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October 10, 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:

ABERDEEN HOUSE; 2640-2656 NORTH ABERDEEN AVENUE; CHC-2018-4019-HCM; ENV-2018-4020-CE

At its meeting of **October 4, 2018**, the Cultural Heritage Commission took the actions below to include the Aberdeen House 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 Aberdeen House 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: Kennard
Seconded: Barron
Ayes: Milofsky
Absent: Buelna, Kanner

Vote: 3 – 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

ABERDEEN HOUSE

FINDINGS

(Adopted by the Cultural Heritage Commission on October 4, 2018)

- The Aberdeen House “embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction” as an excellent example of Tudor Revival residential architecture in Los Feliz.

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 Aberdeen House is a two-story, single-family residence with a detached garage and chauffeur's quarters located on a sloping lot off of Aberdeen Avenue with North Vermont Avenue to the west in the Los Feliz neighborhood of Los Angeles. Constructed in 1926, the subject property was designed by architect Milton R. Sutton (1892-1962) in the Tudor Revival architectural style for Sybill J. Morrison, who owned the property until 1937.

Irregular in plan, the subject property is of wood-frame construction with concrete walls and brick and stucco cladding with half-timber detailing. The roof is multi-planed and cross-gabled and has slate shingles. The primary, southwest-facing elevation is asymmetrically composed with a central arched entryway accentuated by a partially-covered front porch. Heavily articulated wings extend back into the hillside from either side of the central entry, highlighting the site's topography. Fenestration includes multi-lite wood and steel casement windows, diamond-paned steel fixed and casement windows, and bay windows. A porte-cochere extends out from the east-facing elevation. The property has two chimneys, one on the south-facing elevation and one on the north-facing elevation. Interior features include hardwood floors, fireplaces with marble surrounds, a central staircase with an intricate metal railing, coved ceilings, and wood wall paneling. Behind the residence, on a separate lot, there is a garden terrace and a swimming pool.

Architect Milton R. Sutton was born in California in 1892 and started his architectural career as a carpenter. By 1924, he was listed in city directories as an architect. Sutton worked fairly consistently from 1925 into the early 1930s designing residential buildings in the revival-period architectural styles popular in the era, which included at least 20 buildings in Beverly Hills. Sutton passed away in 1962 at the age of 70.

The subject property has undergone minor alterations over the years that include: the removal of non-load bearing partitions and relocation of a stairway in 1937; construction of a new driveway in 1964; conversion of an existing room to a bathroom in 1971; an addition to the kitchen and family room in 1996; the conversion of a former breezeway into a bathroom in 2004; and kitchen and bathroom remodels, all at unknown dates.

SurveyLA, the citywide historic resources survey, identified the subject property as individually eligible for listing under the national, state, and local designation programs as an excellent example of Tudor Revival residential architecture in Los Feliz.

DISCUSSION

The Aberdeen House meets one of the Historic-Cultural Monument criteria: it “embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction” as an excellent example of Tudor Revival residential architecture in Los Feliz.

Tudor Revival style architecture grew out of the Arts and Crafts movement, with an emphasis on pre-industrial aesthetics and crafts, and drew upon a variety of medieval prototypes ranging from thatched-roofed cottages to grand manor houses. In Los Angeles, the architectural style was favored in up-scale neighborhoods, such as Los Feliz, and signaled the growing prosperity of the city builders who spearheaded the movement away from downtown toward more suburban residential areas. The subject property’s brick and stucco exterior, decorative half-timbering, and multi-gabled roof with slate shingles are all reflective of the style. Other distinguishing features include multi-lite wood and steel casement windows, diamond-paned steel fixed and casement windows, paneled wood doors set within arched entryways, and tall chimneys.

Despite interior and minor exterior alterations, the subject property retains sufficient integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association to convey its significance.

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 Aberdeen House 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-2018-4020-CE was prepared on September 17, 2018.

BACKGROUND

On August 2, 2018, the Cultural Heritage Commission voted to take the property under consideration. On September 13, 2018, a subcommittee of the Commission consisting of Commissioners Barron and Kennard visited the property, accompanied by staff from the Office of Historic Resources.