on June 30, 2015, the City Council approved a budget request to obtain a Phase 1 Historic Report for the Smith Hobson House, the City of Ojai as the property owner of the property located at 401 S. Ventura Street (Assessor's Parcel Number 023-0-090-010); and

WHEREAS, October 8, 2015, the Historic Preservation Commission, pursuant to City Council direction, directed the Community Development Director to prepare a Request for Proposal (RFP); and

WHEREAS, August 12, 2016, the City of Ojai entered into a Consulting Services agreement with Carole Denardo of Provenience Group; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of Ordinance No. 675, known as the "Cultural and Historic Preservation Law," Chapter 8 of the Ojai Municipal Code, is to promote the economic and general welfare of the City by preserving and protecting landmarks, monuments and points of historical interest having a special historical or aesthetic character or interest, in order to make the citizens of the City and visitors mindful of the historic, cultural and natural heritage of the City; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with Ordinance No. 675, Chapter 8 of the Ojai Municipal Code, the Historic Preservation Commission is empowered to identify and nominate cultural heritage or historic landmarks when the structure or area meets one or more of the following criteria:

- (a) Its character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characterization of the community;

City of Ojai
Resolution No. 17-44

- (b) Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the development of the community;
- (c) Its embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style valuable for the study of a period, type, method of construction, or use of indigenous materials;
- (d) Its identification as the work of a master builder, designer, architect, or landscape architect whose individual work has influenced the development of the community;
- (e) Its embodiment of elements of design, detailing, materials, or craftsmanship that render it architecturally significant;
- (f) Its embodiment of design elements that make it structurally or architecturally innovative;
- (g) Its unique location or singular physical characteristics that make it an established or familiar visual feature;
- (h) Its suitability for preservation or restoration. Any structure, property, or area that meets one or more of the above criteria shall also have sufficient integrity of location, design, materials, and workmanship to make it worthy of preservation or restoration;
- (i) It shall have historic, aesthetic, or special character or interest for the general public and not be limited in interest to a special group or person;
- (j) Its designation shall not require the expenditure by the City of any amount of money not commensurate with the value of the object to be preserved; and
- (k) Its designations shall not infringe upon the rights of a private owner thereof to make any and all reasonable uses thereof which are not in conflict with the purposes of this chapter.

WHEREAS, the The Report found the proposed project meets criteria (a), (c), (e), and (f) of Section 4-8.07 of the Cultural and Historic Preservation Law, in that the building at 401 S. Ventura Street represents an important period in Ojai's history when the architectural character of the community began to develop. The building is identified with the Smith and Hobson families who were prominent residents of the Ojai Community. The building embodies the important work of Frank Mead and Richard Requa, who also designed the Ojai Arcade as well as other Spanish Revival buildings in Ojai. It is also associated with architects Zelma Wilson and Fisher and Wilde.

City of Ojai
Resolution No. 17-44

Under criterion (b), the building is identified with the Hobson and Smith families who were prominent individuals who served the community through their businesses and fraternal organization involvement.

Under Criterion (g): The Spanish Revival Architecture within the woodland setting contributes to a visual feature of the Community.

Under Criterion (h), the residence has retained its integrity of location, design, materials and workmanship.

Under Criterion (i), the Smith-Hobson Estate property has historic and architectural interest for the general public as outlined in the above report and this property would have interest to the general public.

Under Criterion (k), the property's designation will not infringe upon the rights of a private owner since the owner of the property owner is the City of Ojai.

WHEREAS, the features defining the character of the Spanish Revival Architecture or the property include the Spanish tile roof, arched windows, boxed window grilles, and tile vents. Significant interior features include the porte-cochere and loggia.

WHEREAS, the defining characteristics of the property are listed below as Exterior Object Record and Interior Object Record. Any proposed changes, additions, renovations or alterations to these features shall be subject to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties regarding alteration to historic structures and will require a work permit, as required by and in compliance with the procedural and substantive requirements of Chapter 8 of Title 4 of the Ojai Municipal Code, as it may be amended.

WHEREAS, on June 8, 2017, the Historic Preservation Commission made a motion on a 'Discussion Item' and adopted HPC Resolution No. 17-02 recommending the City Council designate the Smith Hobson House and Estate as the City's Historic Landmark No. 23.

WHEREAS, on July 25, 2017, the City Council reviewed the HPCs recommendation and made the determination that since the item was presented as a "Discussion Item" on the HPCs agenda the item was not noticed correctly as a public hearing. The City Council directed staff to take this item back to the HPC and present it as a Public Hearing item to allow for proper public noticing and also continued the item to its August 8, 2017 City Council meeting.

WHEREAS, on August 8, 2017, the City Council continued the item to its September 12, 2017 City Council meeting.

WHEREAS, on September 12, 2017, the City Council received for its review and consideration a Staff Report in conjunction with the above-mentioned project and continued the item once more, to allow for proper public noticing for the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) to review this item at its September 14, 2017 meeting and make a recommendation to the City Council.

WHEREAS, on September 14, 2017, the Historic Preservation Commission received for its review and consideration a Staff Report and presentation in conjunction with the above-mentioned project and adopted HPC Resolution No. 17-06 recommending the City Council designate the Smith Hobson House, Structures, and Estate, located at 401 S. Ventura Street, as City of Ojai Historic Landmark No. 23.

