

## **4. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS**

### **C. CULTURAL RESOURCES**

#### **2. HISTORICAL RESOURCES**

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##### **1. INTRODUCTION**

This section evaluates potential Project impacts on historical resources and is based on the Historical Resources Assessment Report (Assessment Report) included as Appendix D-3 of this Draft EIR.

##### **2. ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING**

###### **a. Existing Conditions**

The Project Site is located at 1020 S. Figueroa Street within the Central City Community Plan area in downtown Los Angeles. The roughly “L” shaped Project Site encompasses approximately 2.7 acres and is bordered by S. Figueroa Street to the west, W. Olympic Boulevard to the north, S. Flower Street to the east and 11<sup>th</sup> Street to the south. The Project Site is composed of the following 13 parcels: Assessor Parcel Number (APN) 5138-012-024, APN 5138-012-023, APN 5138-012-007, APN 5138-012-008, APN 5138-012-009, APN 5138-012-010, APN 5138-012-011, APN 5138-012-012, APN 5138-012-029, APN 5138-012-031, APN 5138-012-032, APN 5138-012-030, and APN 5138-012-026. All but one of these parcels is improved with surface parking. Only 1020 S. Figueroa Street, APN 5138-012-023, is currently improved with a building over 45 years in age, the Luxe City Center Hotel (Luxe Hotel), originally constructed in 1964. Pursuant to CEQA, the Luxe Hotel situated on the Project Site was evaluated for its eligibility as a potential historical resource and as further described below was found ineligible as a historical resource under applicable federal, State, or local criteria.

###### **(1) Historical Background**

###### **(a) History and Development of the Project Site**

In 1889, the congregation of Immanuel Presbyterian Church purchased four lots in the Ord Tract at the corner of what was then Pearl Street and 10th Street (now S. Figueroa Street and W. Olympic Boulevard, respectively) from Mr. and Mrs. G. S. Knox for \$10,000. The construction of the Immanuel Presbyterian Church was completed in 1891 and the first services were held there in April of the same year. The 1906 Sanborn Map, provided in the Assessment Report, shows that the other lots that now compose the Project Site and its immediate area were developed with single-family homes or duplexes. In 1920, plans had been prepared for a new church building on the Project Site, but the announcement by the City that 10<sup>th</sup> Street (W. Olympic Boulevard) would be widened encroached significantly on the church’s property and therefore the decision was made to sell and located to a new site. However, the move would take nearly a decade to complete. During this transition period, the area around the Project Site began to change from residential to commercial enterprises, as evidenced by the construction of the Petroleum Building directly north of the church in 1925. The new church at 3300 Wilshire Boulevard was dedicated on May 6, 1929, and it appears that around the same time, the old church building on the north corner of the Project Site was demolished.

Building records for 1020 S. Figueroa Street show that, prior to the 1964 construction of the Luxe Hotel on the north corner of its large city block, the greater site had been developed as early as 1890 with dwellings, out structures, and vacant parcels. By 1906, the Project Site was improved with 17 dwelling units and a church, and only two vacant lots remained. In subsequent years, permits show that the Project Site hosted multiple car-related uses including large public car garages (1919 and 1920), automobile showrooms and repair facilities, gasoline service stations (1939 and 1965), and at least one residence (1913). Building permits for the subject property from 1913 to 1960 are summarized in the Assessment Report.

Constructed between 1963 and 1964, what is now known as the Luxe Hotel opened as a motor hotel in 1964 under the ownership of the Union Oil Company of California. The Luxe Hotel was constructed immediately to the south of a gas station (demolished in 1965), also owned by the Union Oil Company. The nine-story tower hotel measured 60 feet wide by 212 feet long by 126 feet high. Facing Figueroa, it included a second-level swimming pool and deck located to the west of the tower, and a single-level parking deck located to the east of the tower accessed by a ramp. The lower two stories of the tower contained restaurant and kitchen functions, lobby, meeting rooms, and back-of-house facilities. The guest rooms were located within the upper seven stories of the building. Notes on the permits indicate that the hotel was designed for 196 guest rooms, a 130-seat restaurant, a cocktail lounge, and meeting rooms accommodating 450 occupants. The construction value was \$1,920,000. The architect was Albert Criz, AIA, (a biography for the architect is provided in the Assessment Report) with engineer Zorah Sheffner and Associates and contractor Vinnell-Brunswick. In keeping with the International Style (a full context for the Corporate International Style is provided in the Assessment Report), the original construction of the hotel utilized a curtainwall system with a strongly rectilinear emphasis, as each floor was defined by a horizontal band of opaque color alternating with a band of transparent glass running the length of the building. Each of the hotel's fourteen bays was originally defined by thin protruding metal ribs running vertically the full height of the building.

The hotel operated as the Doric Motor Hotel (Doric was a Seattle-based chain with holdings from British Columbia to Southern California) through at least 1965. Records show that, by 1967, the facility was operating as a Holiday Inn. The building permits show no significant changes to the hotel until 1989 and 1990 when ownership changed to the Emerik Hotel Corporation with Holiday Inn as the continuing tenant. During this period, the hotel saw a \$400,000 general upgrade to the pool deck, site, canopies, and interiors; a service elevator addition to the south end of the tower; the installation of a fiberglass pool; and a \$2.5 million fire sprinkler system upgrade.

