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September 18, 2018

Los Angeles City Council
c/o Office of the City Clerk
City Hall, Room 395
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Attention: PLUM Committee

Dear Honorable Members:

**WINN APARTMENTS; 417 SOUTH OCEAN FRONT WALK; CASE NO. CHC-2018-3235-HCM,
ENV-2018-3236-CE**

At its meeting of **September 6, 2018**, the Cultural Heritage Commission took the actions below to include Winn Apartments in the list of Historic-Cultural Monuments, subject to adoption by the City Council:

1. **Determined** that the proposed designation is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), pursuant to Article 19, Section 15308, Class 8 and Article 19, Section 15331, Class 31 of the State CEQA Guidelines;
2. **Determined** that the property conforms with the definition of a Monument pursuant to Section 22.171.7 of the Los Angeles Administrative Code;
3. **Recommended** that the City Council consider the Winn Apartments for inclusion in the list of Historic-Cultural Monuments; and
4. **Adopted** the attached findings as the findings of the Commission.

The Commission vote was as follows:

Moved: Kanner
Seconded: Kennard
Ayes: Barron, Milofsky
Absent: Buelna

Vote: 4 – 0

Etta Armstrong, Commission Executive Assistant I
Cultural Heritage Commission

The Cultural Heritage Commission would appreciate your inclusion of the subject property to the list of Historic-Cultural Monuments.

Time for Council to Act: The Commission action is hereby transmitted to the City Council for consideration. Pursuant to Section 22.171.10(f) of the Los Angeles Administrative Code, the Council may approve or disapprove in whole or in part an application or initiation for a proposed designation of a Monument. The Council shall act in 90-days of the public hearing held before the Commission on the proposed designation. The City Council may unilaterally extend the 90-day time limit to act for a maximum of 15 days for good cause. With written consent of the owner, the time for the City Council to act may be extended by up to an additional 60 days. If the Council does not act on the application or initiation within this specified time limit, the application or initiation to designate a Monument shall be deemed to have been denied.

Enclosures: Findings

WINN APARTMENTS

FINDINGS

(Adopted by the Cultural Heritage Commission on September 6, 2018)

- The Winn Apartments “exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city or community” for its association with early twentieth century leisure tourism in Venice.
- The Winn Apartments "embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction” as a rare example of a 1920s apartment house in Venice.

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 if it meets at least one of the following criteria:

1. Is identified with important events of national, state, or local history, or exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city or community;
2. Is associated with the lives of historic personages important to national, state, city, or local history; or
3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction; or represents a notable work of a master designer, builder, or architect whose individual genius influenced his or her age.

SUMMARY

The Winn Apartments are located at 417 South Ocean Front Walk in Venice, between Dudley Avenue to the north, Speedway to the east, and Paloma Avenue to the south. Built in 1921, the subject property is a four-story, 32-unit apartment building with a partial basement and partial roof deck. The Italianate architectural style building was originally constructed for J.R. and Lulu A. Winn as an apartment house offering short- and long-term stays. It is currently in use as a hotel known as the Venice Suites.

On July 4th, 1905, entrepreneur Abbot Kinney opened Venice of America, a seaside resort that featured a canal system and a business district lined with Venetian-style colonnades that led to a pleasure pier. Kinney’s initial development of Venice was wildly popular, drawing over 40,000 visitors during opening weekend, many of whom traveled to the seaside resort by streetcar. Over the course of the next decades, residences were built around the canals and amusement park rides and attractions were constructed, along with apartment houses lining Ocean Front Walk to support the burgeoning tourism industry.

Rectangular in plan, the subject property is of brick construction. The primary, west-facing elevation has a symmetrical three-bay composition, a raised, recessed central entryway, and a contemporary cornice. Buff-colored brick quoins exist around the recessed entryway, at the building corners, and around the fire escape doors. The central entryway has a fire escape above and a marble stair and landing that features marble wainscoting, tiles depicting ocean scenes, and a single-lite metal door. The north and south elevations consist of thirteen bays and a contemporary painted mural dominates the north elevation. Fenestration consists of single

and paired double-hung vinyl windows. On the interior, each floor features a double-loaded corridor leading to eight guestrooms, and there is an original metal elevator.

The subject property appears to have undergone multiple alterations over the years that include the alteration of the parapet and cornice in 1952, repair of fire damage in 1976, installation of security bars on the windows in 1988, the application of gunite over brick on the exterior elevations in 1991 and 1995, the installation of a contemporary cornice in 2001, and an interior and exterior remodel in 2016.

SurveyLA, the citywide historic resources survey, identified the subject property as individually eligible for designation through the state and local programs as a rare example of a 1920s apartment house in Venice, one of few remaining examples from this period along Ocean Front Walk.

DISCUSSION

The Winn Apartments meets two of the Historic-Cultural Monument criteria: it “exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city or community” for its association with early twentieth century leisure tourism in Venice and it “embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction” as a rare example of a 1920s apartment house in Venice.

The opening of Venice of America in 1905 was made possible by the emergence of a middle-class with the time and money for leisurely activities, and the construction of a streetcar to deliver them from downtown Los Angeles. By 1911, business in Venice was booming and to accommodate the large influx of leisure seekers flocking to the seaside resort, a number of brick apartment houses were built along Ocean Front Walk. During the late 20th century, there was a decline in the construction of apartment houses in Venice that is concurrent with the overall decline in beach tourism influenced by the end of streetcar transportation and the rise of the automobile. With the 1960s demolition of many pre-annexation era buildings in Venice, the Winn Apartments is one of the few apartment houses remaining from that period.

Despite the lack of original fabric on the interior of the individual units, the Winn Apartments retains most of the essential characteristic features from its period of significance and sufficient historic integrity to convey its importance.

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 Winn Apartments as an 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 an irreplaceable historic site/open space. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for 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 and sites in a manner consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

Categorical Exemption ENV-2018-3236-CE was prepared on July 30, 2018.

BACKGROUND

On July 5, 2018, the Cultural Heritage Commission voted to take the property under consideration. On July 26, 2018, a subcommittee of the Commission consisting of Commissioners Buelna and Kanner visited the property, accompanied by staff from the Office of Historic Resources.