

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 Charlotte Chase Apartments “embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction” as an excellent and highly intact example of Spanish Colonial Revival architecture applied to a multi-family residence, and represents an exemplary two-story stacked, or a one-over-one grand stair, duplex.

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 subject property is a two-story, multi-family residence with a detached garage located at 1074-1076 South Genesee Avenue between San Vicente Boulevard and Whitworth Drive in the Mid-Wilshire area of Los Angeles. The property was designed as a duplex in the Spanish Colonial Revival architectural style with Art Deco details in 1933 by architect R.S. Loring for Charlotte Chase and her family. In 1949, the property was converted to a five-unit apartment building by then-owner Manuel Bloom. Currently, the building consists of four individual units.

Irregular in plan, the subject property is of wood-frame construction with stucco cladding. The building has a combination hipped and gable clay tile roof with a parapeted, flat, rolled asphalt roof behind the principal facade. Set back from the balcony roof on the upper level is a raised square tower with a hipped tile roof. The primary, west-facing elevation consists of three separate volumes—a center volume with recessed northern and southern volumes. The center volume features an arched picture window on the first floor and a tripartite window on the second floor with a central picture window and flanking casement windows. There is a chimney located on the south side of the center volume. The southern volume has a scalloped-arch porte-cochère with a second story that features multi-lite French doors leading on to a balconette with decorative ironwork. The primary entrance to the lower unit is accessed on the northern side of the center volume through a recessed passageway. An exterior stair with a stucco scalloped balustrade leads to the second-story wrap-around balcony and recessed entryways to the three upper units. Fenestration consists of wood multi-lite casement windows, double-hung windows, divided-lite single-hung windows, picture windows, and non-original vinyl slider windows. Interior features include original wainscoting, wood floors, decorative ceiling beams, crown molding, and bathroom tiles and fixtures. There is a detached garage at the rear of the property accessed via an alley.

Over the years, the subject property has experienced limited alterations that include the modification of the building from a duplex to a five-unit building in 1949; the subsequent restoration of the two first-story units to a single unit in 2005; the replacement of six windows and two doors and a kitchen and bathroom remodel in 2009; and the installation of double-hung and sliding vinyl windows, the addition of security bars on some of the windows, and the addition of steel security doors, all at unknown dates.

The citywide historic resources survey, SurveyLA, identified the subject property as eligible for listing under the national, state, and local designation programs as a Contributor to the potential Orange Grove Avenue-Ogden Drive-Genesee Avenue Multi-Family Residential Historic District.

DISCUSSION

The subject property meets one of the Historic-Cultural Monument criteria: it “embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction” as an excellent and highly intact example of Spanish Colonial Revival architecture applied to a multi-family residence, and represents an exemplary two-story stacked, or a one-over-one grand stair, duplex.

The Spanish Colonial Revival architectural style was popular in Los Angeles for multi-family housing typologies, including duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes, as well as auto-oriented bungalow courts and traditional urban apartment houses. Attempting to fit the image of the single-family home, duplexes were the most common, and were either one-story side-by-side or two-story stacked. Duplexes, such as the subject property, typically were sited on a lot that was the same size as that for a single-family structure, and its use of a side driveway provided the same rhythm to the streetscape. The Charlotte Chase Apartments is an excellent example of the stacked duplex typology in that its characteristic massing, tile roof, and arched openings are limited to the primary façade while the remainder of the building is a simple rectangular volume topped with a parapeted flat roof and features window arrangements that reflect its stacked-flat nature.

In addition, the subject property’s low-pitched tile roof, tower, covered balconies, stucco walls, and asymmetrical composition are all reflective of the Spanish Colonial Revival architectural style. Other distinguishing features include recessed windows, arched window openings and entryways, and decorative iron work.

Despite minor interior alterations, some window replacements, and the conversion of the upper unit to three individual units, the subject property retains a high degree of 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 Charlotte Chase Apartments 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-2018-7217-CE was prepared on December 14, 2018.

BACKGROUND

On November 13, 2018, the Los Angeles City Council, acting upon a motion introduced by Councilmember Herb Wesson, initiated consideration of the subject property as a potential Historic-Cultural Monument. On December 13, 2018, a subcommittee of the Commission consisting of Commissioners Kanner and Barron visited the property, accompanied by staff from the Office of Historic Resources.