

CULVER CITY HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

AUGUST 29, 1990

CULVER CITY
HISTORIC PRESERVATION ADVISORY
COMMITTEE
REPORT

AUGUST 29, 1990

October 15, 1990

Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council:
Chairman and Members of the Redevelopment Agency:

The Historic Preservation Advisory Committee, charged by you to develop recommendations for a Culver City historic preservation program and a related financial assistance program, is pleased to transmit its report herewith.

Establishing an historic preservation program for Culver City is a responsibility fraught with both opportunities and the need for caution. Our opportunities include influencing the preservation of this community's heritage for current and future generations. The need for caution includes the need to balance the established right of a community to enact an historic preservation program with the rights of private property owners. The Committee was very much aware of these factors and sought earnestly to place them in proper perspective in these recommendations.

Since organizing in November 1989, the Committee has met formally eleven times in addition to numerous subcommittee sessions, studio tours and field trips throughout the City. Also, the Committee organized two meetings with residents of Culver City's early years (who offered their help in reviewing the Committee's data), and also presented a briefing for owners of record of properties ranked by the Committee.

As charged, the Committee, made up of a wide range of City organizations and at-large members, sought to apply community values to a survey data base of proposed historically significant buildings and program components.

Following this letter are the Committee's recommendations ("Attachment A") which are summarized below. The Committee is recommending "Criteria for Significance" designed to be as objective and specific as possible to identify architecturally, historically or culturally significant Culver City structures.

The recommendations further include a format for weighting and ranking structures with the objective of encouraging the preservation of the best examples among proposed significant buildings.

Concerning components of an historic preservation program, the Committee is recommending a three-tiered approach including a "Recognition" level as "honorific" only; a "Significant" designation for properties of substantial architectural/historical/cultural ranking; and "Landmark" designation for properties of the highest ranking. "Significant" and "Landmark" properties would be subject to up to six-month review periods for proposed actions which would negatively impact the integrity of the building. Owners of "Landmark" properties would, in addition, be required to prove

"economic hardship"--loss of reasonable economic return or reasonable use--prior to being able to proceed with actions found detrimental to the building's integrity.

An essential part of any historic preservation program and which the Committee is recommending is the designation process which must include adequate notice to the owner and the opportunity to be heard prior to designation. In addition, the Committee recommends that proposed residential "Significant" property owners have the right to consent or not consent to designation while owners of other properties eligible for designation (commercial "Significant" and all "Landmark") would not.

The report includes recommendations in more detail delineating the program components and process including procedures for future processing of nominated structures and reconvening of an historic preservation advisory committee at approximately five-year intervals to review program status and make appropriate recommendations.

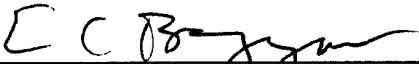
The Committee also considered an Agency-funded financial assistance program recommending assistance for "Significant" and "Landmark" buildings according to eligibility requirements and priorities set forth in the report.

The report also includes "Attachment B", the Committee's recommendations concerning specific structures to be ranked "Recognition," "Significant" and "Landmark"; "Attachment C", data sheets for all ranked structures; and "Attachment D", copies of the minutes for all Committee meetings.

The Committee would like to express its appreciation to Jody Hall-Esser, Joan Kassan, Mark Zierten, and Diann Marsh for their support and encouragement during this arduous process.

Finally, the Committee would like to thank the City Council and Redevelopment Agency for this opportunity to serve our community.

Respectfully,



E. Carrington (Cary) Boggan
Chair



Charlotte Georgi
Vice Chair

JK:jlf
a:jkhpccgm

CULVER CITY HISTORIC PRESERVATION ADVISORY
(HPAC) COMMITTEE REPORT

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Julie Lugo Cerra, Past President, Culver City Historical
Society and Local Historian

Robert Sirchia, Vice President, Operations, The Culver Studios

Arnold Shupack, Sr. Vice President, Operations, Columbia Studios

Owners of Record of HPAC-ranked properties

With special appreciation, the contributions of the following residents from Culver City's earlier years are acknowledged:

Mrs. Anna Marie Allard
Mrs. Gladys Chandler
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Mrs. Verna Gayle

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Mrs. Gladys Kotvasz
Mrs. Betty Musial
Mr. Dan Patacchia
Mrs. Carmen Shaw Simmons
Mrs. Dorothy Wagner

eleven formal meetings, various subcommittee meetings, studio tours, and field trips throughout the City. In addition, they participated in two meetings with residents of Culver City's early years who offered their help in reviewing HPAC's data and in a briefing for owners of record of HPAC-ranked properties.

HPAC refined and prioritized significance criteria and repeatedly applied that criteria to over 178 survey structures, adding and deleting buildings as criteria and data were better defined. HPAC concluded by ranking 124 properties either to be recognized or designated under the recommended program.

