

DEPARTMENT OF
CITY PLANNING
OFFICE OF HISTORIC RESOURCES
200 N. SPRING STREET, ROOM 620
LOS ANGELES, CA 90012-4801
(213) 978-1200

CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION

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GAIL KENNARD
VICE-PRESIDENT

JEREMY IRVINE
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CALIFORNIA



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www.planning.lacity.org

Date: **DEC 02 2014**

Los Angeles City Council
Room 395, City Hall
200 North Spring Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

Attention: Sharon Gin, Legislative Assistant
Planning and Land Use Management Committee

CASE NUMBER: **CHC-2014-3945-HCM**
PLAYA DEL REY STONE PILLARS
179 & 200 CULVER BOULEVARD

At the Cultural Heritage Commission meeting of **November 20, 2014**, the Commission moved to include the above property in the list of Historic-Cultural Monument, subject to adoption by the City Council.

As required under the provisions of Section 22.171.10 of the Los Angeles Administrative Code, the Commission has solicited opinions and information from the office of the Council District in which the site is located and from any Department or Bureau of the city whose operations may be affected by the designation of such site as a Historic-Cultural Monument. Such designation in and of itself has no fiscal impact. Future applications for permits may cause minimal administrative costs.

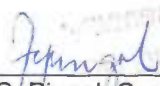
The City Council, according to the guidelines set forth in Section 22.171 of the Los Angeles Administrative Code, shall act on the proposed inclusion to the list within 90 days of the Council or Commission action, whichever first occurs. By resolution, the Council may extend the period for good cause for an additional 15 days.

The Cultural Heritage Commission would appreciate your inclusion of the subject modification to the list of Historic-Cultural Monuments upon adoption by the City Council.

The above Cultural Heritage Commission action was taken by the following vote:

Moved: Commissioner Scrafano
Seconded: Commissioner Kennard
Ayes: Commissioner Irvine, Milofsky, and Barron

Vote: **5-0**


Fely C. Pingol, Commission Executive Assistant
Cultural Heritage Commission

Attachment: Application

c: Councilmember Mike Bonin, Eleventh Council District
City of Los Angeles, Bureau of Street Services
Thomas Lee McMahan
GIS

RECEIVED
CITY CLERK'S OFFICE

2014 DEC -5 AM 10:43

CITY CLERK
BY _____ DEPUTY *go*

Time Limit: 2/18/15
Last Day For Council To Act: 2/18/15
Pursuant To: LAAC

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OFFICE OF HISTORIC RESOURCES
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(213) 978-1270
www.planning.lacity.org

Date: **DEC 02 2014**

City of Los Angeles,
Bureau of Street Services
1149 South Broadway, 4th Floor
Los Angeles CA 90015

CERTIFIED MAIL
RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

CASE NUMBER: **CHC-2014-3945-HCM**
PLAYA DEL REY STONE PILLARS
179 & 200 CULVER BOULEVARD

As you will note from the attached copy of our communication to the Los Angeles City Council, the Cultural Heritage Commission has moved to include the above-referenced property in the list of Historic-Cultural monuments, subject to adoption by the City Council.

In due course, our transmittal will be given a council file number and will be referred to the Council's Planning and Land Use Management Committee for review and recommendation. If you are interested in attending the Council Committee meeting, you should call Sharon Gin at (213) 978-1074 for information as to the time and place of the Committee and City Council meetings regarding this matter. Please give Ms. Gin at least one week from the date of this letter to schedule this item on the Committee Agenda before you call her.

