

FENWAY HALL
621 South Gramercy Place
CHC-2023-7016-HCM
ENV-2023-7017-CE

FINDINGS

- Fenway Hall “exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city or community” as representative of early patterns of development in the Wilshire area that were influenced by streetcar suburbanization.
- Fenway Hall “embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction” as an excellent example of the French Eclectic architectural style.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Fenway Hall meets two of the Historic-Cultural Monument criteria.

It “exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city or community” as representative of early patterns of development in the Wilshire area that were influenced by streetcar suburbanization. When Henry E. Huntington established the Pacific Electric Railway Company in 1901, it was as much a real estate concern as a transportation corporation. Within ten years, its fleet of hundreds of cars and aggressive real estate activities helped propel the city’s expansion. Rail lines such as the line that ran along West Sixth Street and serviced the neighborhood where the subject property is located, were used to promote and sell tracts of land. The streetcar facilitated the movement of more and more people into the area and initiated the construction of apartment buildings in the Wilshire community such as the subject property. Ridership on the streetcars peaked in the mid-1920s, and the system began its slow, inexorable decline in the 1930s; however, it had already left an intrinsic mark on the development of the city.

The subject property also “embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction” as an excellent example of the French Eclectic architectural style. As exemplified by the subject property, French Eclectic-style buildings are characterized by an eclectic combination of design motifs from medieval, Gothic, and Renaissance era French architecture. In Los Angeles, these designs are realized in materials distressed or treated to look like a more expensive material; for example, stucco was painted to appear like stone such as seen at the base of the subject property. Other hallmarks of the style exhibited by the subject property include dormers, steeply pitched hipped roofs, large entry doors highlighted by round arches, and architectural elements framed with quoins, intended to look like cut stone. The subject property has only experienced minor interior and exterior alterations over the years, and 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 Fenway Hall 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-2023-7017-CE was prepared on December 27, 2023.