Again, no significant changes were made after 1990 until a 2001 tenant improvement remodel for owner GGH Corporation/Holiday Inn including a \$400,000 EFIS (Exterior Insulation Finishing System) and metal re-cladding of the curtain wall, a refurbishing of the first and second floor lobbies for \$75,000, and updates to the guest room finishes and furniture.

According to the Manhattan Hospitality Advisors, Inc. report, the hotel's transition from a Holiday Inn to a Luxe Hotel initiated full guest room and public area renovations beginning in 2008. According to permits, in February 2010 there was a general rehabilitation of the building, including painting, tiling, and wallpapering of all rooms followed by a small main floor retail space upgrade in August 2012. In September 2012, the swimming pool was removed and the adjacent deck area expanded to provide a steel trellis, permanent umbrellas, cabanas, dining areas, and a water element at a cost of \$14,000. In 2013, a second floor patio fountain feature was added.

## **(b) Hotels (1880-1980)**

The full historic context under the theme of Hotels (1880-1980) is provided in the Assessment Report. The Luxe Hotel is associated with the rise of the hotel chain in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Among the largest and most successful American hotel chains were Holiday Inn, Hilton, and Sheraton. Conrad Hilton entered the hotel business in Texas in 1919 and opened the first Hilton in Dallas in 1925. His company expanded across the nation and in 1943 Hilton became the first coast-to-coast hotel chain. In 1954, Hilton acquired the Statler Hotels, one of the most influential hotel chains in 20<sup>th</sup> century America as discussed above.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, Sheraton began in Springfield, Massachusetts in 1937 and quickly grew into a large chain with hotels stretching the length of the east coast from Florida to Maine.<sup>2</sup> Both Sheraton and Hilton became publicly traded companies in the 1940s and ultimately became huge international corporations.

Many smaller hotel chains also emerged during the postwar years. The Doric Company was a relatively small operator of hotels and motels in the western United States during this period. In 1963, operations included eight hotels or motels in Washington State, one in Oregon, three in Idaho, and eight in California.<sup>3</sup> The Luxe Hotel initially operated as a Doric Hotel through at least 1967, when ownership changed to the Holiday Inn until 2008. In contrast, while Holiday Inn had humble beginnings in the motor hotel sector it grew into a successful hotel chain in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The first Holiday Inn was opened by Kemmons Wilson in Memphis, Tennessee, in 1952. Wilson developed his hotel after finding his lodging options during family road trips expensive and lacking in amenities. With considerable government funds pouring into highway expansion in 1956, Wilson expanded his operation to cover growing demand for motels on the nation's roads. The company went public in 1967, the same year it acquired the hotel on the subject property. Holiday Inn went on to be an international hotel chain and in 1972 became the first chain to exceed \$1 billion in revenues.<sup>4</sup>

## **(2) Identified Historical Resources in the Project Vicinity**

There are twelve (12) extant historical resources within the Project vicinity (an approximately 0.25-mile radius), which are provided in the Assessment Report in Appendix D-3. Of the twelve (12) previously identified historical resources, there are five (5) previously identified individual historical resources that could be indirectly affected by the Project as the result of alteration of their immediate surroundings, as summarized below.

*One (1) historical resource was determined eligible for the National Register by a consensus through Section 106 Process. Listed in the California Register in the Project Vicinity:*

- Hotel Figueroa, 939 S. Figueroa Street: Hotel Figueroa, constructed in 1925. Located approximately 0.05 miles (260 feet) north of the Project; direct view of the Project.

<sup>1</sup> Hilton Worldwide, "History and Heritage" <http://hiltonworldwide.com/about/history/>. Accessed January 29, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Sheraton, "History," <http://www.starwoodhotels.com/sheraton/about/index.html?categoryId=brand.about.history>. Accessed January 29, 2016

<sup>3</sup> "Autry and Associates Buy 20-Unit Hotel-Motel Chain," *Los Angeles Times*, March 14, 1963, B11.

<sup>4</sup> Jim Orrill, "The History of Holiday Inn Hotels," *USA Today*, <http://traveltips.usatoday.com/history-holiday-inn-hotels-61884.html>, accessed January 12, 2015.

*There is one (1) historical resource that appears individually eligible for the National Register through survey evaluation in the Project Vicinity:*

- Water & Power Substation #9, 922 Francisco Street, constructed in 1922. Located approximately 0.11 miles (600 feet) west of the Project; indirect conjunctive view of the Project.

*There is one (1) historical resource that appears individually eligible for the National Register through survey evaluation and is a designated Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument in the Project Vicinity:*

- Petroleum Building, 714 W. Olympic Boulevard and 1011 S. Flower Street, constructed in 1925. Located directly adjacent to the Project to the north; direct view of the Project.

*There are two (2) Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monuments in the Project Vicinity:*

- Original Pantry, 809-817 W. 9<sup>th</sup> Street and 873-877 S. Figueroa Street, HCM #255, designated October 5, 1982. Approximately 0.13 miles (675 feet) north of the Project; indirect conjunctive view of the Project.
- Standard Oil Company Building, 601-605 W. Olympic Boulevard and 953 S. Hope Street, HCM #340, designated January 26, 1988. Approximately 0.10 miles (510 feet) east of the Project; indirect conjunctive view of the Project.

### **(3) Historical Resources Identified within the Project Site**

The Project Site and the Luxe Hotel do not appear to have been evaluated or recorded in any previous surveys or evaluations. SurveyLA has not yet surveyed the Central City Community Plan Area in which the Project Site is located. The Project Site is not recorded in the Historic-Resources Inventory or listed on the national, State, or local registers.

