



# CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT



**DEPARTMENT:** Community Development

**MEETING DATE:** November 16, 2021

**PREPARED BY:** Craig Jimenez

**AGENDA LOCATION:** PH-1

**TITLE:** Historic Landmark HL-159 for the Farmers Club Fountain at 321 South Myrtle Avenue, City of Monrovia, Applicant; Resolution No. 2021-56

**OBJECTIVE:** To designate the Farmers Club Fountain in Library Park as a historic landmark

**BACKGROUND:** The Historic Preservation Commission (Commission) has initiated this application to designate the Farmers Club Fountain in Library Park as a historic landmark. On January 27, 2021, the Commission discussed the historic value of the structure and recommended to the City Council that an application be prepared for consideration. Pursuant to Monrovia’s Historic Preservation Ordinance, all applications for historic landmark designation require consent of the property owner. The structure is in Library Park and is owned by the City of Monrovia; therefore, the City Council must consent to the submittal of an application for local designation.

On February 16, 2021, the City Council reviewed this request and provided the required authorization and directed staff to prepare the application and initiate the process.

**ANALYSIS:** Situated near the northwest corner of Myrtle and Lime Avenues, the Farmers Club Fountain has become a highly recognizable symbol of Old Town Monrovia and Library Park. The Monrovia-Duarte Farmers’ Club was a group of civic minded individuals who met during the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. While not well known, their lasting contribution to Monrovia was the construction and donation of the Farmers Club Fountain in 1909. In fact, the Club disbanded several weeks after the dedication of the structure. The structure was altered several decades ago by removing the center portion between the columns, presumably to repair/replace the plumbing and fixtures; however, staff was not able to find any records to verify. The purpose of the structure has always been to serve as a shelter for a public drinking fountain.

On August 6, 2013, the structure was struck by an automobile causing significant damage. Due to the substantial efforts of the Monrovia Historic Preservation Group (MOHPG) and the City, it was meticulously restored in 2014. Additional information about the Farmers’ Club, the Fountain, and the restoration can be found on the attached DPR.



### **Criteria and Guidelines**

Using the *Citywide Historic Context Statement*, the structure was evaluated under the *Public and Private Institutional Development Context*, and the *Cultural Landscapes, 1887-1967* theme. As specified by the Historic Preservation Ordinance in the Monrovia Municipal Code (MMC), a property must meet one or more of the applicable designation criteria.

# PH-1

At their meeting of October 27, 2021, the Historic Preservation Commission determined that the Farmers Club Fountain meets two of the designation criteria:

- **Criteria 5** - It has a unique location or physical characteristics or represents an established and familiar visual feature of neighborhood, community, or the city.

*The Farmers Club Fountain has been a highly recognizable and familiar feature of Old Town Monrovia, Library Park, and the City of Monrovia for over 100 years. Its location at the southeast corner of Library Park makes it a highly visible in Old Town.*

- **Criteria 6** – It incorporates elements that help preserve and protect a historic place or area of historic interest in the city.

*The Farmers Club Fountain represents an important association with a cultural landscape in Monrovia, specifically as a significant historic feature of Library Park. Additionally, it has occupied an important location within Old Town Monrovia for over 100 years. Both Library Park and Old Town Monrovia are places of historic interest in the community. The preservation of the Fountain helps to preserve the heritage of the area.*

### **DPR Form**

Monrovia uses the state DPR Forms to survey, describe, evaluate and record historic resources. Using the California Historical Resources Status (CHRS) Codes, staff recommended a rating code of 5S1 (individual property that is listed or designated locally). The Historic Preservation Commission reviewed and approved the attached DPR and concurred with staff's rating. The DPR constitutes the Nomination Statement which has been forwarded to the City Council for consideration.

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT:** The designation of a local landmark is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Specifically, it meets the requirements of a Class 31 exemption pursuant to Section 15331 (Historic Resource Restoration/Rehabilitation) of the CEQA Guidelines which exempts projects that preserve historical resources. This is consistent with the City's CEQA Guidelines.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** There is no fiscal impact associated with the Historic Landmark designation. However, if the City Council chooses to place a historic plaque on the structure, there will be a cost associated with the procurement and installation, which would be less than \$500.

**OPTIONS:** The following options are presented for consideration:

- 1) Approve the Historic Landmark designation as recommended by the Historic Preservation Commission; or
- 2) Deny the Historic Landmark designation if the City Council determines that the property does not meet the designation criteria.

**RECOMMENDATION:** At their meeting of October 27, 2021, the Historic Preservation Commission unanimously voted to recommend that the Farmers Club Fountain be designated as a Historic Landmark.

