

CORNELIUS JOHNSON RESIDENCE AND OLYMPIC OAK

1156 South Hobart Boulevard

CHC-2022-3207-HCM

ENV-2022-3208-CE

FINDINGS

- The Cornelius Johnson Residence and Olympic Oak “is associated with the lives of historic personages important to national, state, city, or local history” as the residence of Cornelius Johnson, two-time Olympic athlete and gold medalist in the high jump in the 1936 Olympics in Berlin, Germany, for which he received the oak tree planted in the rear yard

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The Cornelius Johnson Residence and Olympic Oak meets one of the Historic-Cultural monument criteria.

The subject property “is associated with the lives of historic personages important to national, state, city, or local history” as the residence of Cornelius Johnson, two-time Olympic athlete and gold medalist in the high jump in the 1936 Olympics in Berlin, Germany, for which he received the oak tree planted in the rear yard. Despite facing much segregation and racism as a Black athlete during the Jim Crow era in the United States, Johnson had a highly successful career as a world-class track and field athlete. The height of his career was him winning the gold medal at the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games, which is represented by the oak tree that has stood in the rear yard of his residence and family home for over 80 years. The oak tree is one of only six remaining Olympic Oaks in the United States, and one of 25 remaining worldwide. The single-family home was constructed by Johnson’s father, and was where he resided for 32 years; Johnson passed away prior to his 33rd birthday.

Despite interior and exterior alterations over the years, 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 Cornelius Johnson Residence and Olympic Oak 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-2022-3208-CE was prepared on July 7, 2022.