



City of Woodland

REPORT TO MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR
AND CITY COUNCIL

DATE: March 4, 2008

SUBJECT: Beamer-Motroni Honorary Neighborhood District Designation

Report in Brief

The City's Historic Preservation Commission has approved the designation of the Beamer- Motroni neighborhood as an Honorary Historic Neighborhood District. This designation recognizes the historic character of a neighborhood without placing special land use restrictions or requiring zoning changes. In order for the designation to be recognized, a resolution supporting such action must be approved by the City Council.

Staff recommends that the City Council approve Resolution No. _____ designating the Beamer-Motroni as an Honorary Neighborhood District as described herein.

Background

In May 2005, the Historic Preservation Commission expressed interest in evaluating the Beamer Park Neighborhood based on date of construction if there was a geographical concentration or split between pre and post-World War II homes. The Commission evaluated the dates of construction and conducted a field trip in July 2005. After further discussion, the preliminary boundaries were recommended.

A neighborhood meeting was held on October 10, 2007 by the Commission to provide information to residents and take comments on the proposed honorary district designation and boundary. An informational brochure mailed to residents is included as **Attachment 1**. Approximately 10 residents came to the meeting to speak in favor of the designation and to recommend boundary changes for the district. The original boundary did not include two lots north of Hollister Avenue and West of Third Street, parcels 22 and 36. Additional requests were heard to include the lots north of Hollister Avenue east of Bruton Lane and west of East Keystone Avenue.

At their November 7, 2007 meeting, the Historic Preservation Commission recommended that the Beamer-Motroni neighborhood be recognized as a residential historic district that will be "honorary" in nature to acknowledge and make known the number of historic and well maintained homes within

this neighborhood. A district designation will better identify these homes as a significant part of the community's rich past and stable future. The District boundaries reflect the comments from residents as shown in **Attachment 2**.

An honorary designation does not result in zoning changes and will not place additional restrictions on homes in the district. The recognition of a neighborhood as an Honorary Residential Historic District was previously approved by the City Council over five years ago. On September 3, 2002 the City Council approved Resolution 4376, adopting a Residential Historic District (Honorary) for the residential neighborhood located south of Lincoln Avenue, north of Marshall Avenue, east of Walnut and west of Fourth Street. This is the only other neighborhood that has been designated in this manner.

Staff prepared a resolution for the City Council's consideration to designate the Beamer-Motroni neighborhood as an Honorary Neighborhood District. Resolution No. _____ is included as **Attachment 3**.

Discussion

An honorary district is a geographically definable area with a significant concentration of buildings, structures, sites, spaces or objects unified by past events, physical development, architectural design, materials, etc. It includes contributing and non-contributing properties. Non-contributing properties are those properties which do not share the architectural, historical or geographical characteristics of the district except for their physical presence in the district. New construction and those older buildings which have been changed so much that they are no longer recognizable as historic are non-contributing properties. An honorary district designation is a means by which to recognize and call attention to a neighborhood that not only has a concentration of older homes but recognizes the fact that many have been well maintained and the historic character conserved. There are approximately 105 homes in the district of which twelve (12) were built prior to 1919; nine (9) were built in the 1920's, thirty-five (35) were built in the 1930's and twenty-four (24) were built in the 1940's.

The educational benefits of creating local districts are the same as those derived from any historic preservation effort. Districts help explain the development of a place, the source of inspiration, and technological advances. They are a record of the neighborhood, the residents who lived there and the distinct communities within Woodland.

An honorary district is recommended as it will not involve property rights issues and would not involve special review or permits. However, an honorary designation will have a positive impact through the association of an identified district and will most likely have the effect of increasing property values. Recognition will hopefully foster reinvestment consistent with historic preservation, and will result in continued preservation of neighborhood fabric and character.

