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All compliant submissions may be accessed as follows:

- **"Initial Submissions"**: Compliant submissions received no later than by end of day Monday of the week prior to the meeting, which are not integrated by reference or exhibit in the Staff Report, will be appended at the end of the Staff Report. The Staff Report is linked to the case number on the specific meeting agenda.

- **"Secondary Submissions"**: Submissions received after the Initial Submission deadline up to 48-hours prior to the Commission meeting are contained in this file and bookmarked by the case number.

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If you have any questions, please contact the Commission Office at (213) 978-1300.

SECONDARY SUBMISSIONS

ECHO PARK IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION
PO Box 26896 Los Angeles, CA 90026
(323) 882-4835 EpiaMail@yahoo.com

October 7, 2020

Cultural Heritage Commission
Office of Historic Resources, City Planning Department
221 North Figueroa Street, Suite 1350
Los Angeles, California 90012
Attention: Melissa Jones
email: melissa.jones@lacity.org

Re: Taix Restaurant Historic Cultural Nomination, 1911 Sunset Blvd., LA 90026

Honorable Commissioners:

The Echo Park Improvement Association (EPIA) respectfully recommends that the historic status for Taix Restaurant be approved on the cultural value of the business and not the building.

Our community treasures Taix for the fabulous food, the old-world atmosphere, the so many personal memories and of course the Taix family that moved the original restaurant to Echo Park in the 1960's, now represented by owner Mike Taix who has been a great friend and supporter of the Echo Park community for many, many years.

We concluded that the building should not be landmarked when we asked ourselves, "If Taix Restaurant moved to a new location, and a new restaurant moved into the space and remodeled the exterior to suit its needs, would we object?" And the answer was no. Furthermore, we would not object if at its new location, Taix did not recreate the Disneylandesque façade that marks the current building. We do not believe that there is anything substantial or historic about the architectural elements of the building exterior itself. In terms of the interior, most of what is valued has been done by Mike over the last 20 years or so. We know that notable elements have been identified and there are efforts and plans to move these into a new Taix if at all possible or recreate them just as Mike has recently done.

What we care about is the business. The physical building getting a "Historic" status puts a more onerous CEQA standard on the property redevelopment, lengthening timelines unpredictably and putting the continuation of the business of Taix Restaurant at significantly risk.

In the name of preserving what is of paramount cultural importance to the City of Los Angeles, we urge you to support the historic status of the of Taix Restaurant business, not the property.

Thank you for your consideration:

Andrew Garsten
EPIA President
Cc: City Councilmember Mitch O'Farrell, CD13

September 22, 2020

Cultural Heritage Commission
City of Los Angeles
200 North Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Historic-Cultural Monument Nomination - Taix French Restaurant; 1911 W. Sunset Blvd.

Honorable Members of the Cultural Heritage Commission:

My family and I are so gratified by the community's interest in helping us continue the legacy of the Taix Restaurant. I am writing to introduce the Cultural Heritage Commission to my family's plan to preserve the Taix Restaurant and to ask that you support it.

My family created the Taix French Restaurant, and through our cooking and hospitality, have made it something dear to the hearts of Angelinos for now close to one hundred years. Our entrepreneurship and perseverance has stewarded and preserved Taix through the Great Depression, through World II, several recessions, the federal government's condemnation of our original downtown location, urban decline, numerous remodelings, and periodic changes in public taste. Well before the current pandemic, it became clear to us that Taix cannot continue in its current format and premises, and so – to enable us to continue our business – we created the plan described below.

Preserving the legacy of the Taix Restaurant is not a matter of bricks and mortar. It is a matter of restaurant economics and changing public tastes to which we must respond. Though we acknowledge the well-meaning intentions of the Silver Lake Heritage Trust and the Los Angeles Conservancy, preserving Taix is not something that can be accomplished with the tools of architectural history or by designating it as a City Historic-Cultural Monument. Indeed, well-meaning intentions can have negative and unintended consequences which could put an end to the Taix Restaurant if the City does not act with careful consideration.

The City of Los Angeles has recognized Taix for its importance as a legacy business before (*see* Exhibit A), and we have no objection to our restaurants site being recognized as a Historic-Cultural Monument if it is done properly and in a manner that allows us to evolve so that we can preserve and continue our business. And so, we ask that in considering the application before it, the Commission support our plan, and – if the Commission does nothing else – it observe the primary dictate of the Hippocratic Oath: "Do No Harm."

Accordingly, for the reasons discussed in more detail below, on behalf of our family I respectfully request, that if the Commission chooses to recommend that Taix French Restaurant

be added to the City's list of Historic-Cultural Monuments, the Commission recommend that the designation pertain to the site of the restaurant (and not the existing building) and that the Commission find that:

1. The Taix French Restaurant exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the City and state of California;

2. The primary significance of Taix French Restaurant as a historic-cultural resource is as a commercial use and legacy business that has been dear to the hearts Angelinos for almost 100 years despite many changes in its location, premises, décor, format, and menu;

3. Preservation of the Taix French Restaurant as a historic-cultural resource requires that it be able to respond to economic and social challenges that compel changes in its current physical premises;

4. The Taix family preservation plan will enable the continuation of Taix French Restaurant at its present site, and includes character-defining interior and exterior features that will continue to convey the historical significance of the restaurant and justify the inclusion of its site on the City's list of Historic-Cultural Monuments.

A. Taix's Present Circumstances

a. Taix's Cultural Significance is not in Current Building

The cultural significance of the Taix Restaurant is most assuredly not the building in which it is located or our tenant improvements, and the application filed by Silver Lake Heritage does not contend that it is:

> *"Taix French Restaurant is significant as one of the oldest and most enduring businesses in Los Angeles. The dining establishment has remained in continuous operation between 1927 and the present in its two locations, and remains one of the city's most iconic and beloved local businesses, as well as one of the last vestiges of historic Frenchtown."*

The Historic Resource Group's accompanying report concedes considering how to address Taix as a legacy business resource is complex because *"evaluating properties that are **significant for their use** is difficult, and the guidelines and eligibility standards are relatively subjective in comparison to the established thresholds for evaluating other types of significance."* HRB goes on to recognize that long-lived businesses often have a social – "intangible" – importance rather than a physical or architectural significance:

"In Los Angeles and elsewhere, well-established and long-lived businesses take on important social qualities and often, over time, they organically mature into iconic and revered cultural institutions. Their endurance becomes ingrained into a community's collective memory and plays an integral role in defining a community's sense of cultural and commercial identity. Businesses such as these "have the power to bring people together, provide a sense of continuity with the past, and lend [cities] a rich and layered identity" that is rooted in aspects of their history. ***Though the reasons belying their significance are typically rooted in tradition, culture, and other intangible qualities, these businesses are important because they build a very tangible bridge linking the present with the past."***

b. Taix Cannot Continue In Its Present Building and Format

The truth is that Taix cannot continue in its present building and format. Indeed, while some may find that our premises evoke a certain nostalgia, Taix's over-sized and aged building and infrastructure – and the property taxes, operational, staffing, maintenance and insurance costs associated with them – as well as changing public tastes, would have led to Taix's closure had our family not adopted the preservation plan that we are asking your Commission to support. Put simply, Taix is no longer profitable and its premises are a white elephant.

Even before the COVD-19 public health emergency, our facilities (particularly our extensive banquet facilities) were significantly under-patronized due to increased competition and changing public habits. We no longer need, and cannot afford, a large parking lot, when more and more of our patrons are using Uber and Lyft. Organizations that used to meet in our banquet rooms weekly or monthly are now far and few between, and most no longer exist. We are now long-past the point where Taix's operating revenue is able to support this unnecessary overhead.

Maintaining and insuring our aged-infrastructure consumes a major portion of our reduced revenue. Even if we could snap our fingers and down-size the restaurant and our property, millions of dollars would be required to accomplish the build-out we require and provide capital to restart the business – millions of dollars which the non-existent profits of the restaurant cannot provide. Needless to say, the public's affection and civic recognition cannot provide those dollars either.

In 2018, we realized that in order to continue Taix, the best course for us would be to sell the property to a user that would help us continue at our current site, in a new 'right-sized' format, with new infrastructure. We carefully examined over a dozen developers, and we ultimately decided to move forward with Holland Partner Group, to whom we sold the property in the summer of 2019. HPG has a history of building quality and thoughtful developments throughout Los Angeles and Southern California. Their vision of what this corner of Echo Park could be, with placemaking and the additional energy housing provides, were aligned with the

ideas we had to renew and continue Taix. And together, we began planning the next "new Taix."

Moreover, the structure of our transaction with HPG saved us. Although the restaurant is no longer profitable, HPG has enabled us to stay open by relieving us of the burden of mortgage debt, property taxes and insurance, and by giving us free rent. The last few months of the COVID 19 public health emergency have further reinforced the long term need to adjust our business plans. Sales have significantly dropped, and even at zero rent, the cost of operating the restaurant is not nearly being covered. The easy thing to do for us is give up, but we are not doing that.