**COUNCIL ACTION REQUIRED:** If the City Council concurs, then following the public hearing, the appropriate action would be a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2021-56.

**PRIMARY RECORD**

Primary #  
HRI #  
Trinomial  
CHR Status Code 5S1

Other Listings  
Review Code

Reviewer

Date

Page 1 of 6 \*Resource Name or #: HL- 159

**P1 Other Identifier:** Farmers Club Fountain

**\*P2 Location:**  Not for Publication  Unrestricted

**a. County:** Los Angeles

**c. Address:** Library Park, 321 South Myrtle Avenue **City:** Monrovia **Zip:** 91016

**e. Other Locational Data:** APN # 8516-013-901

**P3a Description:** (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries) Located in the southeast portion of Library Park, this small canopy structure has a medium slope, open-gabled roof capped with clay pantiles (s-tiles). The notched, exposed rafters are supported by two 6" x 6" outriggers atop two cross beams. There are two rectangular, cut granite "arches" on either side of structure. The granite blocks with pointed joints are irregular in size and shape. On the east side, "FARMERS CLUB" is chiseled into the granite; the letters painted gold.

There is a metal, ground mounted, water fountain fixture in the center, it is not original and is not a contributing feature. In 2014, the Farmers Club Fountain was completely repaired and restored after a car accident destroyed much of the structure.

**P3b Resource Attributes:** (List attributes and codes) HP28 Street furniture

**\*P4 Resources Present:**  Building  Structure  Object  Site  District  Element of District  Other

**P5a Photograph**



**P5b Description of Photo:** (view, date)

Facing northwest, October 2021

**P6 Date Constructed:** 1909

**Source:** Monrovia News

**P7 Owner and Address:**

City of Monrovia

415 South Ivy Avenue, Monrovia, CA

**P8 Recorded by:**

City of Monrovia

**P9 Date Recorded:** 10/2021

**P10 Survey Type:** Individual

**P11 Report Citation:**

**Attachments:**  NONE  Location Map  Sketch Map  Continuation Sheet  Building, Structure, and Object Record  
 Archaeological Record  District Record  Linear Feature Record  Milling Station Record  Rock Art Record  
 Artifact Record  Photograph Record  Other (List):

- B1 Historic Name:** Farmers Club Fountain
- B2 Common Name:** Monrovia Wishing Well
- B3 Original Use:** Water fountain shelter
- B4 Present Use:** Water fountain shelter
- B5 Architectural Style:** Vernacular

**B6 Construction History** (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations)

1907 – Constructed  
 1990s (est) – Center granite portion removed.  
 2013 – Damaged by automobile  
 2014 – Restored

**B7 Moved:** No      **Date Moved:** n/a      **Original Location:** n/a

**B8 Related Features:**  
 The existing drinking fountain fixture is not original and is not a contributing feature.

**B9a Architect:** Unknown      **b. Builder:** unknown

**B10 Significance: Theme:** Cultural Landscapes      **Area:** Old Town Monrovia/Library Park

**Period of Significance:** 1887-1967      **Property Type:** HP28 Street furniture

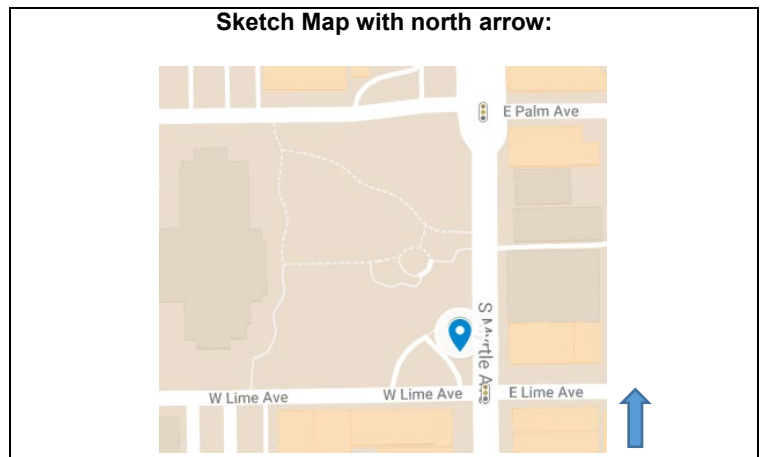
Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as well as integrity.  
*This structure appears ineligible for the National Register and the California Register, it does however, appear eligible for local designation representing an important association with cultural landscapes in Monrovia as a historical feature of Library Park and Old Town Monrovia, both are places of historic interest and make important contributions to the quality of life in Monrovia.*

