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April 24, 2019

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:

**GRAND CENTRAL MARKET; 315-323 SOUTH BROADWAY; 312-320 SOUTH HILL STREET;
CASE NO. CHC-2019-248-HCM, ENV-2019-249-CE**


At its meeting of **April 18, 2019**, the Cultural Heritage Commission took the actions below to include the Grand Central Market 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;
3. **Recommended** that the City Council consider the Grand Central Market for inclusion in the list of Historic-Cultural Monuments; and
4. **Adopted** the attached Findings.

The Commission vote was as follows:

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

Vote: 5 - 0



James K. Williams
Commission Executive Assistant II

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 is hereby 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 on the proposed designation. The City Council may unilaterally extend the 90-day time limit to act for a maximum of 15 days for good cause. With written consent of the owner, the time for the City Council to act may be extended by up to an additional 60 days. If the Council does not act on the application or initiation within this specified time limit, the application or initiation to designate a Monument shall be deemed to have been denied.

Enclosure: Findings

FINDINGS

- Grand Central Market “exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city or community” for its association with the development of the Broadway commercial district and as the original and long-term location of Grand Central Market.
- Grand Central Market “embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction” and “represents a notable work of a master designer, builder, or architect whose individual genius influenced his or her age” as an early example of a fireproof and reinforced concrete building, and as an example of the early work of master architect John Parkinson.

CRITERIA

The criterion is the Cultural Heritage Ordinance which defines a historical or cultural monument as any site (including significant trees or other plant life located thereon), building or structure of particular historic or cultural significance to the City of Los Angeles if it meets at least one of the following criteria:

1. Is identified with important events of national, state, or local history, or exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city or community;
2. Is associated with the lives of historic personages important to national, state, city, or local history; or
3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction; or represents a notable work of a master designer, builder, or architect whose individual genius influenced his or her age.

SUMMARY

Grand Central Market is a mixed-use commercial building that spans the block between Broadway and Hill Street between Third and Fourth Streets in Downtown Los Angeles. The building was constructed in two phases and consists of three volumes: a six-story volume to the east, a one-to-two-story volume at the center, and a three-story volume to the west. Constructed in 1898 as the Homer Laughlin Building, the original, six-story structure was designed by master architect John Parkinson (1861-1935) in the Beaux Arts architectural style. In 1905, architects Thornton Fitzhugh (1864-1933) and Harrison Albright (1866-1932) designed a three-story addition, also in the Beaux Arts architectural style, to the rear of the property, the Laughlin Annex. The ground floor of subject property has served as the location of Grand Central Market since the market’s opening in 1917. The upper floors of the Homer Laughlin Building were converted into apartments as part of a large-scale renovation project that began in 1994.

Rectangular in plan, the subject property is of concrete construction with flat, rolled asphalt roof forms and a raised parapet. The six-story Homer Laughlin Building has smooth concrete cladding at the first and second stories and brick cladding with terra cotta detailing at the upper stories and a dentilled cornice. The ground floor of the primary, southeast-facing elevation features five large rectangular openings with fixed transoms, rolling doors, and contemporary metal awnings. At the north end of the east elevation, there is an arched opening that provides access to the apartments on the upper floors. Fenestration consists of double-hung wood

windows. The Laughlin Annex, which faces northwest onto Hill Street, has smooth concrete cladding. The ground floor consists of five large rectangular openings with fixed transoms and rolling doors that provide pedestrian access to the market. Each opening is sheltered by a contemporary metal awning. On the second and third floors, there are groups of fixed metal windows. To the west, connecting to the Homer Laughlin Annex, there is a single-story portion of the building that was constructed in 1905 to connect the Homer Laughlin Building to its annex. The south elevation of this one-story portion consists of loading docks that service the market.

On the interior, the market occupies the ground floor of the three volumes. It has poured concrete floors and open ceilings with exposed joists and board-formed concrete. The space is punctuated by regular structural piers accented by decorative molding at the top; hipped lightwells provide natural light. Three aisles running east to west create a circulation pattern between individual merchant stalls and seating areas. The interior of the Homer Laughlin Building features an original staircase from 1898 with an ornate wrought iron railing, marble stairs and risers, and a tile floor and wainscot; an open-air atrium; and residential units in varying sizes with concrete and tile floors, plastered walls, and finished ceilings. The upper floors of the Laughlin Annex are used as office space and has poured concrete floors, plastered walls, high ceilings, and large single-hung windows with transoms around lightwells.

