

**STANLEY BURKE'S RESTAURANT AND SIGN**  
5037-5053 North Van Nuys Boulevard  
**CHC-2020-2789-HCM**  
**ENV-2020-2790-CE**

**FINDINGS**

(As Amended by the Cultural Heritage Commission on August 20, 2020)

As per the applicant's request, the Commission agreed to amend the proposed monument name to be Stanley Burke's Restaurant and Sign (formerly called Corky's Restaurant and Sign) to reflect the original owner and occupant of the property.

- Stanley Burke's Restaurant and Sign "exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city or community" for its association with the evolution of the neighborhood restaurant in response to the growing car-oriented lifestyle in post-World War II San Fernando Valley.
- Stanley Burke's Restaurant and Sign "embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction" as a rare example of a purpose-built 1950s diner on a major commercial corridor in Sherman Oaks; and an excellent example of the Googie architectural style.

**DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

Stanley Burke's Restaurant and Sign 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 evolution of the neighborhood restaurant in response to the growing car-oriented lifestyle in post-World War II San Fernando Valley. The neighborhood restaurant emerged in the decades after the Civil War as an offshoot of a tavern, hotel, or grocery. By the early 1900s, such businesses had developed into neighborhood cafés that served as the social gathering place for neighborhoods until the 1940s. Following World War II, neighborhood commercial development, and particularly neighborhood restaurants, began to evolve in response to the rapid increase in ownership of automobiles. As the region had an abundance of undeveloped land, the San Fernando Valley became the center for such new development, and Van Nuys Boulevard, where the subject property is located, became a central commercial strip that included restaurants, shopping centers, movie theaters, and banks. Similar to other auto-oriented neighborhood restaurants that developed in the post-World War II era, the subject property featured a large parking lot at the rear, and offered both counter and booth seating to its customers. In addition, as meeting halls were scarce at the time, the subject property served as an important location for meetings, talks, art exhibits, and official business occasions for political and cultural organizations. As such, the subject property not only represents the adaptation of the neighborhood restaurant to the car culture that defined Los Angeles in the 1950s, but also illustrates how neighborhood restaurants functioned as important and well-known places to gather and socialize within their communities.

Stanley Burke's Restaurant and Sign also "embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction" as a rare example of a purpose-built 1950s diner on a major commercial corridor in Sherman Oaks; and an excellent example of the Googie architectural style. After World War II, storefront-based neighborhood cafés were replaced by auto-oriented coffee shops, and in Los Angeles, they were often designed in the Googie architectural style. As illustrated by the subject property, these often had a parking lot reflecting the shift toward neighborhood commerce based on widespread ownership of automobiles, as well

as a combination of counter and table and booth service. The subject property was historically designed as a coffee shop and has remained in continuous use as a coffee shop or diner until 2019. Most extant 1950s diners in Los Angeles have been extensively altered and no longer retain integrity; the subject property is one of only a few remaining examples in the city.

The Googie architectural style was popular in the years immediately following World War II and emphasized new materials, open spatial configurations, modern engineering and imagery, and complementary landscaping. Its forms also reflected the functions of commerce and advertising, seen in the integration of vivid roof forms and oversized neon signage that helped to attract customers to roadside businesses. Despite the removal of five of the slanted beams originally on the exterior, south-facing elevation and the multiple additions, the subject property continues to retain the essential characteristic features of the Googie architectural style that include the prominent, swooping roof form, natural stone accents, and its expansive, floor-to-ceiling plate glass windows. Other distinguishing elements consist of the subject property's open plan, counter stools, and the semi-exhibition kitchen open to customers' view.

Although the property has experienced interior and exterior alterations, the subject property retains sufficient 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 Stanley Burke's Restaurant and Sign 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-2020-2790-CE was prepared on July 24, 2020.