B. Taix Has Continually Changed Since Its Founding

Those who may believe it is necessary to 'freeze' Taix in time in order to preserve are not sufficiently acquainted with our actual history, and do not understand what our restaurant is as a cultural resource. As entrepreneurs, our family business has had to adapt over and over again in order to survive. Indeed, in 1962, aware that the federal government would soon 'condemn' our original downtown premises, my grandfather took the risky step of moving what was already a City institution to 'new' premises in Echo Park and – on top of that – he changed the restaurant's format from family-style dining to entrée menu service. But, notwithstanding the dramatic changes in locale, décor, menu and service that took place, the public recognized that grandad had preserved what was essential in "Taix." As the LA Times reported:

> ***Original Bargain Duplicated***[1]
>
> *The family and I finally got around to trying what some people call "The new Taix." It is at 1911 Sunset Boulevard, just east of Alvarado Street, and its true name is Les Freres Taix. It is the old Botwin's Café and is somewhat décor-dash wise, a far cry from the original Taix down on Commercial Street – tufted leather booths, carpeting, table cloths, and attractive waitresses rather than 80-year-old waiters. Incidentally, the original Taix is still in business, hasn't yet been bulldozed as a lot of people seem to think. Anyway, at the so-called "new Taix" you get the same generous tureen of excellent vegetable soup, salad with the same garlicy dressing, huge serving of pot roast with large portions of tomato-infested zucchini, creamed au gratin potatoes, sherbet, and coffee – all for $2.25. It is not exactly a gourmet repast. But, you can't beat the price. What's more, they have a red Mountain Wine for 90 cents a half bottle (by Louis Martini) that needs no apologies. And the cocktail lounge is exceptionally attractive. For an economical dine-out treat for the family, or to takeout the girl friend on the night before payday, this in one of the town's better bargains.*

[1] Los Angeles Times, Sunday, November 3, 1963.

Moreover, the changes did not stop in 1962. We have never stood still; no service business can afford to do so. In 1969, we undertook a major renovation that included adding banquet rooms, a wine shop and cellar, the porte cochere, a parking lot, a new bar and the cocktail lounge. The 1970s brought a more continental menu and saw the onset of neighborhood blight. In the 1980s, continental cuisine began to fall out of public favor. We changed our menu, began a room-by-room remodeling to impart an older look to our restaurant, and closed our wine shop. That process continued into the 1990's and 2000's, when we added many older-looking features such as tin ceilings, patinaed mirrored walls, more brick wainscoting, antique-style light fixtures, changed booth layouts and covering, and wood paneling. Little today is left from the 1969 renovation – but our family's legacy business continues to be recognized by the public.

C. Our Preservation Plan

There are four key components of our family's preservation plan for Taix: (1) remain at our site; (2) off-load overhead that the restaurant can no longer support; (3) move into right-sized premises with new infrastructure; and (4) retain our identity while responding to current public tastes and preferences. Our sale to HPG has enabled us to accomplish the first two objectives. The other two components of our plan are discussed in more detail below.

a. Right-Sized Premises with New Infrastructure

As explained earlier, it is not economically feasible to continue to operate in our current premises. Therefore, every plan we have considered requires that Taix be reborn into a smaller, approximately 5,000 square foot footprint with new kitchen, storage, and HVAC facilities. Retaining our aged existing building, and its inefficient and outmoded layout, would be fundamentally incompatible with this objective.

Working with HPG, we developed a plan to renew Taix into a new right-sized restaurant facility. Because the conventional preservation approach often involves some recognition of a building's existing edifice, our initial plan proposed fronting the new building with our current faux-Normandy Sunset Boulevard elevation. *See* Exhibit B. But frankly, that plan pleased no one: not City Planners who wanted to see us activate our stagnant Sunset Boulevard and make it pedestrian friendly; not local stakeholders who told us that retaining what they considered a kitschy, rather tired 'screen set' would be an empty gesture that added nothing to the community; and not preservation voices who are uncomfortable with the idea of new construction. We were asked to think instead about the importance of our site in relation to surrounding properties and the street grid, and how redevelopment of our site could benefit the community over the decades to come. So together with HPG, we went back to the drawing board.

b. Taix In its New Context

Together with HPG, over the next year we engaged with a "design council" of local stakeholders brought together by Councilmember O'Farrell. Through a series of design iterations (*see* Exhibit C) we were ultimately asked to create a pedestrian paseo through the Project from Reservoir and Liberty Streets to Sunset Boulevard that would provide a visual corridor through to Park Avenue and Echo Park to the south.

The resultant transit and pedestrian-friendly development provides 5,500 square feet of new restaurant space for Taix to continue in its current location and footprint, an additional 7,500 square feet of ground floor retail space that will activate the paseo and Sunset Boulevard, and 166 residential units (including 24 units reserved for very low income households).

A second pedestrian paseo will connect the main Project paseo to the Edendale Branch Library (whose parking and primary entrance is from Alvarado Street) transforming our property into the "hub" of the neighborhood – with Taix at its very center. Our shared property line with the library will include four "walk-up" units and a large scale mural.

Our schematic designs have been shared with the Echo Park Improvement Association and the Echo Park Neighborhood Council, who ultimately asked us to finish it with architecture that would be "of Echo Park, and for Echo Park."

With this direction, the design team explored the Echo Park neighborhood, looking to strong examples of early 20th century architecture nearby. The traditional architecture, with pronounced top, middle and bottom horizontal separations, unique storefront street frontages, fire escape balconies and selective uses of arched windows were common themes that the team embraced in the Taix design. Further, given the architectural period of inspiration, pictures of the original Taix building in downtown LA offered direction as well. *See* Exhibit D. With the black framed storefront and red canopies overhead, the new Taix design now provides a distinct nod to the original home of the restaurant. *See* Exhibit E.

c. The "New Taix"

At the center of all this will be the "New Taix" – right -sized , designed to respond to current public tastes, planned with efficiency in mind, and finished in an aesthetic that will provide a familiar experience to our long time patrons. Those patrons will be greeted with an adaptation of the storefront that graced our original downtown premises flanked by our existing "Cocktails" sign. The "New Taix" will remain on its existing site, along Sunset, with its footprint occupying approximately the same position as our bar lounge today.

Therefore, when we reopen, our patrons will find us just where we were…

The new Taix will be comprised of approximately 5,500 square feet broken into multiple interior rooms, with an adjoining 1,500 square foot outdoor dining patio along the Project's new pedestrian paseo that will connect Sunset Boulevard to Reservoir Street. *See* Exhibit F. Our new indoor/outdoor format will respond to the public's desire to enjoy the popular California outdoor dining experience so much in demand while sheltering diners from the hubbub of traffic along Sunset. *See* Exhibit G. The outdoor patio will be directly integrated into the restaurant's interior via operable window-door assemblies that will allow light into Taix's interior, and allow our interior space to seamlessly flow into the outdoor environment.

Inside, we will retain Taix's feel and sense of place by reusing our beloved Cherrywood bar top, along with our trademark patinaed mirrors lining the wall behind the bar. *See* Exhibit H Much of the restaurant's ceiling will be covered with a faux-tin ceiling tile similar in style to that found in our dining rooms today. The bar room walls will be lined with half a dozen booths, with the center of the bar room housing tables that can be moved and adjusted as the occasion demands.

Further back in the restaurant, there will be a darker and more intimate space for another dozen horseshoe, Pullman and circular booths like we have today. This space is conceived to embrace the darker "speak-easy" experience many of our current patrons enjoy. Patinaed mirror treatment along the walls and the faux tin tiles on the ceiling provide the depth of material to accent the plush booth benches that wrap the perimeter of this room.

Beyond this space, a small private dining room can be accessed designed for more intimate parties of approximately a dozen guests, with the restrooms and operations office further down the corridor. The kitchen, back of house and associated storage will be positioned in the center of our space with a backdoor that leads directly to an off-street loading zone and a secure and ventilated commercial trash room.

D. <u>Conclusion</u>

As the City Council Resolution presented to us on the occasion of our 60th anniversary noted,

"WHEREAS CIRCUMSTANCES, TIME AND PLACES HAVE CHANGED DURING THE PAST SIX DECADES, BUT THE WARMTH, CAMARADERIE AND SIMPLY GOOD FOOD AND SERVICE REMAIN THE SAME. THE SPIRIT OF THE BROTHERS –LES FRERES –LIVES"

In the spirit of the City Council's Resolution, and for all of the foregoing reasons, we ask that if your Commission chooses to recommend that Taix French Restaurant be added to the City's list of Historic-Cultural Monuments, the Commission recommend that the designation pertain to the site of the restaurant and that the Commission adopt the findings set forth on the first page of this letter.