#### **(a) Statement of Significance**

A comprehensive architectural description, integrity analysis, and significance evaluation of the Project Site is included in the Assessment Report in Appendix D-3 in this Draft EIR, with a summary provided as follows. Constructed between 1963 and 1964, the Luxe Hotel, originally articulated in the Corporate International style, was designed by architect Albert Criz, AIA. Due to extensive alterations, the Luxe Hotel is Contemporary in style and has lost integrity of design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association as result of the removal of character-defining features and the demolition of other key structures that contributes to its setting and association. This loss of integrity is a direct result of significant alterations to the subject property and its environment, especially with regard to the total overhaul of the front and rear elevations of the subject property which largely erased its original architectural character. An in-depth integrity analysis is provided in the Assessment Report. Therefore, the Luxe Hotel is no longer able to convey its historical and architectural significance under the following themes: Postwar Los Angeles; Hotels (1880-1980); Postwar Modernism (1946-1976); and architect Albert Criz, AIA. Due to this loss of integrity, the subject property is unable to convey its association with commercial development, and particularly auto-centric commercial uses, in postwar Los Angeles. Under architecture, the subject property cannot be eligible as an architectural-type specimen, as it no longer retains its original style, method of construction or property type. Additionally, although Criz had a long and prolific career in Los Angeles, he does not appear to have been a significant architect and does not meet the threshold of significance for a master architect, as

his contributions to Los Angeles architecture do not appear to have been influential. Lastly, the subject property does not appear to be associated with historic events or personages significant to local, State or national history. As a result of these investigations, the Luxe Hotel is assigned a CHR status code of 6Z, “found ineligible for National Register, California Register or local designation through survey evaluation.”

## **b. Regulatory Framework**

Historic resources fall within the jurisdiction of several levels of government. Federal laws provide the framework for the identification, and in certain instances, protection of historic resources. Additionally, states and local jurisdictions play active roles in the identification, documentation, and protection of such resources within their communities.

### **(1) Federal Level**

#### **(a) National Register of Historic Places**

The National Register was established by the NHPA as “an authoritative guide to be used by federal, State, and local governments, private groups and citizens to identify the Nation’s cultural resources and to indicate what properties should be considered for protection from destruction or impairment.”<sup>5</sup> The National Register recognizes properties that are significant at the national, State, and/or local levels.

To be eligible for listing in the National Register, a resource must be significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture. Four criteria for evaluation have been established to determine the significance of a resource:

- A. It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;
- B. It is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;
- C. It embodies 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;
- D. It yields, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.<sup>6</sup>

Districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are 50 years in age must meet one or more of the above criteria and retain integrity (this is, convey their significance) to be eligible for listing. Under the National Register, a property can be significant not only for the way it was originally constructed, but also for the way it was adapted at a later period, or for the way it illustrates changing tastes, attitudes, and uses over a period of time.<sup>7</sup> Within the concept of integrity, the National Register recognizes seven aspects or qualities that, in

<sup>5</sup> 36 CFR Section 60.2.

<sup>6</sup> “Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms,” in *National Register Bulletin 16, U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service, September 30, 1986. This bulletin contains technical information on comprehensive planning, survey of cultural resources and registration in the NRHP.*

<sup>7</sup> *National Register Bulletin 15, page 19.*

various combinations, define integrity: Location, Design, Setting, Materials, Workmanship, Feeling, and Association.

To retain historic integrity, a property will always possess most of the aspects and depending upon its significance, retention of specific aspects of integrity may be paramount for a property to convey its significance.<sup>8</sup> Determining which of these aspects are most important to a particular property requires knowing why, where and when a property is significant.<sup>9</sup> For properties that are considered significant under National Register Criteria A and B, *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation (National Register Bulletin 15)* explains, “a property that is significant for its historic association is eligible if it retains the essential physical features that made up its character or appearance during the period of its association with the important event, historical pattern, or person(s).”<sup>10</sup> In assessing the integrity of properties that are considered significant under National Register Criterion C, *National Register Bulletin 15* states, “a property important for illustrating a particular architectural style or construction technique must retain most of the physical features that constitute that style or technique.”<sup>11</sup>

## (2) State Level

### (a) California Register of Historical Resources

The State Office of Historic Preservation (OHP), as an office of the California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), implements the policies of the NHPA on a Statewide level. The OHP also carries out the duties as set forth in the PRC and maintains the HRI and the California Register. The State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) is an appointed official who implements historic preservation programs within the State’s jurisdictions. Also implemented at the State level, CEQA requires projects to identify any substantial adverse impacts which may affect the significance of identified historical resources.