The above Cultural Heritage Commission action was taken by the following vote:

Moved: Commissioner Scrafano
Seconded: Commissioner Kennard
Ayes: Commissioners Irvine, Milofsky, and Barron

Vote: **5-0**



Fely C. Pingol, Commission Executive Assistant
Cultural Heritage Commission

Attachment: Application

c: Councilmember Mike Bonin, Eleventh Council District
Thomas Lee McMahon
GIS

Los Angeles Department of City Planning RECOMMENDATION REPORT

CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION

**CASE NO.: CHC-2014-3945-HCM
ENV-2014-3946-CE**

HEARING DATE: October 16, 2014
TIME: 10:00 AM
PLACE: City Hall, Room 1010
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA
90012

Location: 179 & 200 Culver Boulevard
Council District: 11
Community Plan Area: Westchester - Playa del Rey
Area Planning Commission: West Los Angeles
Neighborhood Council: Westchester - Playa del Rey
Legal Description: Non-parcel resources located on
the sidewalk near the addresses of 179 & 200
Culver Boulevard

PROJECT: Historic-Cultural Monument Application for the
PLAYA DEL REY STONE PILLARS

REQUEST: Declare the property a Historic-Cultural Monument

OWNER: City of Los Angeles, Bureau of Street Services,
1149 South Broadway, 4th floor
Los Angeles, CA 90015

APPLICANT: Thomas Lee McMahon
Playa Del Rey Community Organization
8207 Delgany Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90293

RECOMMENDATION That the Cultural Heritage Commission:

1. **Declare the objects** a Historic-Cultural Monument per Los Angeles Administrative Code Chapter 9, Division 22, Article 1, Section 22.171.7.
2. **Adopt** the staff report and findings.

MICHAEL J. LOGRANDE
Director of Planning

[SIGNED ORIGINAL IN FILE]

Ken Bernstein, AICP, Manager
Office of Historic Resources

[SIGNED ORIGINAL IN FILE]

Lambert M. Giessinger, Preservation Architect
Office of Historic Resources

[SIGNED ORIGINAL IN FILE]

Nels Youngborg, Preservation Planner
Office of Historic Resources

Attachments: Historic-Cultural Monument Application

FINDINGS

- The objects reflect “the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, State or community” as intact examples of an early period of development of Playa del Rey.
- The objects embody “the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen, inherently valuable for a study of a period style or method of construction” as an example of the Ernest Flagg Method of Stone construction during Flagg’s period of significance.

CRITERIA

The criterion is the Cultural Heritage Ordinance which defines a historical or cultural monument as any site (including significant trees or other plant life located thereon) building or structure of particular historic or cultural significance to the City of Los Angeles, such as historic structures or sites in which the broad cultural, economic, or social history of the nation, State or community is reflected or exemplified, or which are identified with historic personages or with important events in the main currents of national, State or local history or which embody the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen, inherently valuable for a study of a period style or method of construction, or a notable work of a master builder, designer or architect whose individual genius influenced his age.

SUMMARY

Built in 1925, these two stone pillars were constructed concurrently the Dickinson & Gillespie Building (HCM #955). The pillars were used as wayfinding monuments for the “Wonder House of Stone,” designed according to the Ernst Flagg Method for stone construction, which was a model house built in the Surfridge development by Dickinson & Gillespie that was eventually demolished to make way to the expanded runway at LAX. These pillars are the last remnant of the development beyond the streets, curbs and foundations that remain at the end of the LAX runway.

Ernest Flagg (1857-1947) practiced architecture in New York from 1891 following the completion of his studies in Paris at the Ecole des Beaux Arts. One of his earliest commissions was the design of St. Luke's Hospital and marked Flagg's first great success. He was among those who championed the "modern" French school of architecture--what we know as the Beaux-Arts style. Flagg's major buildings include the Singer and the Scribner Buildings in New York, the Naval Academy in Annapolis, the Washington State capitol at Olympia, and the Corcoran Gallery in Washington. His practice was international, as well, with building commissions executed in St. Petersburg and Budapest. Many of his projects have recognized at the municipal, State and Federal level for their historic significance.

Flagg's career was characterized by a dichotomy between the elegant commissions for affluent clients and an innovative approach to construction of low- to middle-class residential architecture that would help address the pressing housing needs in urban areas of the East Coast. In 1916, on his own estate in Staten Island, he constructed a community of innovative small stone houses that evoked Colonial Revival architectural styles and embodied his goal of promoting cement and stone construction techniques that could be built cheaply and easily.