I. Criteria for Significance

The HPAC has developed and recommends criteria for determining significance designed to:

- a) Be as objective and specific as possible in order to provide clear guidance and eliminate potential ambiguity and undue subjectivity;
- b) Identify and encourage preservation of only the "best" (or "better") examples of architecturally, historically and culturally significant structures in Culver City; and
- c) Include a "process" to weight/rank identified structures in order to distinguish the "best" from the "better" and aid in prioritization for potential preservation funding.

A. Recommended Criteria

1. Threshold Criteria

- a) Structure at least 50 years old; and exterior of structure accessible and/or visible to the public; OR
- b) Outstanding structure of special significance to Culver City though less than 50 years of age or not accessible/visible to the public.

NOTE: One of the two threshold criteria must be met for base acceptance as significant structure.

2. Architectural Significance Criteria

Structure (including site improvements if relevant) is an outstanding or surviving example of period, style, detail, unique craftsmanship or method of construction; or represents the work of a city, state or nationally significant architect/designer/builder.

3. Historical/Cultural Significance

Structure (including the site or site improvements if relevant) at which events that made a significant contribution to local (State or National) history or culture occurred; or which involved a close

association with the lives of people who made a significant contributions to the history/development of the City (State/Nation).

4. Historic District

A delineated area of contiguous or related parcels at which events occurred that made a significant contribution to City (State/National) history or culture OR which contains structures which are collectively significant examples of period, style, method of construction providing distinguishing characteristics of the architectural type or period represented.

B. Application of Criteria

In order to apply the significance criteria objectively, the following point system for evaluation and ranking was developed and applied to all properties and districts. It is recommended the following be reproduced and completed for each property:

RECOMMENDED FORMAT FOR EVALUATING AND RANKING STRUCTURES

Point value

1. Quality of Architecture

a) Does the structure represent the work of a city (state or nationally) significant architect/designer/builder? (8 points) _____

CHOOSE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

b) Is the structure in question the best example of its kind in Culver City? (20 points) _____

c) Is the structure a good example but there are better? (10 points) _____

d) Does the structure retain some of the original construction/style/materials but there have been significant alterations? (5 points) _____

Subtotal Architectural Significance _____

2. Historical/Cultural Significance

a) Is the building associated with a prominent person(s) of importance to the incorporation, growth or development of Culver City/(State or Nation)? (15 points) _____

b) Is the building associated with an historical pattern or significant event related to incorporation, growth or development of Culver City (State or Nation)? (10 points) _____

Subtotal Historical/Cultural Significance _____

3. Other

a) Is the building the oldest example of its type/style in Culver City? (5 points) _____

b) Is the building accessible and/or visible to the public? (5 points) _____

c) Has the building been well preserved? (5 points) _____

Subtotal Other _____

4. TOTAL POINTS _____

5. Comments: _____

C. Significance of Ranking

In order to determine/distinguish the significance of the ranking method noted above, the HPAC recommends the following:

<u>Category</u>	<u>Point Total</u>
1. Property qualifies as a <u>Landmark of highest architectural/historical/cultural significance</u> to Culver City	<u>41-60 points</u>
2. Property qualifies as architecturally/historically/culturally "significant".	<u>21-40 points</u>
3. Property to be "recognized" as of architectural/historic cultural interest.	<u>20 or fewer points</u>

II. Historic Preservation Program

The HPAC recommends a three-tiered program as follows:

- A. "Recognized" Properties. Properties determined to be of architectural, historic or cultural interest shall be so noted for the record and owners shall be so advised. No other action shall be taken to limit/restrict use or modification of such property; owners shall be passively encouraged to preserve their property through private efforts.
- B. "Significant" Properties. Properties determined to be of substantial architectural/historic or cultural significance shall be qualified for designation as such; and, additionally:
1. Required review period shall apply prior to issuance of permits for demolition/moving/alteration/addition (waiting periods ± 6 months) in order for the property owner to seek alternative solutions in keeping with the bases for designation.
 2. Information/referrals/workshops shall be conducted to assist these private owners with voluntary rehabilitation within bases for designation.
- NOTE: 1. Demolition/moving/alterations/additions permitted when necessary for public health or safety.
2. Residential properties shall only be designated "Significant" with the consent of the property owners (or 51% of the property owners in a historic district).
- C. "Landmark" Properties. Properties which are exceptional examples of the highest architectural/cultural/historical significance to the community. These properties shall be:
1. Designated as Landmarks.
 2. Subject to permit review/waiting period.
 3. Subject to minimum maintenance standards and rehabilitation standards which shall be developed.

4. Permitted to be demolished, relocated or altered only if, in addition to the waiting period, adaptive reuse has been ruled out, and economic hardship can be proven by the owner. Economic hardship may be established when the property owner has proven that without the requested permit (demolition, relocation or alteration), owner 1) cannot earn a reasonable economic return and/or 2) is denied reasonable use of the property.

(See attached information on the concept of "hardship" and historic preservation.)

- NOTE:
1. Demolition/alteration relocation shall be permitted for public health and safety reasons.
 2. Landmark residential or commercial properties can be designated without owner consent.
 3. Prior to demolition, relocation, alteration, a photo essay of the building shall be "prepared" at the expense of the property owner.

