



CITY OF LONG BEACH

DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

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October 10, 2016

CHAIR AND CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSIONERS

City of Long Beach
California

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommend the City Council designate the building located at 237 Long Beach Boulevard as a local Historical Landmark. (District 2)

APPLICANT: Gilro, LLC - Greg Gill
 c/o GRG Management Services
 1716 Clark Ave., PMB 334
 Long Beach, CA 90815
 (Application No. HP16-453)

THE REQUEST

The applicant requests that the Cultural Heritage Commission recommend that the City Council designate the building located at 237 Long Beach Boulevard as a local Historical Landmark.

BACKGROUND

The subject property is located on the west side of Long Beach Boulevard between Third Street and Broadway (Exhibit A – Location Map). The two-story brick commercial building is a narrow rectangular structure built up to the front property line. The building is approximately 22 feet wide, 116 feet in depth, and abuts the building to the north with a 2-foot 8-inch side yard on the south property line.

The property is located within the PD-30 (Downtown Plan) zone. When the PD-30 zoning district was adopted, an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was prepared which included an evaluation of historic properties within the Downtown Plan Area. The accompanying mitigation measures in the EIR included recommendations for the properties identified as historically significant to be considered for local landmark designation or adaptive reuse. This property was not included on the list of evaluated properties within the downtown plan area.

ANALYSIS

STYLE

This two-story Brick Commercial Vernacular style building was constructed circa 1908. From 1895-1929, this style of building was routinely constructed in downtown areas across the country. Common features among these buildings is the use of "face" brick for the front façade and rougher brick for side and rear elevations, which typically were not publicly visible. Brick Commercial buildings are modestly adorned with limited ornamentation. Decorative detailing, when present, included cornices, friezes, piers, quoins, and stringcourses in contrasting glazed or colored brick. These buildings are typically constructed at the front property line, and vary from one to three stories in building height. Often the buildings are attached, or closely constructed to abutting buildings with a zero side setback. All character defining features are located on the front façade and include the segmental brick arches over the windows, symmetrical second floor window fenestration, and two-story building form constructed at the property line. The subject property is located on Long Beach Boulevard (originally American Avenue).

The subject two-story brick building is rectangular in shape with a flat roof and a partial basement. This building uniquely uses yellow "face" brick along the front façade. The less visible side of the building uses standard brick. Along the second floor the two windows are a segmental arched style. The window opening is arched with brick set in a vertical alignment to emphasize the arch feature and contrast it from the horizontally set brick along the front wall. The first floor front façade is asymmetrical in arrangement with a wood door providing a second floor staircase access. The remainder of the façade features columns and steel storefront sashes and glazing.

BUILDING REHABILITATION

As is frequently the case, historic commercial buildings often experience some degree of alteration over their life span. This building is no exception, as the exterior was altered and major structural stabilization was necessary. All structural stabilization work has been completed and this building has been carefully restored. While some contemporary building alterations occurred through the renovation, care was taken to use historically appropriate and/or compatible materials. For example, steel and wood for doors, window frames, window sashes, and storefront window frames were used, which are appropriate materials for a building from this period.

Some of the alterations made during the renovation include the aluminum windows and exposed steel frame at the rear of the building. A metal canopy was also installed at the front of the building with support cables attached to the front wall façade. The "face" brick along the front façade was painted white. All the paint was removed from the front wall and the original brick was cleaned and left exposed.

PERMIT HISTORY

A records search of building permits is standard research for a historic landmark designation. These records are valuable for purposes of identifying architects, contractors, craftsmen or other historically significant persons affiliated with the construction of a resource. The original building permit was not found in the City's records, and no definitive year built date has been conclusively determined. However, the County Assessor and Sanborn Map records both indicate that the building was constructed in 1908. Original plans for the building were not found in the City's records archives.

DESIGNATION CRITERIA

The Cultural Heritage Ordinance contains four criteria, any one of which may be used as a basis for designation, associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history (Criterion A), associated with the lives of persons important to the City's past (Criterion B), embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic values (Criterion C), or has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important in prehistory or history (Criterion D).

The subject property is eligible for Landmark designation under Criteria A. The building is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of the City's history. This building represents the early commercial development of the City in a time of tourism, and rapidly growing industry. By the turn of the century, Long Beach's economy had diversified from its original scattering of shops and lodges. New and important businesses essential for a developing city were found throughout the Long Beach, including banks, drugstores, and several department stores. The tourist boom in the 1900s greatly accelerated the process of commercialization and downtown construction. The rapid increase in visitors and long-term settlers created an opportunity to provide services and goods to the City's large numbers of new residents in the early 20th century.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff has analyzed the landmark nomination and has determined that it meets the requirements set forth in Title 21 of the City's Zoning Code, Section 2.63.050 (Cultural Heritage Commission) of the Long Beach Municipal Code which state that a cultural resource qualifies for designation as a Landmark if it retains integrity and meets one or more of the four findings. Staff supports the nomination, and finds that the nomination meets Criteria A of the Cultural Heritage ordinance for landmark designation.

The proposed nomination is complimentary to the commercial district and surrounding neighborhood. The building is currently located within the PD-30 Downtown Area. Its location is within an urban area with commercial, offices and residential. The building is historically significant because of its association with the early growth of the City and resulting downtown commercial building development. The designation of the building

as a historic landmark protects it from inappropriate alterations and raises awareness of the City's history. The nomination for Landmark status is consistent with the General Plan Land Use Historic Preservation Goal of protecting historic resources from inappropriate alterations.

Staff recommends that the Cultural Heritage Commission make a recommendation to the City Council to approve the nomination.

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Public notices were distributed on September 20, 2016. As of this date no letters have been received.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

In accordance with the 15331 Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), environmental review is not required for actions taken for the preservation or restoration of historic structures.

Respectfully submitted,



CHRISTOPHER KOONTZ, AICP
ADVANCE PLANNING OFFICER



LINDA F. TATUM, AICP
PLANNING BUREAU MANAGER

LFT:CK:AP

Attachments: Exhibit A – Location Map
Exhibit B – Photographs & Plans
Exhibit C – Findings