

CALIFORNIA EAGLE PUBLISHING CO. OFFICES

4071-4075 S. Central Avenue; 1055 E. 41st Street

CHC-2024-649-HCM

ENV-2024-650-CE

FINDINGS

- The California Eagle Publishing Co. Offices “exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city or community” as the headquarters of the California Eagle, one of the most prominent early 20th century African American newspapers in the West, which advocated for and illuminated civil rights issues.
- The California Eagle Publishing Co. Offices “is associated with the lives of historic personages important to national, state, city, or local history” as the residence and office of nationally-recognized, pioneering African American journalist, community leader, politician, and civil rights activist Charlotta Bass (1880-1969).

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The California Eagle Publishing Co. Offices 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 the headquarters of the *California Eagle*, one of the most prominent early 20th century African American newspapers in the West, which advocated for and illuminated civil rights issues.

During its approximately seven decades in operation, and nearly twenty years at the subject property, the *California Eagle* served as one of the most important sources of information and inspiration for Blacks in Los Angeles and nationwide. It also played a crucial role in the development of the African American community in Los Angeles. With the newspaper’s headquarters located at the subject property, in the center of the Black neighborhood in Southeast Los Angeles, it is evident how intertwined the *California Eagle* was with its primary audience. During the early 20th century, Central Avenue was the hub of the city’s Black-owned businesses and institutions, and Black-owned newspapers like the *California Eagle* publicized social events, supported Black businesses, and reported on civil rights issues. More specifically, the *California Eagle* advocated for and illuminated a variety of civil rights-related topics, from equal employment opportunities and fair wages, to restrictive covenants and equal access to housing, to racial segregation and discrimination. It also advocated for equal employment opportunities at myriad public and private companies in Los Angeles and statewide; published numerous scathing attacks on the Ku Klux Klan; endorsed political candidates whose platforms were sympathetic to the cause; and exposed both private and government-backed discriminatory housing practices. The *California Eagle* was one of the earliest, and longest lasting, Black publications in the city.

The subject property also “is associated with the lives of historic personages important to national, state, city, or local history” as the residence and office of nationally-recognized, pioneering African American journalist, community leader, politician, and civil rights activist Charlotta Bass (1880-1969).

In addition to owning, managing, and publishing the *California Eagle*, Bass was a community leader, a founder of the Los Angeles branches of several notable Black political organizations, and an outspoken proponent of racial justice for all minority groups. Under her leadership for almost 40 years, nearly 15 years of which being while Bass lived and worked at the subject property, the *California Eagle* became one of the country's most wide reaching and highly influential African American newspapers of the early 20th century. During her time at the subject property, Bass was also involved with various prominent organizations such as serving as the Los Angeles delegate to the 1939 NAACP conference and a member of the Peace Committee of the World Congress in 1950 in Paris and Prague as a strong opponent of the atomic bomb and the Korean War. In addition, while she resided at the subject property, she began her career in politics, running for the Los Angeles City Council and becoming the first African American woman to run for Vice President of the United States. Furthermore, in 1954, Bass founded the Bass-Kinloch Cultural Center, which offered weekly forums and guest speakers, musical programs, dinners, and other social events at the subject property.

Despite interior and exterior alterations that the subject property has experienced over the years, it continues to retain sufficient integrity of materials, design, workmanship, location, association, and feeling to convey its historic appearance and associations as the 1930s-50s headquarters of the *California Eagle* newspaper and with pioneering African American journalist, community leader, civil rights activist, and politician Charlotta Bass.

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 California Eagle Publishing Co. Offices 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-2024-650-CE was prepared on March 15, 2024.