

FINDINGS

- The Holmby Building “exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city or community” for its association with the early development of Westwood Village by the Janss Corporation.
- The Holmby Building “embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction, [and] represents a notable work of a master designer, builder, or architect whose individual genius influenced his or her age” as an excellent example of the Mediterranean Revival architectural style and as one of the earliest commercial works of master architect Gordon B. Kaufmann.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The Holmby Building 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” for its association with the early development of Westwood Village by the Janss Corporation. Although development of the tract started in 1922, it was not until December 1927 that the Janss Investment Corporation announced the development of a planned commercial district, Westwood Village, and it launched two years later. To ensure that the identity of Westwood Village remained a cohesive, unified complex, the Janss company implemented design guidelines for building exteriors that extended to a loosely defined range of Mediterranean styles. These styles complemented the Italian and Romanesque architecture of the adjacent university campus. Along with the Janss Dome, the Holmby Building was one of the first two buildings to be developed by the company in Westwood Village and was intended to define the character of development in the Village and serve as a model for subsequent construction efforts.

The Holmby Building also “embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction” as an excellent example of the Mediterranean Revival architectural style. The building’s low-pitched hipped and gabled clay tile roof, simple, horizontal massing, arched openings, and limited use of applied decoration are all reflective of the style. Other distinguishing features include the clock tower, upper-story loggias, divided-lite casement windows, and decorative molded window surrounds.

Furthermore, the subject property “represents a notable work of a master designer, builder, or architect whose individual genius influenced his or her age” as one of the earliest commercial works of master architect Gordon B. Kaufmann. Starting his own firm in 1924, five years prior to the completion of the subject property, and having a career that spanned more than 40 years, the subject property represents one of Kaufmann’s early commercial designs and the earliest example of his work in Westwood Village.

Despite interior and exterior alterations, the subject property retains a sufficient level of integrity of location, materials, design, setting, 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 Holmby Building 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 a 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 Section 15331, 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-2020-5542-CE was prepared on November 11, 2020.