



CITY OF LONG BEACH

R-14

DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

333 West Ocean Blvd., 3rd Floor, Long Beach, CA 90802 (562) 570-5237

September 6, 2016

HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

City of Long Beach
California

RECOMMENDATION:

Request the City Attorney to prepare an Ordinance to designate the roof-mounted "Fly DC Jets" sign located at 3860 N. Lakewood Boulevard as a Historical Landmark. (District 5)

DISCUSSION

The "Fly DC Jets" sign is situated on the rooftop of the building located at 3860 N. Lakewood Boulevard between Conant Street and Carson Street. The property is the site of the former Douglas Aircraft manufacturing plant, which later became known as McDonnell Douglas. The Boeing Company took over the property in 1997 and closed the plant in 2006. The new property owners, Sares-Regis Group, leased the main hangar building to Mercedes Benz USA, which uses the building as a vehicle preparation facility, training facility and regional office for its western United States operations. On August 8, 2016, the Cultural Heritage Commission recommended the City Council landmark the sign (Exhibit A).

The building site is located within the PD-19 zone (Douglas Aircraft Planned Development District), which was originally adopted in 1986 and most recently amended in 2011. The PD-19 zoning permits a comprehensive list of land uses that are broadly consistent with the I-G (General Industry) district.

Last year, the City revised its Cultural Heritage Ordinance to make the landmark designation process more streamlined and consistent with State criteria. During this process, Development Services staff and the Cultural Heritage Commission discussed potential future landmarks that could be considered under the revised Ordinance and the "Fly DC Jets" sign was identified as a potential landmark. Staff approached the property owners with the idea to designate the sign. A site inspection was completed by staff and the property owners in March 2016. The property owners provided staff with rooftop access to inspect the sign. Staff found the sign to be in good condition with no signs of damage, alterations, or signs of deferred maintenance.

The "Fly DC Jets" sign remains at its original location atop the original 1956 Douglas

Aircraft commercial jet manufacturing facility. The sign letters are mounted to metal scaffolding atop the roof along the south end of the building in an east-west direction and oriented to face in a southerly direction. The sign resembles the Douglas Aircraft logo of the mid-1950s. The sign is a Mid-Century Modern design with a "space-age" feel that was widely popular during this era and used for a variety of different businesses. The sign captures the enthusiasm of the aircraft industry with the stylized jet and rocket on the right, the jet stream of the rocket and even the slant of the letters "Fly," which all evoke a sense of movement and speed. Overall, the sign is well preserved and retains its original form and character.

The sign uses exposed neon tubing to illuminate the lettering and graphics. Only two colors are used in the sign: the jet stream is red, while blue is used for the jet, rocket, circle and the word "Fly." It is the most prominent remaining visual symbol of the company's existence in Long Beach, especially since the Douglas Aircraft's military manufacturing facilities across the street to the west have been demolished. The sign has held up well since its construction and has retained its structural integrity. The neon lighting is still functioning and the property owner ensures that it is lit every night.

Currently, the "Fly DC Jets" sign has a limited and unclear standard of protection against alterations. The PD-19 Planned Development Ordinance identifies the sign as being considered a potential historic resource and broadly describes the standard of protection as: "... the "Fly DC Jets" sign shall be retained in place, protected and maintained as is." Landmark designation establishes clarity in the standards that are used to evaluate alterations and the applicable review process. If approved, any future alterations to the sign will require review by the City's Cultural Heritage Commission in order to verify compliance with the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the Cultural Heritage Ordinance.

The subject property is eligible for Long Beach Historic Landmark designation under Criteria A and B of the Cultural Heritage Ordinance. The sign is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of the City's history. The establishment of the Douglas Aircraft manufacturing plant in Long Beach had a tremendous effect on the City's history. Much like the oil industry, the aircraft manufacturing and aerospace industries are closely associated with the City's history and development patterns. As the heart of the aerospace industry in Long Beach, Douglas Aircraft's lasting impacts shaped the City's history, geography, culture, economy and environment. The sign is a familiar visual sight that has become an icon of the City's aircraft manufacturing and aerospace heritage.

The sign is also eligible under Criteria B as it is associated with Douglas W., Douglas Jr., and Douglas Commercial. The aircraft manufacturing facilities provided revenue and jobs to the area as well. Douglas also contributed to the early development of the aerospace industry and was at the forefront of the aeronautics field, especially in Southern California. Therefore, the "Fly DC Jets" sign meets the standard for Criteria B.

This matter was reviewed by Assistant City Attorney Michael J. Mais on August 15, 2016 and by Budget Analysis Officer Rhutu Amin Gharib on August 17, 2016.

SUSTAINABILITY

Establishing the "Fly DC Jets" sign as a Long Beach Historical Landmark will assure its continued use and existence while reducing construction waste as compared to new construction.

TIMING CONSIDERATIONS

City Council action on this matter is not time critical.

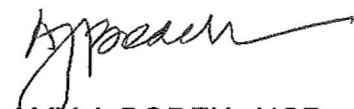
FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal or local job impact associated with this recommendation.