The City's Historical Preservation Ordinance, 12A, includes procedures for historic district designation; however, official designation requires written consent of all property owners for a district affecting residential properties. Official designation would require review by the Historic Preservation Commission for any exterior alterations including new construction, additions and

relocation of a structure in that district. Designation of Beamer-Motroni as an Honorary District **does not** involve this level of regulation.

Fiscal Impact

Adoption of the resolution should have no fiscal impact beyond the utilization of staff time. The designation will not impose restrictions on the homeowners in the honorary district.

Public Contact

Posting of the City Council agenda. A notice concerning the proposed City Council Resolution and district boundary was sent to residents and neighbors 10 days prior to the meeting date.

Alternative Courses of Action

1. Approve Resolution No. _____ designating the Beamer-Motroni as an Honorary Neighborhood District as described herein.
2. Do not approve at this time. Council may request possible revisions or decline to approve at this time.

Recommendation for Action

Staff recommends that the City Council approve Alternative No. 1.

Prepared by: Cindy Abell-Norris
Principal Planner

Reviewed by: Barry Munowitch, AICP
Assistant City Manager

Mark G. Deven
City Manager

Attachment:

1. Beamer-Motroni Honorary Neighborhood District Meeting Notice
2. Boundaries for the Proposed Beamer-Motroni Honorary Neighborhood District
3. Resolution Adopting an Honorary Residential Historic Neighborhood District

BEAMER-MOTRONI
HONORARY
NEIGHBORHOOD
DISTRICT

NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING

Neighborhood Meeting

October 10, 2007

6:00 pm

**City Council Chambers
300 First St & (upstairs)**

Purpose of meeting--to discuss with neighbors a proposed honorary district designation.

Contact: Cindy Norris, Senior Planner
(530) 661-5820, e-mail:
cindy.norris@cityofwoodland.org

Comments will be accepted through November 1, 2007 and should be directed to Cindy Norris.

Historic Overview

Bay area entrepreneur Hewitt Davenport subdivided Beamer Park in 1913 creating an upscale residential enclave of Woodland. Davenport was assisted by noted landscape architect, Mark Daniels. Several local builders began constructing homes in the Park in 1914. William Fait, a designer-builder who arrived in Woodland in 1912 from Spokane, was very active in Beamer Park, crafting an assortment of bungalows both before and after World War I. He and Joseph Motroni, who built more houses in this section of town than any single builder, were residents of Beamer Park.

After the depression, the housing market began to rebound in the late 1930s. In 1936, Motroni's Subdivision was approved. Motroni began filling in West Keystone Avenue in Beamer Park with an assortment of houses

including his own dream house with a floor plan in the shape of an airplane. This house, built in 1937, is located at 524 W. Keystone Avenue.

This was a very productive period in Motroni's career as his design talent and stature as a trusted builder and successful businessman rose to a peak.

A private train was chartered from Sacramento to promote the grant opening of Beamer Park in June 1914. The complete build out of the park took more than 40 years and, thus, a broad range of housing styles are represented.

(Source: *Crafting a Valley Jewel, Architects and Builders of Woodland*, by David L. Wilkinson).

District Recommendation

The Historic Preservation Commission is recommending that the Beamer-Motroni neighborhood be recognized as a residential historic district that will be "honorary" in nature to acknowledge and make known the number of historic and well maintained homes within this neighborhood. A district will better identify these homes as a significant part of the Community's rich past and stable future.

An honorary designation does not result in zoning changes and will not place additional restrictions on homes in the district.

Questions:

1. What is an honorary district?

An honorary district is a geographically definable area with a significant concentration of buildings, structures, sites, spaces or objects unified by past events, physical development, architectural design, materials, etc. It includes contributing and non-contributing properties. (Non-contributing properties are those properties which do not share the architectural, historical or geographical characteristics of the district except for their physical presence in the district. New construction and those older buildings which have been changed so much that they are no longer recognizable as historic are non-contributing properties.) An honorary district designation is a means by which to recognize

and call attention to a neighborhood that not only has a concentration of older homes but recognizes the fact that many have been well maintained and the historic character conserved.

