



HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

APPLICATION: HL-135/MA-126

AGENDA ITEM: PH-3

PREPARED BY: Ili Lobaco
Associate Planner

MEETING DATE: April 29, 2015

SUBJECT: Historic Landmark HL-135/Mills Act MA-126

APPLICANT: 114 ELA LLC
114 East Lemon Avenue
Monrovia, CA 91016

REQUEST: Historic landmark designation and approval of a Mills Act Contract

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION: Categorical Exemption (Class 1)

BACKGROUND: Pursuant to the Historic Preservation Ordinance, the property owners of 114 East Lemon Avenue have filed an application for consideration of historic landmark designation and approval of a Mills Act Contract.

ANALYSIS: In 1921, the Southern Counties Gas Company purchased the property at 114 East Lemon Avenue. According to the information submitted by the owners, prominent Los Angeles architects, Albert R. Walker and Percy A. Eisen designed the building. Walker and Eisen, both native Californians, began their partnership in 1919. Building records show that construction began in 1922 when the building permit was obtained by local contractor W. H. McCune.



Walker and Eisen would go on to design commercial business buildings and residences. Some of their designs include the San Gabriel Post Office, Gas Company buildings including the historic Santa Ana, Santa Monica and Sawtelle. They also designed the Beverly Wilshire Hotel, Fine Arts Building (1927), Oviatt Building (1925), and United Artist theatres, including the UA theatre in Pasadena to name a few.

The building is a one-story brick building with composition roof, cement floor, and cast stone trim around the front facing windows and door. The

Federally Inspired style building has two large window openings that are symmetrically located on both sides of the front door opening. The windows each have tripartite, five-over-five individual pane transom window panels above the windows.

The brick exterior has an arched pattern around the door. Other brick patterns are found along the cornice of the building and horizontally below the windows and across the entire front of the building. The rear of the building is simpler in style due to being clad in stucco.

Several building permits are found in the City's records. Between 1922 when the building was constructed and 1940, nine permits exist for remodels, alterations and additions. It is uncertain when the long garage area on the east side of the building was added but the current configuration has existed since the 1960's.

The building is located in Monrovia's Historic Downtown area that stretches from Foothill Boulevard to Olive Avenue and Primrose Avenue to Ivy Avenue. Staff believes that Criteria #3 (*It contributes to the significance of an historic area, being a geographically definable area possessing a concentration of not less than 50% of historic or architecturally related grouping of properties which contribute to each other and are unified aesthetically by physical layout or development*) applies to this building. It is a part of a concentrated cluster of buildings in this area that were built between the early 1900's to the mid 1920's as part of the early booming growth of Monrovia's downtown area.



Occupants of the building since its construction include Southern California Gas Company, The Vikings Table, Graphic Arts Service Company, Susie's Hair Designs, Graf Air Conditioning, new Pasadena Optical Inc., an accounting office, CBS Property Services Inc., HL Ranch and Historic Lighting and now, Smitten On Paper.

Criteria and Guidelines

The Commission must determine the applicable designation criteria for landmark status for the building at 114 East Lemon Avenue. As specified by the Historic Preservation Ordinance, a property must include one or more of the applicable designation criteria. The following criterion is presented for the Commission's consideration.

Criteria Number 1 - *It is identified with persons or events significant in local, regional, state or national history.*

This building was one of the first designed by Albert R. Walker and Percy A. Eisen after beginning their architectural partnership in 1919. Walker and Eisen went on to design several noteworthy buildings that are highlighted in the book Walker & Eisen: twenty years of Los Angeles architecture, 1920-1940 written by Donald J. Schippers.

Criteria Number 3 - *It contributes to the significance of an historic area, being a geographically definable area possessing a concentration of not less than 50% of historic or architecturally related grouping of properties which contribute to each other and are unified aesthetically by physical layout or development.*

The building is located in Monrovia's Historic Downtown area where there are many buildings that were built between the early 1900's to the mid 1920's as part of the early booming growth of Monrovia's downtown area.

