

PACIFIC DINING CAR
1300-1314 West 6th Street
CHC-2021-9217-HCM
ENV-2021-9218-CE

FINDINGS

(As amended by the Cultural Heritage Commission on April 7, 2022)

- The Pacific Dining Car “exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city or community” as the long-term location of a restaurant that has played an important part in the commercial and social life of Westlake and Los Angeles as a whole.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The Pacific Dining Car meets one 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 the long-term location of a restaurant that has played an important part in the commercial and social life of Westlake and Los Angeles as a whole.

Los Angeles has a wide range of long-term businesses that have served residents, visitors, and tourists for decades and have contributed to the commercial identity and history of Los Angeles. SurveyLA identifies several eligibility standards for evaluating properties for historic significance under the theme of “Commercial Identity, 1920-1980.” These include evaluating whether a property “is associated with a business that made an important contribution to commercial growth and development in Los Angeles” and whether it “is the founding or the long-term location of a business significant in commercial history.” The subject property served as the location for the Pacific Dining Car restaurant, a business established in 1921, for nearly 100 years. In Los Angeles and elsewhere, well-established and long-lived businesses, such as the Pacific Dining Car, take on important social qualities and over time they often organically mature into iconic and revered cultural institutions. Their endurance becomes ingrained into a neighborhood’s collective memory and plays an integral role in defining a community’s sense of cultural and commercial identity. Billed as “Los Angeles’s oldest steakhouse,” the Pacific Dining Car became a legacy business and a beloved community institution, inextricably tied to this physical location, earning it a reputation as one of Los Angeles’s most iconic dining establishments.

While the Pacific Dining Car restaurant’s nearly 100-year history should be recognized, it is the period between 1921 and 1934 that represents the historic significance of the subject property, when it was distinguishable as a restaurant built in the form of a railway dining car. This period, which established the legacy restaurant, includes relocation of the 1921 dining car to the present site in 1923 and alterations/additions to the kitchen and storeroom made in 1934. Alterations and additions to the dining car outside the period of significance do not contribute to the character of the original 1921 restaurant built in the form of a railway dining car and do not further enhance the qualities that make the subject property significant.

Despite the restaurant’s closure and the removal of most of the booths and interior décor, the subject property retains sufficient integrity of location, setting, design, feeling, association, and materials to convey its significance as a cultural institution of the Westlake neighborhood.

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 Pacific Dining Car 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-2021-9218-CE was prepared on March 7, 2022.