Thank you for supporting our efforts to preserve the Taix French Restaurant,



Mike Taix

cc: Councilmember Mitch O'Farrell
Lambert Giessinger, Office of Historic Resources



City of Los Angeles
State of California

RESOLUTION

Les Freres Taix

WHEREAS, MEMBERS OF THE TAIX FAMILY CAME FROM THE FRENCH ALPS TO LOS ANGELES MORE THAN A CENTURY AGO, BRINGING A WORK ETHIC AND CULINARY TALENTS THAT WOULD GRACE AND SATISFY THE PALATES OF A GROWING CITY; AND

WHEREAS, THE TAIX BROTHERS – LES FRERES TAIX – PLUNGED INTO LIFE IN THEIR NEW ENVIRONMENT, COMMITTING THEIR SKILLS TO WHATEVER ENTREPRENURIAL ENTERPRISE WAS NECESSARY TO SURVIVE, OFTEN TIMES DIFFERENT FROM THEIR TRAINING AS BAKERS; AND

WHEREAS, THOSE VERSATILE YEARS – DURING WHICH PARTNERSHIPS WERE FORMED, LAND AND PROPERTIES WERE ACQUIRED AND SHUFFLED AND FAMILY MEMBERS SEPARATED – FOCUSED IN ON 1927 WHEN THE SON OF ONE OF THE PIONEERING BROTHERS, MARIUS TAIX JR., TOOK OVER MANAGEMENT OF A RESTAURANT IN DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES NEARBY THE THEN-NEW LOS ANGELES CITY HALL; AND

WHEREAS, THE DYNAMICS OF TIME AND GROWTH, HOWEVER, LEFT NO ROOM FOR THE RESTAURANT THAT FOR 33 YEARS WAS TO BE POPULAR WITH CIVIC CENTER HABITEUS, AND THE RESTAURANT WAS FORCED TO MOVE; AND

WHEREAS, MARIUS TAIX JR., AND HIS SONS PIERRE AND RAYMOND, ALONG WITH PARTNERS LOUIS SANGOUARD AND JOHN NARP, DID NOT MOVE FAR, ACQUIRING PROPERTY ON SUNSET BOULEVARD NEAR ALVARADO STREET, TO CONTINUE THE TRADITION OF LE FRERES TAIX, A RESTAURANT OF SUPERLATIVE CUISINE, UNMATCHABLE HOSPITALITY AND GRACIOUS CORDIALITY; AND

WHEREAS, LES FRERES TAIX THIS YEAR CELEBRATES ITS 60TH ANNIVERSARY AS A LOS ANGELES TRADITION WITH RAYMOND TAIX AS THE PATRIARCH RESTAURANTEUR, AND MICHAEL TAIX AND JON BRUNO MANAGING WITH THE SAME GUSTO THAT FIRST BROUGHT THE RESTAURANT TO THE ATTENTION OF A PATRONAGE THAT APPRECIATED CLASS AND STYLE; AND

WHEREAS, CIRCUMSTANCES, TIME AND PLACES HAVE CHANGED DURING THE PAST SIX DECADES, BUT THE WARMTH, CAMARADERIE AND SIMPLY GOOD FOOD AND SERVICE REMAIN THE SAME, THE SPIRIT OF THE BROTHERS – LE FRERES – LIVES.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT BY ADOPTION OF THIS RESOLUTION, THE LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCIL CONGRATULATES LES FRERES TAIX ON ITS 60 ANNIVERSARY AS ONE OF THE PREMIER RESTAURANTS IN LOS ANGELES AND ON THE WEST CONAST.

RESOLUTION BY:
Councilman 4th District

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing resolution was adopted by the Council of the City of Los Angeles at its meeting held August 14, 1987.
President of the Council

SECONDED BY
Councilman 13th District

ATTEST:
City Clerk

Exhibit A – City Council Resolution



Exhibit B Summer 2019 - Initial Taix development designs envisioned removing and reinstalling the Sunset fronting elevation of the existing structure. Significant updates would be required to ensure code compliance, fire-life safety requirements and structural needs. The general response from community stakeholders favored removing the elevation to provide greater public space and more connectivity between the multiple street frontages of the site.



Exhibit C Spring 2020 – The submitted Taix development designs reimagined the use of the site by creating a publicly accessible pedestrian paseo connecting Sunset Blvd to Reservoir St. creating an off-street opportunity for Taix to include outdoor dining in the process. Community stakeholders generally supported the approach, but asked that the architecture be improved.



Exhibit D 1920's-1950's – The original Taix in downtown Los Angeles served as architectural inspiration to create a more traditional aesthetic that would be fitting with the neighboring buildings so central to the Echo Park identity. The strong horizontal lines between commercial ground floor, middle floors, and the top are prevalent in this more traditional design. Storefronts with different glazing assemblies not reaching full floor to ceiling and covered by canopies become focal elements.



Exhibit D 1920's-1950's – The original Taix in downtown Los Angeles served as architectural inspiration to create a more traditional aesthetic that would be fitting with the neighboring buildings so central to the Echo Park identity. Fire escape balconies, more ornate windowsills and headers are prevalent in this more traditional design.



Exhibit E Summer 2020 – The updated Taix design takes inspiration from the original Taix building from downtown, as well as the other Echo Park buildings from the same era of early 1900's architecture. The more traditional aesthetic has strong vertical lines with the white pilasters but also provides for horizontal breaks between top, middle, bottom portions of the building. The public paseo has been enlarged from the previous version creating greater connectivity through the site.



Exhibit E Summer 2020 – View from Park Ave and Sunset Blvd.



Exhibit E Summer 2020 – Looking West down Sunset Blvd. Original Taix signage retained in place overlooking The Sunset/Reservoir intersection.

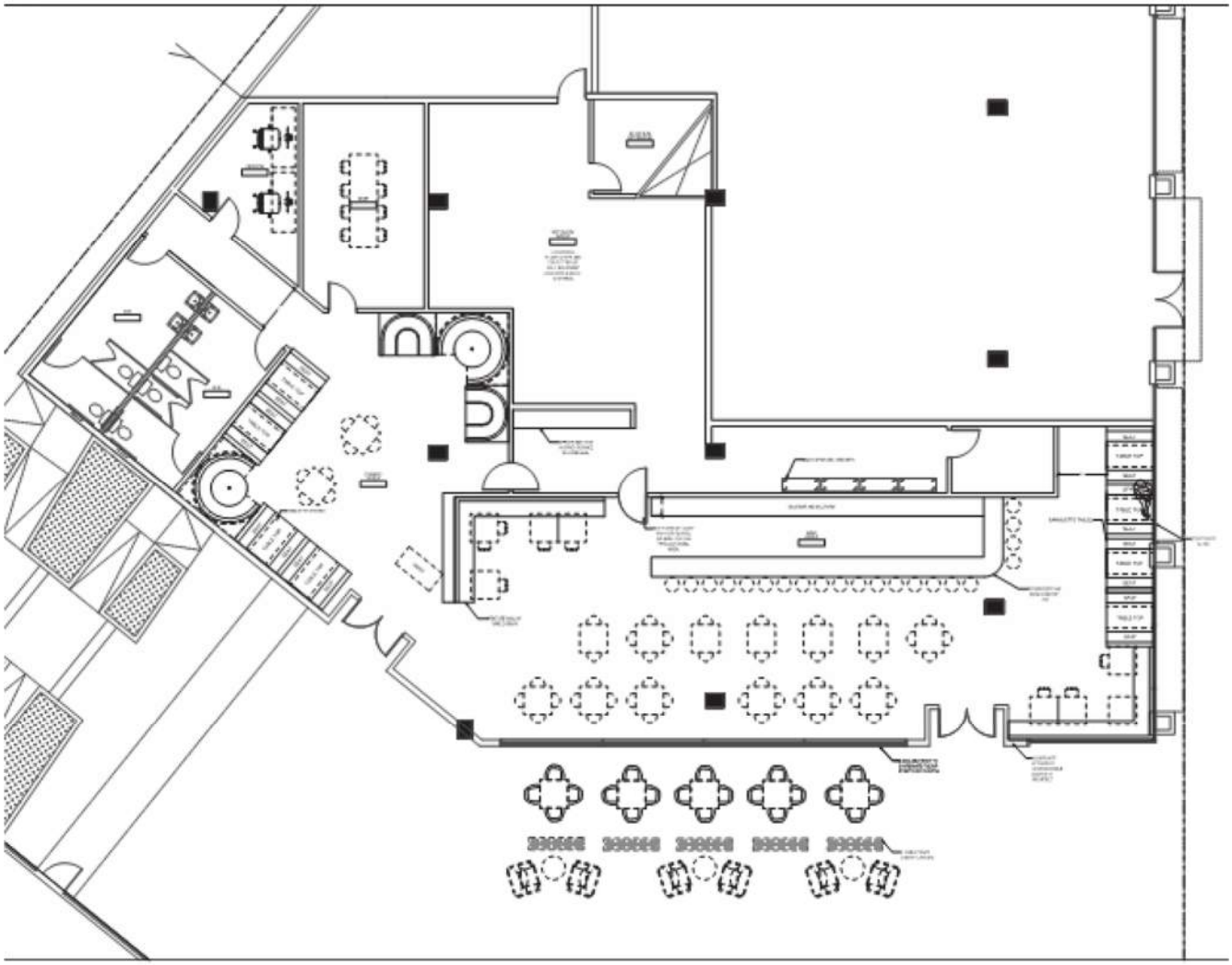


Exhibit F Summer 2020 – Interior space plan for new Taix restaurant. Sunset Blvd is plan Right, Reservoir St. is plan Left with the public paseo and outdoor dining at the base of the plan. Patrons can enter from one of two entrances off the paseo into the bar room or to the hostess desk, a small private dining room and right-sized kitchen utilize the upper portion of the plan.



