

# Los Angeles Department of City Planning

## RECOMMENDATION REPORT

**CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION**

**CASE NO.: CHC-2013-1551-HCM  
ENV-2013-1552-CE**

**HEARING DATE:** August 1, 2013  
**TIME:** 10:00 AM  
**PLACE:** City Hall, Room 1010  
200 N. Spring Street  
Los Angeles, CA  
90012

Location: 501 S. Spring Street  
Council District: 14  
Community Plan Area: Central City  
Area Planning Commission: Central  
Neighborhood Council: Downtown Los Angeles  
Legal Description: Lot A and B of Tract  
Resubdivision of a Portion of Block 13 of Ord's  
Survey and Lot 6 and 7 of Tract Subdivision of the  
North Part of Block 13 of Ord's Survey

**PROJECT:** Historic-Cultural Monument Application for the  
APPROVAL OF EXPANSION OF HISTORIC-CULTURAL  
MONUMENT #80 (PALM COURT) TO INCLUDE ALEXANDRIA  
HOTEL AND ADDITIONS

**REQUEST:** Declare the property a Historic-Cultural Monument

**OWNERS:**

Chelsea Building LLC 550 S. Hill Street Ste 980 Los Angeles, CA 90013	Nick Hadim 6009 Washington Blvd. Culver City, CA 90232
Alexandria Housing Partners, LP PO Box 880367 San Diego, CA 92108	Yacobian Enterprises, Inc. 501 S. Spring Street Los Angeles, CA 90013

**APPLICANT/  
OWNER'S  
REPRESENTATIVE:** Mitzi March Mogul  
1725 Wellington Road  
Los Angeles, CA 90019

**RECOMMENDATION**      **That the Cultural Heritage Commission:**

1. **Declare the properties** a Historic-Cultural Monument per Los Angeles Administrative Code Chapter 9, Division 22, Article 1, Section 22.171.7 and expand the existing scope of the current designation.
2. **Adopt** the report findings.

MICHAEL J. LOGRANDE  
Director of Planning

**[SIGNED ORIGINAL IN FILE]**

---

Ken Bernstein, AICP, Manager  
Office of Historic Resources

**[SIGNED ORIGINAL IN FILE]**

---

Lambert M. Giessinger, Preservation Architect  
Office of Historic Resources

Prepared by:

**[SIGNED ORIGINAL IN FILE]**

---

Edgar Garcia, Preservation Planner  
Office of Historic Resources

Attachments:           Historic-Cultural Monument Application

## **FINDINGS**

- 1) The building “embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen, inherently valuable for a study of a period style or method of construction” as an example of the Beaux-Arts style.
- 2) The building is associated with a master builder, designer, or architect, as a work by the noted architect John Parkinson of Parkinson & Parkinson.
- 3) The property reflects “the broad cultural, economic, or social history of the nation, State or community” for its association with the development of the Los Angeles downtown district in the early twentieth-century.
- 4) The building is associated with numerous historical personages who stayed at the Alexandria Hotel during its heyday.

## **CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (“CEQA”) FINDINGS**

The Commission hereby recommends that Council find the proposed designation of the Alexandria Hotel properties as a Historic-Cultural Monument to be exempt from further analysis under the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, Sections 15308 (Class 8) and 15331 (Class 31).

## **SUMMARY**

Built in 1905 with additions in 1906 and 1911, this eight-story and twelve-story hotel building exhibits character-defining features of Beaux Arts style architecture. Located at the intersection of 5<sup>th</sup> Street and Spring Street in Downtown, the main subject building is rectangular in plan and has a flat roof. The primary elevations are arranged in the classical base-shaft-capital composition. The flat roof is lined with a decorative balustrade cornice. The primary facades are clad in terra cotta and stone. The street level storefronts and mezzanine are altered. A large blade sign is located at the intersection of the main elevations and spells “Alexandria Hotel.” The exterior features decorative stone work, egg and dart stringcourse, keystone medallions, cast stone chimeras, and fire escapes. Windows are sash and fixed pane with some bay window configurations. Some significant interior elements include decorative ceilings, finishes, metal railings, and marble floors.