WHEREAS, on October 10, 2017, the City Council received for its review and consideration a Staff Report and presentation in conjunction with the above-mentioned project. After taking public testimony, hearing evidence from the City staff and reviewing the Phase I Historic Resources Report, the City Council finds that the City Hall Structure and property located at 401 S. Ventura Street and known as the Smith Hobson House, Structures, and Estate, is historically and culturally significant based on the findings contained in the Historic Resources Report.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Ojai, California, that:

SECTION 1. Based on the findings contained in the Historic Resources Report and contained herein, the City Council hereby designates that the City Hall structure and grounds known as the Smith Hobson House, Structure, and Estate, excluding the Help of Ojai building and all other outbuildings on the property, located at 401 Ventura Street be designated as City of Ojai Historic Landmark No. 23, as it relates to the defining architectural characteristics, Exterior Object Record and Interior Object Record outlined as follows:

**Smith Hobson House
401 S. Ventura Street
Ojai, California**

**EXTERIOR
OBJECT RECORD**

The subject property currently consists of an irregular-shaped Spanish Colonial Revival municipal building, characterized by its white stuccoed exterior walls, prominent arches, low-pitched side-gabled roof with narrow eaves clad with terracotta roof tiles, and concrete foundation within a landscaped garden setting.

FEATURE: The eastern facade, which features an arcaded porte-cochere and loggia, arched windows, paired casement windows, and boxed window grilles, (Plates 3-9).

SIGNIFICANCE: The Smith-Hobson Ojai City Hall is an example of early Spanish Colonial Revival architectural design, with notable architectural elements such as an arcaded porte-cochere and loggia designed by architects Frank Mead and Richard Requa, who also designed the renowned 'arcade' and other Spanish Revival buildings in downtown Ojai. Also, in 1978, designed by Zelma Smith prominent architect recognized locally, nationally, and internationally for her design work.

ATTRIBUTES: Doors and windows throughout the exterior of the building largely appear to be authentic, with the exception of two picture windows in the rear.

REMARKS: A review of photographs taken by Julius Shulman in 1976 of Ojai City Hall as designed by Zelma Smith, revealed the building façade has remained intact after renovations were completed to present day.

PHOTOS:



Plate 1. Arcaded porte-cochere at the east end of façade, facing south.



Plate 2. East end of façade displaying arched doors and windows, facing south.



Plate 3. South end of east elevation arcaded loggia, facing north.



Plate 4. Interior of the arched loggia, facing southwest.



Plate 5. Over-sized entry door within the arched loggia, facing west.



Plate 6. East side of façade, facing southwest.



Plate 7. Façade – east of the City Hall courtyard entrance, facing south.

Smith Hobson House
401 S. Ventura Street
Ojai, California

INTERIOR
OBJECT RECORD

In 1978, the building was acclaimed “one of the most beautiful City Halls in the United States” by a panel of renowned architects. The Ojai City Hall is also associated with distinguished architects Zelma Wilson and Fisher & Wilde who received an award by the Ventura County Unit of the American Institute of Architects for their outstanding work integrating the two residences for use as a municipal building.

FEATURE: Many examples of Craftsman elements in the building interior, such as dark wood boxed beams, built-in cabinets, and ceramic tiled fireplaces, remain unaltered, (Plates 35-40).

SIGNIFICANCE: Both Abram L. Hobson, the original owner, and his son-in-law, Fred Smith were important individuals associated with the Smith-Hobson City Hall; both used the building as their residence.

ATTRIBUTES: The Smith-Hobson residence was constructed in 1907, during early twentieth century development of the town of Nordhoff/Ojai and it reflects changes in architectural preferences in California. The municipal building is also associated with its use as Ojai’s City Hall for the past 40 years.

REMARKS: A review of the original floor plans and an assessment of the current building suggests there were minimal changes made when the two buildings were connected. Most of the alterations, such as wall, window, and door removal or relocation, occurred within the interior of the building to create offices.

PHOTOS:



Plate 8. City Council Chambers depicting wood ceiling beams, wood built-ins, and ceramic tile fireplace.



Plate 9. City Council Chambers- Craftsman-style ceramic tiled fireplace.



Plate 10. Close-up of Craftsman-style tile on fireplace in City Council Chambers.



Plate 11. Craftsman-style built-in cabinets in City Council Chambers.



Plate 12. Craftsman-style tiled fireplace in City Hall office.



Plate 13. Craftsman-style tiled fireplace in City Hall Conference Room.

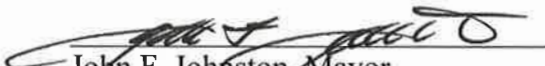


Plate 14. Second floor staircase on east side of building.

PASSED, APPROVED and ADOPTED this 10th day of October 2017 by the following vote:

AYES: Blatz, Francina, Johnson
NOES: Haney, Weirick
ABSENT: None
ABSTAIN: None

CITY OF OJAI, CALIFORNIA



John F. Johnston, Mayor

10-13-17

Date signed

ATTEST:



Gail Davis, Deputy City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



Matthew Summers, City Attorney