

DEPARTMENT OF
CITY PLANNING
200 N. SPRING STREET, ROOM 272
LOS ANGELES, CA 90012-4801

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
CALIFORNIA



ERIC GARCETTI
MAYOR

EXECUTIVE OFFICES

VINCENT P. BERTONI, AICP
DIRECTOR
(213) 978-1271
KEVIN J. KELLER, AICP
EXECUTIVE OFFICER
(213) 978-1272
LISA M. WEBBER, AICP
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
(213) 978-1274

CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION

RICHARD BARRON
PRESIDENT

GAIL KENNARD
VICE PRESIDENT

PILAR BUELNA
DIANE KANNER
BARRY MILOFSKY

ROCKY WILES
COMMISSION OFFICE MANAGER
(213) 978-1300

<http://planning.lacity.org>

November 27, 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:

**COMMUNITY LAUNDRY COMPANY BUILDING; 900-930 NORTH HIGHLAND AVENUE;
CHC-2018-3626-HCM, ENV-2018-3627-CE**

At its meeting of **November 15, 2018**, the Cultural Heritage Commission took the actions below to include the Community Laundry Company Building 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 Community Laundry Company Building 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: Milofsky
Seconded: Kennard
Ayes: Barron
Nays: Buelna, Kanner

Vote: 3 – 2

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

FINDINGS

- The Community Laundry Company Building “exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city or community” as an excellent and rare example of a 1920s industrial building in the entertainment industry support services area of Hollywood.
- The Community Laundry Company Building “embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction” as an excellent and rare example of concrete industrial architecture in Hollywood.

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 1927 Community Laundry Company Building is a two-story industrial building located at 900 North Highland Avenue at the northeast corner of Highland Avenue and Willoughby Avenue in Hollywood. Designed by architect W. J. Saunders in the Mayan Revival architectural style, it was constructed for the Community Laundry Company. The subject property has been in continuous use as a laundry plant since its construction.

Rectangular in plan with a chamfered southwest corner, the subject property is of concrete construction with a flat roof. At the northeast corner of the roof there is a freight elevator penthouse. The exterior of the building is scored in an ashlar pattern, and has a stringcourse, cornice, and pilasters of geometric precast concrete blocks patterned with concentric circles and rectangles. The main entrance is centered on the southwest corner of the building and is accented by brick. The entrance consists of a non-original fully glazed metal door with sidelites and a transom. Fenestration consists of multi-lite steel windows with operable awning sashes; the ground-level windows are obscured by non-original metal screens. On the west-facing and south-facing elevations, there are shallow balconettes with decorative wrought iron railings at the second story. The first floor of the east-facing elevation consists of eleven loading bays with roll-up doors. A detached boiler house was constructed at the northeast corner of the property in 1928.

Film production began in Hollywood in 1911, and quickly grew into a significant economic force. As the popularity of motion pictures grew, more physical facilities related to motion picture

production were constructed in Hollywood. In 1919, the City established a series of industrial zones specifically designated for motion picture use. The largest and most significant of these, containing over 750 entertainment-related industrial and commercial properties, was oriented around the intersection of Santa Monica Boulevard and Highland Avenue near major studios including Paramount Pictures, Warner Brothers, RKO, Columbia, and United Artists. This industrial area was developed from multiple tracts and provided studio support services dating to the 1920s such as prop houses, costume houses, laundry plants, production offices, film laboratories and processing plants, film vaults, warehouses, and vendors for equipment. It remains a significant collection of these resources, many of which are still in operation.

The subject property has undergone multiple alterations over the years that include the modification of the parapet in 1960, demolition of an attached shed in 1961, the repair of fire damage in 1979, the construction of a mezzanine addition in 1980, the installation of a 4,070 square-foot steel canopy in 1984, the installation of two illuminated wall signs in 2002, and the in-fill of a secondary entrance on the west-facing elevation, addition of awnings, the replacement of some original exterior doors, and various tenant improvements, all at unknown dates.

SurveyLA, the citywide historic resources survey, identified the subject property as individually eligible for listing under national, state, and local designation programs as an excellent and rare example of concrete industrial architecture with a decorative motif in Hollywood and as an excellent and rare example of a 1920s industrial building in the entertainment industry support services area of Hollywood.

DISCUSSION

The Community Laundry Company Building 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” as an excellent and rare example of a 1920s industrial building in the entertainment industry support services area of Hollywood, and it “embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction” as an excellent and rare example of concrete industrial architecture in Hollywood.

The motion picture industry played, and continues to play, a significant role in the economic and cultural development of Los Angeles, and Hollywood movie studios and their accompanying support services that make up the entertainment industry are significant assets to the region. For as long as the entertainment industry has existed, so, too, has the necessity for supplies and services which support its activities and operations. By the late 1920s, motion picture support services, such as those provided by the Community Laundry Company, operated almost exclusively out of Hollywood, and operations continued to flourish throughout the 1930s and into the 1940s. The Community Laundry Company was established in 1923 and moved to the subject property in 1928. The company provided general laundry and dry-cleaning services—a vital service to the film industry and to the growing number of hotels and restaurants in Hollywood. The Community Laundry Company Building has been in continuous use as a laundry facility since its construction and stands as a unique facet of the economic development of the industrial zone in Hollywood.

As is the case with residential, institutional, and commercial property types, industrial buildings often incorporated popular architectural styles of the day into their overall designs and industrial building in Los Angeles reflect a variety of styles over time. Due to the utilitarian nature of industrial buildings, such architectural styling was usually expressed in applied details, such as

cornices, pilasters, cartouches, and friezes. The subject property's decorative frieze, pilasters, and modular geometric motifs in the Mayan Revival architectural style are reflective of this approach. The property also represents a rare remaining example of the property type. Despite interior and 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 Community Laundry Company Building 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-2018-3627-CE was prepared on August 28, 2018.

BACKGROUND

On July 19, 2018, the Cultural Heritage Commission voted to take the property under consideration. On August 23, 2018, Commissioner Kanner visited the property, accompanied by staff from the Office of Historic Resources. In accordance with LAAC 22.171.10, on August 29, 2018, the property owner requested a 60-day extension on the time for the Commission to act on the Historic-Cultural Monument application.