The California Register was created by Assembly Bill 2881 which was signed into law on September 27, 1992. The California Register is “an authoritative listing and guide to be used by State and local agencies, private groups, and citizens in identifying the existing historical resources of the State and to indicate which resources deserve to be protected, to the extent prudent and feasible, from substantial adverse change.”<sup>12</sup> The criteria for eligibility for the California Register are based upon National Register criteria.<sup>13</sup> Certain

<sup>8</sup> *The National Register defines a property as an “area of land containing a single historic resource or a group of resources, and constituting a single entry in the National Register of Historic Places.” A “Historic Property” is defined as “any prehistoric or historic district, site, building, structure, or object at the time it attained historic significance. Glossary of National Register Terms, [http://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb16a/nrb16a\\_appendix\\_IV.htm](http://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb16a/nrb16a_appendix_IV.htm), accessed June 1, 2013.*

<sup>9</sup> *National Register Bulletin 15, page 44.*

<sup>10</sup> *“A property retains association if it is the place where the event or activity occurred and is sufficiently intact to convey that relationship to an observer. Like feeling, association requires the presence of physical features that convey a property’s historic character. Because feeling and association depend on individual perceptions, their retention alone is never sufficient to support eligibility of a property for the National Register.” Ibid., page 46.*

<sup>11</sup> *“A property that has lost some historic materials or details can be eligible if it retains the majority of the features that illustrate its style in terms of the massing, spatial relationships, proportion, pattern of windows and doors, texture of materials, and ornamentation. The property is not eligible, however, if it retains some basic features conveying massing but has lost the majority of the features that once characterized its style.” Ibid., page 46.*

<sup>12</sup> *PRC Section 5024.1(a).*

<sup>13</sup> *PRC Section 5024.1(b).*

resources are determined by the statute to be automatically included in the California Register by operation of law, including California properties formally determined eligible for, or listed in, the National Register.<sup>14</sup>

The California Register consists of resources that are listed automatically and those that must be nominated through an application and public hearing process. The California Register automatically includes the following:

- California properties listed on the National Register and those formally Determined Eligible for the National Register;
- California Registered Historical Landmarks from No. 770 onward;
- Those Points of Historical Interest (“PHI”) that have been evaluated by the OHP and have been recommended to the State Historical Commission for inclusion on the California Register.<sup>15</sup>

Other resources which may be nominated to the California Register include:

- Individual historical resources;
- Historical resources contributing to historic districts;
- Historical resources identified as significant in historical resources surveys with significance ratings of Category 1 through 5;
- Historical resources designated or listed as local landmarks, or designated under any local ordinance, such as an HPOZ.<sup>16</sup>

To be eligible for the California Register, a historic resource must be significant at the local, State, or national level, under one or more 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;
2. Is associated with the lives of persons important in our past;
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.

Additionally, a historic resource eligible for listing in the California Register must meet one or more of the criteria of significance described above and retain enough of its historic character or appearance to be recognizable as a historic resource and to convey the reasons for its significance. Historical resources that have been rehabilitated or restored may be evaluated for listing. Integrity is evaluated with regard to the

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<sup>14</sup> PRC Section 5024.1(d).

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> PRC Section 5024.1(e)

retention of seven aspects of integrity similar to the National Register, location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Also like the National Register, it must also be judged with reference to the particular criteria under which a resource is proposed for eligibility. Alterations over time to a resource or historic changes in its use may themselves have historical, cultural, or architectural significance. It is possible that historical resources may not retain sufficient integrity to meet the criteria for listing in the National Register, but they may still be eligible for listing in the California Register. A resource that has lost its historic character or appearance may still have sufficient integrity for the California Register if it maintains the potential to yield significant scientific or historical information or specific data.<sup>17</sup>

### **(3) Local Level**

#### **(a) City of Los Angeles**

The City enacted a Cultural Heritage Ordinance in April 1962 which defines City Monuments. According to the Ordinance, City Monuments are sites, buildings, or structures of particular historic or cultural significance to the City in which the broad cultural, political, or social history of the nation, State, or City is reflected or exemplified, including sites and buildings associated with important personages or which embody certain distinguishing architectural characteristics and are associated with a notable architect. These City Monuments are regulated by the City's Cultural Heritage Commission and the City Council.

#### **(b) Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Ordinance**

The Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Ordinance (Los Angeles Administrative Code, Chapter 9, Division 22, Article 1, Section 22.171.7) establishes criteria for designating local historic resources as City Monuments. A City Monument is any site (including significant trees or other plant life located on the site), 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;
- Which are identified with historic personages or with important events in the main currents of national, State or local history;
- Which embody the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen, inherently valuable for a study of a period, style or method of construction; or
- Which are a notable work of a master builder, designer, or architect whose individual genius influenced his or her age.

A proposed resource may be eligible for designation if it meets at least one of the criteria above.

When determining historic significance and evaluating a resource against the Cultural Heritage Ordinance criteria above, the Cultural Heritage Commission and the staff of the Office of Historic Resources often ask the following questions:

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<sup>17</sup> Codified in California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 11.5, Section 4852(c) which can be accessed on the internet at <http://ohp.parks.ca.gov>



- Is the site or structure an outstanding example of past architectural styles or craftsmanship?
- Was the site or structure created by a “master” architect, builder, or designer?
- Did the architect, engineer, or owner have historical associations that either influenced architecture in the City or had a role in the development or history of Los Angeles?
- Has the building retained “integrity”? Does it still convey its historic significance through the retention of its original design and materials?
- Is the site or structure associated with important historic events or historic personages that shaped the growth, development, or evolution of Los Angeles or its communities?
- Is the site or structure associated with important movements or trends that shaped the social and cultural history of Los Angeles or its communities?<sup>18</sup>

With regard to integrity, the seven aspects of integrity of the National Register and California Register are the same and the threshold of integrity for individual eligibility is similar.