The educational benefits of creating local districts are the same as those derived from any historic preservation effort. Districts help explain the development of a place, the source of inspiration, and technological advances. They are a record of ourselves and our communities.

2. Will this create greater awareness of neighborhood character and quality?

Local districts encourage better design. It has been shown through comparative studies that there is a greater sense of relatedness, more innovative use of materials, and greater public appeal within historic districts than in areas without historic designations.

One of the benefits of an honorary district designation is that it will provide greater awareness of the historic character of the Beamer-Motroni neighborhood, which in turn will encourage the maintenance and preservation of the character of the district and foster a sense of neighborhood stability. Designation will help encourage new construction and renovations that are complementary to the neighborhood. Designation will help assure that the features the residents and community value for the Beamer-Motroni neighborhood will be clearly identified and expectations for the type and quality of future development expressed.

The Beamer Park neighborhood and many of the homes are included in the City's Walking Tour guide book and the neighborhood was featured in last year's Stroll Through History tour. The characteristics and features of the homes are discussed in the write-ups that are provided in the guide book.

3. What does it mean for me as a property owner?

Recognition, stability, increased property value,

neighborhood renewal and pride of ownership are benefits of designation. Local districts protect the investments of owners and residents. Buyers know that the aspects that make a particular area attractive will be protected over a period of time.

4. Why is this being done for this neighborhood?

The Beamer-Motroni neighborhood has a significant concentration of homes built by several Woodland master builders, including William Fait and Joseph Motroni. There are 39 structures featured in the *Explore Historic Woodland* self-guided walking tour book.

5. Does everybody have to agree? What if some property owners disagree?

No, everyone does not have to agree in the case of an honorary district, because it does not impose regulatory restrictions. If a property owner disagrees it is possible that the home will still be included as it is the concentration of homes of significant character that together makes up the district. However, the designation as a historic landmark does require full ownership agreement.