Exhibit G Summer 2020 – Along the main pedestrian paseo, storefronts with different glazing assemblies not reaching full floor to ceiling and covered by canopies become strong elements reminiscent of an earlier period. The 5,500 SF Taix restaurant space has ample outdoor seating, accessed via operable window-door assemblies, connecting the interior barroom and outdoor paseo seamlessly.



Exhibit H Summer 2020 – The 5,500 sf Taix restaurant includes multiple rooms, with the bar room being located on the prominent Sunset/Paseo corner, similarly located to its current location on the site. The new Taix bar reuses the existing wood Cherry bar top and relies on similar design cues and finish material choices of the existing restaurant to maintain the sense of place and experience that patrons have come to love. Operable window-door assemblies create a seamless transition into the outdoor dining space from the bar area.



Exhibit H Summer 2020 – The 5,500 sf Taix restaurant includes multiple rooms, with the bar room being located on the prominent Sunset/Paseo corner, similarly located to its current location on the site. The operable window-door assemblies create a seamless transition into the outdoor dining space on the paseo into the bar area. The ability to have outdoor seating, off the busy street frontage of Sunset Blvd has become all the more critical in today's environment.

HOLLYWOOD HERITAGE, INC.
P.O. Box 2586
Hollywood, CA 90078
(323) 874-4005 • FAX (323) 465-5993

Mr. Richard Barron AIA
Commission President
City of Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Commission Office of Historic Resources
221 N. Figueroa St., Suite 1350
Los Angeles, CA 90012

October 12, 2020

RE: Sister Mary Corita Studio Historic-Cultural Monument Nomination

Dear Mr. Barron,

The Board of Directors of Hollywood Heritage and its Preservation Issues Committee are pleased to support the nomination of the Sister Corita Kent Studio at 5518 Franklin Avenue to become a Historic Cultural Monument. Based upon the facts presented by Kathryn Wollan and the Corita Art Center, we feel the building meets Criterion 2 for its association with Corita Kent, a historic personage important to national, state, city and local history.

The vibrant serigraphs Corita screened at 5518 Franklin Ave made waves throughout the art world. During her lifetime, her work received national and worldwide acclaim from art critics and curators, and her legacy has been solidified by retrospective scholarship that traces her influence on Pop Art and subsequent movements. While working out of the studio from 1962 and 1968, Corita produced some of her most famous pieces. When Corita left Immaculate Heart in 1968, her bold prints had already been shown in 230 exhibitions, including alongside contemporaries Andy Warhol and Roy Lichenstein. Her art had an aesthetic as well as political and moral value. In an era of turmoil across the country and the Catholic church, Corita used her work to spread messages of love, hope, and unity in the face of war, poverty, and sexism. As her work received greater attention, Corita herself became a public figure. In 1966 she was named a

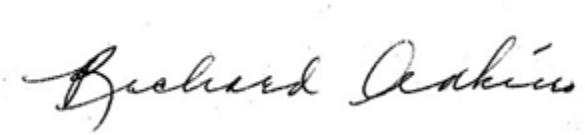
Los Angeles Times's Women of the Year in 1966 and in 1967 was featured in Harper's Bazaar and Newsweek magazine.

While Corita's work has received national and international recognition, much of her influence was local. Corita has a deep tie to the Hollywood community. Brought to Hollywood at an early age and raised in a working-class neighborhood on De Longpre, her formative years were spent in the community. At the age of eighteen, she became a member of the Immaculate Heart community, residing at the Motherhouse at the corner of Franklin and Western. She became a central figure at Immaculate Heart College, leading the art department and fighting for social justice. While the IMC Motherhouse/high school has been lost, Corita's studio on Franklin remains. It is the only significant extant site in Los Angeles where Corita produced her artwork.

Designation of the Sister Corita Kent Studio offers an opportunity to ensure Cultural Heritage Monuments reflect the diverse history and experiences of Los Angeles residents. The SurveyLA Visual Arts sub-theme, while an important first step, remains underdeveloped. It is paramount not only to recognize the work of L.A.'s visual artists but also gain a deeper understanding of their production spaces. Women, for reasons of political, economic, and social disenfranchisement, have long been underrepresented in our historical narratives and designated sites. Corita's success must be understood within this context.

The field of historic preservation has begun to acknowledge that the emphasis on material integrity and architectural significance is often a barrier to low-income and politically marginalized communities. Enforcing standards that exclude these underrepresented populations will continue to reproduce inequity in our landmarks. Corita's studio, while altered, remains recognizable to her students and would, we believe, be recognizable to her. That such a prosaic space is the production site of such remarkable work is a testament to the significance of Corita and how she used what was available to her. Recognizing the political, cultural, and social value of sites such as the Sister Corita Kent Studio is a crucial step to ensure representation of Los Angeles' rich history and built environment.

Sincerely,



Richard Adkins

ARMBRUSTER GOLDSMITH & DELVAC LLP

LAND USE ENTITLEMENTS □ LITIGATION □ MUNICIPAL ADVOCACY

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October 6, 2020

VIA EMAIL

Cultural Heritage Commission
of the City of Los Angeles
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles CA 90012

Attn: James K. Williams, Executive Assistant
James.k.williams@lacity.org

RE: 630 HCM, ENV-2020-5631-CE; 5518 Franklin Ave., Los Angeles

Honorable Commissioners:

We represent the owner of 5518 Franklin Avenue which has been nominated as a City Historic-Cultural Monument. The decision on further consideration is on your October 15th agenda.

Prior to the nomination, the owner had been processing approvals with the City of Los Angeles to redevelop the site. As part of that processing, we had asked an expert preservation consultant, Jenna Snow, to assess the integrity of the building. Attached is Ms. Snow's memo regarding integrity she previously submitted to the Office of Historic Resources.

As you will see, Ms. Snow does not question the significance of Sister Corita Kent. Rather, the memo focuses on integrity. The building lacks even a modicum of integrity. Ms. Snow fully demonstrates this. Of particular note are side-by-side photo comparisons on pages 6 and 7, as well as diagrams illustrating locations of alterations on each elevation on pages 9 and 10. Her conclusion is based on several site visits, review of historic photographs, and the alteration permit history.

The majority of the alterations are not reversible. Any effort to return it to the appearance of Corita's time would simply be reconstruction—not rehabilitation. Further, reversibility is not relevant to the evaluation of eligibility. It must be eligible—it must have integrity—as the building exists today. Further consideration of the nomination would unfairly delay the approval process that was underway.

Aa result of the extensive alterations and lack of integrity, we respectfully request the Commission to not take the nomination under consideration.

Very truly yours,

William F. Delvac

Attachment

Memorandum

DATE: September 15, 2020

TO: Lambert Giessinger
Office of Historic Resources
City of Los Angeles Planning Department
221 N. Figueroa St., Suite 1350
Los Angeles, CA 90012

FROM: Jenna Snow

RE: 5518 Franklin Avenue, Los Angeles, CA

A project is proposed for the building located at 5518 Franklin Avenue (Assessor Parcel Number 5544-004-025) in the Hollywood neighborhood of Los Angeles, California ("subject building" or "building"). The commercial building was constructed in 1960. It has not been previously surveyed; it was not included in the City of Los Angeles' citywide survey, SurveyLA, nor is it included in the Historic Property Data File for Los Angeles County, updated to 2011, nor the Built Environment Resource Directory, maintained by the California Office of Historic Preservation.

The subject building is associated with former nun and visual artist Sister Mary Corita Kent (known simply as Corita Kent after she left the convent and referred to in this report simply as Corita), who presumably used it as her art studio between 1960 and 1968. The significance of Corita to the history of art in the twentieth century has been well documented though exhibits, scholarly papers, and documentary films. A brief overview of Corita's life and work is provided below.

This memorandum is not a full historic resource assessment of 5518 Franklin Avenue that evaluates the building under each of the criterion. Rather, it assumes that Corita is a person significant in our past and that she used the subject building as her studio, which was the primary space where she produced her art during the period 1960-1968. However, it is possible that there are other locations associated with some of her significant work and contribution to the art world, including Immaculate Heart College where she lived and taught from 1936-1968, her gallery in North Hollywood that she opened in 1969, and her studio in Boston, where she created the design for the Boston Gas Co.'s gas tanks and U.S. Postal Service "Love stamp." This memo focuses on whether or not the subject building retains sufficient integrity for designation, either in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register), the California Register of Historical Resources (California Register), and as a local Historic Cultural Monument (HCM) for its association with Corita. Based on a review of building and alteration permits, as well as historic photographs, the subject building has been substantially altered and does not appear anything like it did during the years of Corita's time there; it is therefore ineligible for designation at any level.