**B11 Additional Resource Attributes:** none

- B12 References:**  
 Monrovia News  
 Monrovia Daily News Post  
 Los Angeles Times  
 City records

**B13 Remarks**

**B14 Evaluator /Date:** Craig Jimenez, AICP  
City of Monrovia, 10/2021



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### B10. Significance (continued from page 2)

#### *Monrovia-Duarte Farmers' Club*

The Monrovia-Duarte Farmers' Club<sup>1</sup> was a short lived organization formed by civic-minded citizens who wanted to improve the appearance of the City.<sup>2</sup> Many of their meetings appeared to be focused on the raising of poultry.<sup>3</sup> However, based on various news reports, the club also had interests in public roads<sup>4</sup>, horticulture<sup>5</sup> and forestry.<sup>6</sup> Some of their meetings had reported attendance of over 75 people.<sup>7</sup> Although no records could be found to confirm the founding date, there are sources that indicate it was active as far back as 1902.<sup>8</sup> Additionally, an article in 1909 announcing their disbandment states that "the club was organized a few years ago."<sup>9</sup> The last meeting of the Farmers' Club was held at the home of Mrs. T.C. Forbes on November 23, 1909,<sup>10</sup> several weeks after the dedication of the fountain. Although the club was involved in planting trees and built gravel walkways around the old Ivy Avenue School<sup>11</sup> (now Clifton Middle School), their major contribution to Monrovia appears to be the construction of the Fountain.

The first announcement of the fountain appears to be in an article in the Monrovia News, which stated that a drinking fountain would "be constructed of donated material and the arrangements are being rapidly perfected by Messrs. F.W. Burr and J.R. Cutting."<sup>12</sup> G.H. Hutchins was also part of the planning committee. (source needed) Construction began the week of September 21, 1909 and completed the week of November 12, 1909. (source needed)

#### *Time Capsule*

It was reported that a time capsule was to be buried that included copies of the Monrovia Messenger (October 9, 1909), Monrovia News (October 15, 1909) and the Los Angeles Times (November 1, 1909). The club members also included a letter addressed "To Posterity," according to the Monrovia News, the letter reads:

Those who had most to do with the building of this fountain hope that if the contents of this box is ever to light it will be so far in the future that the names of all having in any way to do with it will have been forgotten. It is dedicated by the people and for the people. May it outlast the everlasting hills that tower above it. Monrovia, California, November one, Nineteen hundred and nine.

Unfortunately, the capsule's whereabouts and fate are unknown. One theory is that the box was stolen before it could be encapsulated.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> May have been originally called the Duarte Monrovia Farmers' Club as reported in the Los Angeles Times, December 3, 1902, p. 19 and/or the Farmers' Club of Duarte and Monrovia, Los Angeles Times, October 28, 1905, 21

<sup>2</sup> Ryon, Ruth, "What was the Farmers Club? now we know!", Monrovia Daily News Post, December 14, 1971, B-1

<sup>3</sup> Monrovia News, February 23, 1907

<sup>4</sup> Monrovia News, September 28, 1907

<sup>5</sup> Los Angeles Times, October 27, 1906, 24

<sup>6</sup> Monrovia News, May 2, 1908

<sup>7</sup> Los Angeles Times, September 30, 1905, 9

<sup>8</sup> Los Angeles Times, December 3, 1902, 19

<sup>9</sup> Monrovia News, November 27, 1909

<sup>10</sup> ibid

<sup>11</sup> Monrovia Daily News Post, December 14, 1971, B-1

<sup>12</sup> Monrovia News, August 7, 1909

<sup>13</sup> Monrovia Daily News Post, December 14, 1971, B-1

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### ***Destruction and Restoration***

On the evening of August 6, 2013, a motorist jumped the curb and crashed into the structure causing significant damage. After the accident, the City's Public Works staff collected and stored the materials for the eventual restoration. The restoration of the structure was a joint effort between the City of Monrovia and the Monrovia Historic Preservation Group (MOHPG).

Once a settlement agreement with the insurance company was reached, the restoration began. The first task was to reassemble the salvaged granite. This is very unique and specialized work and it was challenging to find a contractor that had the requisite skills and experience. Based on his past experience and skill, the Monrovia City Council awarded the contract to rebuild and restore the granite columns to Sierra Madre-based contractor Bruce Goss. The work commenced on June 6, 2014 and completed the following month. Each granite block was able to be placed back in its original position, none of the granite was damaged. While the original structure relied on its own weight, the reconstruction included stainless steel threaded anchor rods that were embedded which allowed the roof structure to be securely attached to the granite columns. The joints were pointed to match the original based on historic photographs.

