

FINDINGS

- The Sycamore Bungalow Court “exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city or community” for its association with the rapid development of Hollywood and its surrounding areas in the 1920s.
- The Sycamore Bungalow Court “embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction” as an excellent and intact example of a two-story bungalow court in the Spanish Colonial Revival style in Hollywood.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The Sycamore Bungalow Court meets two of the Historic-Cultural Monument criteria.

The subject property “exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city or community” for its association with the rapid development of Hollywood and its surrounding areas in the 1920s. In addition, the subject property “embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction” as an excellent and intact example of a two-story bungalow court in the Spanish Colonial Revival style in Hollywood.

From the 1910s through the boom of the 1920s and into the 1930s, Hollywood experienced tremendous population growth due to a rapidly expanding film business. To accommodate the growing population of newcomers, there was a sharp increase in residential development. Concentrations of residential properties from this period are located adjacent to the major motion picture studios and include modest single-family residences along with a wide variety of multi-family housing types, including duplexes, triplexes, and bungalow courts such as the subject property.

Bungalow court apartments are one of four multi-family housing types that became popular during California’s population boom after World War I, and have a particular significance in Hollywood. Bungalow courts are distinguished by several different types, but most commonly they appear as one-story detached bungalows in a U-shaped configuration with a central courtyard; two-story bungalow courts, such as the subject property, are rare. Most units are entered through private porches or stoops from the courtyard and exhibit similar features of single-family dwellings, but on a more modest scale.

The subject property is an excellent and highly intact example of a two-story bungalow court, as it includes the following characteristic elements of the housing type: a U-shaped configuration; detached two-story bungalows; private entrances; central open space; interior features characteristic of a single-family house; and rectangular interior floor plans. The footprint of the subject property has remained the same since 1926 and retains integrity in its site plan, orientation, and interior configurations. Minor cosmetic changes to the property include alterations

to windows, kitchens, and bathrooms. Despite these alterations, the overall plan is unchanged and the subject property continues to reflect its bungalow court building type.

Overall, the subject property retains sufficient integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association to convey its significance.

While the applicant argues that the subject property also “is associated with the lives of historic personages important to national, state, city, or local history” for its connection to electrical engineer Peter Mole, staff finds that the property does not meet this criterion. While Mole may be considered an historic personage for his pioneering contributions to the motion picture industry, his association with the property is tenuous.

Peter Mole moved to Los Angeles in 1923. In 1926, while working at Creco, Mole developed a new incandescent lighting technique for filmmaking that manufactured and distributed through his own business, the Mole-Richardson Company. Established in 1927, the company was located at 6310 Santa Monica Boulevard (demolished), where Mole built the first Mole-Richardson light. In 1928, the company moved to a purpose-built building at 941 North Sycamore Avenue (substantially altered, circa 2018), where they continued to operate until 2015. Mole received his first Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences recognition for his contribution to the success of the incandescent illumination fixture in 1928, and he and his company went on to win Academy Awards for technical achievements in 1935, 1939, and 1946. In 1930, Mole moved to Carhay Square, and he later moved to 510 Burnside Avenue, where he resided until his death in 1960. Mole lived at the subject property for only three years, from 1927 until 1930, of his decades-long career and the building does not appear to represent his significant impacts on filmmaking.

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 Sycamore Bungalow Court 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 City of Los Angeles has determined based on the whole of the administrative record, that substantial evidence supports that the Project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section Article 19, Section 15308, Class 8 and Class 31, and none of the exceptions to a categorical exemption pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 applies. The project was found to be exempt based on the following:

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-2019-7557-CE was prepared on February 14, 2020.