The following memo first outlines the regulatory setting, followed by a brief overview of Cortia's life and significant work. The memo then provides a description of the building and its alterations and an assessment of its integrity.

Regulatory Setting

National Register

The National Register of Historic Places is "an authoritative guide to be used by federal, state, and local governments, private groups, and citizens to identify the nation's cultural resources and indicate what properties should be considered for protection from destruction or impairment,"[1] Administered by the National Park Service, the National Register is the nation's official list of historic and cultural resources worthy of preservation. Properties listed in the National Register include districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture. Resources are eligible for the National Register if they meet one or more of the following criteria for significance:

A) are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
B) are associated with the lives of significant persons in our past; or
C) embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
D) have yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory.[2]

Once a resource has been determined to satisfy one of the above criteria, then it must be assessed for "integrity."[3] Integrity refers to the ability of a property to convey its significance. Evaluation of integrity is based on "an understanding of a property's physical features and how they relate to its significance." The National Register recognizes seven aspects or qualities of integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. To retain integrity, a property must possess several, and usually most, of these aspects.

Relationship to Project

While 5518 Franklin Avenue may have been significant under Criterion B for its association with visual artist Corita, who used the building as her studio between 1960 and 1968, the building has been substantially altered since her tenure and is no longer is able to convey that significance. The building is unrecognizable from its appearance in 1968, and therefore is not eligible for listing in the National Register.

California Register

Based substantially on the National Register, the California Register is "an authoritative guide… used by state and local agencies, private groups, and citizens to identify the state's historical resources and to indicate what properties are to be protected."[4] For a property to be eligible for listing in the California Register, it must be found by the State Historical Resources Commission to be significant under at least one of the following four criteria:

1) is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage; or

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[1] National Register Bulletin #16A: *How to Complete the National Register Registration Form* (National Park Service, 1997).

[2] National Register Bulletin #15, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* (National Park Service, 1990, revised 2002).

[3] National Register Bulletin #15, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* (National Park Service, 1990, revised 2002).

[4] California Public Resources Code §5024.1(a), <http://codes.lp.findlaw.com/cacode/PRC/1/d5/1/2/s5024.1>.

2) is associated with the lives of persons important in our past; or
3) embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual or possesses high artistic values; or
4) has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Also included in the California Register are properties which have been formally determined eligible for listing in, or are listed in the National Register; are registered State Historical Landmark Number 770, and all consecutively numbered landmarks above Number 770; and Points of Historical Interest, which have been reviewed and recommended to the State Historical Resources Commission for listing.

The primary difference between eligibility for listing in the National and California Registers is integrity. Properties eligible for listing in the National Register generally have a higher degree of integrity than those only eligible for listing in the California Register. There is, however, no difference with regard to significance.

Relationship to Project
5518 Franklin Avenue may have been eligible under criterion 2, but it does not retain sufficient integrity to be eligible for listing in the California Register.

City of Los Angeles
§22.171.7 of Los Angeles Administrative Code defines criteria for designation of a Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM). as any site, building, or structure of particular historical or cultural significance to the City of Los Angeles, such as historic structures or sites that:

1) are 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) are associated with the lives of historic personages important to national, state, city, or local history; or
3) Embody 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.

Relationship to Project
5518 Franklin Avenue may have been individually eligible as an HCM under criterion 2, but it does not retain sufficient integrity to be eligible for listing as an HCM.

Corita Kent (1918-1986)
During her life and after her death, Corita has been recognized as a pivotal and influential visual artist in the Pop art movement. She has been described as "a key figure in the history of American art."[5] She entered the religious order of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in 1936 at the age of 18, taking the name of Sister Mary Corita Kent. With the exception of a few years when she taught in British Columbia in the early 1940s, Corita lived at the convent at Immaculate Heart between 1936 and 1968. Soon after becoming a novice nun, she began teaching at a parochial school while pursuing her bachelor's degree at Immaculate Heart College. Corita joined the art department faculty

[5] Ian Berry and Michael Duncan, *Someday is Now: The Art of Corita Kent*, (New York: DelMonico/Prestel, 2013).

at Immaculate Heart College in 1947. Concurrent with her teaching duties, she also completed a master's degree in Art History from University of Southern California in 1951.[6]

Over the course of her career, Corita created over 700 screen prints, or serigraphs, the primary medium of her art. Her work typically combined Pop art with religious imagery or content. By the end of the 1960s, her work started to have more political overtones. Her obituary in the *New York Times* describes her works that combine text with simple images or color fields like "blown-up bread wrappers ('Enriched Bread') and mass-produced homilies ('Handle With Care!'). She let graffiti wander around her serigraphs like toy cars wound up and released on the kitchen floor."[7]

The period 1962-1968 has been considered the height of her influence in Pop art.[8] In 1966, she had 150 one-woman shows in galleries, museums and universities throughout the country and was named the *Los Angeles Times* "Woman of the Year."[9] She was profiled in *Harper's Bazaar* magazine in 1966 and was on the cover of *Newsweek* magazine on December 25, 1967 as "The Nun: Going Modern." Scholar Susan Dackerman notes that Corita achieved a "kind of celebrity" during her life.[10]

Between 1947 and when she left the community in 1968, Corita was a beloved teacher at the Immaculate Heart College, known as a demanding teacher calling herself "a big old taskmaster,"[11] and assigning elaborate homework. April Dammann, in her biography of Corita, writes, "as an artist Sister Corita has a special outreach to the young." Her serigraph "10 Rules for Students, Teachers, and Life" have become famous. The film, "Become Microscope" (2014) by Aaron Rose documented the impact she had on her students' lives.

With her rigorous teaching schedule, as well as lecturing at institutions across the country about her work, she was only able to focus on her own work for a few weeks each year during the month of August.[12] In a "Talk of the Town" article appearing in the *New Yorker* magazine in January 1966, she is quoted: "This year I did thirty or thirty-five [works of art], and printed about a hundred of each. I work very fast, and others help me mix paint and clean up. It's a standing joke that anyone who drops in in August helps."[13] It is assumed for purposes of this memo that Corita used the subject building as her studio during her August work sessions during the 1960s. However, there is little primary documentary evidence available at this time to support that assumption. There are no Los Angeles City phone directory listings available for the subject building during the 1960s and most historic photographs available online show Corita teaching in another location, presumably the art classrooms at Immaculate Heart College. It is not known how the building was used the remainder of the year.

In 1968, after Corita left the Immaculate Heart community and eventually left the order, she moved to Boston, where she lived for the remainder of her life. Two of her most widely-known works were

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[6] Corita Art Center, "Corita, Chronology," https://corita.org/about-corita; April Dammann, *Corita Kent; Art and Soul. The Biography*, (Santa Monica, CA: Angel City Press, 2015).

[7] "Corita Kent, Artist and Nun, Designed 'Love' Stamp on 60's," *New York Times*, September 19, 1986, Section D, page 22.

[8] Susan Dackerman, "Corita Kent and the Language of Pop," https://hammer.ucla.edu/collections/grunwald-center-collection/corita-kent/essays/corita-kent-and-the-language-of-pop.

[9] Jerry Belcher, "Artist Corita Kent, 'Love' Stamp Designer, Dies at 67," *Los Angeles Times*, September 20, 1986, 1.

[10] Susan Dackerman, "At the San Antonio Museum of Art- Corita Kent talk," *Art This Week*, Recorded on February 14, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a3hLARspYew.

[11] The Art Assignment, "Art + Life Rules from a Nun," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IRPyql3cezo.

[12] Dammann, 44.

[13] "Talk of the Town: Peace on Earth," *The New Yorker*, January 1, 1966, 22-23.

produced during this period. In 1971, she created a painting on the side of the Boston Gas Co.'s huge, 150-high natural gas tank that has become a landmark in that city. Her other notable work during this period was the "Love" design for the stamp, which was issued in April 1985.

In 1969, Corita opened the Corita Print Gallery at 5126 Vineland Avenue in North Hollywood in 1969. In an article when the gallery opened, Corita noted that she "moved her art collection from the back of an art classroom at the college into her gallery."[14]

University of California Los Angeles Library Center for Oral History Research conducted an oral history of Corita in 1976, an indication of the impact she had already made in her life. Further evidence of her significance was the placement of her obituary on the front page of the *Los Angeles Times*. After her death, Corita's papers were donated to Schlesinger Library at Harvard University, while her personal art collection was donated to the University of California Los Angeles Grunwald Center for the Graphic Arts and digitized by the Hammer Museum. The Corita Art Center holds the copyrights in all works by Corita Kent, excluding some commissions. The Corita Art Center also "preserves and promotes Corita Kent's art, teaching, and passion for social justice."[15] Corita's art has been included in numerous exhibitions since her death, including a retrospective that traveled to several museums throughout the country between 2013 and 2015, including The Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh and the Pasadena Museum of California Art.