6. What effect will this have on property values?

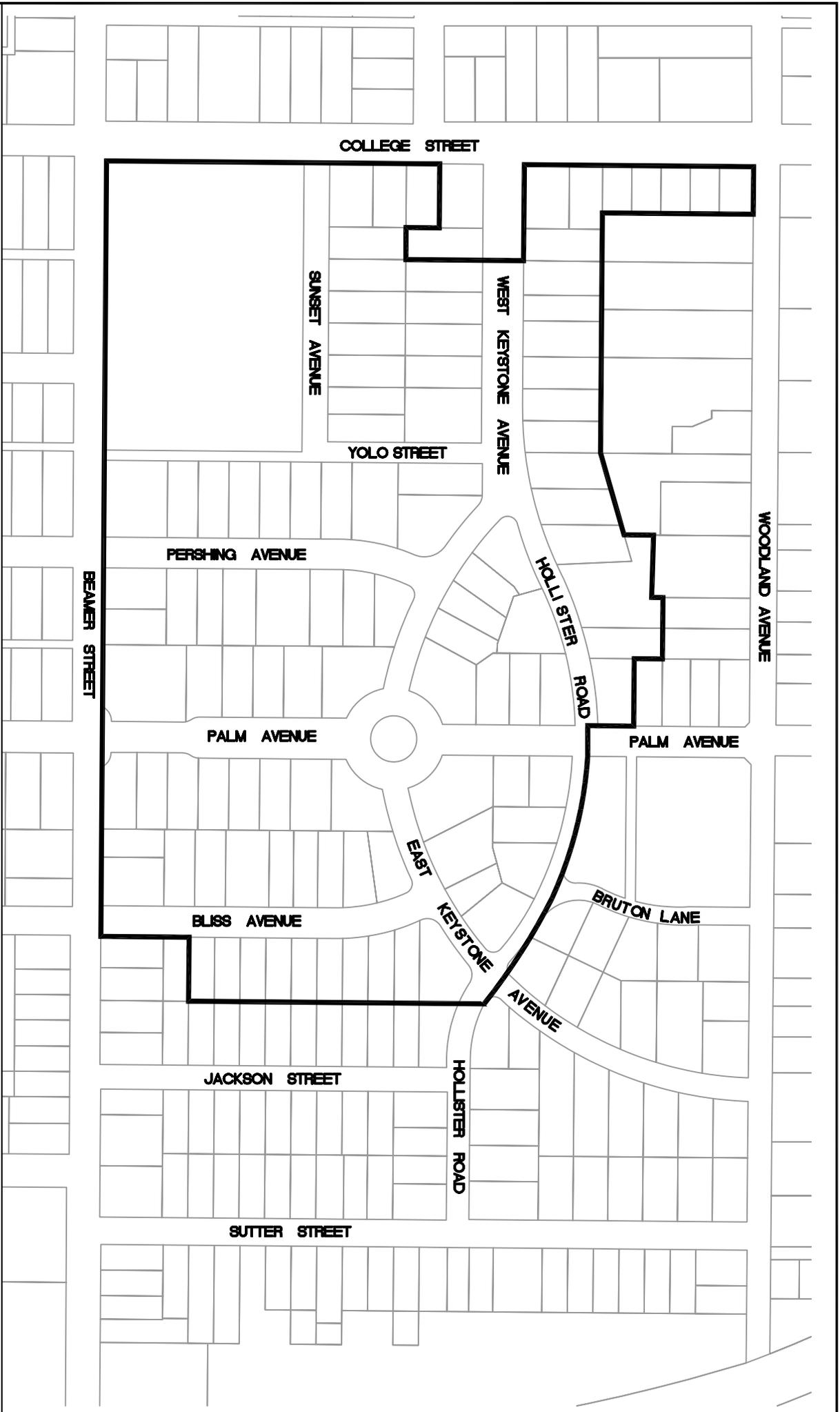
In general, being associated with a recognized "district" will most likely have the effect of increasing property values. This may be the result of recognition and pride of ownership. Recognition will hopefully foster reinvestment consistent with historic conservation, and will result in preservation of neighborhood fabric and character. Real estate agents in many cities use historic district status as a marketing tool to sell homes.

7. Does this affect my ability to work on my home and make changes?

If you want to alter, move or demolish a structure you will follow the same procedures of permit application as you would without the honorary district. There is no obligation to restore or rehabilitate your property.

DISTRICT BOUNDARY

BEAMER - MOTRONI HONORARY DISTRICT



RESOLUTION NO. _____

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WOODLAND,
CALIFORNIA, ADOPTING THE BEAMER-MOTRONI HONORARY HISTORIC
NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT**

The City Council of the City of Woodland, California (“City Council”) hereby finds, determines, resolves and orders as follows:

WHEREAS, In 1913 Hewitt Davenport subdivided Beamer Park, creating an upscale residential enclave of Woodland; and

WHEREAS, In June of 1914 a private train was chartered from Sacramento to promote the grand opening of Beamer Park; and

WHEREAS, In 1936 Motroni’s Subdivision was approved; and

WHEREAS, Motroni began filling in West Keystone Avenue and in Beamer Park with an assortment of houses including his own dream house with a floor plan in the shape of an airplane; and

WHEREAS, on October 10, 2007 the City held a neighborhood meeting, at which time 10 individuals spoke in favor of the district designation; and

WHEREAS, on November 7, 2007 the Historical Preservation Commission considered and approved the proposed honorary residential historic district as shown on the attached map identified as Exhibit A; and

WHEREAS, an honorary district designation is a means by which the City can recognize and call attention to a neighborhood that not only has a concentration of older homes but recognizes the fact that many have been well maintained and the historic character conserved.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, We, the members of the Woodland City Council hereby approve the Beamer-Motroni Honorary Neighborhood Residential District.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the City Council of the City of Woodland this 4th day of March, 2008, by the following vote:

AYES:
NOES:
ABSENT:
ABSTAINIG: