



CITY OF LONG BEACH

DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

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August 13, 2018

CHAIR AND CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSIONERS
City of Long Beach
California

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness request to make exterior building modifications including restoration work, roof modifications, and the addition of an enclosed stairwell, in conjunction with a change of use to hotel. The building is located at 210 E. Ocean Boulevard and is a designated Historic Landmark building known as The Breakers building. (District 2)

APPLICANT: Arco Construction
900 N. Rock Hill Road
Saint Louis, MO 63119
(Application No. HP18-255)

THE REQUEST

The applicant requests approval of exterior building modifications including restoration work, roof modifications, and the addition of an enclosed stairwell, to The Breakers Building in conjunction with a change of use to a hotel. The project includes hotel amenities, including a spa, outdoor pool, patio terrace areas, retail, event space, and food and beverage services. The existing Sky Room restaurant will be maintained as part of this project. The Breakers building is located at 210 E. Ocean Boulevard and is a City-designated Historic Landmark.

BACKGROUND

The subject property is located on the south side of Ocean Boulevard between Locust Avenue to the west and Collins Way to the east (Exhibit A – Location Map) within the PD-6 (Downtown Shoreline Plan Area) District. Victory Park abuts the subject property to the north. An existing access easement through the public park allows for vehicular access to the site via a circular driveway. To the south, the site abuts the mixed-use development located at 207 Seaside Way, which is currently under construction. The east-west alley (Marine Way) adjacent to the project site was vacated by Resolution No. C-23207, and an easement was reserved along the full length and width of the alley for utility purposes.

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The property is developed with a thirteen-story building with a 14th floor cupola and rooftop area. Two additional lower levels are located below street level at Ocean Boulevard. The building was originally constructed in 1925. The building is approximately 172,000-square-feet in area and is designed in a Spanish Renaissance Revival style with a gable roof with towers. The building consists of a main 13-story tower with a two-story base that extends the entire length of the parcel between Locust Avenue and Collins Way. The building was designed by the Los Angeles architecture firm of Walker and Eisen which was one of the most prominent during the 1920s. The firm is known for architecturally significant buildings such as the Oviatt Building, the former Ambassador Hotel, Beverly Wilshire Hotel, and Ace Hotel building. The building was constructed by Jay W. Burgin, a noted Long Beach contractor.

The building is part of a collection of several architecturally significant high-rise buildings in the greater downtown and shoreline areas constructed during the 1920s. The Breakers was one of the largest buildings constructed in Long Beach at the time and captures an early period of development, and popularity in tourism. The building survived the 1933 Long Beach Earthquake.

In 1937, Conrad Hilton of the Hilton Hotel company purchased the building. Under Hilton's ownership, the building underwent an extensive renovation and the Sky Room was added to the rooftop of the building. At the time, it was one of the finest hotels in Long Beach.

The building was designated as a City Historic Landmark in 1989 and this designation recognizes the building's Spanish Renaissance Revival style, elaborate concrete ornamentation around the entry, and bas-relief busts and detailing (Exhibit B – Ordinance No. C-6609). The building's exterior is identified in the landmark ordinance as protected the area as well is the interior lobby. In addition, character defining features include:

- Bas-relief ornamentation at entry,
- Corinthian capitals,
- Octagonal tower
- Window fenestration,
- Exterior finishes, and
- Pill box

Shortly after landmark designation, a seismic strengthening of the building took place. This improvement while significant for the protection of the building, also created significant building alterations. One of the biggest impacts resulting from the project is that it sealed several original window openings.

The last land use entitlement for the property was approved in 1999 and included the conversion of the landmark building to a 233-unit congregate care facility.

ANALYSIS

On April 9, 2018, the Cultural Heritage Commission (CHC) held a Study Session to introduce the CHC to the proposal for The Breakers building. The Study Session was

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beneficial to both the applicant and property owners as it gave the Commission the opportunity to better understand the project and provide valuable project feedback to staff and the development team.