Once the masonry was complete, MOHPG took the lead in the reconstruction of the roof. The two 6" x 6" wood beams that supported the roof were able to be reused, however had significant dry rot. They were repaired and restored using a two-part epoxy. The rafters however, could not be salvaged. They were refabricated using the original as a cutout detail to match. About half of the roof tiles were destroyed, replacement tiles were supplied by *Architectural Detail* in Pasadena. A number of MOHPG members volunteered their time to complete the restoration: Gloria Crudgington, Jimi Hendrix, Mark Howard, Alan Morse, Susan Motander, John Rogers, Robb Stewart, John Watson, Jim Wigton, and Chip Young. The project was completed in April 2015.

### ***Restoration Timeline***<sup>14</sup>

August 6, 2013	Fountain structure destroyed by an automobile
May 6, 2014	Monrovia City Council approved expenditure of \$7,087.91 to Bruce Goss of Sierra Madre for the repair of the granite portion of the fountain
June 6, 2014	Work begins on the repair and restoration of the four beams from the roof
July 15, 2014	Granite work completed
October 23, 2014	Rafter tails cut by Robb Stewart
November 8, 2014	Wood painted
December 4, 2014	Wood portion of roof installed
April 14, 2015	Roof tiles completed

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<sup>14</sup> Information from Jim Wigton, President, Monrovia Historic Preservation Group (1/28/2021)

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Additional Photo Documentation



Figure 1- Public Works crew cleaning up after accident in 2013 (source: MOHPG)



Figure 2 - Farmers Club Fountain, west elevation (2021)

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Figure 3 - Rafter tail detail (2021)



Figure 4 - Farmers Club inscription (2021)

## RESOLUTION NO. 2021-56

### A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MONROVIA, CALIFORNIA, DESIGNATING THE FARMERS CLUB FOUNTAIN IN LIBRARY PARK AS HISTORIC LANDMARK NUMBER 159

#### RECITALS

(i) The Historic Preservation Commission has initiated an application to designate the Farmers Club Fountain in Library Park at 321 South Myrtle Avenue as a historic landmark. On February 16, 2021, the City Council authorized the preparation and submittal of the application.

(ii) On October 27, 2021, the Historic Preservation Commission of the City of Monrovia conducted a duly noticed public hearing on the application. At the hearing, all interested persons were given an opportunity to be heard. The Historic Preservation Commission received and considered the staff report and all the information, evidence, and testimony presented in connection with this application. At the close of the public hearing, the Historic Preservation Commission forwarded a Nomination Statement to the City Council seeking historic landmark status for the Farmers Club Fountain in Library Park (“the structure”) and found that it met the criteria for designation as an historic landmark.

(iii) On November 16, 2021, the City Council of the City of Monrovia conducted a duly noticed public hearing on the application. At the hearing, all interested persons were given an opportunity to be heard. The City Council received and considered the staff report and all the information, evidence, and testimony presented in connection with this application.

(iv) Environmental Review

(a) This application is Categorically Exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15331 and the City’s CEQA Guidelines.

(v) The custodian of records for all materials that constitute the record of proceeding upon which this decision is based is the City Clerk. Those documents are available for public review in the Office of the City Clerk located at 415 South Ivy Avenue, Monrovia, California 91016.

(vi) All legal prerequisites to the adoption of this Resolution have occurred.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, the City Council of the City of Monrovia hereby finds, determines and resolves as follows:

1. The City Council finds that all of the facts set forth in the Recitals of this Resolution are true and correct.

2. Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") and the City's local CEQA Guidelines, this application is Categorical Exempt from the requirements of CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15331.

3. As specified by the Historic Preservation Ordinance, the City Council finds that the Property meets the following designation criteria for a historic landmark:

a. *It has a unique location or physical characteristics or represents an established and familiar visual feature of neighborhood, community, or the city (Criteria 5).*

b. *It incorporates elements that help preserve and protect a historic place or area of interest in the city (Criteria 6).*

4. The City Council hereby designates the Farmers Club Fountain in Library Park as Historic Landmark Number 159.

5. The City Clerk shall certify to the adoption of this Resolution.

**PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED** this 16<sup>th</sup> day of November 2021.

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Tom Adams, Mayor  
City of Monrovia

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

ATTEST:

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Alice D. Atkins, MMC, City Clerk  
City of Monrovia

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Craig A. Steele, City Attorney  
City of Monrovia