

Mountain States Life Building/ Yucca-Vine Tower
1801 – 1805 North Vine Street; 6301 – 6317 West Yucca Street
CHC-2023-7508-HCM
ENV-2023-7509 -CE

FINDINGS

- The Mountain States Life Building/ Yucca-Vine Tower “exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city or community” as an integral component of the development of the Hollywood-Vine commercial district.
- The Mountain States Life Building/ Yucca-Vine Tower “embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction” as an excellent example of an Art Deco architectural style commercial building.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The Mountain States Life Building/ Yucca-Vine Tower meets two of the Historic-Cultural Monument criteria. The subject property “exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city or community” as an integral component of the development of the Hollywood-Vine commercial district. Approaching the 1920s, Hollywood Boulevard was reimagined as a first-class shopping and business district, with the Vine Street intersection becoming the nexus of commercial development around 1922. Vine Street between Hollywood and Yucca was specifically projected to be a high-class fashion district known as Peacock Alley and Henry L. Gogerty, architect of the subject property, was selected to exclusively design the style center. The construction of the subject property was essential to the development of the Hollywood-Vine commercial district, as well as the city’s Five-Finger Plan that led to Yucca Street- Vine Street becoming one of the busiest intersections in Los Angeles. The subject property’s completion in 1929 marked a new era in the growth of Hollywood-Vine as a business center and it has remained an iconic feature of Hollywood throughout its over nine decades in existence.

The subject property also “embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction” as an excellent example of an Art Deco architectural style commercial building. The building’s vertical emphasis, zigzag elements, bas-relief sculptures, and steel windows are all reflective of the style. Other distinctive features include exterior cast-stone ornamentation as well as coffered ceilings, walls clad with marble, elevator lobbies on each floor, and arched openings on the interior. At the time of the subject property’s construction, Art Deco was the popular choice for modern skyscrapers in Hollywood as the district established itself as a center of commerce. Despite interior and exterior alterations over the years, the subject property 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 Mountain States Life Building/ Yucca-Vine Tower 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-2023-7509-CE was prepared on March 15, 2024.