

THE SWORD APARTMENTS

4467 – 4479 W. 2nd Street

CHC-2024-1584-HCM

ENV-2024-1585-CE

FINDINGS

- The Sword Apartments “embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period or method of construction” as an excellent example of a multi-family residential building designed in the Monterey Revival architectural style.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The Sword Apartments meets one criterion for designation under the Cultural Heritage Ordinance.

The subject property “embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction” as an excellent example of a multi-family residential building designed in the Monterey Revival architectural style. The Monterey Revival style emerged as a variation of the Spanish Colonial Revival architectural style as Anglo-Americans began modifying existing adobes by adding second floors with open galleries or balconies. Its detailing is a combination of the American Colonial Revival architectural style together with the Mediterranean Revival architectural tradition. The style saw limited use from the 1920s through the 1940s across single and multi-family residences such as courtyard apartments, with a rise in popularity during the 1930s. As exhibited by the subject property, local hallmarks of the style include tiled low-pitched roofs with extended eaves, stucco and wood siding, American Colonial Revival-style window and door detailing, and a cantilevered gallery across the front. Other characteristic features on the interior of the subject property include trefoil arch openings, faux fireplaces, decorative mantels, and built-ins within draped-arches.

While the applicant also argues that the subject property “exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city, or community” as being representative of early patterns of development in the Wilshire area that were influenced by streetcar suburbanization, staff does not find that it is individually significant within this historic context. Residential development in the Wilshire area boomed during the 1920s and 1930s and tracts sited close to major streetcar lines such as on 3rd Street and throughout the Wilshire area boasted an array of duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, courtyard apartments, and apartment houses like the subject property. The subject property exhibits a common typology for this time period and there is a plethora of 1920-30s multi-family residences extant in the Wilshire neighborhood and across the city, many of which were constructed near streetcar lines. There are over 1,600 multi-family residences in the Wilshire Community Plan Area that are either currently listed or determined eligible for designation through SurveyLA. Additionally, the subject property is designated as a contributor to the St. Andrews Square National Register Historic District, which is significant as an excellent example of a streetcar suburb and an excellent collection of primarily Arts and Crafts residential architecture from the early 20th century. Furthermore, there are two other designated historic districts that represent excellent examples of streetcar suburbanization in the Wilshire area: the Oxford Square Historic Preservation Overlay Zone and the Ridgewood Place National Register Historic District.

Aside from the demolition of the original detached garage on site, the building has experienced

minimal interior and exterior alterations over the years. The subject property therefore 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 Sword 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 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-2024-1585-CE was prepared May 10, 2024.