

## **FINDINGS**

- The King Edward Hotel “exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city or community” for its association with the early 20<sup>th</sup> century development of hotels in Downtown Los Angeles, and as the home of the King Eddy Saloon, a business important to the commercial identity of Downtown Los Angeles that has continuously operated at the property since the 1930s.
- The King Edward Hotel “embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction” and “represents a notable work of a master designer, builder, or architect whose individual genius influenced his or her age” as an excellent example of a commercial building in the Beaux Arts architectural style, and as a significant work of master architect John Parkinson.

## **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The King Edward Hotel meets two of the Historic-Cultural Monument criteria: it “exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city or community” for its association with the early 20<sup>th</sup> century development of hotels in Downtown Los Angeles, and as the home of the King Eddy Saloon, a business important to the commercial identity of Downtown Los Angeles that has continuously operated at the property since the 1930s; and it “embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction” and “represents a notable work of a master designer, builder, or architect whose individual genius influenced his or her age” as an excellent example of a commercial building in the Beaux Arts architectural style, and a significant work of master architect John Parkinson.

The presence of transcontinental rail depots, high demand for seasonal labor, and growing migration and tourism prompted the construction of numerous hotels in the eastern portion of Downtown Los Angeles in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Unlike earlier lodging types, these hotels were typically larger and more luxurious, utilizing new construction techniques and amenities like electricity, elevators, and steam heating. The King Edward Hotel was built as part of this hotel boom; located near 6<sup>th</sup> Street and Main Street, where the Pacific Electric Railway had established a new terminal and headquarters in 1905, it marked the expansion of the city’s central business district into what had previously been an industrial area. During the 1920s and 30s, affluent travelers increasingly looked to newer hotels located elsewhere in the city, and the many hotels in the eastern portion of Downtown, including the King Edward, were largely converted to single-room occupancy housing.

The King Eddy Saloon, located on the ground floor of the King Edward Hotel, has been in operation under various names since 1933. The space originally housed a bar, which closed in 1918 as California moved to restrict sale and consumption of alcohol. In 1921, after the beginning of Prohibition at the federal level, former saloon operators Ernest Vierke and A.M. Miller opened what was ostensibly a soda fountain in the space. However, the infilled windows and decorated cellar with a stage suggest that it was a front for a speakeasy. The business received an alcohol license in 1933, when Prohibition was repealed. Since then, the King Eddy Saloon has been an important fixture in the social life of Downtown and Skid Row, attracting a regular clientele that has included authors John Fante and Charles Bukowski, as well as many residents of the surrounding area.

The King Edward Hotel reflects the dominance of Beaux Arts architecture in Downtown Los Angeles in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, when it served as a marker of the growing city’s prosperity. The property’s symmetrical composition, tripartite form, prominent cornice with dentils

and molding, and interior columns all reflect the style as applied to a multistory commercial building. While the property has experienced some alterations, particularly on the interior, it maintains a high degree of integrity overall.

John Parkinson (1861-1935) was a prolific master architect who was instrumental in shaping the built environment of Downtown Los Angeles in the early 20th century and created some of the city's most iconic commercial, civic, and institutional buildings. Within Parkinson's body of work, the King Edward Hotel is significant as being among his initial experiments in developing economical, fireproof construction methods. Instead of framing the entire building with iron and steel as he employed in previous projects such as Grand Central Market, in designing the King Edward Hotel, he utilized hollow, semi-porous tile partitions to form the supports for the floors and walls above the first floor. In addition, the King Edward Hotel is unique in that it was designed by Parkinson as a business venture for himself; it remained in his family's name until 1962.

Despite interior and exterior alterations, the subject property is largely intact and retains a high level 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 King Edward Hotel 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.

**CHC-2020-288-HCM**

**117-131 East 5th Street; 455 South Los Angeles Street**

**Page 3 of 3**

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-2020-289-CE was prepared on February 14, 2020.