

KROTONA COURT & GRAND TEMPLE OF THE ROSY CROSS

2122-2130 N. Vista Del Mar Avenue; 6110 W. Primrose Avenue

CHC-2024-2186-HCM

ENV-2024-2187-CE

FINDINGS

- Krotona Court and the Grand Temple of the Rosy Cross “exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic, or social history of the nation, state, city, or community” as the headquarters of the American Section of the Theosophical Society from 1912-1920, which greatly influenced alternative spiritual movements in Los Angeles and contributed to the development of Lower Beachwood Canyon.
- Krotona Court and the Grand Temple of the Rosy Cross “exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic, or social history of the nation, state, city, or community” as the headquarters of the American Section of the Theosophical Society from 1912-1920, which greatly influenced alternative spiritual movements in Los Angeles and contributed to the development of Lower Beachwood Canyon.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Krotona Court and the Grand Temple of the Rosy Cross meets two criteria for designation under the Cultural Heritage Ordinance.

The subject property “exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic, or social history of the nation, state, city, or community” as the headquarters of the American Section of the Theosophical Society, which greatly influenced alternative spiritual movements in Los Angeles and contributed to the development of Lower Beachwood Canyon. The subject property served as one of the earliest and most prominent institutional sites associated with modern esoteric movements as the headquarters of the American Section of the Theosophical Society from 1912 until 1920. It also spurred the growth and development of Lower Beachwood Canyon through advertisements in Theosophist periodicals encouraging its followers and others from across the country to come to Los Angeles to purchase surrounding vacant lots or rent units in existing adjacent residences. As the Lower Beachwood Canyon community grew, the subject property became the figurative center of the Krotona Colony which was composed of at least 18 other properties associated with the Theosophical Society and various esoteric groups. Even after the Theosophical Society moved to Ojai in 1924, residences associated with Theosophy were constructed, demonstrating Theosophists’ continued investment and influence in the development of the area.

While the roots of the Theosophical and other modern esoteric movements can be traced to South and East Asia, Theosophy saw large growth in popularity in, and came to be associated with, Southern California and Los Angeles. The Theosophical Society was among the first Western organizations that introduced cultural practices from Eastern religions such as Buddhism and Hinduism to Los Angeles, paving the way for the exploration of esoteric thought that has profoundly shaped Los Angeles culture. While occupying the subject property, Theosophists, particularly women leaders such as Marie Russak Hotchener, Alice Evans Bailey, May S. Rogers, and Christine Wetherill Stevenson, used arts, culture, and lectures to popularize alternative spiritual practices that formed the foundation of the New Age movement in the 1970s. Similar to the basis of Theosophy and other esoteric spiritual movements during the late 19th and early 20th

centuries, the New Age movement looked forward to a “New Age” of love and light and offered a preview of the coming era through personal transformation and healing. Even after the subject property was converted into apartments by 1926, the association with Theosophy remained and attracted residents. The subject property appears to be among the earliest remaining purpose-built properties associated with alternative spiritual disciplines in Los Angeles.

The subject property also embodies “the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction” as an early and significant example of a Spanish Colonial Revival-style building designed by master architects Mead & Requa and an excellent and rare example of a Moorish Revival style institutional building designed by master architects and Heineman & Heineman. Constructed in 1913, Krotona Court is one of the earliest examples of the Spanish Colonial Revival architectural style in Los Angeles, succeeding the earliest known example of the style in the city, the Southwest Museum (HCM #283), constructed in 1912. The 1915 Panama California Exposition in San Diego exposed Spanish-inspired architectural styles to Southern California and architects soon after incorporated the styles into a range of new developments; by the 1920s, the Spanish Colonial Revival architectural style was ubiquitous throughout Los Angeles. Master architects Mead & Requa are widely understood to be two of the most significant producers of Spanish Colonial Revival styles, the development of which was greatly influenced by the architects’ travels through the American Southwest, South America, the Mediterranean, and Africa. Mead & Requa’s design of Krotona Court incorporates many features characteristic of the Spanish Colonial Revival architectural style including its stucco exterior walls, low-sloped clay tile roofs, prominent courtyard, arched doorways, and protruding lattice box screens. Krotona Court represents one of Richard Requa’s early commissions and one of the first projects completed by the Mead & Requa partnership. The Grand Temple of the Rosy Cross exemplifies the Moorish Revival architectural style through its stucco exterior, ogee arch-framed doorways and entrances, and geometric stained-glass windows, which draw design elements from North African, Muslim, and Moorish architecture popularized in North Africa and southern Spain. Krotona Court also includes Moorish Revival stylistic details, as reflected by the large dome atop the Esoteric Room, which was common among Spanish Colonial Revival-designed buildings. Remaining examples of Moorish Revival-style buildings are rare in Los Angeles.

Although it has experienced several alterations, including the removal of most original interior features of the Grand Temple of the Rosy Cross building, the Grand Temple’s exterior and the remainder of the subject property retain 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 Krotona Court and the Grand Temple of the Rosy Cross 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-2024-2187-CE was prepared on September 13, 2024