### 3. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

#### a. Methodology

The analysis in this section was conducted by PCR personnel who meet and exceed the Secretary of the Interior’s Professional Qualification Standards in history and architectural history. The historical resources evaluation involved a review of the National Register and its annual updates, the California Register, the Statewide Historical Resources Inventory database maintained by OHP and the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS), and the City of Los Angeles’s inventory of historic properties to identify any previously recorded properties within or near the Project Site, as well as environmental review assessments for other projects in the vicinity. An intensive pedestrian survey was also undertaken to document the existing conditions of the Project Site and Project vicinity. The following tasks were performed for the study:

- Searched records of the National Register, California Register, California Historic Resources Inventory Database, and City of Los Angeles City Historic-Cultural Monuments designations and SurveyLA.
- Conducted field inspections of the Project Site and vicinity, and utilized the survey methodology of the State OHP.
- Photographed the Luxe Hotel on the Project Site and examined other properties in the area that exhibited potential architectural and/or historical associations.
- Conducted site-specific research on the property utilizing building permits, assessor’s records, Sanborn fire insurance maps, City directories, historical photographs, California Index, Avery Index, Online Archive of California, USC Digital Collections, historical Los Angeles Times, and other

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<sup>18</sup> *What Makes a Resource Historically Significant?* City of LA Office of Historic Preservation, <http://preservation.lacity.org/commission/what-makes-resource-historically-significant>. Accessed July 7, 2013.

published sources. Conducted research at the City of Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety and Los Angeles County Assessor.

- Reviewed and analyzed ordinance, statutes, regulations, bulletins, and technical materials relating to federal, State, and local historic preservation, designation assessment processes, and related programs.
- Evaluated potential historic resources based upon criteria used by the National Register, California Register, and City of Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Ordinance.
- Assessed the Project against the CEQA thresholds for determining the significance of impacts to historical resources.

## b. Thresholds of Significance

The thresholds for determining the significance of environmental effects on historical resources are derived from the State *CEQA Guidelines* as defined in Section 15064.5 and the *L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide*.

According to the State *CEQA Guidelines*, a project involves a “substantial adverse change” in the significance of the resource when one or more of the following occurs:

- Substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource means physical demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration of the resource or its immediate surroundings such that the significance of an historical resource would be materially impaired.
- The significance of a historical resource is materially impaired when a project:
  - A. Demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics of an historical resource that convey its historical significance and that justify its inclusion in, or eligibility for inclusion in, the California Register of Historical Resources; or
  - B. Demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics that account for its inclusion in a local register of historical resources pursuant to Section 5020.1(k) of the PRC or its identification in a historical resources survey meeting the requirements of Section 5024.1(g) of the PRC, unless the public agency reviewing the effects of the project establishes by a preponderance of evidence that the resource is not historically or culturally significant; or
  - C. Demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics of a historical resource that convey its historical significance and that justify its eligibility for inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources as determined by a lead agency for purposes of CEQA.

The *L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide* states that a project would normally have a significant impact on a significant resource if it would cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in Section 15064.5 of the State *CEQA Guidelines* when one or more of the following occurs:

- Demolition of a significant resource;
- Relocation that does not maintain the integrity and significance of a significant resource;

- Conversion, rehabilitation, or alteration of a significant resource which does not conform to the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings (Standards); or
- Construction that reduces the integrity or significance of important resources on the site or in the vicinity.<sup>19</sup>

Under CEQA, a proposed development must be evaluated to determine how it may impact the potential eligibility of a structure(s) or a site for designation as a historic resource. The Standards were developed as a means to evaluate and approve work for federal grants for historic buildings and then for the federal rehabilitation tax credit (*see* 36 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Section 67.7). Similarly, the Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Ordinance provides that compliance with the Standards is part of the process for review and approval by the Cultural Heritage Commission of proposed alterations to City Monuments (*see* Los Angeles Administrative Code Section 22.171.14.a.1). Therefore, the Standards are used for regulatory approvals for designated resources but not for resource evaluations. Similarly, CEQA recognizes the value of the Standards by using them to demonstrate that a project may be approved without an EIR. In effect, CEQA has a “safe harbor” by providing either a categorical exemption or a negative declaration for a project which meets the Standards (*see* State *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15331 and 15064.5(b)(3)).

Based on the above considerations, the factors listed in the *L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide* have been reviewed and refined to address both the State and City guidelines. As such, the Project would have a significant impact on historic resources, if:

- HIST-1** The Project would demolish, destroy, relocate, or alter a historical resource such that eligibility for listing on a register of historical resources would be lost (i.e., no longer eligible for listing as a historic resource); or
- HIST-2** The Project would through indirect effects reduce the integrity or significance of important historical resources on the Project Site or in the vicinity such that eligibility for listing on a register of historical resources would be substantially changed.

### c. Project Characteristics

As described in Chapter 2.0, *Project Description*, of this Draft EIR, the Project would demolish the Luxe Hotel and surrounding surface parking lots, and construct a new mixed-use hotel, residential and commercial development. The Project would include three towers atop an eight level Podium (Podium) with four levels above grade and up to four levels below grade. The residential tower located at the corner of S. Flower Street and 11<sup>th</sup> Street (Residential Tower 1) would be 32 stories while the residential tower at the intersection of S. Figueroa Street and W. Olympic Boulevard (Residential Tower 2) would be 38 stories. The 34 story Hotel Tower would include up to 300 hotel rooms, along with banquet facilities, conference space and amenities. The Project is designed to respect the context and character of the adjacent historic Petroleum Building by stepping back from the corner of S. Figueroa Street and W. Olympic Boulevard to allow views of the corner of the Petroleum Building.

