



Kate Harrison
Councilmember District 4

ACTION CALENDAR
March 9, 2021

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmembers Harrison and Hahn

Subject: Resolution Clarifying Eligibility for Historic Landmark Designation for Residences and Other Structures, Sites and Areas of Importance for Notable Community Members Who Contributed to the Cultural and Historic Values of Berkeley

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a resolution clarifying eligibility for historic landmark designation for residences and/or other structures, sites and areas of importance for notable community members who contributed to the cultural and historic values of Berkeley, including to allow the childhood home of Vice President Kamala Harris to be eligible for designation.

BACKGROUND

At the Jan 21, 2021 Special Council Meeting regarding the Appeal of Landmarks Preservation Commission Decision: Denial of City Landmark or Structure of Merit Designation for 1915 Berryman Street (LMIN2020-0003), staff restated the opinion that in order to satisfy the historic value criterion of the Landmarks Preservation Ordinance, the applicant must establish a direct connection between the subject property and the inhabitant's historical contributions (i.e., that the notable contributions occurred in the subject property). On page 7 of the August 6, 2020 1915 Berryman staff report, staff indicated that: "The Landmark application, however, has not demonstrated how the extant residential building at 1915 Berryman Street currently embodies or represents Payson's contributions [as]... his activities within religious and political organizations (if found significant) would be more correctly associated with the institutions and locations in which they occurred. Because the subject site served as his personal residence, productive activities would not be attributed to it."

This opinion is not supported by the Landmarks Preservation Ordinance itself, nor the National Register guidelines, and would preclude the landmarking of Vice President Kamala Harris's childhood home. Vice President Harris was raised in Berkeley and made history as the first woman, African-American, and South Asian American to be elected to the second highest office in the executive branch. These achievements did not take place while she was a resident of Berkeley.

This resolution would clarify Council's intent with respect to the Landmarks Preservation Ordinance that residences and/or other structures, sites and areas of importance for

Berkeley community members who contributed to the cultural and historic values of Berkeley, as these terms are identified in subsections A., A.4, and B.1 of Section 3.24.110 of the Landmark Preservation Ordinance, are eligible for historic landmark designation or structure of merit designation.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

No fiscal impacts.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

No known environmental impacts.

CONTACT PERSON

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ATTACHMENTS

1. Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

RESOLUTION CLARIFYING ELIGIBILITY FOR HISTORIC LANDMARK DESIGNATION FOR RESIDENCES AND OTHER STRUCTURES, SITES AND AREAS OF IMPORTANCE FOR NOTABLE COMMUNITY MEMBERS WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THE CULTURAL AND HISTORIC VALUES OF BERKELEY

WHEREAS, Kamala Harris has just been elected Vice-President of the United States, one of the nation's highest positions; and

WHEREAS, Kamala Harris has made history as the first woman, first African-American, and first South Asian American to be elected Vice-President; and

WHEREAS, prior to becoming Vice-President of the United States Kamala Harris served with distinction as a United States Senator for California, only the third female Senator from California, and only the 58th female Senator in the history of the United States; and

WHEREAS, the City of Berkeley and its community members are proud to claim Kamala Harris as a former resident of Berkeley; and

WHEREAS, there is strong support for making Kamala Harris' home while in Berkeley a historic landmark to recognize her ground-breaking achievements; and

WHEREAS; Under the current guidelines used by the City of Berkeley's Planning Department, a historic structure can be landmarked or designated a structure of merit only if the person actually performed his or her historic or cultural acts within the structure itself; and

WHEREAS; This interpretation is not supported by the City of Berkeley's Landmarks Preservation Ordinance or National Register guidelines; and

WHEREAS; This interpretation would preclude the City of Berkeley from even considering the landmarking of Kamala Harris's residence;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Berkeley confirms and clarifies that the residences and/or other structures, sites and areas of importance for notable Berkeley community members who contributed to the cultural and historic values of Berkeley as these terms are identified in subsections A., A.4, and B.1 of Section 3.24.110 of the Landmark Preservation Ordinance, are eligible for historic landmark designation or structure of merit designation, or as otherwise deemed to qualify.

