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May 22, 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:

RANCHO EL ESCORPION LIME KILN; EL ESCORPION PARK BETWEEN CANYON ROAD AND INTERSECTION OF CASTLE PEAK DRIVE AND WOODGLADE LANE; CASE NO. CHC-2018-815-HCM, ENV-2018-816-CE

At its meeting of **May 3, 2018**, the Cultural Heritage Commission took the actions below to include the above-referenced property 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; and
3. **Recommended** that the City Council consider and designate the subject property a Historic-Cultural Monument; and
4. **Adopted** the attached findings as amended by the Commission.

This action was taken by the following vote:

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

Vote: 5 - 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 will be 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. The 90-day time limit may be extended by the Council for good cause for a maximum of 15 days. If the Council does not act on the application or initiation within this 105-days total 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.

Enclosures: Amended Findings

RANCHO EL ESCORPION LIME KILN

FINDINGS

(As amended by the Cultural Heritage Commission on May 3, 2018)

FINDINGS

- The Rancho El Escorpion Lime Kiln "reflects the broad cultural, economic, or social history of the nation, state, or community" for its association with the lime industry and its role in the economic development of the San Fernando Valley and greater Los Angeles between the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The Rancho El Escorpion Lime Kiln proposed Historic-Cultural Monument is defined as the area within a 20-foot radius measured from the center of the lime kiln. The subject property was constructed and operated by the local Chumash, Tongva, and Mexican populations and meets one of the Historic-Cultural Monument criteria.

The subject property "reflects the broad cultural, economic, or social history of the nation, state, or community" for its association with the lime industry and its role in the economic development of the San Fernando Valley and greater Los Angeles between the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. With few local building materials available in Southern California's Mission (1769-1833) and Rancho (1780s-1880s) periods, the processing of quicklime from limestone was of great importance. Beyond being instrumental in brick and mortar construction for the expanding city of Los Angeles, the lime produced in the kilns of the west San Fernando Valley was used to build dams, aqueducts, and other water-related structures. Lime plaster and whitewash protected adobe buildings from weather, and lime was also used in the processing of cattle hides, the region's largest export at the time.

While the applicant argues that the subject property is also "identified with historic personages or with important events in the main currents of national, state, or local history," the information provided does not support this finding. There is no evidence that notable individuals referenced for their association with Rancho El Escorpion, such as Espiritu Chihuya and Miguel Leonis, have any direct association with the lime kiln itself and it is not clear how the subject property represents their significant contributions to the history of the region. The lime kiln also does not appear to be associated with any singular important events.

The applicant also argues that the subject property "embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural-type specimen, inherently valuable for study of a period, style or method of construction" as an example of nineteenth century lime kiln construction in the west San Fernando Valley. While an intact lime kiln might achieve significance in this area, the fact that it is buried relegates it from an architectural-type specimen to an archaeological artifact; an assessment of its historic integrity is not currently possible.

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 Rancho El Escorpion Lime Kiln 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-2018-816-CE was prepared on April 12, 2018.