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September 12, 2019

Los Angeles City Council
c/o Office of City Clerk
City Hall, Room 395
200 North Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Attention: PLUM Committee

Dear Honorable Members:


FOURTH STREET CHATEAU DUPLEX; 8274-8276 WEST 4TH STREET; CASE NO. CHC-2019-4770-HCM; ENV-2019-4771-CE; COUNCIL FILE NO. 19-0713; CD-5

On July 2, 2019, the City Council instructed the Department of City Planning to initiate Historic-Cultural Monument designation proceedings for the Fourth Street Chateau Duplex at 8274-8276 West 4th Street (CF-19-0713). On August 8, 2019, a subcommittee of the Cultural Heritage Commission (CHC) visited the property, as required by Section 22.171.8 of the Los Angeles Administrative Code (LAAC). On September 5, 2019, after at the completion of a public hearing on the matter, the Commission, determined that this property does not conform with the definition of a Monument pursuant to LAAC Section 22.171.7 by a vote of 5 - 0. Therefore, the request for designation as a Historic-Cultural Monument has been declined.

The Commission was as follows:

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

Vote: 5 - 0


James K. Williams
Commission Executive Assistant II

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. The Council may override a Commission recommendation of denial of Council initiated designation by a minimum of 10-votes.

Attachment: Findings

FINDINGS

- The Fourth Street Chateau Duplex does not meet any of the three criteria of the Cultural Heritage Ordinance and therefore is ineligible for designation as an Historic-Cultural Monument.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The Fourth Street Chateau Duplex does not meet the criteria for designation under the Cultural Heritage Ordinance.

The preparer argues that the subject property “embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction” as an example of a one-over-one grand stair duplex in the Late Chateausque architectural style. However, staff do not find that the building meets this criterion. It is not a unique or outstanding example of the Late Chateausque style or of the one-over-one grand stair, or two-flat, multi-family residential typology. The Late Chateausque style is common in the Wilshire Community Plan Area, where the subject property is located; there are over 70 buildings that were either identified in SurveyLA as eligible for listing, or are currently designated as Historic-Cultural Monuments, and most are in the Wilshire area. Although the building retains some of the characteristic features of the architectural style, notably the corner turret, multi-lite casement windows, and arched openings, the property has experienced a significant number of alterations that cumulatively diminishes its historic integrity. Other more exemplary and intact buildings in the Late Chateausque architectural style that are already designated include Chateau Colline (1935, HCM #703), 350 North Sycamore Apartments (1936, HCM #1010), and The French Chateau Apartments (1937, HCM #815).

One of the earliest and most modest types of apartment housing in Los Angeles was the duplex. Apartment houses were built throughout the twentieth century and in nearly every part of Los Angeles, and duplexes in particular were constructed in large numbers. Today, examples of the dwelling type are found citywide in areas of including Westlake, Wilshire, San Pedro, Echo Park, South and Southeast Los Angeles, and others. Although the two-flat, or one-over-one grand stair case, was a more architecturally elaborate form of a duplex, it became popular throughout the 1920s and 1930s, and there are myriad extant examples throughout the city, and within the Wilshire area.

Furthermore, the subject property is not identified with any important historical events, is not associated with any historic personages, and is not a notable work of a master architect, builder, or designer.

Based on these findings and its compromised integrity, the subject property does not appear to be eligible for designation as a Los Angeles City Historic-Cultural Monument.