The proposed Alexandria Hotel historic monument was designed by noted architect John Parkinson (1861-1935) who would later establish the firm of Parkinson & Parkinson. As one of the most successful architecture firms in early 20<sup>th</sup> century Los Angeles, this firm is responsible for the design of several Historic-Cultural Monuments (HCMs) such as City Hall (HCM #150; 1928), Union Station (HCM #101; 1939), and Bullocks Wilshire (HCM #56; 1929).

Additions to the original main subject building consist of an undifferentiated expansion added in 1906 on the 5<sup>th</sup> Street elevation. Designed by Parkinson, this seamless addition was built on a different parcel owned by a separate property owner. In 1911, the twelve-story addition (referred to as the “annex”) was built adjacent to the main hotel building on Spring Street. Owing to disagreements among the property owners in 1939, the 5<sup>th</sup> Street addition was sealed off and isolated from the rest of the Alexandria Hotel.

In 1971, the Cultural Heritage Board (now Cultural Heritage Commission) designated the Alexandria Hotel's Palm Court (formerly the Franco-Italian Dining Salon) as Historic-Cultural Monument #80, one of the few "interior-only" designations in the City's roster of HCMs.

### **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, such as historic structures or sites in which the broad cultural, economic, or social history of the nation, State or community is reflected or exemplified, or which are identified with historic personages or with important events in the main currents of national, State or local history or which embody the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen, inherently valuable for a study of a period style or method of construction, or a notable work of a master builder, designer or architect whose individual genius influenced his age.

### **DISCUSSION**

The Alexandria Hotel, Annex, and Addition successfully meets four of the specified Historic-Cultural Monument criteria: 1) "embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen, inherently valuable for a study of a period style or method of construction," 2) is associated with several historic personages 3) reflects "the broad cultural, economic, or social history of the nation, State or community," and 4) is associated with a master builder, designer, or architect. As one of the first luxury hotels built in the burgeoning financial and entertainment district of early twentieth-century downtown Los Angeles, the Alexandria Hotel building, designed by famed architect John Parkinson in the Beaux-arts style, qualifies for designation as a Historic-Cultural Monument based on the above criteria.

The subject building exhibits distinctive features of the neoclassical Beaux-Arts architectural style, such as symmetrical facades, three-part vertical organization, a glazed terracotta façade, and classical details. As the work of renowned architect John Parkinson, who built several other iconic buildings in downtown Los Angeles, it qualifies as the work of a "master builder, designer, or architect." The construction of the subject building also reflects the early 20<sup>th</sup> century development of Downtown and specifically the Spring Street financial and commercial district.

The Alexandria Hotel in its heyday attracted an elite clientele including Charlie Chaplin, Humphrey Bogart, Mae West, Rudolph Valentino, Clark Gable, several former U.S. presidents, and many others associated with the entertainment and business industry in Los Angeles. Therefore, it is associated with several historic personages.

### **BACKGROUND**

At its meeting on June 6, 2013, the Cultural Heritage Commission voted to take the application under consideration. On July 18, 2013, a subcommittee of the Cultural Heritage Commission toured the subject property.

### **CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT ("CEQA") REVIEW**

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 expanded designation of the Alexandria Hotel, Annex and Addition as a 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 irreplaceable historic structures. The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards of 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 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.

# Los Angeles Department of City Planning

## RECOMMENDATION REPORT

**CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION**

**CASE NO.: CHC-2013-1551-HCM  
ENV-2013-1552-CE**

**HEARING DATE:** June 6, 2013  
**TIME:** 10:00 AM  
**PLACE:** City Hall, Room 1010  
200 N. Spring Street  
Los Angeles, CA  
90012

Location: 501 S. Spring Street  
Council District: 14  
Community Plan Area: Central City  
Area Planning Commission: Central  
Neighborhood Council: Downtown Los Angeles  
Legal Description: Lot A and B of Tract  
Resubdivision of a Portion of Block 13 of Ord's  
Survey and Lot 6 and 7 of Tract Subdivision of the  
North Part of Block 13 of Ord's Survey