<sup>19</sup> *L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide, Section D.3. Historical Resources, City of Los Angeles, 2006, page D.3-1.*

## d. Project Impacts

**Threshold HIST-1:** The Project would result in a significant impact on historical resources if it would demolish, destroy, relocate, or alter a historical resource such that eligibility for listing on a register of historical resources would be lost (i.e., no longer eligible for listing as a historic resource).

**Impact Statement HIST-1:** *The Project would demolish the Luxe Hotel, recommended ineligible at the national, State and local levels, and therefore, there would be no direct Project impacts on historical resources within the Project Site. However, there is a potential for construction vibration to have potential adverse material impacts on the Petroleum Building which may exceed a vibration threshold should the consent of the property owner not be secured for the implementation of a proposed mitigation measure to reduce such impact. Therefore, direct impacts on the adjacent Petroleum Building from potential construction vibrations are conservatively concluded to be significant and unavoidable.*

The Luxe Hotel was evaluated and found ineligible as a historical resource under any of the applicable federal, State, or local criteria in the Assessment Report included in Appendix D-3. Therefore, the Luxe Hotel does not qualify as a historical resource under CEQA. Because the Luxe Hotel is not a historical resource, no impacts associated with demolition of the Luxe Hotel building would occur. The Petroleum Building would be potentially subject to vibration impacts during the construction of the new buildings on the Project Site. The construction of the new buildings would include excavation and grading and the use of vibratory equipment. The potential effects of construction activity on the Petroleum Building have been addressed throughout the Draft EIR. Most notably, Section 4.G, Noise and Vibration, addresses potential construction vibration impacts on the Petroleum Building, and includes a mitigation measure that requires among other directives, documentation by a qualified preservation consultant prior to project initiation and the installation of continuously operational automated vibrational monitors on the Petroleum Building. As indicated in that analysis, although implementation of the mitigation measure would reduce vibration impacts to a less than significant level, access to the Petroleum Building property would be required and is not a certainty. Therefore, it is conservatively concluded that vibration impacts on the Petroleum Building are potentially significant and unavoidable.

**Threshold HIST-2:** The Project would result in a significant impact on historical resources if it would through indirect effects reduce the integrity or significance of important historical resources on the Project Site or in the vicinity such that eligibility for listing on a register of historical resources would be substantially changed.

**Impact Statement HIST-2:** *The Project would not reduce or materially impair the integrity or significance of important historical resources in the Project vicinity such that their eligibility for listing on a register of historical resources would be substantially changed. Therefore, indirect impacts would be less than significant.*

Indirect impacts were analyzed to determine if the Project would result in a substantial material change to the integrity and significance of historical resources with views of the Project, which are identified in the Assessment Report in Appendix D-3 of this Draft EIR and described in Subsection 2, above. As shown and further evaluated in the Assessment Report, there are five historical resources in the Project vicinity that

would have direct and indirect views of the Project; however, changes to the setting caused by the Project would have no effect on the eligibility of these resources. Only one of those historical resources, the Petroleum Building, is located immediately adjacent to the Project Site. As further described below, the Project would not alter the setting of the five historical resources located in the Project vicinity in a manner that would materially impair their historical significance or integrity.

Two LAHCMs, the Original Pantry at 809-817 W. 9<sup>th</sup> Street and the Standard Oil Company building at 601-605 W. Olympic Boulevard/953 S. Hope Street, would have indirect views of the Project. Additionally, Water & Power Substation #9 at 922-926 Francisco Street, which is potentially eligible for the national, State, and local registers, would also have an indirect view of the Project from the secondary elevations, but the primary elevation faces west towards Francisco Street, the opposite direction of the Project Site and adjacent Petroleum Building, and therefore the Petroleum Building is not directly related to Water & Power Substation #9's historic setting. In addition, these historical resources are 0.10 miles or more away from the Project Site and views would be limited by distance and other buildings in the line of sight. Furthermore, the current Luxe Hotel on the Project Site does not contribute to the historical setting of any of these three historical resources, and the historical setting of these historical resources has already been eroded by later development, including numerous contemporary high-rise buildings. Therefore, although these historical resources would have an indirect view of the Project, there would be no indirect impacts to these resources with development of the Project.

Of the three historical resources described in the paragraph above, only the Standard Oil Company Building has a direct view of the Petroleum Building, an LAHCM, located immediately adjacent to the Project Site. The Petroleum Building contributes to the historical setting of the Standard Oil Company Building, as it was built in 1924 one year earlier than the Petroleum Building. However, the Project would not impact the Standard Oil Company Building's direct view of the Petroleum Building as the Project would be built to the west and south of the Petroleum Building. The Standard Oil Company Building would retain its relationship to the Petroleum Building and their historic setting would remain intact.

The Project would have a less than significant impact on one historical resource with a direct view of the Project. The Hotel Figueroa, which is a designated LAHCM and is also potentially eligible for the National Register, is located at 939 S. Figueroa Street approximately 0.05 miles or 260 feet north of the Project. Due to its proximity, the Hotel Figueroa would have a direct view of the Project. However, the setting of the Hotel Figueroa is already severely eroded as it is surrounded by contemporary high-rise developments, including one directly across the street from its primary elevation at 717 W. Olympic Boulevard. The south elevation of the Hotel Figueroa is secondary to its primary, front elevation, and would face the Project. Furthermore, the current building occupying the Project Site does not contribute to the setting of the Hotel Figueroa, and therefore the removal of the Luxe Hotel and its replacement would not further erode the setting of the historical resource. While the Project would partially obscure Hotel Figueroa's indirect view of the Petroleum Building's west elevation, after Project completion the Hotel Figueroa would still have indirect views of the Petroleum Building's primary elevation and upper floors of the west elevation.

