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May 31, 2018

Los Angeles City Council  
c/o Office of the City Clerk  
City Hall, Room 395  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Attention: PLUM Committee

Dear Honorable Members:

**SELMA LAS PALMAS COURTYARD APARTMENTS; 1535-1555 NORTH LAS PALMAS AVENUE AND 6700-6718 WEST SELMA AVENUE; CASE NO. CHC-2018-1040-HCM; ENV-2018-1041-CE**

At its meeting of **May 17, 2018**, the Cultural Heritage Commission took the actions below to include the above-referenced property in the list of Historic-Cultural Monuments, subject to adoption by the City Council:

1. **Determined** that the proposed designation is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), pursuant to Article 19, Section 15308, Class 8 and Article 19, Section 15331, Class 31 of the State CEQA Guidelines;
2. **Determined** that the property conforms with the definition of a Monument pursuant to Section 22.171.7 of the Los Angeles Administrative Code; and
3. **Recommended** that the City Council consider the Selma Las Palmas Courtyard Apartments for inclusion in the list of Historic-Cultural Monuments; and
4. **Adopted** the attached findings as amended by the Commission.

This action was taken by the following vote:

Moved: Milofsky  
Seconded: Buelna  
Ayes: Barron, Kanner, Kennard

**Vote: 5 – 0**

Etta Armstrong, Commission Executive Assistant I  
Cultural Heritage Commission

The Cultural Heritage Commission would appreciate your inclusion of the subject property to the list of Historic-Cultural Monuments.

**Time for Council to Act** The Commission action will be transmitted to the City Council for consideration. Pursuant to Section 22.171.10 (f) of the Los Angeles Administrative Code, the Council may approve or disapprove in whole or in part an application or initiation for a proposed designation of a Monument. The Council shall act in 90-days of the public hearing held before the Commission. The 90-day time limit may be extended by the Council for good cause for a maximum of 15 days. If the Council does not act on the application or initiation within this 105-days total time limit, the application or initiation to designate a Monument shall be deemed to have been denied. The Council may override a Commission recommendation of denial of Council initiated designation by a minimum of 10-votes.

Enclosures: Amended Findings

# SELMA LAS PALMAS COURTYARD APARTMENTS

## FINDINGS

(As Amended by the Cultural Heritage Commission on May 17, 2018)

- The Selma Las Palmas Courtyard Apartments "embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural-type specimen, inherently valuable for study of a period, style, or method of construction" as an excellent and highly intact example of a multi-family residential property in the Hollywood Regency architectural style and a notable example of courtyard housing.
- The Selma Las Palmas Courtyard Apartments is "identified with historic personage(s) or with important events in the main currents of national, state, or local history" for its association with developer and philanthropist Benjamin Weingart.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The Selma Las Palmas Courtyard Apartments meets two of the Historic-Cultural Monument criteria.

The Selma Las Palmas Courtyard Apartments "embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural-type specimen, inherently valuable for study of a period, style, or method of construction" as an excellent and highly intact example of a multi-family residential property in the Hollywood Regency architectural style, and a notable example of courtyard housing. The hallmarks of the Hollywood Regency style, as exhibited by the subject property, are hipped roofs, steel casement windows, stucco cladding with brick veneer, and the use of Neoclassical design elements such as fluted pilasters, pediments, and iron railings. The subject property also retains other characteristic features that include hardwood floors and built-in cabinetry.

Courtyard apartments are one of four multi-family housing types that became popular during California's population boom after World War I. Courtyard apartments are distinguished by several different types, but most commonly they are two stories in height, have a U- or O-shaped configuration with a central courtyard, and have pedestrian access incorporated into the courtyard with vehicular access at the periphery. The Selma Las Palmas Courtyard Apartments is a notable representative of this typology, as it includes the following characteristic elements: O-shaped configurations; central open spaces; garages at the rear; orientation of the interior living spaces toward the central courtyard; and rectangular interior floor plans. The footprint of the subject property has remained the same since 1939 and retains integrity in its site plan, orientation, and interior configurations.

The Selma Las Palmas Courtyard Apartments is "identified with historic personage(s) or with important events in the main currents of national, state, or local history" for its association with developer and philanthropist Benjamin Weingart. Weingart was a significant community leader and the subject property represents his significant commitment to the development of housing for all levels of economic attainment; the subject property was constructed as workforce housing for those employed in the Hollywood film industry. Weingart's company, Aetna Construction Company, built the residential property and the parent company, Consolidated Hotels Incorporated, owned the property for several decades.

The applicant argues that the subject property is also "reflects the broad cultural, economic, or social history of the nation, state, or community" as a representative of the idolized Hollywood lifestyle in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. However, the information provided in the application does not

support this finding. The subject property better represents courtyard housing as a type of multi-family residential development rather than a reflection of cultural, economic, or social history.

The Selma Las Palmas Courtyard Apartments is highly intact and retains a high level of integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

### **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 Selma Las Palmas Courtyard Apartments 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 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-2018-1041-CE was prepared on April 30, 2018.