When Grand Central Market opened in 1917, it became one of the largest city markets on the West Coast. The basement served as a farmer's market where farmers and truck gardeners could lease space and sell their produce directly to consumers. Other features of the market included a women's restaurant, restrooms, a drinking fountain, an information bureau, and an English tea room. During the 1920s, the market catered to the wealthy residents of Bunker Hill. The open-air shopping and dining experience was easily accessible via the Angels Flight Railway and conveniently located near the shopping and entertainment along Broadway. Over decades of downtown development and demographic shifts, the market modernized and its popularity endured. Grand Central Market continues to be an attractive destination for Los Angeles locals and tourists alike.

Born in Scorton, England in 1861, John Parkinson apprenticed in construction while studying engineering and drafting at night school. He immigrated to the United States in 1891 and relocated to Los Angeles by 1894. The Homer Laughlin Building was one of his earliest designs after he established his own firm in the city. In 1920, he partnered with his son Donald Parkinson to form Parkinson & Parkinson. Some of Parkinson's well-known works in the Los Angeles area include the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum (1921), Los Angeles City Hall (1928, HCM #150), and Union Station (1939, HCM #101). Parkinson died in Los Angeles in 1935.

Thornton Fitzhugh was born in Indiana in 1864 and attended school in Indianapolis and Cincinnati. He practiced architecture on the East Coast and in Cincinnati before relocating to Los Angeles, where he began practicing in 1895. He is perhaps best known for his design of the Pacific Electric Building (1905, HCM #104), which served as a hub for Pacific Electric streetcars, offices, and an early location for the Jonathan Club. Other works by Fitzhugh include the Embassy Auditorium and Hotel (1914, HCM #299), Lady Effie's Tea Parlor (1907, HCM #764), and the Cooper Arms Apartments (1923) in Long Beach. Fitzhugh died in 1933 in Los Angeles.

Harrison Albright was born in Pennsylvania in 1866 and attended the Pierce College of Business before establishing his own architectural firm in Philadelphia. In 1891, he moved to West Virginia where he was appointed State Architect. In 1905, he and his family moved to Los Angeles. The first building he designed was the Laughlin Annex, but one of his best-known

designs was the U.S. Grant Hotel in San Diego, which was completed in 1906. Albright died in 1932.

The subject property has undergone several alterations over the years that include the construction of the annex in 1905; the conversion of the ground floor to market space in 1917; the renovation of the ground floor and basement in 1939; the partial removal and reconstruction of the façades in 1962; seismic retrofitting and a new façade and glazing on the Hill Street elevation in 1991; and further façade renovation and replacement of windows and doors in 1994.

The subject property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places as a Contributor to the Broadway Theater and Commercial District and is individually listed in the California Register of Historical Resources.

DISCUSSION

Grand Central Market meets two of the Historic-Cultural Monument criteria: it “exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city or community” for its association with the development of the Broadway commercial district and as the original and long-term location of Grand Central Market, and it “embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction” as an early example of a fireproof and reinforced concrete building, and “represents a notable work of a master designer, builder, or architect whose individual genius influenced his or her age” as an example of the early work of master architect John Parkinson.

As the population of Los Angeles continued to expand, in the early 20th century a budding business district started to spread south and west from the city’s original Plaza, resulting in what is today known as the Historic Core. The subject property was one of the earliest buildings to anchor the district and a catalyst in downtown Los Angeles’ early development; it represents an essential aspect of the city’s commercial identity.

In continuous operation since its opening in 1917, Grand Central Market has earned a reputation as one of the city’s most iconic commercial institutions. Individual merchants within the market have changed over time, catering to a range of ethnic groups as the demographics of downtown Los Angeles shifted, including early communities of Italian, Jewish, Russian and German immigrants downtown, followed by the Latino community that emerged after the war. Grand Central Market has served millions of Los Angeles residents and visitors over the course of more than a century in business and bears significant association with the commercial and cultural identity of the city.

John Parkinson is considered a master architect for his role in shaping the built environment of Los Angeles over the course of his career. Whether alone or in one of his partnerships, Parkinson was involved in the design of some of the city’s most iconic buildings. Grand Central Market is an excellent example of Parkinson’s commercial work in downtown Los Angeles, and is one of his earliest designs in the city.

Constructed of a steel frame with partitions made of steel and fireproof plaster, and Portland cement floors over expanded steel, the original 1895 building is regarded as the first fireproof building in Southern California. Also, when the expansion of the building, known as the Laughlin Annex, was completed in 1905, it became the first reinforced concrete building in Los Angeles.

Despite some interior and exterior alterations, Grand Central Market 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 Grand Central Market 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-2019-249-CE was prepared on March 26, 2019.

BACKGROUND

On February 7, 2019, the Cultural Heritage Commission voted to take the property under consideration. On March 21, 2019, the Commission visited the property, accompanied by staff from the Office of Historic Resources.