

QUEEN OF ELYSIAN HEIGHTS
2004 North Echo Park Avenue; 1553 West Ewing Street
CHC-2022-434-HCM
ENV-2022-435-CE

FINDINGS

- The Queen of Elysian Heights “exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city or community” as a rare, intact example of early residential development in the Echo Park area.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The Queen of Elysian Heights meets one 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 a rare, intact example of early residential development in the Echo Park area. Echo Park was initially developed by real estate developer Thomas Kelley and other investors. They purchased 70 acres of land, including what is now Echo Park Lake, and named it the Montana Tract; the first lots were put up for sale in 1887. The availability of public transportation made the area easily accessible from downtown Los Angeles and encouraged residential development. In 1886, the Ostrich Farm Railway (later to become Sunset Boulevard) was laid out through the middle of what became the Washington Heights Tract, created the next year. Two other tracts making up what is now Echo Park are the Echo Park Tract, subdivided in 1903, and the Lake Side Tract, also subdivided in 1903. Development continued in the first decade of the 20th century with the subdivision of tracts such as Sunset Boulevard Heights, northeast of what is now Sunset Boulevard and Echo Park Avenue. The area began to develop in earnest in the 1920s, a period when the city at large experienced a development boom. Constructed in 1895, the subject property pre-dates the subdivision of many of the tracts in Echo Park and represents some of the region’s earliest residential development.

While the applicant argues that the subject property also “embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction” as an excellent example of a small Queen Anne Victorian, staff are unable to make this finding. It is not a unique or outstanding example of the Queen Anne architectural style. Additionally, the subject property has experienced a number of alterations over the years, such the removal of most of the original historic features on the interior, enclosure of the staircase to the second floor, modifications to the original floor plan, and an incompatible large, two-story, stucco addition at the rear, which have diminished its integrity. There are a number of other buildings designed in the Queen Anne architectural style already designated Historic-Cultural Monuments that are better examples of the style and maintain a higher degree of integrity, including the Residence at 1300 W. Carroll Avenue (1887, HCM #51); Residence at 1320 Carroll Avenue (1887, HCM #77); Benjamin J. Waters Residence (1899, HCM #598); and the Ziegler Estate (1904, HCM #416).

Although very few original features remain on the interior, the exterior of the subject property retains sufficient integrity of location, 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 Queen of Elysian Heights 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 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-2022-435-CE was prepared on May 6, 2022.