

WALKER'S CAFE
700 West Paseo del Mar
CHC-2021-10727-HCM
ENV-2021-10728-CE

FINDINGS

- Walker's Cafe "exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city or community" as the home of a long-standing restaurant that played an important part in the social life of San Pedro

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Walker's Cafe meets one 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" as the home of a long-standing restaurant that played an important part in the social life of San Pedro.

Walker's Cafe operated continuously in San Pedro from 1946 to 2021 under the family of founders Raymond J. Walker and Bessie Mae Petersen; Petersen herself ran the business from its establishment until 1994, when poor health forced her to retire at the age of 82. Petersen was known for her generosity, providing meals to customers regardless of their ability to pay, and giving shelter and work to homeless customers. During its long history, the restaurant attracted a loyal and diverse clientele representing a broad cross-section of San Pedro, drawn to its food, inviting atmosphere, and proximity to Point Fermin Park. The property retains many of its original features, most notably the neon sign and interior arches. Despite its closure, the subject property continues to represent 75 years of Walker's Cafe's role as a local cultural institution and an important part of community life in San Pedro.

While the applicant also argues that the property "is associated with the lives of historic personages important to national, state, city, or local history" for its association with owner and operator Bessie Mae Petersen, staff do not find that Petersen rises to the level of an historic personage. Though a well-known and beloved figure in the San Pedro community, Petersen did not ultimately have a significant impact on local history.

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 Walker's Cafe 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-2021-10728-CE was prepared on February 11, 2022.