At the CHC Study Session, the applicants requested clarification on very specific questions regarding the proposed alterations before proceeding with further plan development. Questions addressed at the CHC Study Session are summarized below in Table 1. The table provides a description of the originally proposed alterations in the left column, Commission comments and responses in the middle column, and the revisions to the plans based on those comments in the right column.

Based on the Commission’s comments, the applicants revised the drawings and returned with a more detailed project and presentation (Exhibit C – Plans & Photographs).

Table 1: Questions Addressed at the April 2018 Cultural Heritage Commission Hearing

	STUDY SESSION– PROPOSED ALTERATIONS	CHC COMMENTS/RESPONSE AT STUDY SESSION	REVISED PLANS
1	Permitting an addition of a stairwell/elevator tower extending from the existing stairwell at east elevation	The Commission generally found the addition acceptable, but also encouraged more contemporary appearance (i.e. glass material) to better comply with SOI Standards.	Alteration Remains – The proposed stairwell still proposed as stucco exterior to match existing building finish.
2	The 14 th floor has varying roof levels, and plans requested raising the roof to a single level thereby enlarging the proposed roof deck and an addition of glass railing	Commission reviewed the visibility and generally found the alteration acceptable	Alteration Remains and Revised – Plans include the raised roof level and glass railing on the 14 th floor. The proposed plans now include a restroom structure on the expanded rooftop terrace.
3	Changes to the third floor including mechanical equipment removal, new pool, glass railing	Commission reviewed the visibility and generally found the alteration acceptable	Revised – The proposed alterations are still included on the third floor, but with one change. The glass rail will now be a solid wall with plaster finish. Only one outdoor pool is proposed in the revised plans.
4	Proposal to replace all windows with period appropriate materials (upper floors)	Steel or wood, based on original materials	Revised – The plans indicate that the proposed windows for upper floors would be of aluminum material.
5	Proposal to replace storefront windows with period appropriate materials	Steel or wood, based on original materials	Revised – The plans indicate that all storefront windows, except one original storefront, would be replaced with aluminum storefront window systems.
6	Review of rear alterations to rear façade	Commission reviewed and generally found the alterations acceptable	Revised - Rear alterations associated with pool area have been removed from project.

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Table 1: Questions Addressed at the April 2018 Cultural Heritage Commission Hearing

	STUDY SESSION- PROPOSED ALTERATIONS	CHC COMMENTS/RESPONSE AT STUDY SESSION	REVISED PLANS
7	Alterations to Sky Room windows	The applicants clarified that plans showed alterations in error, but no longer planned	Revised - No changes to Sky Room windows are proposed.
8	Three (3) options were presented for Victory Park modifications	Commission recommended minimal change to no change at all. Recommendations also included avoiding parking areas in front of building	Revised - The plans only include one option (Option 3) for changes to Victory Park. This option proposes for the widening of the driveway in Victory Park with various planting areas, walkways and berms. Vehicles are proposed to exit onto Collins Way (converted to one way street).
9	Proposal to relocate existing interior historic bar	Commission reviewed and generally found the alterations acceptable	Alteration Remains - No change to plans, as proposed at study session.
10	Proposal to eliminate historical elements at upper level hallways	Commission reviewed and generally found the alterations acceptable	Alteration Remains - No change to plans, as proposed at study session.

SOI = Secretary of the Interior

In addition to the general scope of work presented at the April 2018 CHC Study Session, the revised plans include features not previously presented to the Commission. Table 2, below, includes a summary of changes or new features that were not presented the Commission during the CHC Study Session.