Criteria Number 4 - *It embodies one or more distinctive characteristics of style, type, period, design, materials, detail, or craftsmanship.*

The property is significant under this criterion as it exemplifies characteristics of federally inspired architecture. The building is in excellent condition and retains integrity in its design, materials and workmanship.

Staff's determination is that 114 East Lemon Avenue meets Criteria Number 1, 3 and 4.

Mills Act Contract

The applicants are also requesting approval of a Mills Act Contract which will provide tax savings for the homeowners. The City will lose a portion of the property tax collected on the property to assure its preservation and enhancement.

Conditions

The building is well restored from public view, so the set standards and conditions will be applied (Exhibit C). These include placing a historic plaque on the property and electrical safety inspection within two years. A seismic retrofit, which is also a standard condition, was completed in 1996. A City building permit is on file.

DPR Form

Since Staff is processing this application as a City of Monrovia Historic Landmark, a status code of 5S3 has been assigned (appears to be individually eligible for local listing or designation through survey evaluation). If the Historic Preservation Commission determines that the building is eligible for listing for local designation and the City Council concurs, then the code will be changed to 5S1 (individual property that is listed or designated locally).

The DPR form is attached for the review, comment and approval of the Commission.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission forward a Nomination Statement to the City Council recommending that the building at 114 East Lemon Avenue be designated as a historic landmark. Approval of a Mills Act Contract with the property owner subject to the attached conditions is also recommended.

If the Historic Preservation Commission concurs with this recommendation and determines that the property meets at least one of the seven criteria for historic landmark designation, and the information provided on the DPR is accurate then, following the public hearing, the following motion is appropriate:

Designate the property at 114 East Lemon Avenue as Historic Landmark Number 135, and approve entering into a Mills Act Contract with the conditions of approval, and so recommend to the City Council.

Other Listings
Review Code

Reviewer

Date

Page 1 of 2 *Resource Name or #: HL-135-MA-126

P1 Other Identifier: 114 East Lemon Avenue

*P2 Location: Not for Publication Unrestricted

a. County: Los Angeles

c. Address: 114 East Lemon Avenue City: Monrovia Zip: 91016

e. Other Locational Data: APN # 8516-022-040

P3a Description: (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries)

The building is a one-story brick building with composition roof, cement floor, and cast stone trim around the front facing windows and door. The Federally Inspired style building has two large window openings that are symmetrically located on both sides of the front door opening. The windows each have tripartite, five-over-five individual pane transom window panels above the windows. The brick exterior has an arched pattern around the door. Other brick patterns are found along the cornice of the building and horizontally below the windows and across the entire front of the building. The rear of the building is simpler in style due to being clad in stucco.

P3b Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) HP6. 1-3 story commercial building

*P4 Resources Present: Building Structure Object Site District Element of District Other

P5a Photograph

P5b Description of Photo: (view, date)

Front view, April 2015

P6 Date Constructed: 1922

Source: LA County Assessor

P7 Owner and Address:

114 ELA LLC
114 East Lemon Avenue
Monrovia, CA 91016

P8 Recorded by:

City of Monrovia

P9 Date Recorded: May 2015

P10 Survey Type: Individual



P11 Report Citation:

Attachments: NONE Location Map Sketch Map Continuation Sheet Building, Structure, and Object Record
 Archaeological Record District Record Linear Feature Record Milling Station Record Rock Art Record
 Artifact Record Photograph Record Other (List):

Page 2 of 2 *Resource Name or #: HL-135-MA-126

- B1 **Historic Name:** N/A
- B2 **Common Name:** N/A
- B3 **Original Use** Southern Counties Gas Company
District Headquarters
- B4 **Present Use** Office and Retail Use
- B5 **Architectural Style** Federally inspired

B6 Construction History (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations)