III. Designation Process

The HPAC recommends the following process be followed to formally recognize/designate qualified structures after approval of the final program by the Agency/Council:

A. Recognized Buildings/Districts:

1. Owners receive letter notification.
2. No further action to be taken.

B. Significant Buildings/Districts

1. Owners receive letter notification.
2. Nomination form to consent to designation also sent to each RESIDENTIAL owner.

C. Landmark Building/District

1. Owners receive letter notification.
2. Nomination is automatic - no owner consent required.

D. Additional Recommendations

1. Continuing Designation Process.
 - a) Additional buildings could be nominated in the future by the property owners or any Culver City resident or business person.
 - b) Nominated properties would be reviewed by the Planning Commission for qualification under the significance criteria and point ranking on an annual or biannual basis.
 - c) Qualified buildings would be considered at a noticed public hearing before the Agency/Council following notification (and consent, if applicable) of the property owner.
 - d) As a continuing activity, staff and appropriate Commissions, the Culver City Historical Society, etc. would promote community awareness of the City's historic preservation program and opportunities to nominate qualified buildings.

- e) Every feasible attempt would be made to periodically identify and contact the following Culver City property owners concerning the designation of their property:
 - (1) Owners of property ranked "significant" who have previously rejected designation.
 - (2) New owners who have purchased properties ranked as "significant" but which properties have not previously been so designated.
- f) If legal and feasible, penalties to be imposed beyond those authorized in current code if "significant" alterations or demolition carried out without the appropriate City permit concerning designated buildings.

2. Future HPAC Reviews

At +5 year intervals, Agency/Council would appoint an HPAC to review the status of the Culver City Historic Preservation Program and make recommendations including additional buildings to be recognized or designated, if applicable.

IV. Financial Assistance Program

The HPAC recommends the following basic components be included in a financial assistance program to assist in preservation of Landmark and Significant properties:

- A. Recommended Threshold Eligibility for Culver City Redevelopment Agency Rehabilitation Assistance:
 - 1. Structure is located within a Culver City Redevelopment Agency project area; or
 - 2. Structure is a low to moderate income (up to 120% of county median) residential unit anywhere in Culver City; or
 - 3. Structure is a publicly-owned building for which an "of-benefit" finding to a project area can be made.

B. Recommended Criteria for Agency Historic Preservation Program Priority Funding:

1. Structure is on the list "Landmark" or "Significant" structures.
2. Structure is cited as in need of seismic retrofit for seismic safety.
3. Structure is in need of rehabilitation to address code deficiencies and/or to meet minimum maintenance standards.
4. Structure is in need of rehabilitation to restore significant architectural features.

V. Recommended Ranking of Structures

A. Residential Structures

1. Single Structures

(see charts, pages 15, 16, 17, 18)

2. Districts (see charts, pages 15, 17)

a) Landmark Districts: Lafayette Place Landmark District.

1-6) 4052 ABC - 4058 ABC Lafayette Place

7-12) 4068 ABC - 4070 ABC Lafayette Place

b) Recognition District: Braddock Drive Historic District

1) 11027 Braddock Drive

2) 11033 Braddock Drive

3) 11034 Braddock Drive

4) 11037 Braddock Drive

5) 11043 Braddock Drive

6) 11047 Braddock Drive

c) Recognition District: McConnell Boulevard Recognition District

1) 4128 McConnell Boulevard

2) 4132 McConnell Boulevard

3) 4138 McConnell Boulevard

4) 4141 McConnell Boulevard

5) 4148 McConnell Boulevard

- 6) 4150 McConnell Boulevard
- 7) 4154 McConnell Boulevard
- 8) 4158 McConnell Boulevard
- 9) 4160 McConnell Boulevard
- 10) 4161 McConnell Boulevard
- 11) 4163-65 McConnell Boulevard
- 12) 4166 McConnell Boulevard
- 13) 4173 McConnell Boulevard
- 14) 4177 McConnell Boulevard
- 15) 4181 McConnell Boulevard

B. Commercial Properties

1. Single Structures

(see charts, pages 15, 16, 17)

2. Commercial Historic Districts (see chart, page 19)

a) Columbia Studios (see attached plan)

Recognize site and the following buildings:

1) Landmark

- a) Thalberg Building
- b) Colonnade (entrance)

2) Significant

- a) Schoolhouse (Crawford Building)
- b) Sound stages 3, 4, 5, 6
- c) Jean Harlow (wardrobe) building, buildings 43, Garland Building; 39, Tracy Building; 34, Hepburn-Building; 35 Gable Building; 48, Myrna Loy Building
- d) Commissary
- e) Water Tower

NOTE: It is also recommended that the water tower be recognized as an historic "structure" and be preserved and retained if possible.

b) Culver Studios (see attached plan)

Recognize site and the following buildings:

- 1) Landmark: 9336 Washington Boulevard, Mansion Building and Ince appendage.
- 2) Significant Buildings 'S', 'T', 'U', and 'V'.