Table 2: Summary of Changes from Plans Presented at the April 2018 Cultural Heritage Commission Hearing

STUDY SESSION PLANS	CHANGE FROM STUDY SESSION PLANS	NEW FEATURE NOT PREVIOUSLY PROPOSED
Two (2) pools proposed – one at second floor (behind tower) and one at third floor	The 2 nd floor pool was removed and replaced with a terrace area.	N/A
3 rd floor pool railing featured a 42-inch-high glass railing	The railing has been revised to be a solid plaster parapet wall at the 3 rd floor.	N/A
N/A	N/A	A new bathroom structure added at 14 th floor roof deck.
Elevator Tower finish to match existing stucco finish	CHC discussion allowed for the building extension to be glass or more contemporary style. The proposed plans indicate that the extension will remain as stucco.	N/A
Victory Park – Three (3) options presented with purpose of widening for two-car width and grasscrete for valet spaces	One option was provided on the revised plans. The driveway is proposed to be widened and reconfigured with exiting onto Collins Way & new landscape plan.	N/A

Table 2: Summary of Changes from Plans Presented at the April 2018 Cultural Heritage Commission Hearing

STUDY SESSION PLANS	CHANGE FROM STUDY SESSION PLANS	NEW FEATURE NOT PREVIOUSLY PROPOSED
Windows presented as compatible in style and appearance	Materials proposed are aluminum for upper stories. The one (1) original storefront window that dates to the period of significance is proposed to be protected in place. The remaining storefront windows are proposed to be aluminum-framed and in a style to reflect the scale and proportions of the original design. Three (3) windows on the rear elevation (alley) will have new metal panel infill panels to cover the area where the new mezzanine area would overlap the window opening.	N/A
Doors at rear elevation (alley)	N/A	The south elevation would include the infill of seven window/door elements and the replacement/addition of new doors to align with the new basement floor plan.

N/A = Not Applicable

Stairwell/Elevator Addition

The biggest and most visible alteration on the plans is an addition to the tower portion of the building to accommodate a new stairwell and service elevator. The addition extends the tower eastward approximately 10 feet from its existing facade. The addition of the stairwell and service elevator is a necessary life safety improvement for the building that provides a gurney elevator and code compliant stairwell. The applicants proposed to finish the addition/extension in stucco to match the original building. The proposal considers the Secretary of Interior’s (SOI) Standard #9 to distinguish the new work from the original building by including separate new rectangular fixed windows and an aluminum reveal along the side of the extension. While these are helpful towards complying with the intent of SOI Standard #9, it’s not sufficient to clearly distinguish the addition. As conditioned, the addition shall be painted a different color from the original building and/or include another treatment to more clearly distinguish the addition/extension.

Rooftop Pool Area and Railing

The revised plans indicate that the proposed 2nd floor rooftop pool at the rear of the building has been removed, which causes no impacts to the historic building. The 2nd floor rear roof is now proposed to be used as an open terrace area with a stairwell to access the 3rd floor pool deck.

The proposed outdoor rooftop pool and deck area on the 3rd floor requires the addition of a 42-inch-high railing. The revised plans contrast the glass railing originally proposed in the study session. As currently proposed, a solid parapet wall would be installed with finishes to match the building colors and designed to complement the existing parapets. Staff recommends, as conditioned, to design the parapet walls to complement the building features, but paint the new walls a separate color to further distinguish the new from the original features. The proposed color change would ensure that the railing would not replicate the original building features.

Windows & Storefront Windows

Windows are an important feature to a building. Over the building's history of uses and seismic strengthening, almost all original windows have been replaced (Exhibit D – GPA Memorandum). One historic storefront remains intact under existing conditions. The existing replacement double-hung windows (upper floors) consist of a vinyl sash style and the storefront windows have been replaced with aluminum windows. Both materials (vinyl and aluminum) are not appropriate for a building from this period. The National Park Service (NPS) provides guidance for window replacement projects including historic high-rise buildings such as the subject property (Exhibit E – Replacement Windows That Meet the Standards). It is recommended that all replacement windows on the structure are of original material, size, and style of the original building (wood or steel). In recognition of the number of windows to be restored, staff has reviewed the NPS guidance for replacement windows and applied those standards to the landmark building.