Building Description

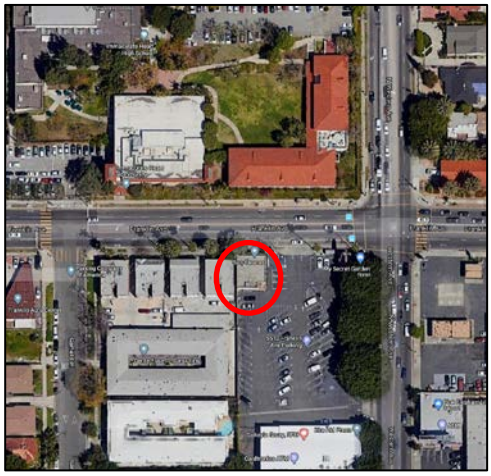


Figure 1: Location map, subject building circled red (source: Google, 2020)

5518 Franklin Avenue is located on the south side of Franklin Avenue, immediately west of the intersection with Western Avenue. The building shares the parcel with a florist shop, which is located at the corner to the east, while the subject building is located on the west side of the parcel. The subject building also shares a surface parking lot with a drug store to the south, although the drug store is located on a separate parcel. It is located directly across Franklin Avenue from Immaculate Heart High School which is located on the former campus of Immaculate Heart College. It is situated in an urban environment. Surrounding buildings have a variety of uses, including multi-family residential, commercial, and institutional. Franklin Avenue has heavy vehicular traffic.

[14] Ellen S. Rodman, "Corita Trades Habit for Brush," *Los Angeles Times*, December 1, 1969, Party IV, 26.
[15] Corita Art Center, https://corita.org/about-center.

A sidewalk runs along the north elevation of the building. A mature tree planted within a well in front of the building nearly obscures it from the street. A driveway, accessing both commercial buildings on the property, as well as the parking lot for the drug store, is located immediately east of the subject building. A tall, metal pole sign is placed a short distance to the east of the building, close to the sidewalk.



Figure 2: 5518 Franklin Ave., north (right) and east (left) elevations, view southwest (Snow, 2020)



Figure 3: 5518 Franklin, north (right) and east (left) elevations, view southwest (source: Facebook, Corita Art Center, circa 1960s)

The subject building is utilitarian in style. It is one story high and rectangular in plan. It has a flat roof with a slightly raised parapet. The building is constructed of masonry with concrete block at the lower half of the building.

The north elevation, facing Franklin Avenue, has wing walls on either side of the elevation extending to the sidewalk, while the majority of the elevation is slightly inset. A slender metal post is placed in the center of the elevation. The wing walls appear to support a sign band, which contains a relatively small, contemporary sign. The inset portion of the elevation is nearly blank, save for two, fixed metal sash windows on the eastern side of the elevation.

The east elevation contains the main entrance within a T-shaped portion that steps out from the plane of the elevation. The paired glass and aluminum entry doors are topped by a fixed glass transom and sided by a single side light to the south. A contemporary sign is located within the T-shaped portion above the entry doors.



Figure 4: 5518 Franklin Ave., east (right) and south (left) elevations, view northwest (Snow, 2020)



Figure 5: 5518 Franklin Ave., east elevation, view northwest (source: Facebook, Corita Art Center, circa 1960s)



Figure 6: 5518 Franklin Ave, east elevation, view west (Snow, 2020)



Figure 7: 5518 Franklin Ave., east elevation, view northwest (source: screen shots from documentary film "Alleluia," 1967)



Figure 8: 5518 Franklin Ave., interior, view northwest toward north elevation (Snow, 2020)



Figure 9: 5518 Franklin Ave., interior, view northwest toward north elevation (source: screen shot from documentary film "Alleluia," 1967)

At the south elevation, a secondary exit is approximately centered in the concrete block wall. Lettering applied to the upper portion of the wall identifies the commercial establishment. At the east side of the south elevation, a short portion with a shed roof contains three vents along both the top and bottom of the elevation. Metal doors on the east side of the shed only open from the interior. A tall vent rises above the roof the main portion of the building.

The west elevation is located along the west property line. Visible from the sidewalk over a couple of metal gates, the west elevation has no articulation and is a solid, concrete block wall.

The interior is currently used a dry cleaner and separated into public and private areas. The small public area has a suspended ceiling with exposed florescent tube lights. Walls and counters are finished in vinyl, while the floor is covered in contemporary carpet. A small room for alterations is located off of the public area. The private area encompasses the majority of the interior, containing dry cleaning equipment and a conveyer-belt for clothing. Most of the space has unfinished concrete floors, although a small portion is finished with vinyl floor tiles. The private space also has exposed concrete block walls, unfinished ceilings, and suspended florescent tube light fixtures.

Alterations

Completed in 1960, 5518 Franklin Avenue has undergone substantial alterations. The following table lists all available alterations permits:

Date	Permit No.	Work	Owner	Architect/Builder	Valuation
10/16/1959	1959LA44894	New 40x38'8", 1-story building for retail sales	Flower Street Corp.	J.P. Anderson (engineer)/Robert Genofile	$13,000
3/23/1960	Certificate of Occupancy	1 story, type V, 39' x 40' store building. G-1 occupancy	Flower Street Corp		
7/10/1972	1972LA54512	"addition and alteration change occ from G1 to G2." New use of health food store. Sketch shows addition along east and south elevations	Ralphs Grocery Co.	Robert Ewing /Kermit D. Ferguson	$4,000
9/12/1972	Certificate of Occupancy	"One story type IIIB, 7'4"x28'8" addition to an existing 38'x40' store. Change of occupancy from store G-1 to health food G-2 occupancy."	Ralphs Grocery Co.		
5/13/1983	1983LA63870	"Pole Sign"	Flairs Cleaners	David Erlich/Gen. Ind. DBA Best Signs	$7,800
5/13/1983	1983LA63871	"Roof Pole Sign"	Flairs Cleaners	David Erlich/Gen. Ind. DBA Best Signs	$7,800
5/17/1983	1983LA63956	"Remove existing roof and parapet install new roof system on top of existing walls."	Don Fazio	Anwar Cassim/Lawrence H. Boyd	$20,000
8/4/1983	1983LA69708	"New additions to existing 1st story cleaners" sketch plan shows additions to north and east elevations	Flair Inc.	Paul A. Goldstein	$6,000

Based on the above table of building and alteration permits, as well as side-by-side images above, there have been substantial alterations to the three visible elevations. Specifically, alterations include:

- Reconfiguration of primary façade (north elevation facing Franklin Avenue) in 1983, with infill of storefront windows (see above Figures 2-3). Earlier storefront windows and glass doors were removed and a metal support post in the center of the elevation was added. New, fixed windows at the east side of the elevation were also added.
- Addition of a new entry along east elevation in 1972 (see above Figures 4-7). Addition consists of T-shaped portion with glass entry doors.
- Addition along most of the south elevation, expanding the building footprint several feet to the south and reconfiguring that elevation in 1972.

- Addition of new roof in 1983 (see above Figures 4-7). While the building originally had a stepped parapet, the parapet was leveled off when the new roof was installed. In addition, based on photographic evidence, exterior walls were extended taller than the original building height.
- Modification of interior as a result of infill of original storefront windows and doors, making what was originally a light-filled interior suitable as an art studio into a very dark space, relying entirely on internal lighting.

5518 Franklin Avenue bears almost no resemblance to how it appeared prior to 1973. The following diagrams illustrate the locations of alterations on each elevation.

