

Diverse neighborhood ready to make history

By Janette Williams
STAFF WRITER

PASADENA — Garfield Heights, one of Pasadena's oldest, most architecturally significant and ethnically diverse neighborhoods, is set to become the city's second historic landmark district.

More than two years after the process began, the Northwest Pasadena community will join Bungalow Heaven as a designated historic area following a final hearing July 20 at the Jackie Robinson Center.

"I think our neighborhood is the best-kept secret in town, and it's the best place I've ever lived," said Aprile Boettcher, president of the neighborhood association. "The designation is an accomplishment we can take pride in, that recognizes we live in a special area, historically

intact — we're a blast from the past."

Garfield Heights, bounded by Washington Boulevard and Mountain Street, Los Robles and Marengo Avenues, contains about 320 "wonderfully ethnically blended" households, Boettcher said.

The homes — most built between 1885 and 1937 — are a mix of Victorian, Craftsman and Queen Anne, Spanish and American Colonial and Tudor Revivals, Boettcher said.

At least 51 percent of residents in the area signed the application for landmark designation.

"Everyone was enthusiastic," Boettcher said. "We had to write a conservation plan, but Bungalow Heaven had already done a lot of the ground work and that made it easier."

At first some residents were concerned the designation might impose

Please turn to PAST / A7



THIS VICTORIAN home built in 1889 is the second oldest house in Pasadena. It will be included in the Garfield Heights landmark district.

PAST

Preservation group plans to buy homes

Continued from A1

too many homeowner restrictions, she said.

"But once they realized it was not designed to be a hardship, but to honor the neighborhood and preserve it, they were very enthusiastic," Boettcher said.

Garfield Heights has also been targeted as a site for the Heritage Homeownership Partners program of Pasadena Heritage.

The preservation group has received \$141,180 from the city's Housing Trust Funds to help buy and rehabilitate three houses for sale to low- and moderate-income buyers, Executive Director Sue Mossman said.

"We're trying to raise (an additional) half-million dollars for the project, but we can start when we get half of that," Mossman said. "We're hoping to start within the next few months. We've been looking at some houses and a couple look like good possibilities."

Such programs combined with the landmark designation



Staff photos by WALT MANCINI

APRILE BOETTCHER, president of Garfield Heights Homeowner Association, stands in front of two architecturally significant houses.

will provide a "holistic" approach to preservation in the district, Mossman said.

"The trick for us will be to find properties where the purchase prices don't prevent us making a significant investment while keeping them affordable," Mossman said. House prices in the area range from about \$130,000 to more than \$200,000, she said.

Bill Huang, a program associate at the National Trust for Historic Preservation, has worked with the neighborhood

association and Pasadena Heritage on the partnership program and landmark designation.

"The beauty of Garfield Heights is that it's not a pristine neighborhood, just an older neighborhood, intact and with a lot of character," he said. "Only a handful of houses merit (individual) city landmark status," he said. "But overall the whole neighborhood is intact and that's a good enough reason for the district to become a city landmark."