In 1922, he published a book, *Small Houses: Their Economical Design and Construction*, in which he set forth his aim to improve the design and construction of small houses while reducing their cost. The book also reflected his conviction that stone construction was superior to wood and, in the long run more, economical. He went to great lengths to develop a modular system of design that involved the use of drafting paper grid with a fixed module: 3'9" for the small houses on his estate in Staten Island. Flagg maintained that by placing all the walls and major divisions of the compositions on the lines of the grid, measured drawings would be created without calculations and harmonious proportions were assured.¹

After publication of the book in 1922, Flagg authored articles for popular magazines regarding his new system of residential stone construction to reach a wider audience. They included *Colliers*, *House Beautiful*, and *McCall's*. Flagg was besieged with correspondence and requests for plans; but later lamented, "so-called Flagg Houses sprang up in many parts of the country which had little resemblance to the genuine article. Also many were built on plans provided by me."²

In 1925, the development firm of Dickinson & Gillespie obtained one of those plans of an Ernest Flagg stone house and constructed it within their Surfridge Estate. The road that connected the development to Culver Boulevard wound up a hill from the beach community down below. As a method of advertisement and wayfinding for their new development and residential architecture, the Stone Pillars were created. Although the stone pillars were not designed by Ernest Flagg, they were constructed at the same time as the Ernst Flagg Stone House and with the same materials.

The Pillars represent one of the earliest periods of development within Playa del Rey and have retained their integrity through time. The pillar at 200 Culver Blvd. has retained the highest amount of integrity in material and feeling, as all its original features have been maintained. Its features include the cast-stone base, stone-clad column, cap and chalice. However, this pillar was moved about 20 ft. west of its original location around 1939 to make way for street widening. The second pillar at 179 Culver Blvd. has retained the highest degree of integrity in location, due to the fact that it has remaining in the same location since construction. However, its cap and chalice were removed sometime after 1950.

DISCUSSION

The Playa del Rey Stone Pillars successfully meets two of the specified Historic-Cultural Monument criteria: 1) reflects "the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, State or community," and 2) "embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen, inherently valuable for a study of a period style or method of construction." The growth in Los Angeles' population during the early part of the 20th century created a need for housing and transportation. Playa del Rey was a small beach community that was supported by a tourism economy until the early 1920's when the area experienced a development boom. The columns were constructed by the firm Dickinson and Gillespie, which was a major company in the history of residential, commercial and oil-extraction development in Los Angeles. These

¹ New York Landmarks Preservation Commission, Expanded Landmark Site of the Ernest Flagg House, Gatehouse and Gate. (Report prepared by Barry Bergdoll and Shirley Zavin.) New York: 1983 Unpublished: Item 9;p.4

² New York Landmarks Preservation Commission, National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form: Ernest Flagg Houses on Todt Hill. (Application prepared by Barry Bergdoll.) New York: 1983 Unpublished: Item 8;p.3

pillars represent this significant period of development in the area. Since these pillars were built concurrently with the Ernest Flagg Stone House, they represent a construction method used throughout the country at the time. These may be the only examples of the construction method in Los Angeles.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT ("CEQA") FINDINGS

State of California CEQA Guidelines, Article 19, Section 15308, Class 8 *"consists of actions taken by regulatory agencies, as authorized by state or local ordinance, to assure the maintenance, restoration, enhancement, or protection of the environment where the regulatory process involves procedures for protection of the environment."*

State of California CEQA Guidelines Article 19, Section 15331, Class 31 *"consists of projects limited to maintenance, repair, stabilization, rehabilitation, restoration, preservation, conservation or reconstruction of historical resources in a manner consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic buildings."*

The designation of the Playa del Rey Stone Pillars as a Historic-Cultural Monument in accordance with Chapter 9, Article 1, of The City of Los Angeles Administrative Code ("LAAC") will ensure that future construction activities involving the subject property are regulated in accordance with Section 22.171.14 of the LAAC. The purpose of the designation is to prevent significant impacts to a Historic-Cultural Monument through the application of the standards set forth in the LAAC. Without the regulation imposed by way of the pending designation, the historic significance and integrity of the subject property could be lost through incompatible alterations and new construction and the demolition of irreplaceable historic structures. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards of Rehabilitation are expressly incorporated into the LAAC and provide standards concerning the historically appropriate construction activities which will ensure the continued preservation of the subject property.