1922 – Building constructed
 July 1922 – addition
 1926 – addition
 1928 – alteration
 1929 – remodel
 1936 – alteration
 June 1938 – alteration
 July 1938 – alteration
 1939 – alteration

B7 **Moved:** No **Date Moved** N/A **Original Location** N/A

B8 **Related Features:**
 None

B9a **Architect:** Albert R. Walker and Percy A. Eisen **b. Builder:** W. H. McCune

Commercial

B10 **Significance:** **Theme:** Development **Area:** Monrovia

Period of Significance: 1922 **Property Type** HP6. 1-3 story commercial building

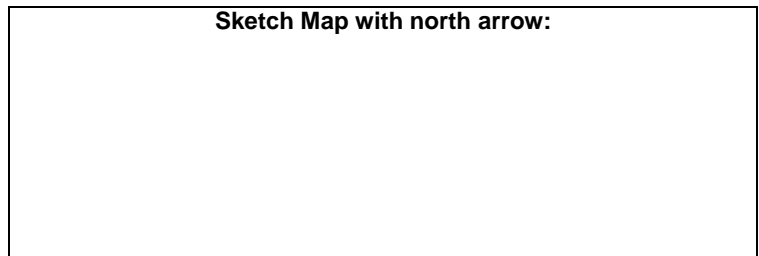
Constructed in 1922, this building was designed by Los Angeles architects, Albert R. Walker and Percy A. Eisen who also designed several noteworthy buildings that are highlighted in the book Walker & Eisen: twenty years of Los Angeles architecture, 1920-1940 written by Donald J. Schippers. The building has Federally inspired architecture including cast stone trim around the windows and door, two large symmetrically located windows on both sides of the front door, with tripartite, 5-over-5 individual pane transom windows, brick arched pattern around the door and along building cornice and horizontally across the entire front of the building. The building is located in Monrovia's Historic Downtown area and is located among several other buildings that were built between the early 1900's to the mid 1920's as part of the early booming growth of Monrovia's downtown area. Based on its association with noteworthy Los Angeles architects, its location in the Historic Downtown area and its architectural features, the building appears eligible as for designation as a City of Monrovia Landmark.

B11 **Additional Resource Attributes:** None

B12 **References:**
 County Assessor, City Building permits, Monrovia Library, Sanborn Maps, several local residents and misc. articles referenced by the property owner

B13 **Remarks**

B14 **Evaluator/Date** City of Monrovia, April 2015



STANDARDS AND CONDITIONS
114 East Lemon Avenue
Mills Act Contract MA-126

During the term of this agreement, the Historic property shall be subject to the following conditions:

1. All structures on the property shall be kept in excellent condition including exterior walls, windows and roofing.
2. A Certificate of Appropriateness shall be required for all exterior alterations and/or additions to the structure on the property. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation shall be applied to the property with the exception that standard condition #9 shall allow for additions, exterior alterations or related new construction to match the original building upon approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness (Attachment A).
3. *View Corridor Maintained.* The view corridor enabling the general public to see the building from the public right-of-way shall not be further obscured. The view corridor, including landscaping, hardscape and fencing, shall be maintained.
4. *Landmark Plaque.* The owner(s) shall place a Historic Preservation Commission approved historic plaque on the site within two (2) years of the City Council designation of the historic landmark.
5. *Electrical Safety Inspection.* Within two years of the date of City Council approval, an electrical safety inspection report shall be submitted on the electrical contractor's letterhead indicating that the existing service panel meets minimum code and poses no hazardous conditions, GFCI outlets are provided as specified by code, and proper grounding of the panel exists. This condition shall be waived if the building records confirm the upgrading of the service panel or written electrical inspection completed within the last five (5) years is provided.
6. The property owner(s) shall submit to the Planning Division a progress report every 2 years for the first 10 years of the Contract listing a response to the conditions of approval as listed on this document. Report shall also include interior and exterior maintenance projects completed since your last required update report. After the first 10 years, a progress report shall be required every 5 years.