

THE COMPLEX
6464-6480 W. Santa Monica Boulevard; 1052-1060 N. Wilcox Avenue
CHC-2023-3455-HCM
ENV-2023-3456-CE

FINDINGS

(As amended by the Cultural Heritage Commission on August 17, 2023)

- The Complex “exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city or community” as an excellent example of streetcar-related commercial development in Hollywood. It also significantly contributed to the development of the theatre community in Los Angeles and played an important role in the establishment of Hollywood Theatre Row.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The boundary of the proposed Monument is amended to exclude the industrial building located at 1048-1050 W. Wilcox Avenue. As outlined in the memo submitted by the applicant on July 27, 2023, although this building was constructed at the same time, and by the same architect as the original commercial building to the north, it was utilized as a public garage and does not contribute to the significance of The Complex.

The Complex “exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city or community” as an excellent example of streetcar-related commercial development in Hollywood.

Similar to other parts of Los Angeles, the rail lines in Hollywood facilitated the development of densely populated commercial corridors, such as Santa Monica Boulevard. During the 1920s, when the subject property was constructed, the entertainment industry experienced its heyday and there was a major population boom. In tandem with the existence of the streetcar lines, these factors led to commercial and residential development in Hollywood at this time. As exemplified by the subject property, streetcar commercial development is most commonly characterized by two-story business blocks, with shops below and professional offices or apartments above, with single story storefronts placed directly on the sidewalk and no accommodation for automobiles. The pedestrian orientation of the subject property, its multiple storefronts set within arcades, and its location on a prominent corner are also all reflective of commercial development built in response to the streetcar line that ran along Santa Monica Boulevard. Today, the subject property stands as one of relatively few intact examples of streetcar-oriented commercial architecture that are extant in Hollywood.

In addition, the subject property “exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city or community” for its significant contributions to the development of the theatre community in Los Angeles and its important role in the establishment of Hollywood Theatre Row. The Complex’s five small theatres and rehearsal spaces offered low-barrier opportunities for new and experimental artists and served as a

springboard for artists to launch their careers. Serving as the Richmond Shepard Theatre throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the subject property contained three theatres and three rehearsal studios where Shepard taught classes, coached celebrities including Dick van Dyke and Lily Tomlin, and rented studio and theatre space to numerous actors and dancers. In 1989, Chazz Palminter's "A Bronx Tale" opened at The Complex and the success of the play led to an off-Broadway run and a movie starring Robert De Niro. In 1993, the *Los Angeles Times* profiled comedian and playwright Pat Hazell, whose play "The Bunk Bed Brothers" opened at The Complex to glowing reviews and led to a movie deal. Actress Julia Sweeney also first performed at The Complex her one-woman show, *God Said, Ha!*, which worked its way up to Broadway. Further, at The Complex, new actors have overlapped with more well-known actors and performers, including Don Cheadle, Justine and Jason Bateman, Dr. Dre, Quentin Tarantino, and Axel Rose, who all rehearsed and performed at the subject property, allowing for collaboration and community building.

Additionally, The Complex served as the anchor for Hollywood Theatre Row for more than three decades. In the 1980s, Hollywood's economic decline led to cheap rent and plentiful commercial venues for artists. In this era, The Complex (then The Shepard Theatre) was joined along Santa Monica Boulevard by several other theatres, which over the next decade would draw in more theatre companies and lead to the area being branded as Hollywood Theatre Row. In 2006, The Complex won the Charlie Theatre Arts Award, a Hollywood Arts Council program that celebrates local businesses and individuals who revitalize and unite the Hollywood community through programming, architecture, public art, and other innovations. Receiving the Charlie Award in the Theatre Arts category, The Complex was formally recognized as the anchor of Hollywood's Santa Monica Boulevard Theatre District for over 25 years. Additionally, in 2015, the Los Angeles City Council voted to name the intersection in front of the subject property as "Hollywood Theater Row" in recognition of Hollywood Theatre Row's contributions to arts and culture in Hollywood and Los Angeles as a whole.

Despite interior and exterior alterations over the years, the subject property retains a sufficient 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 Complex 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 an 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-2023-3456-CE was prepared on July 21, 2023.