



LOS ANGELES CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION

200 North Spring Street, Room 272, Los Angeles, California, 90012-4801, (213) 978-1300

www.planning.lacity.org

LETTER OF DETERMINATION

MAILING DATE: APR 26 2021

Case No. **CHC-2021-2244-HCM**

Council District: 12 – Lee

CEQA: ENV-2021-2245-CE

Plan Area: Canoga Park- Winnetka-Woodland Hills-West Hills

Proposed Monument: MARCH AVENUE PALM TREES

Property Address: Public ROW in median and along east side of North March Avenue between West Ingomar and West Justice Streets

Owner: City of Los Angeles Bureau of Street Services (StreetsLA), Urban Forestry Division

At its meeting of **April 15, 2021**, the Cultural Heritage Commission took the actions below to include the March Avenue Palm Trees in the list of Historic-Cultural Monuments, subject to adoption by the City Council:

1. **Determined** that the proposed designation is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), pursuant to Article 19, Section 15308, Class 8 and Article 19, Section 15331, Class 31 of the State CEQA Guidelines;
2. **Determined** that the property conforms with the definition of a Monument pursuant to Section 22.171.7 of the Los Angeles Administrative Code;
3. **Recommended** that the City Council consider the March Avenue Palm Trees for inclusion in the list of Historic-Cultural Monuments; and
4. **Adopted** the attached Findings.

The Commission vote was as follows:

Moved: Kennard

Seconded: Kanner

Ayes: Barron, Buelna, Milofsky

Vote: 5 – 0

James K. Williams, Commission Executive Assistant II
Cultural Heritage Commission

Time for Council to Act: The Commission action will be transmitted to the City Council for consideration. Pursuant to Section 22.171.10(f) of the Los Angeles Administrative Code, the Council may approve or disapprove in whole or in part an application or initiation for a proposed designation of a Monument. The Council shall act in 90-days of the public hearing held before the Commission on the proposed designation. The City Council may unilaterally extend the 90-day time limit to act for a maximum of 15 days for good cause. With written consent of the owner, the time for the City Council to act may be extended by up to an additional 60 days. If the Council does not act on the application or initiation within this specified time limit, the application or initiation to designate a Monument shall be deemed to have been denied.

For further information regarding the scheduling of this matter before the City Council please call the Office of the City Clerk, Planning and Land Use Management Committee at (213) 978-1074.

Attachment: Findings

- c: Hannah Lee, Chief of Staff, Twelfth Council District
- Ken Bernstein, Principal City Planner, Office of Historic Resources
- Lambert Giessinger, Architect, Office of Historic Resources
- Shannon Ryan, Senior City Planner
- Melissa Jones, City Planning Associate
- Victor Cuevas, Assistant Deputy Superintendent, Department of Building and Safety
- Pascal Challita, Chief, Department of Building and Safety, Inspection Bureau

March Avenue Palm Trees
N. March Avenue between W. Ingomar Street
and W. Justice Street
CHC-2021-2244-HCM
ENV-2021-2245-CE

FINDINGS

- The March Avenue Palm Trees “exemplif[y] significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city or community for their association with the Rancho Sombra del Roble, an early agricultural and residential development of the western San Fernando Valley.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The March Avenue Palm Trees meet one of the Historic-Cultural Monument criteria: they “exemplif[y] significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city or community” for their association with the Rancho Sombra del Roble, an early agricultural and residential development of the western San Fernando Valley.

Based on their presence in aerial images from 1928, the March Avenue Palm Trees date to the original development of the Rancho Sombra del Roble. During the Rancho Sombra del Roble’s time as a private retreat, the subject landscape was located within the ranch property. March Avenue was originally an extension of Cohasset Street, which comprised the southern boundary of the ranch and one of the means of access to the property from other parts of the San Fernando Valley. The March Avenue Palms Trees formed a distinctive corridor within the Rancho Sombra del Roble that intersected Justice Street about 600 feet west of the original entry gate. Today, the trees create a cohesive streetscape along March Avenue and represent a vestige of the once-sprawling Rancho Sombra del Roble, an early development of the western San Fernando Valley. Despite the change of setting and removal of some trees, the subject landscape retains a high level of integrity to convey its significance.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (“CEQA”) FINDINGS

State of California CEQA Guidelines, Article 19, Section 15308, Class 8 “*consists of actions taken by regulatory agencies, as authorized by state or local ordinance, to assure the maintenance, restoration, enhancement, or protection of the environment where the regulatory process involves procedures for protection of the environment.*”

State of California CEQA Guidelines Article 19, Section 15331, Class 31 “*consists of projects limited to maintenance, repair, stabilization, rehabilitation, restoration, preservation, conservation or reconstruction of historical resources in a manner consistent with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic buildings.*”

The designation of the March Avenue Palm Trees as an Historic-Cultural Monument in accordance with Chapter 9, Article 1, of The City of Los Angeles Administrative Code (“LAAC”) will ensure that future construction activities involving the subject trees 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 trees could be lost through incompatible alterations and new construction and the demolition of an irreplaceable historic site/open space. The Secretary

of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation are expressly incorporated into the LAAC and provide standards concerning the historically appropriate construction activities which will ensure the continued preservation of the subject trees.

The City of Los Angeles has determined based on the whole of the administrative record, that substantial evidence supports that the Project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section Article 19, Section 15308, Class 8 and Class 31, and none of the exceptions to a categorical exemption pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 applies. The project was found to be exempt based on the following:

The use of Categorical Exemption Class 8 in connection with the proposed designation is consistent with the goals of maintaining, restoring, enhancing, and protecting the environment through the imposition of regulations designed to prevent the degradation of Historic-Cultural Monuments.

The use of Categorical Exemption Class 31 in connection with the proposed designation is consistent with the goals relating to the preservation, rehabilitation, restoration and reconstruction of historic buildings and sites in a manner consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

Categorical Exemption ENV-2021-2245-CE was prepared on February 26, 2021.