

DEPARTMENT OF
CITY PLANNING
OFFICE OF HISTORIC RESOURCES
200 N. SPRING STREET, ROOM 620
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CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION

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www.planning.lacity.org

Date: **APR 11 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-2014-287-HCM**
GRETHER & GRETHER BUILDING
730 S. LOS ANGELES STREET

At the Cultural Heritage Commission meeting of **April 3, 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 Hamacher
Seconded: Commissioner Kennard
Ayes: Commissioner Louie
Absent: Commissioners Scott and Barron

Vote: 3-0



Fely C. Pingol, Commission Executive Assistant
Cultural Heritage Commission

Attachment: Application

c: Councilmember Jose Huizar, Fourteenth Council District
Duns Capital, LLC
Chattel, Inc.
GIS

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ERIC GARCETTI
MAYOR

Date: **APR 11 2014**

Duns Capital, LLC
8322 Beverly Boulevard #301
Los Angeles CA 90048

CERTIFIED MAIL
RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

CASE NUMBER: **CHC-2014-287-HCM**
GRETHER & GRETHER BUILDING
730 S. LOS ANGELES STREET

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 Hamacher
Seconded: Commissioner Kennard
Ayes: Commissioner Louie
Absent: Commissioners Scott and Barron

Vote: **3-0**



Fely C. Pingol, Commission Executive Assistant
Cultural Heritage Commission

Attachment: Application

c: Councilmember Jose Huizar, Fourteenth Council District
Chattel, Inc.
GIS

Los Angeles Department of City Planning
RECOMMENDATION REPORT

CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION

CASE NO.: CHC-2014-287-HCM
ENV-2014-288-CE

HEARING DATE: April 3, 2014
TIME: 10:00 AM
PLACE: City Hall, Room 1010
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA
90012

Location: 730 S. Los Angeles Street
Council District: 14
Community Plan Area: Central City
Area Planning Commission: Central
Neighborhood Council: Downtown Los
Angeles
Legal Description: Lot FR "UNNUMBERED
LT" of the Maple Avenue Tract, ARB 1

PROJECT: Historic-Cultural Monument Application for the
GRETHER & GRETHER BUILDING

REQUEST: Declare the property a Historic-Cultural Monument

OWNER: South Park Group, LLC
8322 Beverly Boulevard #301
Los Angeles, CA 90048

OWNER'S REPRESENTATIVE: Chattel, Inc.
13417 Ventura Boulevard
Sherman Oaks, CA 91423

RECOMMENDATION That the Cultural Heritage Commission:

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

MICHAEL J. LOGRANDE
Director of Planning



Ken Bernstein, AICP, Manager
Office of Historic Resources



Lambert M. Giessinger, Preservation Architect
Office of Historic Resources

Attachments: Historic-Cultural Monument Application

FINDINGS

- 1) The building "embodies 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 Chicago School style.
- 2) The property reflects "the broad cultural, economic, or social history of the nation, State or community" for its association with Walter Grether, whose work as president and founder of the Wholesale Institute helped establish Los Angeles as a major center for manufacturing in the United States in the 1930s and 1940s, and architects Gilbert Stanley Underwood and Daniel Hull, two significant figures in the development of the National Park Service's distinctive Rustic style and the practice of landscape architecture in America's national parks and wilderness.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT ("CEQA") FINDINGS

The Commission hereby recommends that Council find the proposed designation of the Century Plaza Hotel properties as a Historic-Cultural Monument to be exempt from further analysis under the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, Sections 15308 (Class 8) and 15331 (Class 31).

SUMMARY

Built in 1924, this Chicago School style structure sits on a rectangular parcel within the Fashion District in downtown Los Angeles. The six-story, reinforced concrete building is rectangular at its ground floor, occupying the entirety of its lot, and T-shaped from the second through the sixth floor. The primary façade is organized in a base-shaft-capital arrangement, where there is a distinction between the first and second floor base, the third through fifth floor shaft, up to the capital-like sixth floor and cornice. From the second to the sixth floors, fenestration is wood sash Chicago windows with a fixed center pane flanked by smaller, single-light, double-hung windows. The first and second floors are clad in cast stone painted cream color to mimic terra cotta or natural stone. The primary entrance is located in the center bay and features a decorative painted cast stone door surround with a segmental arch framing a transom opening above a contemporary and altered storefront.

The ground floor and mezzanine level is currently divided into three retail spaces all punctuated by reinforced concrete columns arranged in rows from east to west. Upper floors and the basement have identical round concrete columns running from east to west across the open floor plans. Ceilings have been altered on many floors to include glued acoustical tiles and panels set in T-bar. Historic circulation patterns between and within floors are unclear. The passenger elevator is located at the center of the west portion of the building with a stairwell beside it, and a freight elevator is located at the center of the east portion of the building, with a stairwell beside it.

The building has had some alterations, mainly on the first floor. Three out of four store fronts have had some windows replaced, the interior lobby and retail spaces have been partially reconfigured and the mezzanine has been partially enclosed.

John Montgomery Cooper designed the Grether & Grether Building. He designed a variety of building types, including industrial buildings in Los Angeles during the 1920s. After graduating

from Yale University, Cooper worked as an engineer on the Panama Canal. He opened an architectural and general contracting firm in 1919, which went on to design and/or build the Roxie Theatre (HCM# 526) and Wilshire Theatre (Santa Monica Landmark #81), San Diego Wholesale Market, Angelus Furniture Company, Pepperdine College's first campus on 78th Street and Vermont, and Bakersfield's Padre Hotel. Between 1922 and 1930, Cooper designed over 20 industrial manufacturing buildings in Los Angeles. The Grether & Grether Building is distinguished from other Cooper industrial designs by its Chicago School style.

Gilbert Stanley Underwood and Daniel Hull, critical figures in the design of the Ahwahnee Hotel in Yosemite (1927) and other facilities at Yosemite, Grand Canyon, Bryce Canyon and Zion National Parks, operated their architectural firm from within the Grether & Grether building during their period of significance. Their office was listed in the building from 1925 to 1928, the period identified as the formative era of the Rustic style and National Park Service's standardized plans for visitor experiences in the parks, both of which these designers played integral roles.

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.

DISCUSSION

The Grether & Grether Building successfully meets two of the specified Historic-Cultural Monument criteria: 1) "embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen, inherently valuable for a study of a period style or method of construction," as a Chicago School style structure and 2) reflects "the broad cultural, economic, or social history of the nation, State or community," in association with Walter Grether and the Wholesale Institute, and architects Gilbert Stanley Underwood and Daniel Hull.

BACKGROUND

On February 6, 2014, the Cultural Heritage Commission voted to take the application under consideration. The site was toured by the Commission on March 6, 2014.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT ("CEQA") REVIEW

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 Grether & Grether Building 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.