**PROJECT:** Historic-Cultural Monument Application for the  
APPROVAL OF EXPANSION OF HISTORIC-CULTURAL  
MONUMENT #80 (PALM COURT) TO INCLUDE ALEXANDRIA  
HOTEL AND ADDITIONS

**REQUEST:** Declare the property a Historic-Cultural Monument

**OWNERS:**

Chelsea Building LLC 550 S. Hill Street Ste 980 Los Angeles, CA 90013	Nick Hadim 6009 Washington Blvd. Culver City, CA 90232
Alexandria Housing Partners, LP PO Box 880367 San Diego, CA 92108	Yacobian Enterprises, Inc. 501 S. Spring Street Los Angeles, CA 90013

**APPLICANT/  
OWNER'S  
REPRESENTATIVE:** Mitzi March Mogul  
1725 Wellington Road  
Los Angeles, CA 90019

**RECOMMENDATION**      **That the Cultural Heritage Commission:**

1. **Take the property under consideration** as a Historic-Cultural Monument per Los Angeles Administrative Code Chapter 9, Division 22, Article 1, Section 22.171.10 because the application and accompanying photo documentation suggest the submittal may warrant further investigation.
2. **Adopt** the report findings.

MICHAEL J. LOGRANDE  
Director of Planning

---

Ken Bernstein, AICP, Manager  
Office of Historic Resources

Prepared by:

---

Edgar Garcia, Preservation Planner  
Office of Historic Resources

Attachments:           Historic-Cultural Monument Application

## **SUMMARY**

Built in 1905 with additions in 1906 and 1911, this eight-story and twelve-story hotel building exhibits character-defining features of Beaux Arts style architecture. Located at the intersection of 5<sup>th</sup> Street and Spring Street in Downtown, the main subject building is rectangular in plan and has a flat roof. The primary elevations are arranged in the classical base-shaft-capital composition. The flat roof is lined with a decorative balustrade cornice. The primary facades are clad in terra cotta and stone. The street level storefronts and mezzanine are altered. A large blade sign is located at the intersection of the main elevations and spells "Alexandria Hotel." The exterior features decorative stone work, egg and dart stringcourse, keystone medallions, cast stone chimeras, and fire escapes. Windows are sash and fixed pane with some bay window configurations. Some significant interior elements include decorative ceilings, finishes, metal railings, and marble floors.

The proposed Alexandria Hotel historic monument was designed by noted architect John Parkinson (1861-1935) who would later establish the firm of Parkinson & Parkinson. As one of the most successful architecture firms in early 20<sup>th</sup> century Los Angeles, this firm is responsible for the design of several Historic-Cultural Monuments (HCMs) such as City Hall (HCM #150; 1928), Union Station (HCM #101; 1939), and Bullocks Wilshire (HCM #56; 1929).

Additions to the original main subject building consist of an undifferentiated expansion added in 1906 on the 5<sup>th</sup> Street elevation. Designed by Parkinson, this seamless addition was built on a different parcel owned by a separate property owner. In 1911, the twelve-story addition (referred to as the "annex") was built adjacent to the main hotel building on Spring Street. Owing to disagreements among the property owners in 1939, the 5<sup>th</sup> Street addition was sealed off and isolated from the rest of the Alexandria Hotel.

In 1971, the Cultural Heritage Board (now Cultural Heritage Commission) designated the Alexandria Hotel's Palm Court (formerly the Franco-Italian Dining Salon) as Historic-Cultural Monument #80, one of the few "interior-only" designations in the City's roster of HCMs.

## **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, such as historic structures or sites in which the broad cultural, economic, or social history of the nation, State or community is reflected or exemplified, or which are identified with historic personages or with important events in the main currents of national, State or local history or which embody the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen, inherently valuable for a study of a period style or method of construction, or a notable work of a master builder, designer or architect whose individual genius influenced his age.

## **FINDINGS**

Based on the facts set forth in the summary and application, the Commission determines that the application is complete and that the property may be significant enough to warrant further investigation as a potential Historic-Cultural Monument.