

**STAFF REPORT BY:**

ANDRES L. SOTO  
PRINCIPAL PLANNER

**FOR:**

Historic Preservation Commission  
Meeting of October 11, 1995

**REQUEST:**

Consider the Historic Designation of  
Structure (Woodrow Wilson School)  
located at 750 South 8th Street  
(Landmark #45).

**SIGNIFICANCE AND EVALUATION:**

This particular structure is significant under the Construction/Architecture and Institutionalization/Socialization Themes. Prominent features of the box style structure include reinforced concrete block construction, large and small double hung windows in the front and sides of the structure, square flat roof, awning extension (approximately 3 ft.) above the main entrance and second entrance (east part of the building) facing 8th Street. There is a variation in the height of the building at the main entrance to give relief to the roof line of the structure.

Property for the school (four and one half acres) was purchased from Roy W. Gould in 1937 for \$4,250. Gould purchased the property in 1936 from John J. & Sallie E. Cottrell. The structure, which was constructed in 1938, was on a site immediately adjacent to Garfield School which fronted 7th Street, between "O" and Congress Streets.

The structure is historically significant due to the social and cultural aspects of its time. The school was built to provide schooling for Mexican students of the seventh and eighth grades, according to statements made during the dedication of the structure. Additionally, it was a structure that utilized funding from the Federal Works Project Administration (WPA).

**MODIFICATION:**

Staff examined the exterior of the primary structure and concluded that it is in the original construction of the period, and maintains its integrity of construction. It is noted that additional structures were constructed in later years on the site to accommodate the increase in student population, however, it is only the primary building that is being considered for historic designation.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends the Historic Preservation Commission approve the designation of Woodrow Wilson School, located at 750 South 8th Street, as a Historic Structure (Landmark #45), and forward said recommendation to the City Council for approval.

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## WOODROW WILSON SCHOOL - 1939

There was a new school to be located on four and one half acres of land east of the Garfield School has been purchased from Roy Gould for \$4,250.00. He has promised to move the house and outbuildings across the street to other property he owns. The plan is for a South Colton junior high school. It will face Eighth Street. The building will be reinforced concrete and at least ten rooms.

- Colton Courier, July 15, 1937.

The Seventh and eighth grades of Roosevelt School will be relieved by the new building of the Woodrow Wilson School to be built on South Eighth Street next to the Garfield School.

The new school will cost about \$80,000.00. The school will have eleven rooms, eight for classrooms, and then classrooms for manual training, cooking and sewing and a principal's office. The roof will be flat. It will be just east of the Garfield School. - Colton Courier, November 30, 1937.

Woodrow Wilson School has a dedication of the new structure. The new school will provide schooling for Mexican students of the seventh and eighth grades stated Dr. Elam J. Anderson, president of the University of Redlands.

- Colton Courier, October 14, 1938.

Work started on the Woodrow Wilson School at Seventh and Congress Streets. November 8 was the starting of the school WPA improvement project with a cost of \$28,910.00. The work will employ about 142 men for six months. The school is the most recent addition to the District and serves as a junior high for South Colton. The building and equipment is modern and the work is to be done on the grounds.

Paul J. Rogers was principal of the building. He is a newcomer to this term taking the place of H. Fred Heisner who served last year as principal of Wilson and Garfield Schools in South Colton.

John H. Waldron, superintendent of the elementary schools, secured the WPA improvement project. - Colton Courier, October 31, 1939.

The Woodrow Wilson School graduated 94 eighth graders last night. Natalie Salazar and Pete Luque, Jr., were presented with the American Legion medals and certificates. Each year the American Legion presents awards to the most outstanding girl and boy in the class. Pete Luque spoke on "Life in School".

- Colton Courier, June 10, 1948.

Woodrow Wilson Jr. High School is to graduate 132, the largest class in the history of the school. - Colton Courier, June 12, 1950.

1990

DATE: May 9, 1990

TO: Historic and Scenic Commission

FROM: Lynn Merrill  
Survey Consultant

SUBJ: Financial Incentives for Historic Preservation.

Per your direction, I have attempted to prepare a brief outline of the available financial incentives and programs for encouraging historic preservation. The list is by no means exhaustive, and is only a cursory review of each subject. Obviously, for the most current tax information, we recommend that an individual should contact their tax preparer and their attorney's for their own situation.

I. Investment Tax Credit

1. 20% tax credit is available for certified historic structures. This is also known as the Historic Credit.
2. 10% tax credit for structures originally placed in service before 1936. This is also known as the Older Structure Credit.
3. The combination of these two credits is known as the Rehabilitation Tax Credit.
4. A qualified rehabilitation expenditure is an amount properly chargeable to a capital account for property which is subject to depreciation and which is either 1) nonresidential real property, 2) Residential rental property, 3) real property with a class life of more than 12.5 years, or 4) and addition or improvement to property described in items 1 or 2 of this paragraph.
5. Acquisition costs and enlargement costs are excluded. Soft costs, such as architectural and engineering fees, legal expenses and development fees are included.
6. A certified historic structure is defined as any building which is individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places, or is located in a registered historic district and is certified by the Secretary of the Interior as being of historic significance to the district.
7. A certified rehabilitation must follow the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. This basically requires the owner to maintain and preserve the buildings integrity.

8. All work is subject to certification and review by both the State Office of Historic Preservation and the Secretary of the Interior.
9. This process is not impossible, but it requires thoughtful planning and familiarity with the tax laws and the rehabilitation standards.

## II. Facade Easements

1. According to the California Department of Real Estate Reference Book, an easement is defined as "**A right, privilege or interest limited to a specific purpose which one party has in the land of another.**" A facade easement is the interest of the public in the front or facade of a building.
2. A facade easement is usually deeded to a not-for-profit or public entity. Like any real estate transaction, it must be recorded in the office of the County Clerk to be in effect.
3. It prevents unauthorized alteration or demolition of a historic facade. The grantee has the responsibility and the right to enforce this easement.
4. Since the facade easement represents something of legitimate value, by giving a facade easement to a not-for-profit organization established to be the recipient of such an easement, the owner of the property has the right to take a credit on his/her tax return.
5. There are other responsibilities that go along with a facade easement. Once again, care and thoughtfulness should go into the decision to develop, administer or operate a facade easement program.

## III. The Mills Act

1. The Mills Act is a state law that provides for a ten year contract to be executed between the owner of a landmark and the legal jurisdiction. This agreement entitles the owner to a reduction in property taxes in exchange for an agreement to preserve the landmark. The contract can also require repair and rehabilitation.
2. In real estate, most land dealings are based on the concept of "highest and best use." In a Mills Act agreement, the owner is forfeiting his right to highest and best use of his property. For example, if the property in question is a single family residential structure located in an area zoned for multiple family, the highest and best use would be to tear down the structure and build apartments. By this agreement, the property owner is "compensated" for his voluntary loss of value by a reduction in his property taxes. He is, in effect, taxed at the lower value as a single family residential use.

3. Mills Act agreements involve both the City and County Assessor. They require determination of the value of the property before and after the Mills Act agreement.
4. The contract term is for ten years, and is automatically renewed annually for a period of ten years.