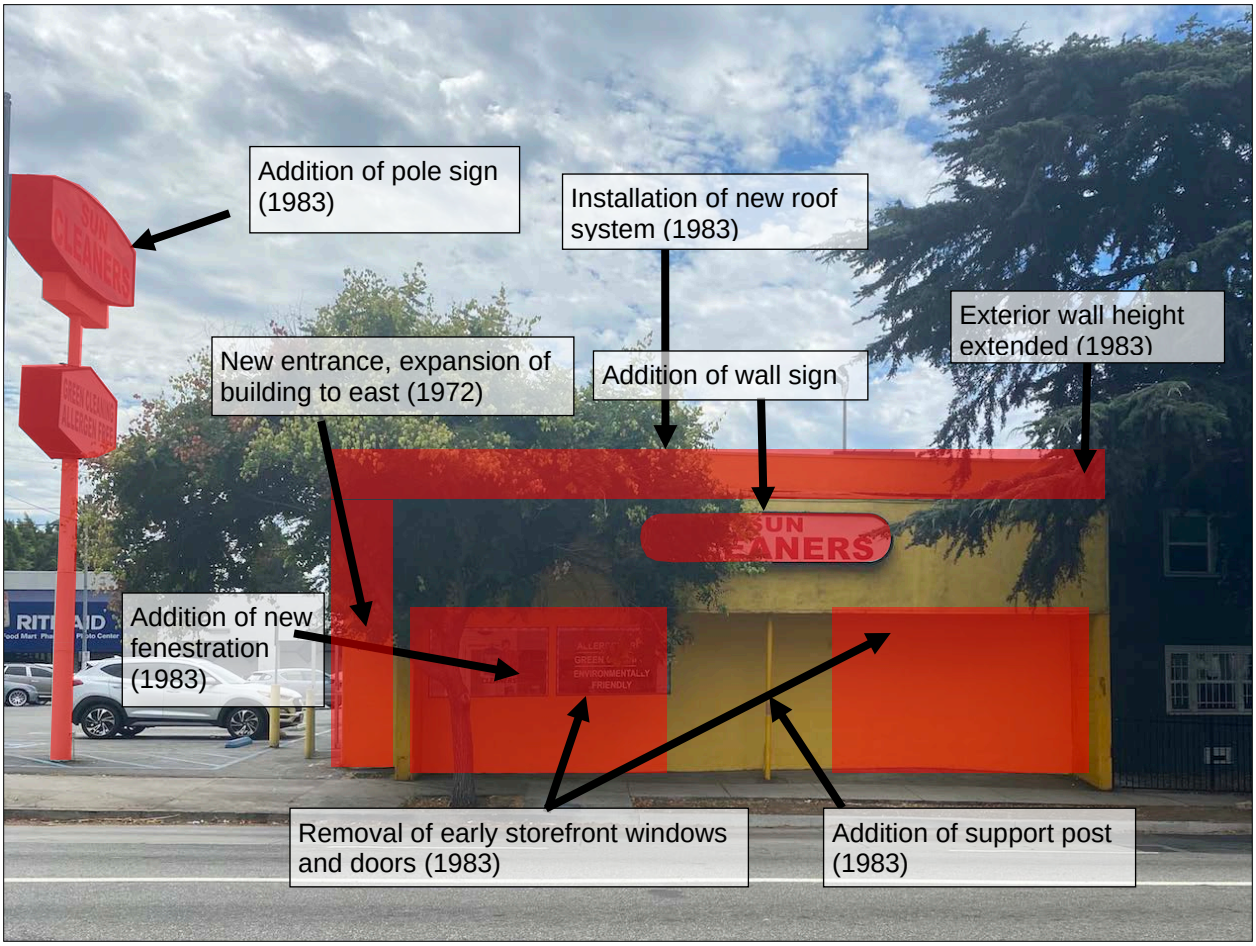


Figure 10: 5518 Franklin Avenue, north elevation, view south, alterations highlighted



Figure 11: 5518 Franklin Avenue, east elevation, view west, alterations highlighted

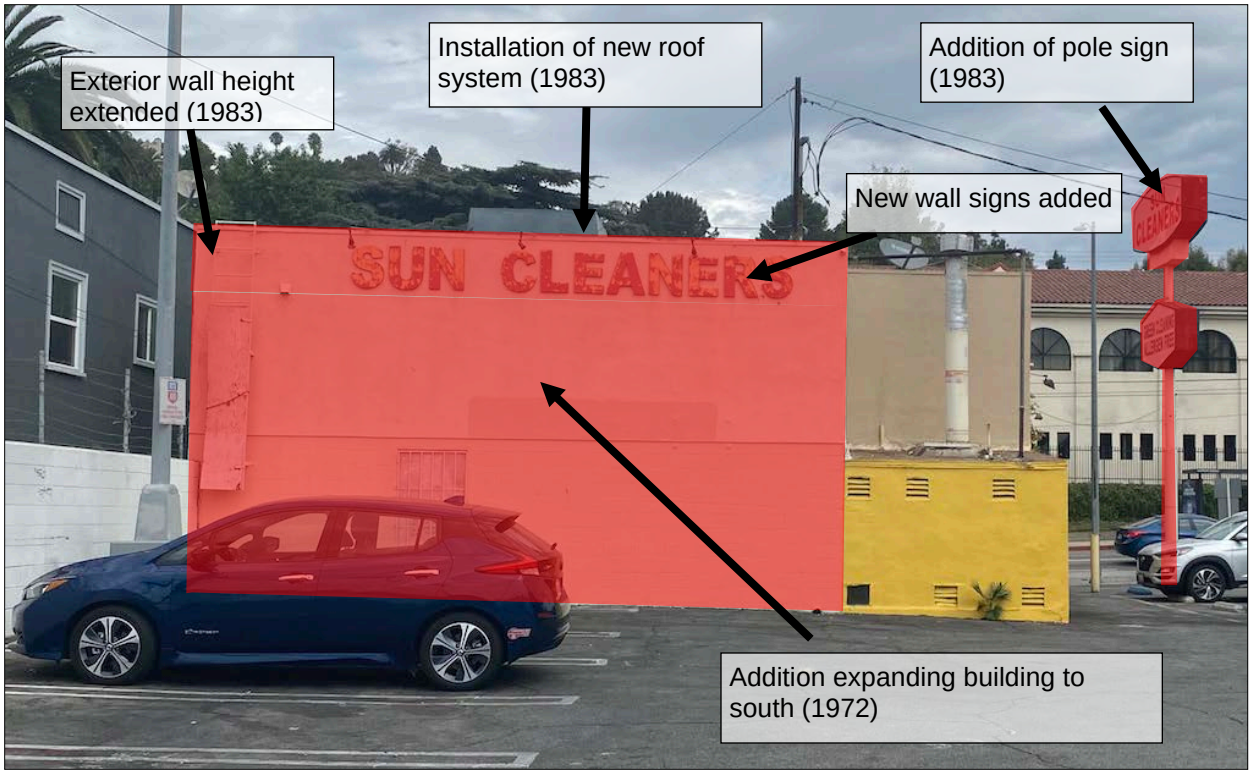


Figure 12: 5518 Franklin Avenue, south elevation, view north, alterations highlighted

As demonstrated in the above diagrams, all of the building's visible elevations have been substantially altered, the plan had been changed, the height has been changed, and the interior has been modified. Little of the original wall surfaces are extant. Along the north elevation, facing Franklin Avenue, the only extant original fabric are the wing walls and sign band. All other features have been replaced, including original storefront windows and doors. Along the east elevation only a small portion of the original concrete block construction is evident at the south side of the elevation. With the exception of a small shed at the east side of the elevation, the entirety of the south elevation was added in 1972. Finally, the height of the building has been extended on all elevations.

Alterations to the building are not simply cosmetic. Original walls, doors, and windows are not covered over. Rather, the alterations have created an almost entirely new building with expansion on three elevations as well as an increase in height. Not even the original footprint is extant.

Integrity

As noted above, for a property to be eligible for designation at the local, state or national level, it must meet at least one eligibility criterion and retain sufficient integrity to convey that historic significance. Integrity is defined as physical and visual characteristics necessary to convey its significance. Evaluation of integrity is founded on "an understanding of a property's physical features and how they relate to its significance." The seven aspects of integrity are Location, Design, Setting, Materials, Workmanship, Feeling, and Association. To satisfy the integrity requirement, a property must retain at least a majority of these seven aspects. As noted above, the building may have been significant for its association with Corita under criterion B/2/2. National Register guidance states, "A basic integrity test for a property associated with an important event or person is whether a historical event or person is whether a historical contemporary would recognize the property as it exists today."[16] National Register guidance further elaborates that a property that has "substantial amounts of new materials" or if it "no longer retains basic design features that convey its historic appearance," is not eligible for designation.

The following describes how the subject building does or does not meet each of the seven aspects of integrity.

> *Location:* The subject building retains integrity of location as it has not moved or been moved to the site.
>
> *Design*: The subject building does not retain integrity of design. It looks nothing like it did when it was used by Corita Kent during the period 1960-1968. Three of the four elevations, including the primary façade, have been substantially altered, as well as the plan, entrance doors, windows, and roof. Notable alterations include:
>
> - Removal and infill of storefront windows and doors
> - New windows at north elevation
> - Relocation of main entrance from north elevation to east elevation
> - Projecting entrance at east elevation
> - Addition at south elevation
> - Taller walls to accommodate additional height
> - New roof

[16] National Register Bulletin #15, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* (National Park Service, 1990, revised 2002), 48.

Setting: Integrity of setting is defined as the physical environment of a historic property. The subject building generally retains integrity of setting during the period 1960-1968. During this period, the other commercial building on the parcel was constructed, as well as the surrounding surface parking lot. The building retains its relationship with surrounding buildings and surface parking.

Materials: The subject building does not retain integrity of materials, given the substantial alterations. The building originally had simple construction materials constating of concrete block. However, the building has lost its only notable features, namely original storefront windows and doors along the north elevation. Therefore, the building lacks integrity of materials.

Workmanship: Loss of materials has resulted in loss of integrity of workmanship, or evidence of artisans' labor and skill in constructing or altering a building.

Feeling: Because the subject building has lost integrity of design, materials, and workmanship, it does not retain integrity of feeling, which is defined as a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time resulting from the presence of physical features that, taken together, convey the property's historic character. Specifically, as an artist's studio, fenestration is integral to the quality of interior light. The building has lost all of its original fenestration, resulting in a very dark interior illuminated only by artificial light. The building has lost any feeling it may have once had as an artist's studio.