“Replacement windows on the primary, street-facing or any highly visible elevations that are part of the base of high-rise buildings must match the historic windows in all their details and in material (wood for wood and metal for metal). The base may vary in the number of stories, but is generally defined by massing or architectural detailing.” – National Parks Service

The lower rectangular base of the building extends is visible from all four sides since the building is built to all property lines and windows. As applied to this landmark building, Staff has determined that the base of the building is the area from ground level up to the higher string course (decorative horizontal band) separating the top of the 4th floor and bottom of the 5th floor. Based on this determination, Staff recommends that this portion of the building comply with the NPS guidance for windows on highly visible elevations. The street-facing north (Ocean Boulevard), west (Locust Avenue), and east (Collins Way) elevations shall be treated as highly visible elevations. Therefore, all windows at the base of the building on these elevations shall be restored to original materials and styles (See Plan Sheet A9.02, Photo 2 Enlarged [1926]). Windows that replicate appearance of the original windows above the 5th floor can be replaced another (non-historic) material, as appropriate. Staff has conditioned that the windows and storefront window systems at the base of the building (ground level to string course separating top of 4th floor and bottom of 5th floor, as shown on front elevation) are restored with windows that match the style and materials of the original building.

The proposed north elevation at the ground floor level features a series of storefronts. As proposed, a poster display case is proposed on the western side of the façade. This proposed element appears to break up the symmetry of this ground floor elevation. The

solid wall will be a structural shear wall. Staff has conditioned that the storefront system is restored to match historic style and materials. This would include removing the blank wall on the north elevation and replacing it with a storefront. Staff would consider a proposal to phase the restoration of this elevation to match historic conditions. If restoration of this storefront is not feasible, the blank wall area shall be painted to look like a storefront and incorporate interpretive signage related to the building's history.

Rooftop Terrace

The revised plans include a new restroom structure on 14th floor on the expanded rooftop terrace. The rooftop restroom would extend approximately 1-foot above the new 42-inch glass rail proposed to shield patrons from wind. The new restroom structure on the rooftop terrace would represent an addition that exceeds the existing roof parapet. The proposed rooftop restroom does not appear to be a modification that staff can support. Staff has recommended that the applicant consider the potential for incorporating the restroom inside the cupola base, if feasible.

Fire Escape

A historic fire escape is located on the south elevation of the tower portion of the landmark building. The plans indicate that this fire escape is proposed for removal from the building. As an original feature of the building, staff has conditioned that the fire escape on the rear elevation is protected in place.

Lobby

The ground floor lobby is identified in the landmark ordinance as containing historic design elements and decorative features that should be preserved. Ground-floor lobby areas and arcade hallway areas shall be protected in place. In addition, the historic mail chute adjacent to the elevators shall be protected in place.

Victory Park

The proposed modifications to Victory Park, a City owned park, are best illustrated on the Conceptual Landscape Plan. The plan includes a widened driveway with small cobble pavers for the driving surface, linear pavers leading to the hotel entry, new layered drought tolerant landscaping, bermed landscape areas with retaining walls, new artistic pavers in front of the building into more of courtyard area. The proposal increases the hardscape in the park, but improves the landscaping. The driveway access will continue from Ocean Boulevard, but the driveway configuration is realigned to exit to Collins Way.

At the April 2018 CHC Study Session, the Commission expressed concerns about cars parked on the driveway for extended periods of time and a large number of cars in front of the building. The revised plans proposed to widen the driveway. At its narrowest point on the proposed plans, the driveway would maintain a 24-foot-width and widen at the entry to 33 feet in width. Staff recommends that the driveway be narrowed to match existing conditions. The overall width should be between 20 to 22 feet to still maintain a pass lane

and still allow cars to park and unload. The materials need more evaluation from Parks, Recreation and Marine, but guidance on the general direction from the Commission on materials like contemporary pavers would be helpful.

The landmark ordinance identifies the circular driveway as an important feature associated with The Breakers building. The plans still need to be reviewed by the Site Plan Review which includes Public Works among other City Departments that review these cases.

