

MORRIS CHERNUS APARTMENTS
4344 – 4346 South Garthwaite Avenue; 3207 – 3221 West 43rd Place
CHC-2022-7318-HCM
ENV-2022-7319-CE

FINDINGS

- The Morris Chernus Apartments “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 the Spanish Colonial Revival architectural style as applied to a multi-family residence, and as a notable work of master architect Edith Northman.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The Morris Chernus Apartments meets one of the Historic-Cultural Monument criteria.

The subject property “embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction” as an excellent example of the Spanish Colonial Revival architectural style as applied to a multi-family residence. The arched windows, second-floor balconies with arches, and hipped roof with clay tiles are all characteristic of the style. Other distinguishing features include the corner tower, stucco wall cladding, and decorative wrought-iron grilles.

In addition, it “represents a notable work of a master designer, builder, or architect whose individual genius influenced his or her age” as a notable work of master architect Edith Northman. Northman had a very successful career in Southern California from the 1920s and the 1940s in which she designed hundreds of Period Revival-style buildings and was a true master of the idiom, though her contributions to the field have been largely unrecognized. Despite the wide range of her portfolio, Northman is perhaps best known for her residential designs and she was an influential practitioner in the Los Angeles area during its most prolific period of residential development and growth. Completed in 1929, the subject property was designed during the emergence of Northman’s prominence as an individual practitioner and during a period when many of her designs already showcased a high level of expertise across various Period Revival architectural styles. The building’s adept Spanish Colonial Revival design, applied to an unusually shaped building adapted to its triangular parcel, reveals Northman’s mastery of her discipline and the enduring nature of her design philosophy.

Despite interior and exterior alterations over the years, the subject property retains a sufficient level of integrity of location, setting, materials, design, 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 Morris Chernus 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 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-2022-7319-CE was prepared on November 7, 2022.