Association: The building at 5518 Franklin Avenue does not retain integrity of association and does not pass the basic test noted above. It is unlikely Corita Kent would recognize the property as it exists today as the light-filled studio where she worked during her August breaks from teaching.

Given the extensive alterations to all elevations, fenestration, plan, and roof, it would not be possible to bring the building back to anything resembling its appearance from 1960-1968 without complete reconstruction.

Conclusion

As documented in this memorandum, 5518 Franklin Avenue has sustained extensive alterations such that it no longer retains basic design features that convey its historic appearance. While the building is assumed to have been significant for its association with Corita from 1960-1968, it no longer retains sufficient integrity to convey that association. All visible elevations have been substantially altered since 1968. Specifically, the originally storefronts have been infilled, a new entrance has been added, the rear elevation has been expanded, and a new roof system increased the height of the building. Occupied by a dry-cleaning business for over thirty years, the building interior has no resemblance to an art studio. As the building does not retain any integrity of design, materials, workmanship, feeling or association, it is not eligible for designation under federal, state or local law and is not a historic resource for purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act.

DAY OF HEARING SUBMISSIONS

Nyla Arslanian
2489 N. Edgemont Street
Los Angeles CA 90027
(323)662-8236



October 13, 2020

Cultural Heritage Commission
City of Los Angeles
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Email: chc@lacity.org

Project Site: 5500-5518 Franklin Avenue/1859-1863 Western Avenue
CHC-2020-5631-CE

Dear Commissioners,

This letter is in support of your consideration of Sister Mary Corita's Studio as a designated Monument of the City of Los Angeles

Known as Corita Kent, the internationally recognized artist is a true product of our city. Born and raised on De Longpre Avenue, she attended church on Sunset Boulevard, and was a central figure at Immaculate Heart College for almost a decade.

Throughout the turbulent decade of the 1960s, Corita used the visual language of Pop art to raise awareness about social injustices including poverty, racism, women's rights, and war.The building at 5518 Franklin Ave is significant for its association with famed artist, educator and social justice advocate Corita Kent. From 1960-1968, Corita used the building as her studio and classroom where she created some of her most recognizable works, hosted creative leaders, and influenced a generation of young artists. It is the only extant property of primary significance in LA associated with Corita's artistic production.

Sincerely,



Nyla Arslanian
Editor, Discover Hollywood Magazine
President Emeritus, Hollywood Arts Council

cc: Councilman Mitch O'Farrell—Attn: Craig Bullock

Planning CHC <chc@lacity.org>

Save Corita's studio on Franklin Avenue

1 message

Josh Freeman <jfreeman@aigala.org> Thu, Oct 15, 2020 at 9:37 AM
To: chc@lacity.org, melissa.jones@lacity.org

Case number: CHC-2020-5630-HCM

Los Angeles's history in the arts is important to our community. We need to preserve it.

The Corita Art Center doesn't look like much. It's a quiet, unassuming building. But so much has happened there that has contributed to the arts in Southern California and, in fact, the world.

Please save this memory to Sister Corita Kent, whose iconic work is one of the great contributions to both art and graphic design in modern history.

Thank you.

Josh Freeman
Advisory Board | Past President | AIGA Los Angeles

ofc 310 441-9950
cel 310 562-7210
e: jfreeman@aigala.org

AIGA LA the professional association for design

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EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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October 14, 2020

Mr. James Williams, Commission
Executive Assistant
Cultural Heritage Commission
200 North Spring Street, Room 272
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Mr. Williams:

We are writing to express the Board's support of the Corita Art Center's application for historic designation of Corita Kent's former art studio, located at 5518 Franklin Avenue in the City of Los Angeles.

The legacy of Corita Kent lives on in her innovative and iconic artwork, as well as in the people impacted by her teaching and activism. Entering the religious order of Immaculate Heart of Mary at the age of 18, followed by teaching and heading up the Art Department at Immaculate Heart College, Corita empowered her students to create art out of seemingly ordinary objects. This work was partly motivated by her commitment to making art more accessible for those who could not otherwise afford it. The Corita Art Center continues to build on this legacy by providing arts opportunities and social services to underserved communities.

Corita's artwork often evoked religious and political themes, in addition to reflecting life experiences. Spiritually focused works often made innovative use of advertising images and slogans, popular song lyrics, biblical verses, and literature. In later years, her works aligned with her political advocacy, focusing on social justice issues like poverty and racism. Many of these works often conveyed messages of love and peace during a historical period marked by social upheaval. After leaving the order in 1968, Corita's work was influenced by her new secular life and battles with cancer. At the time of her death in 1986, she had created almost 800 serigraph editions, thousands of watercolors, and innumerable public and private commissions.

Unfortunately, Corita's former art studio in Hollywood, where Corita worked throughout the '60s and created some of her most important work, is slated for demolition to accommodate additional parking for a nearby project. During her time in the building, she made some of her most recognizable works, hosted notable creative leaders, and influenced a generation of young artists through her art and teaching. The demolition of the building would cause devasting and irreversible loss of an invaluable cultural heritage site for Hollywood and broader Los Angeles.

During these difficult times when the mandate for inclusion and equity should be applied to all marginalized people, including women, we should take a stand to prevent the demolition of Corita's former art studio, a building of tremendous cultural importance and significance, for the purpose of providing additional parking spaces. This site should be properly reviewed for historic designation before redevelopment plans continue.

We are in support of the historical recognition for the Art Studio of Corita Kent. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

KATHRYN BARGER
Chair of the Board
Supervisor, Fifth District

HILDA L. SOLIS
Supervisor, First District

MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS
Supervisor, Second District

SHEILA KUEHL
Supervisor, Third District

JANICE HAHN
Supervisor, Fourth District

Planning CHC <chc@lacity.org>

Corita's Studio, Case CHC-2020-5630-HCM

1 message

Chantel Cote <hello@chantelcote.com> Wed, Oct 14, 2020 at 6:57 PM
To: chc@lacity.org
Cc: melissa.jones@lacity.org

DO NOT TEAR DOWN Corita's former studio at 5518 Franklin Ave. She is one of the first artist I learned about when I moved to Los Angeles and have been inspired by since. Los Angeles is an epicenter of influential art and it's important to preserve what makes LA so great. Corita's legacy needs to live on in this historic location. Corita's studio is a place where everyone can experience a little bit of positive and motivating Los Angeles art history. Especially now, her story is more important than ever. The demolition of this site would just be another light being put out in a time of darkness. Besides, we don't need more parking. I'm perfectly happy to walk that extra block or take the Metro or even pay the meter a dollar more if it means saving this historic site!

Corita's Studio, Case CHC-2020-5630-HCM

ECHO PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

EPHS@HISTORICECHOPARK.ORG

October 14, 2020

Cultural Heritage Commission
200 N Spring Street, Room 272
Los Angeles, CA 90012

To Cultural Heritage Commission:

The Echo Park Historical Society supports declaring Taix French Restaurant, 1911-1929 W. Sunset Boulevard, a city Historic-Cultural Monument.

Our organization is dedicated to preserving and promoting the historic and cultural heritage of Echo Park. Recognizing Taix as a neighborhood and city historic landmark is long overdue.

Taix, which opened in Echo Park nearly 60 years ago, is a touchstone for generations of Angelenos from all classes and races who have dined in its restaurant, sipped cocktails in the lounge and celebrated events and attended civic meetings in its banquet rooms.

The restaurant is a neighborhood icon, with its half-timbered walls, petite tower and glamorous porte cochere. Yet it is also a historic destination for residents of other parts of the city, rivaled in our neighborhood only by such landmarks as Echo Park Lake and Angelus Temple.

Taix's French-Norman style reflects the era when dining out was a more formal and special occasion.

Until now, the restaurant's owners had taken great pains to honor that history, showing numerous historic images in the Taix lobby and having the intersection outside the restaurant named "Taix Square." For that reason, it seemed unfathomable to us that the owners would seek the building's destruction.

ECHO PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

EPHS@HISTORICECHOPARK.ORG

Taix is worthy of monument status for contributing to the city's broad cultural, economic and social history and embodies a distinctive architectural style adapted for commercial uses.

Many of the historical society's members know firsthand the special place that Taix has in our community. Now is the time to recognize that cultural and historic significance.

Kind regards,

— Echo Park Historical Society Board of Directors

c:

Ken Bernstein, Principal City Planner, Office of Historic Resources
Lambert Giessinger, Architect, Office of Historic Resources
Melissa Jones, City Planning Associate
Craig Bullock, Planning Director, Thirteenth Council District
Councilmember Mitch O'Farrell, Thirteenth Council District
Adrian Scott Fine, Los Angeles Conservancy
Rosalind Sagara, Los Angeles Conservancy
Carol Cetrone, Silver Lake Heritage Trust

1810 LOBDELL PLACE ECHO PARK CA 90026