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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-2014-922-CR  
SULLIVAN CANYON  
OLD RANCH ROAD AND MELHILL WAY

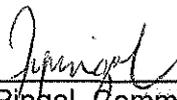
At the Cultural Heritage Commission meeting of April 3, 2014, the Commission moved to approve a resolution providing COMMENTS to the California State Office of Historic Preservation regarding listing of Sullivan Canyon to the California Register of Historical Resources. This resolution is subject to final adoption by the City Council and concurrence by the Mayor's Office.

The California State Office of Historic Preservation allows for 90 days to receive comments from a city regarding a proposed listing of a property to the California Register.

The above Cultural Heritage Commission action was taken by the following vote:

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

Vote: 3-0

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Fely C. Pingol, Commission Executive Assistant  
Cultural Heritage Commission

Attachment: Staff Report with Findings

c: Councilmember Mike Bonin, Eleventh District  
Sullivan Canyon Property Owners Association  
Chattel, Inc.

## **FINDINGS**

See Resolution in Attachment A.

## **INTRODUCTION**

In 2007, the State Office of Historic Preservation and the National Park Service approved the City of Los Angeles' application to become a "Certified Local Government" (CLG) for historic preservation under the National Historic Preservation Act. This action provided official recognition to the City of Los Angeles for its new comprehensive historic preservation program with the establishment of the Office of Historic Resources. CLG status gives the City of Los Angeles formal authority to comment on nominations of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects to the National Register of Historic Places and California Register of Historical Resources. Both National Register and California Register nominations are ultimately reviewed by the State Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) and presented for approval before the State Historical Resources Commission (SHRC).

With input from the Rules and Government Committee and the City Council, the Office of Historic Resources developed a procedure to provide comments from the City of Los Angeles to the SHRC while conforming to the City's Intergovernmental Relations process. Approved in December 2008, this process calls for preparation of a proposed resolution (Support/Opposition/General Comments), for approval by the Cultural Heritage Commission, City Council, and concurrence by the Mayor.

## **CA REGISTER CRITERIA**

Criterion 1: Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history or the cultural heritage of California or the United States.

Criterion 2: Associated with the lives of persons important to local, California or national history.

Criterion 3: Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic values.

Criterion 4: Has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California or the nation.

## **DISCUSSION**

The written nomination contends that Sullivan Canyon meets Criteria 3 for the California Register of Historical Resources as an intact example of a postwar Ranch style single-family housing tract designed by Cliff May, one of the most important originators and designers of the Ranch style.

Sullivan Canyon is the culmination of Cliff May's lifelong dedication to designing, developing, and promoting an urbanized form of ranch living. As one of the most important designers of the Ranch style, May dictated what "modern" suburban American living looked like to countless households across the United States. May constructed and designed thousands of houses throughout California and the Western United States, but Sullivan Canyon is where May was allowed to bring the Ranch style to its most literal expression by incorporation of communal stables, bridle trails, and horse barns in a rustic setting that reflected an actual ranch.

Around 1946, May began subdividing parcels off of Old Ranch Road, then known as Sullivan Canyon, for a new development to be called Sullivan Canyon Ranches. He placed “sensible restrictions” on the land to ensure the development of the area maintained its Ranch character into the future. These restrictions included social, architectural and spatial restrictions, some of which became illegal in 1948 with Supreme Court decisions banning racial covenants.

The natural topography of the canyon contributes to the character of the development, while strict rules about placement and types of planting give a rustic feel to its setting, May maintained control of the area’s overall aesthetic long after his role as a developer had ended. Tucked away within this natural setting are the houses in Ranch style that complete the exceptional character of this small development in the Santa Monica Mountains. Sullivan Canyon provides a strong sense of time and place as Cliff May’s intact vision for perfect ranch living in the City of Los Angeles.

May’s houses generally and specifically in Sullivan Canyon have been described as a “high-style” version of the postwar Ranch style house. Character-defining features of May’s Ranch designs are:

- Single-story building featuring: wings, carports integrated within the building envelope, medium to low-pitched roofs, large picture windows framing public areas of the house, deeply inset entrances and bays, wide or prominent chimneys, and exposed structural beams.
- Variety of siding materials applied to the exterior, including brick and board and batten siding.
- Use of “Cliff May White.”
- Roof material of hand-split wooden shakes or shingle tiles.

Character defining features of the setting of Sullivan Canyon include:

- Natural landscape that features mostly local plants and unmanicured brush on the hillside. Mature oak and sycamore trees planted along Old Ranch Road.
- Uncurbed roadway, lack of sidewalks.
- Ancillary structures and spaces integral to the care, feeding, and housing of horses, often in front yard.
- Hardscaping that reflects the ranch lifestyle, hand-split post and rail fencing along Old Ranch Road, wood speed limit signs.
- Linear nature of development that follows the trail of Old Ranch Road.

## **BACKGROUND**

The California Register application was received by the Los Angeles Office of the City Clerk on February 4, 2013.

**ATTACHMENT A: Proposed Resolution**

WHEREAS, any official position of the City of Los Angeles with respect to legislation, regulations or policies proposed to or pending before a local, state or federal governmental body or agency must have first been adopted in the form of a Resolution by the City Council with the concurrence of the Mayor; and

WHEREAS, the City of Los Angeles through the Cultural Heritage Commission and its duties as a Certified Local Government has reviewed the California Register of Historical Resources nomination for Sullivan Canyon located at Old Ranch Road and Melhill Way; and

WHEREAS, the City of Los Angeles deems that the applicant (Sullivan Canyon Property Owners Association) submitted a complete application and followed proper notification procedures for California Register of Historical Resources nominations; and

WHEREAS, the City of Los Angeles believes that the application thoroughly photo-documents the subject buildings, objects and landscape, and provides adequate architectural descriptions; and

WHEREAS, the City of Los Angeles believes that Cliff May rises to the level of master architect for his contributions to the field of architecture in Los Angeles and around the world, and that the development of Sullivan Canyon embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region and method of construction unique to the area (Criterion 3);

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, with the concurrence of the Mayor, that by adoption of this Resolution, the City of Los Angeles SUPPORTS the proposed listing of Sullivan Canyon to the California Register of Historical Resources.

## RESOLUTION

**WHEREAS**, any official position of the City of Los Angeles with respect to legislation, regulations or policies proposed to or pending before a local, state or federal governmental body or agency must have first been adopted in the form of a Resolution by the City Council with the concurrence of the Mayor; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Los Angeles through the Cultural Heritage Commission and its duties as a Certified Local Government has reviewed the California Register of Historical Resources nomination for Sullivan Canyon located at Old Ranch Road and Melhill Way; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Los Angeles deems that the applicant (Sullivan Canyon Property Owners Association) submitted a complete application and followed proper notification procedures for California Register of Historical Resources nominations; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Los Angeles believes that the application thoroughly photo-documents the subject buildings, objects and landscape, and provides adequate architectural descriptions; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Los Angeles believes that Cliff May rises to the level of master architect for his contributions to the field of architecture in Los Angeles and around the world, and that the development of Sullivan Canyon embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region and method of construction unique to the area (Criterion 3);

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, with the concurrence of the Mayor, that by adoption of this Resolution, the City of Los Angeles hereby includes in its 2013-14 State Legislative Program SUPPORT of the proposed listing of Sullivan Canyon located at Old Ranch Road and Melhill Way, Los Angeles, CA 90049, in the California Register of Historical Resources.