The use of Categorical Exemption Class 8 in connection with the proposed designation is consistent with the goals of maintaining, restoring, enhancing, and protecting the environment through the imposition of regulations designed to prevent the degradation of Historic-Cultural Monuments.

The use of Categorical Exemption Class 31 in connection with the proposed designation is consistent with the goals relating to the preservation, rehabilitation, restoration and reconstruction of Historic buildings in a manner consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings.

BACKGROUND

On October 16th, 2014 the Cultural Heritage Commission took the property under consideration. On November 6th, Commissioners Barron and Irvine inspected the site with Lambert Giessinger of the Office of Historic Resources (OHR) staff. Separately, Commissioner Milofsky inspected the site. And later the same day, November 6th, 2014, Commissioners Scrafano and Kennard inspected the site with Nels Youngborg of the OHR staff.

**HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT
APPLICATION**

TYPE OR HAND PRINT IN ALL CAPITAL BLOCK LETTERS

IDENTIFICATION

1. NAME OF PROPOSED MONUMENT Playa del Rey Stone Pillars
2. STREET ADDRESS 200 Culver Boulevard and 179 Culver Boulevard, Wikipedia GPS Coordinates for PDR
CITY Playa del Rey ZIP CODE 90293 COUNCIL DISTRICT 11
3. ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NO. 4116-007-053 and 4116-012-011
4. COMPLETE LEGAL DESCRIPTION: TRACT Playa del Rey Township, Tracts 9809/8557 depending on year
BLOCK 5 & 17 LOT(S) 13 & 11 ARB. NO. _____
5. RANGE OF ADDRESSES ON PROPERTY 200 Culver Boulevard and 179 Culver Boulevard
Coordinates: 33.958926°N 118.448436°W (Center of PDR Village midway between the two Pillars)
6. PRESENT OWNER City of Los Angeles
STREET ADDRESS 200 Spring Street E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____
CITY Los Angeles STATE CA ZIP CODE 90012 PHONE (____) _____
OWNERSHIP: PRIVATE _____ PUBLIC City of Los Angeles
7. PRESENT USE Landmark, Playa del Re GPS Coordinates ORIGINAL USE Landmark, Playa del Re GPS Coordinate

DESCRIPTION

8. ARCHITECTURAL STYLE Ernest Flagg System - Utah Dolomite Faced - Cast Stone Base, Capital and Chalice
(SEE STYLE GUIDE)
9. STATE PRESENT PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE OR STRUCTURE (SEE OPTIONAL DESCRIPTION WORK SHEET 1 PAGE MAXIMUM)
(See attached Imagery) Pillar "P 1 A" is in the original 1925 condition. P 1 A was moved some time between 1931 and 1939 from its original spot at HCM 955 to a position on the LA City sidewalk about 40 feet west. Pillar P 1 B is in its original location in front of the 1904 pressed-brick railroad building but the cast stone chalice and Capital have been removed (date unknown, see photographs.) The interior of the pillars are solid, likely rubble and concrete mix. Both the base and capital are cast stone. The pillars are faced with random Utah Dolomite stone in the original condition (see photographs). The pillars have four insets in the capital, likely meant for brass plaques, now missing. Likely Beach Land Company founders (1902). Engineering sketches have been created for the purpose of eventual restoration. (See photographs.) See E. Flagg, D&G's "The Wonder House of Stone".