

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Christopher Drake, and I am writing regarding the historical designation status currently applied to 1224 Harper Avenue in Redondo Beach. This home has been owned by my family since 1972 and is the place where my three brothers and I spent our childhoods. This house was more than walls and a roof to us – it was where we grew up, celebrated birthdays, gathered for holidays, and said our goodbyes to loved ones. It is a big part of our family story.

I am asking that the city reconsider the historical designation and remove it. Not only because it is factually inaccurate but keeping it in place would cause deep and lasting financial harm to my family.

The official city record describes this as a “Craftsman” style home with three bedrooms and two bathrooms. This is simply not true, as the home has had five bedrooms for many decades, long before my parents purchased it. The previous owner told us the home began as a small one-story structure in 1912 and gradually expanded over many decades, with an upstairs added, rooms reconfigured, and more bedrooms built.

By the time my family moved in, it had already been significantly altered from its origins, and after 100+ years of life, any “original” features of the home were long gone. The historic label wasn’t applied until the 1980s, many decades after major alterations were made, so the designation is based on a version of the house that no longer exists. It is a classification that, in this case, preserves nothing that is genuinely historic.

Beyond the technical inaccuracies, there is also the human impact of the incorrect historic designation. My brothers and I inherited this home after our parents passed; it was their intention for the sale to help secure our individual futures. For me personally, I have no retirement savings, no 401(k), and no investments. The proceeds from the sale of this home is not “extra” money; it is intended to be my safety net for the next 20 to 30 years. At least two of my brothers are in similar positions.

But if the historic designation remains, the house will lose a lot of its value because of it. Additionally, the designation could require us to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars we don’t have just to meet current minimum code

requirements and to maintain features that aren't original. Losing that value and spending that money would be the difference between us living with dignity in our later years, as our parents intended, or facing financial insecurity at a time when we are least able to recover.

I am not asking the city to erase any of its history. I'm just asking that the history be recognized accurately, and that families like mine are not burdened by an incorrect designation that serves neither historic preservation nor fairness. Removing this designation would allow the property to be sold at a fair market value and likely redeveloped into three new single-family homes, bringing new life, new families, and additional tax revenue to Redondo Beach.

This is not just a decision about a building, but about how it will directly affect real people's lives. I hope you will see these facts and the human side and vote to remove the historical designation from 1224 Harper Avenue.

Thank you for your time and understanding.

Sincerely,

Christopher Drake