

May 14, 2023

VIA EMAIL: CLERK.PLUMCOMMITTEE@LACITY.ORG

Marqueece Harris-Dawson, Chair
Planning and Land Use Management Committee
City of Los Angeles
200 North Spring Street
Room 340
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Council File 22-0454: 1300-1314 W. 6th Street: Support for Cultural Heritage Commission Recommendation

Dear Chair Harris-Dawson and Members of the PLUM Committee:

This office represents the Wesley Idol II and Toby Idol 2002 Trust, the owner (the “Owner”) of the property and improvements located at 1300-1314 West 6th Street (the “Property”) in the City of Los Angeles (the “City”), including the now-closed Pacific Dining Car restaurant. Ms. Toby Idol is the sole surviving trustee of the ownership trust and is therefore the sole owner of the Property.¹

The PLUM Committee Should Adopt the Unanimous Recommendation of the Cultural Heritage Commission to Set the Property’s Period of Significance from 1921 – 1934

The Cultural Heritage Commission’s (“Commission”) carefully crafted recommendation aligns with the only supportable period of significance for the Property. Upon reviewing the historic nomination and the report prepared by Chattel, Inc., the Commission held that the Chattel report’s analysis properly addressed the relevant criteria and amply supported the conclusion that a haphazard series of post-1934 additions (some entirely unrelated to restaurant operation) did not meet the standard for designation. The Commission recommendation states:

¹ The record concerning this nomination is replete with misrepresentations by those who give the impression they have an ownership interest in the property, and that they speak for the Owner. More troubling, the nomination itself suffers from a fundamental misrepresentation, as the nomination Applicant is Douglas E. Wance, yet Mr. Wance is not actually the applicant. Mr. Wance is a lawyer in Orange County with the Buchalter law firm and *has stated to this office that he is not the applicant*, but rather represents, presumably in a legal capacity, “fans” of the now closed restaurant. He has declined to reveal his clients and has not corrected the record with respect to his representation or the fact that he is not the applicant.

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“This [1921-1934] period...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.**” (emphasis added)

The historic experts on the Commission had little difficulty in reaching this conclusion. Commissioner Kanner stated “It is the...rail car itself...that should be recognized. The other buildings are just buildings; they don’t have much character.” Commission President Milofsky stated “I have a hard time saying the [other parts of the Property] are significant...The core history is the original dining car and the kitchen that was added.”

There is no basis for the City Council to expand upon the Commission’s unanimous recommendation, and the PLUM Committee should recommend adoption of the Commission’s recommendation to the full City Council. For clarity with respect to future use of the site, the PLUM Committee should also adopt the Chattel, Inc. report as the basis for the recommendation, as the report provides more detail and context for the Commission’s recommendation.

It has been over 19 months since the filing of a suspicious and deeply lacking nomination, freezing the property in a state of disrepair, and jeopardizing the development of a site that could provide significant affordable housing. We respectfully request that the PLUM Committee support the recommendation of the Cultural Heritage Commission and bring this matter to a close.

Sincerely,

Alexander M. DeGood

AMD:amd

cc: Helene Rotolo, Council District 1
Helen Campbell, Council District 1
Lambert Giessinger, Office of Historic Resources
Candy Rosales, PLUM Legislative Assistant