The Variety Arts Center Theater at 940 S. Figueroa is located across the street from the Hotel Figueroa on the south side of the 900 block of S. Figueroa Street, but the Variety Arts Center Theater does not have a view of the Project Site and is flanked by two commercial buildings improved in 2014 and 2008. As such, the development of the Project would not impair the Variety Arts Center Theater's integrity of setting and it would remain a historical resource after Project completion.

Located on the same block as the Project Site is 1037 S. Flower Street, occupied by El Cholo restaurant, which appears to be heavily altered and does not retain integrity from its period of significance, 1930, when it was constructed. Additionally, 1037 S. Figueroa Street is not currently designated nor was it identified as potentially eligible through any survey. Because 1037 S. Flower Street is not a historical resource, there would be no associated indirect impacts due to the development of the Project.

Lastly, there is one historical resource directly adjacent to the Project Site, the Petroleum Building located at 714 W. Olympic Boulevard and 1011 S. Flower Street, which is a designated LAHCM. Although the Petroleum Building is directly adjacent to the Project, the Project would not alter the historical setting or views of the Petroleum Building in a manner that would materially impair the Petroleum Building's historical significance or integrity from its period of significance (1925, the date of construction). The architecturally distinguished facades of the Petroleum Building along W. Olympic Boulevard and S. Flower Street are primary character-defining facades exhibiting elaborate architectural detailing originally intended for public view and would not be blocked by the Project. The Petroleum Building has a Classical design, which emphasizes symmetry, and includes Classical features such as arched openings, a heavy, elaborate cornice, string courses, a cast stone veneer which imitates ashlar masonry, highly regulated fenestration patterns, and swag detailing above the top row of windows on the primary elevations. The primary elevations of the Petroleum Building fronting W. Olympic Boulevard and S. Flower Street would not be affected by the Project and would remain fully visible from the public right of way. Furthermore, the Project would be set back 30 feet along W. Olympic Boulevard to maintain views of the west corner of the Petroleum Building as well as a portion of the west façade, which would further support the visual prominence of the Petroleum Building. Also, Residential Tower 2 would be 540 feet tall and would be set back 20 feet from the west elevation of the Petroleum building to create a buffer between the Petroleum Building and Residential Tower 2. Moreover, the digital band wrapping around the buildings would not materially impair the Petroleum Building and would not affect the primary views of the Petroleum Building from the southeast. The digital signage is similar to other signage placed along S. Figueroa Street, displayed at LA Live and 717 W. Olympic Boulevard. Views of the Petroleum Building from the southeast towards the west elevation have already been impaired by contemporary infill development and the presence of large-scale digital signage.

The west façade of the Petroleum Building is a non-descript secondary façade of unadorned brick, simple design and materials which was intended to accommodate adjacent structures in the block and was not originally designed for public view. As it exists today the west façade has a tall solid brick wall that is covered almost entirely by a large sign, and a projecting rear wing punctuated by regularly spaced rectangular windows. The west façade is a contributing secondary façade that has been previously partially altered and obscured by existing signage. While a portion of the west façade would be obscured from view by the Project, this façade is an unadorned secondary elevation that lacks the ashlar stone veneer and Classical ornamentation of the primary elevations along S. Flower and W. Olympic. Furthermore, the west façade currently and over recent years has been covered with large-scale advertising. While the 75 foot tall Podium would be directly adjacent to the Petroleum Building, the two structures would be separated by a distance of approximately 12 inches at the Podium level along the Petroleum Building's west façade and would be 90 feet below the 165 foot tall Petroleum Building. Moreover, Residential Tower 2 (at S. Figueroa Street and W. Olympic Boulevard) would be set back 20 feet from the northern section of the west elevation of the Petroleum Building and 20 feet from the southern half of the west elevation of the Petroleum Building (the only portion of the west elevation which contains windows). As such, any windows on the southern end of the west elevation would be set back 20 feet from the Podium and 40 feet from Residential Tower 2.

The Project and its effect on the Petroleum Building were evaluated against the applicable Standards 9 and 10 of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (Standards), as discussed in Chapter 5, Section C of the Assessment Report. The analysis found that the Project would partially conform with Standard 9 and would fully conform with Standard 10. The Project conforms to the extent feasible with the intent of the Standards by ensuring the continued visual prominence of the Petroleum Building along W. Olympic Boulevard, including the provision of a setback along the west elevation of the Petroleum Building and the setback of Residential Tower 2 approximately 40 feet away from the west elevation of the Petroleum Building. The Project would not destroy historic materials, features, or spatial relationships that characterize the Petroleum Building and the Project would be clearly differentiated from yet compatible with the materials of the Petroleum Building. However, while the Podium would be considerably shorter than the Petroleum Building, the Project only partially conforms to the Standard 9 in terms of size and scale because the high-rise components of the Project would exceed the height of the 165 foot tall Petroleum Building and is out of scale and proportion with the 165 foot tall Petroleum Building. While the Project only partially conforms to Standard 9, the Project is in keeping with the intent of Standard 9, which is to minimize the impact of new construction on existing historical resources. This minimization of impacts is achieved through the 30 foot setback along W. Olympic Boulevard, the 20 foot setback of the Podium and 40 foot setback of Residential Tower 2 from the southern half of the Petroleum Building's west elevation (where the Petroleum Building's windows are located), the 20 foot setback of Residential Tower 2 from the Petroleum Building's west elevation, the height of the Podium (90 feet less than that of the Petroleum Building), the transparency and contemporary architectural treatment of the Podium, no destruction of historical materials or spatial relationships, and retention of the views of the two primary east and south elevations of the Petroleum Building along W. Olympic Boulevard and S. Flower Street. Overall, the analysis presented in the Assessment Report determined that the indirect impacts to the Petroleum Building would be less than significant and would not alter the Petroleum Building's eligibility as a historical resource.

