

CITY OF OJAI

RESOLUTION NO. 17-50

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF OJAI
APPROVING THE LANDMARK DESIGNATION FOR
THE NORDHOFF GRAMMAR SCHOOL
AS CITY OF OJAI HISTORIC LANDMARK NO. 24
LOCATED AT 414 E. OJAI AVENUE,
ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NUMBER 021-0-120-010**

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 a 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 (Ojai Unified School District buildings); and

WHEREAS, on June 30, 2015, the City Council approved the budget request to obtain a Phase 1 Historic Report for the Nordhoff Grammar School, located at 414 E. Ojai Avenue (Assessor's Parcel Number 021-0-120-010); 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 City Council 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;
- (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;

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- (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 Report found the proposed project meets criteria (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), (g), (h), (i), and (k) of Section 4-8.07 of the Cultural and Historic Preservation Law, as follows:

Criterion (a): Nordhoff Grammar School represents early-to-mid twentieth century development of the public school system in Ojai from 1927 to 1953 (the period of significance) and continued education of students within the School District as it replaced the original 1895 school.

Criterion (b): The School is associated with many individuals of the Ojai Community, including Ethel Percy Andrus, founder of the AARP.

Criteria (c.): There are character-defining characteristics associated with the Spanish Revival architecture of the Auditorium Building and original school building.

Criteria (d): The construction of the various phases of the School included designs by Roy C. Wilson.

Criteria (e): Although there have been modifications to the School buildings over time, the Auditorium and original school building retain much of their original features.

Criteria (f): The arcade feature is consistent with the Arcade that is a prominent element of Downtown Ojai.

Criteria (g): The School is a familiar community feature having stood in one form or another in the same location since 1895.

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

Criteria (i): the property has historic and architectural interest for the public as outlined in the report and this property would have interest to the general public and community as a whole.

Criteria (k): the property's designation will not infringe upon the rights of a private owner since the owner of the property is a public agency.

WHEREAS, the features defining the character of the Spanish Revival Architecture for the Auditorium Building and Buildings fronting Ojai Avenue, including character-defining elements such as decorative columns and benches, circular tile and cut-out vents.

WHEREAS, the defining characteristics of the property are listed below as objects of record in this resolution. Any proposed changes, additions, renovations or alterations to these features shall be subject to the Secretary of the Interiors standards regarding alteration to historic structures and will require a work permit.

WHEREAS, on October 12, 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. 17-07, recommending the City Council designate the entire Nordhoff Grammar School, including the original and Kindergarten buildings, except for the non-contributing corporation yard metal structures in the rear of the property, located at 414 E. Ojai Avenue, as City of Ojai Historic Landmark No. 24.

WHEREAS, on November 28, 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 staff report, Phase I Historic Resources Report, and the addendum to the report to include the Kindergarten building, the City Council finds that three portions of the Nordhoff Grammar School located at 414 E. Ojai Avenue, those three portions being: the arcaded grammar school building, specifically the portion facing Ojai Avenue; the lawn area in front of the arcaded grammar school building facing Ojai Avenue; and the Chaparral Auditorium along Ojai Avenue are historically and culturally significant based on the findings contained in the Historic Resources Report as it relates to the defining architectural characteristics documented in this resolution and as Exterior Objects of Record.

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 Addendum contained herein, the City Council hereby designates three portions of the Nordhoff Grammar School property, located at 414 E. Ojai Avenue, as City of Ojai Historic Landmark No. 24, as it relates to the defining architectural characteristics listed and documented as Exterior Objects of Record as stated in this resolution. Those three portions are: the arcaded grammar

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school building, specifically the portion facing Ojai Avenue; the lawn area in front of the arcaded grammar school building facing Ojai Avenue; and the Chaparral Auditorium along Ojai Avenue. These significant architectural features, described below, constitute the elements that define the character of the Spanish Revival buildings. Any alteration to the exterior of the original Nordhoff Grammar School's arcaded grammar school building, specifically the portion facing Ojai Avenue, the lawn area in front of the arcaded grammar school building facing Ojai Avenue, and the Chaparral Auditorium along Ojai Avenue, including doors, windows, roofs, and exterior walls, and any alteration of the character-defining elements described in this resolution that exist in these three designated portions of the property requires the approval of a Work Permit by the Historic Preservation Commission under the terms of the City's Cultural and Historic Preservation Law, in addition to any other permit required by applicable federal, state, or local law.

Nordhoff Grammar School
414 E. Ojai Avenue
Ojai, California

EXTERIOR OBJECTS OF RECORD

The Spanish Revival (also known as Spanish Eclectic) style school property consists of a modified U-shaped configuration of one-story buildings adjoined by an arcade and topped with a low-pitched terracotta-tiled roof. They comprise a rectangular-shaped main building with a hipped roof, and a truncated tower attached to the east side (c. 1927-1929) fronting East Ojai Avenue. Arcaded wings with side-gabled roofs extend to the east and north (c. 1927-1929). Another addition extends east from the north end of the north wing to complete the U-shape (c. 1937-1938). The arcade connects the east end of the east wing to Chaparral Auditorium, constructed in 1938. The west side of the core building exhibits a larger rectangular-shaped Superintendent's Office - c. 1953) with a side-gabled roof. The remaining educational building on the campus is a one-story contemporary style school building at the southeast corner of North Montgomery Street and East Aliso Street, which currently houses a preschool (c. 1953-1954).

FEATURE: With the exception of the contemporary style building, each segment of the cohesive complex is characterized by a concrete foundation, single-story, low massing, white plastered exterior walls, central courtyard, prominent arcaded wings, decorative columns, low-pitched roof, and narrow eaves clad with terracotta roof tiles. Other character-defining features include generous expanses of wood multi-pane double-hung windows, wood tripartite hopper windows, and decorative tiles and decorative circular vents. Unlike the arched arcade in the downtown area of downtown Ojai, the covered walkway here is square, with plastered columns or wood columns on concrete piers featuring refined upper design elements and exposed rafters. Only the shortened bell tower displays an arched opening.

SIGNIFICANCE: By 1927, prominent Santa Paula architect Roy C. Wilson, who also designed Nordhoff Union High School, the San Antonio School Building, Bill Baker's Bakery (now Azu), and the original Ojai Festival Bowl (now Libbey Bowl) was commissioned to design a new Spanish Revival style grammar school on the school grounds (Figures 9 and 10).³¹ Among Roy C. Wilson's most famous works is the Teague/Charles Collins Mansion in Santa Paula, which has been designated as Ventura County Historical Landmark #54.³² Santa Barbara contractor Grant T. Johnson was awarded the contract to build the new Nordhoff Union Grammar School.³³ Prior to construction of the new school, the original 1895 school building was moved to the northeastern corner of the property (Figure 11).