Victory Park is designated a City parkland in the General Plan, PD-6, and the Local Coastal Program. The widened driveway and courtyard area would effectively remove public park space. In addition, the proposed improvements in Victory Park are designed in a manner that a member of the public would not recognize that the area north of The Breakers is public park space. While the enhancement of Victory Park is permissible, the amount and perception of public park space is subject to zoning standards and findings. Staff recommends that the design of Victory Park is revised to align with the current driveway and planting areas.

Paint Colors

A historic paint analysis has been prepared to document the original color of the building (Exhibit F – Color Analysis Study). The applicant proposes to paint the entire building a single color (off-white, Benjamin Moore, 856 Silver Satin). While this color scheme does not directly reflect the original color of the building (pale peach color), staff finds the proposed colors acceptable. As conditioned, staff requires that the parapet wall around the pool and the new stairwell/elevator addition to be painted a different color than the structure to differentiate the new from the original features.

The windows are proposed to be painted two colors: a black color (P2, Black) at the ground floor to the 2nd floor and an off-white color (P3, Bone White) at the 3rd floor and above. This color scheme would match historic photos of the landmark building.

In addition, as per CHC comments, a condition of approval for this project requires the restoration of the bas-relief on the building. This scope of work would include removal of the existing paint and restoration to match the original finishes and color.

Secretary of The Interior's Standards

While the new improvements represent a change from existing conditions, they are compatible with the existing landmark building's architectural style and use of the building. The improvements should not give a false sense of the property's historical development.

Standard No. 2 states "The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided." No original street facing windows are proposed to be replaced as part of the project. As conditioned, all interior areas designated as character defining features in the landmark ordinance shall be protected in place.

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Standard No. 6 states "Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence." One original storefront window system remains under existing conditions. For windows that have been replaced along street-facing elevations, the applicant shall be required to follow standards established by the National Park Service for replacement windows. As conditioned, any replacement windows at the designated base of the building shall be restored to original style and materials. Replacement windows at the upper floors shall be windows that maintain a similar appearance to the original windows, but may be constructed of non-historic materials.

The Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, Standard No. 9 states that "new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale and architectural features..." The new work would bring the building into compliance with life and safety standards and restore damaged and missing original features of the building. As proposed and conditioned, the new stairwell/elevator addition would be distinguished from the original building by incorporating finished in stucco painted in a different color, new rectangular fixed windows on the east elevation of the addition, and an aluminum reveal along the side of the extension. In addition, the proposed parapet wall around the 3rd floor rooftop pool would be designed to be compatible, but distinguished from the original building by painting the wall a different color. In addition, the storefront system would be restored to original style and materials. Where appropriate on upper floors, non-historic windows would be replaced with new windows of a compatible style, but feature non-historic materials.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff has analyzed the proposed project and has determined that the project meets the requirements set forth in Title 21 of the City's Zoning Code, Section 2.63.080 (Cultural Heritage Commission) of the Long Beach Municipal Code, the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings. With conditions, Staff supports approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness for the project. All the findings can be made in the affirmative for the proposed improvements, as these improvements are compatible in overall scale, massing, proportions, materials and colors to the architectural style of the existing structure on the property and in the context of the landmark ordinance. Staff recommends approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness subject to the conditions of approval (Exhibit G – Findings and Conditions of Approval).

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Public notices were distributed on July 25, 2018. As of this date, no objections have been filed as it relates to the project.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Pursuant to Sections 15301 (Existing Facilities) and 15331 (Historical Resource Restoration/Rehabilitation) of the CEQA Guidelines, and no subsequent environmental review is required.

Respectfully submitted,



CHRISTOPHER KOONTZ, AICP
PLANNING BUREAU MANAGER
CK:AP:mc

- Attachments:
- Exhibit A – Location Map
 - Exhibit B – Ordinance No. C-6609
 - Exhibit C – Plans & Photographs
 - Exhibit D – GPA Memorandum
 - Exhibit E – Replacement Windows That Meet the Standards
 - Exhibit F – Color Analysis Study
 - Exhibit G – Findings & Conditions of Approval