



Village Planning Committee Meeting Summary
Z-94-24-3

Date of VPC Meeting	October 16, 2024
Request From	R-3
Request To	R-3 HP
Proposal	Historic Preservation Overlay for the Thompson Rock Garden
Location	Approximately 280 feet north of the northeast corner of 13th Place and Cinnabar Avenue
VPC Recommendation	Approval, per the staff recommendation
VPC Vote	13-0

VPC DISCUSSION:

One member of the public registered to speak on this item in support, wishing to speak, and one member of the public registered in support, not wishing to speak.

STAFF PRESENTATION

Maura Jackson, staff with the Historic Preservation Office, provided background on the subject site and the surrounding area, the Historic Preservation Overlay eligibility criteria and how the Thompson Rock Garden meets those criteria, displayed images of the site, and presented staff’s recommendation of approval.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Julia Taggart, President of the Sunnyslope Historical Society, displayed images and historic photographs of the rock garden, Grover Cleveland Thompson and his family, the current owner Marion Blake, and discussed background information on Grover Cleveland Thompson’s life and how the rock garden was created.

QUESTIONS FROM COMMITTEE

Chair Stephanie Fogelson asked Ms. Taggart why she was passionate about this particular project. **Ms. Taggart** replied that she would like to see more properties with historic designation, rock gardens are becoming scarce in the area, this is a huge part of Sunnyslope history, and she wanted to help the property owner, Marion Blake. Ms.

Taggart added that Ms. Blake could have sold the property, but she kept it and has maintained it for 45 years.

Committee Member Gabriel Jaramillo asked about the property wall and if an adjacent property owner wanted to replace that wall, what impacts would that have, and if the site is accessible to the public. **Helana Reuter**, Historic Preservation Officer with the City of Phoenix, responded that the walls are not on a shared property line, they are on the subject site and the front wall is only about four feet in height. Ms. Ruter added that if the property owner wanted to increase the height of the walls they would have to discuss that with the property owner given that there are art elements as part of the wall and the rock garden is visible from the street, and the neighboring property owner is free to modify walls on their own property. **Ms. Taggart** responded that the rock garden is open to the public on the first Friday of the month and will be a part of the Sunnyslope Studio Tour and noted that Ms. Blake is 83 years old, security is a concern as to the hours the site is open to the public and her giving tours alone. Ms. Taggart added that she spoke with the surrounding businesses who supported the site and wanted to see it get historic status. Ms. Ruter reiterated that the rock garden is visible from the sidewalk.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

Committee Member Steve Pamperin shared that he lives nearby and supports the request.

Committee Member Nadine Alauria recognized that the property owner, Ms. Marion Blake, was in attendance.

MOTION

Committee Member Mike Krentz motioned to recommend approval of Z-94-24-3 per the staff recommendation. **Committee Member Nadine Alauria** seconded the motion.

VOTE

13-0; Motion to recommend approval of Z-94-24-3 per the staff recommendation passed; with Committee Members Alauria, Carmona, Garbarino, Jaramillo, Krentz, Larson, McBride, Molfetta, O'Hara, Pamperin, Sommacampagna, Matthews and Fogelson in favor.

STAFF COMMENTS REGARDING VPC RECOMMENDATION:

None.