### e. Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts to historical resources occur when a Project in combination with other cumulative projects would have a cumulatively considerable contribution to impacts to historical resources. The cumulative impacts area considered for historical resources is the area occupied by properties within viewing range of the Project Site and is bounded by the I-110/SR 110 Freeway to the west, S. Flower Street to the east, 9<sup>th</sup> Street to the north, and Pico Boulevard to the south. Of a list compiled by Gibson Transportation Consulting and presented in Chapter 3, *General Description of Environmental Setting* in this Draft EIR for the Project, there are 116 cumulative projects planned or under construction in the Project area. Of these cumulative projects, nine are within the cumulative impacts area for historical resources and include cumulative project numbers 15, 32, 54, 73, 95, 97, 105, 114, and 116. Of these nine projects, only two (cumulative project numbers 54 and 73) appear to have the potential for impacts to on-site or adjacent historical resources. Cumulative project number 54 at 1212 W. Flower Street is a mixed-use project that proposes to construct two high-rise towers and retain the New Formalist style five-story office building constructed in 1967 at the northwest corner of the site. Cumulative project number 73 located at 940 S. Figueroa Street is a rehabilitation project of the Variety Arts Building, LAHCM #196. Both of these projects retain or rehabilitate historical resources. In regard to potential indirect impacts on historical resources in the cumulative impact study area, such impacts to the extent they occur, are not expected to be so severe that they would affect the eligibility of historic resources.

Cumulative project #116, Olympic Tower, located at 811 W. Olympic Boulevard, proposes to construct a 57 story tower at the northwest intersection of W. Olympic Boulevard and S. Figueroa Street abutting Hotel

Figueroa. The construction of the Olympic Tower in conjunction with the Project would increase the density of the neighborhood; however, the S. Figueroa Street corridor has been redeveloped with high density improvements in the twenty-first century and retains little historic character with the exception of historic buildings such as the Hotel Figueroa and the Variety Arts Center Theater.

The nine development projects within the cumulative impacts area would not materially impair the integrity of setting of the two identified historical resources to such a degree that their integrity would be compromised and thereby materially impaired. Both of these historical resources are eligible based upon their individual significance and are not contributors to a district, therefore, their eligibility does not depend on their related setting. Furthermore, the historic setting of the cumulative impacts area has already been eroded by recent twenty-first century development projects. Therefore, cumulative projects within the cumulative impacts area are expected to have less than significant impacts on historical resources.

In this case, the Project would not demolish or materially alter any historical resources, and would result in no direct impact to historical resources, with the exception of potentially significant vibration effects on the adjacent Petroleum Building which would be isolated and would not have a cumulative impact on other historic resources. Furthermore, the Project would indirectly impact only one historical resource, the adjacent 1925 Petroleum Building located at 714 W. Olympic Boulevard and 1011 S. Flower Street. However, the potential indirect impact to the Petroleum Building associated with views would partially block a non-character defining unadorned secondary elevation, which would not affect the eligibility of the Petroleum Building. Since the Project would have no direct impact on any historical resources except for isolated potentially significant vibration effects, indirect impacts would be less than significant or not cumulative in nature. Therefore, the Project's cumulative impacts would not be cumulatively considerable and its cumulative impact would be less than significant.

#### **4. MITIGATION MEASURES**

A mitigation measure (MM-NOISE-2) that includes vibration monitoring for the Petroleum Building during Project construction is included in Section 4.G, Noise and Vibration, of this Draft EIR. With implementation of MM-NOISE-2, vibration velocities in excess of a vibration threshold would transmit an alarm to on-site personnel with authorization to halt work in the vicinity. Furthermore, in the event damage occurs to historic finish materials due to construction vibration, such materials would be repaired (at the developer's expense) in consultation with a qualified preservation consultant in a manner that meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. Thus, implementation of MM-NOISE-2 would ensure vibration impacts on the Petroleum Building would be less than significant. However, this measure requires the consent of that property owner which has not yet been secured, therefore, it is conservatively concluded that vibration impacts on the Petroleum Building are potentially significant and unavoidable. Project operations would not have significant impacts on historic resources, and no further mitigation measures beyond that included in Section 4.G, Noise and Vibration, would be required.

#### **5. LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION**

As MM-NOISE-2 would require the consent of that property owner, and that owner may not agree, the analysis conservatively assumes that construction related direct impacts to the historic Petroleum Building



would be significant and unavoidable. Impacts related to project operation would be less than significant for historic resources and no additional mitigation measures would be required.

