

ARCHITECT MILFORD WAYNE DONALDSON FAIA

April 15, 2016

Honorable State Historical Resources Commissioners
Ms. Julianne Polanco, Secretary

Office of Historic Preservation
1725 23rd Street, Suite 100
Sacramento, CA 95816

Support on Willow Glen Trestle, Santa Clara County, California to the National Register of Historic Places

Dear Honorable Commissioners and Secretary Ms. Julianne Polanco,

Overview of Professional Qualifications

Currently I am the President of award winning Architect Milford Wayne Donaldson, FAIA, Inc. since 1978, specializing in historic preservation services. I am licensed to practice architecture in California, Nevada and Arizona and hold a certified license from the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards. I am also affiliated with several historical and preservation organizations and a past president of the California Preservation Foundation (CPF), Chairman of the California Missions Foundation and past chairs of the State Historical Building Safety Board, the State Historical Resources Commission, and the Historic State Capitol Commission.

In 1991, The California Council of the American Institute of Architects acknowledged my statewide leadership in the interpretation of the California Historical Building Code that allowed the rehabilitation of historic buildings. In 1992, the American Institute of Architects inducted me into the College of Fellows.

I served by appointment for two Governors as the California State Historic Preservation Officer from 2004 until 2012. I currently serve as the Chairman of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, appointed by President Barack Obama in 2010 and reappointed for another another term ending in 2017.

OHP Summary of the Nomination

The trestle is eligible under Criterion A for its association with the industrial development of San Jose. Until the arrival of Western Pacific Railroad, San Jose and its surrounding agricultural communities had only one choice for railroad access to their community: Southern Pacific, whose near monopoly on freight traffic allowed them to dictate high rates to shippers. By encouraging Western Pacific to enter the San Jose area, the two railroads were placed in competition, and Western Pacific gained access to a major regional shipper of agricultural produce. There were obstacles to Western Pacific's entry to the area, including concerns of neighbors in communities along the proposed alignment, and resistance by Southern Pacific Railroad, who felt it was in their interest to maintain their transportation monopoly.

Background Explanation acting as California State Historic Preservation Officer

I understand that the State Historical Resources Commission has been provided a copy of my 2004 letter as CA SHPO regarding the Willow Glen Trestle. At that time, an EIR had been prepared for a trail alignment that proposed to keep the trestle intact, with some rehabilitation of the non-historic railing. There was some consideration of artifacts along the creek, but no need to review the historic status of the trestle since it was not proposed for major alteration or demolition.

Subsequent to 2004, I understand that the archives of the former town of Willow Glen were recovered from storage and made available for public viewing at the local library. The recovered newspaper articles and other reports from the 1920s provided additional background on the importance of the trestle and its impacts on development of the region.

Support of the Nomination

Willow Glen Trestle is a wooden trestle built in 1922 by the Western Pacific Railroad to serve industries in San Jose without disrupting the existing residential neighborhood of Willow Glen. The trestle solved the problem of access to West San Jose industries and gave Western Pacific the ability to provide rail transportation to an industrial area of the important fruit growing and canning region previously served only by the larger competitor Southern Pacific Railroad.

As a past member serving on the local City of San Diego Historical Resources Board for 12 years, I fully understand how important these types of resources are to the local community. As you know, the local landmarks commission supported historic status and the trestle remains very important to the local community. The nomination has received 35 letters

of support, including a finding by the City of San Jose Preservation Commission that the property was eligible for local listing: "The Commission voted to nominate the Los Gatos Creek Trestle for designation as a landmark of special historical, architectural, cultural, aesthetic or engineering interest or value of a historic nature (6-0-1; Schultz absent)"

I listened to the audio tape of the San Jose Landmarks Commission meeting and was thrilled to not only listen to the citizen's testimony, but to hear the Commissioner's final deliberations:

Commissioner Ed Saum:

"A landmark isn't the cheapest, easiest thing, that's why we thank when people come before us and ask to landmark their houses. The first thing I do is say 'Thank you! You are taking a burden on yourself that not everybody is willing to do, but it is a worthwhile burden.'"

Commissioner Marilyn Messina:

"I think it's wonderful to see such a group of people, and so passionate and dedicated about preserving something, something unique and special in your area and the history, and it's very gratifying for us to see that."

And the enthusiastic comment by the Chair, Ramiro Torres:

(about the EIR saying the trestle will last only 50 years): "Even if it lasts (only) 50 years, I think it should not be up to us, at this point, our generation, to make the determination that it should be torn down. I have a 2-1/2 year old, and maybe then, 50 years from now, his generation can say 'yes' to rebuilding, or the structure is too old and should be replaced. But at this point, if it's going to last another 50 years, let's keep it!"

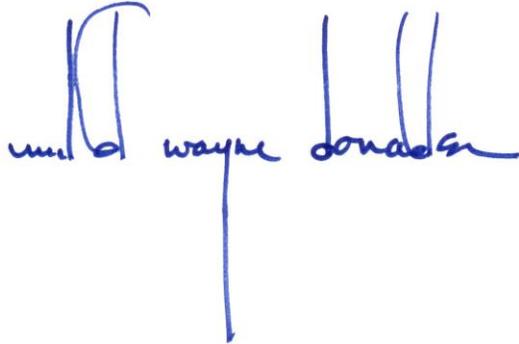
In addition to solidifying a community's past, preservation can help strengthen a community's future. Historic structures such as the Willow Glen trestle help create vibrant, cultural downtowns that draw tourism, art, festivals, and other activities which in turn draw investment, revenue, and economic growth.

Local residents will also benefit through interpretive components such as learning and recreational activities that complement the historic Willow Glen Trestle site's didactic offerings and illustrate a special meaning between its past, present and future. The more the community is involved, the more attractive and effective an area will become for locals and visitors.

I support the excellent report, submitted for your consideration, by Mr. William Burg, Office of Historic Preservation, State Historian II and his determination that the Willow Glen Trestle is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A at the local level of significance, with a period of significance of 1922-1965.

I highly recommend the Commission to accept the nomination and direct the State Historic Preservation Officer to approve the nomination for forwarding to the National Park Service for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Thank you for allowing me to support this nomination,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Milford Wayne Donaldson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M" and "W". A vertical line extends downwards from the end of the signature.

Milford Wayne Donaldson FAIA
President