SUGGESTED ACTION

Approve recommendation.

Respectfully submitted,



AMY J. BODEK, AICP
DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

AJB:LT:ck

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APPROVED:



PATRICK H. WEST
CITY MANAGER

Attachment: Exhibit A – August 8, 2016 Cultural Heritage Commission Staff Report



CITY OF LONG BEACH

DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

333 West Ocean Boulevard, 5th Floor • Long Beach, CA 90801 • (562) 570-6194 • Fax (562) 570-6068

August 8, 2016

CHAIR AND CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSIONERS

City of Long Beach
California

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommend the City Council designate the roof-mounted "Fly DC Jets" sign located at 3860 N. Lakewood Boulevard as a Historical Landmark. (District 5).

APPLICANT: City of Long Beach
333 W. Ocean Boulevard
Long Beach, CA 90802
(Application No. HP16-169)

THE REQUEST

The City requests that the Cultural Heritage Commission review the background materials and recommend that the City Council designate the "Fly DC Jets" sign located at 3860 N. Lakewood Boulevard as a local Historical Landmark.

BACKGROUND

The subject sign is situated on the rooftop of the building located on a site on the east side of Lakewood Boulevard between Conant Street and Carson Street (Exhibit A – Location Map). The property is the site of the former Douglas Aircraft manufacturing plant which later became known as McDonnell Douglas. Boeing took over the property in 1997 and closed the plant in 2006. The new property owners, Sares-Regis Group, leased the main hangar building to Mercedes Benz which uses the building as a vehicle preparation facility, training facility, and regional office for its western United States operations.

The building site is located within the PD-19 zone (Douglas Aircraft Planned Development District) which was originally adopted in 1986, and most recently amended in 2011. The PD-19 zoning permits a comprehensive list of land uses that are broadly consistent with the I-G (General Industry) district.

Last year, the City revised its Cultural Heritage Ordinance to make the Landmark designation process more streamlined and consistent with state criteria for Landmark

designation. During this process, Development Services department and the Cultural Heritage Commission discussed potential future landmarks that could be considered under the revised ordinance and the "Fly DC Jets" sign was identified as a potential landmark. Staff approached the property owners with the idea to designate the sign. A site inspection was completed by staff and the property owner in March 2016. The property owners provided staff rooftop access to inspect the sign. Staff found the sign to be in good condition with no signs of damage, alterations, or signs of deferred maintenance.

ANALYSIS

DESIGN

The Fly DC Jets sign remains at its original location atop the original 1956 Douglas Company commercial jet manufacturing facility. The sign letters are mounted to metal scaffolding atop the roof along the south end of the building in an east-west direction and oriented to face in a southerly direction. The sign resembles the Douglas Company logo of the mid-1950s. The sign is a Mid-Century Modern design with a "space-age" feel that was widely popular during this era and used for a variety of business types. The sign captures the enthusiasm of the aircraft industry with the stylized jet and rocket on the right, the jet stream of the rocket, and even the slant of the letters "Fly," which all evoke a sense of movement and speed. Overall, the sign is well preserved and retains its original form and character.

The sign uses exposed neon tubing to illuminate the lettering and graphics. Only two colors are used in the sign: the jet stream is red, while blue is used for the jet, rocket, circle and the word "Fly." It is the most prominent remaining visual symbol of the company's existence in Long Beach, especially since the Douglas Company's military manufacturing facilities across the street to the west have been demolished. The sign has held up well since its construction and has retained its structural integrity. The neon lighting is still functioning and the property owner ensures that it is lit every night. (Exhibit B –Photographs).

HISTORIC CONTEXT AEROSPACE INDUSTRY-1941-1965

The Douglas Company facility and the Fly DC Jets sign were constructed during the Aerospace Industry Subtheme era, 1941-1965, as described in the City of Long Beach Historic Context Statement. The Aerospace Subtheme era is particularly important in this case for establishing a basis of how to evaluate the resource and to understand the time period within its context. The Aerospace Subtheme extensively discusses the Douglas Aircraft facility's influence in the City.

Early efforts by Earl Daugherty helped establish the first municipal airport in Long Beach in 1924. The easy access to an established airport influenced Donald J. Douglas Jr. to locate the Douglas Company facilities in Long Beach in 1940. At the time, the \$20,000,000 military aircraft manufacturing plant encompassed nearly 142 acres and 11 buildings. During World War II, plant workers in Long Beach built more than 9,400

transport, attack and bomber planes at a value of more than \$1 billion. The plant was planned to employ some 50,000 workers, with a payroll in excess of \$56,000,000. After the war, the Douglas Company continued to be one of the largest employers in Long Beach.

The lasting legacy of the aircraft and aerospace manufacturing industry on the City is immeasurable. Establishment of the Douglas Company aircraft manufacturing plant provided an economic incentive for middle class incomes for families to relocate to Long Beach. It spurred the construction of new middle class housing stock that is associated with the post-war period. The Douglas Company played a transformative role in the City's history which is why the Fly DC Jets sign is an iconic symbol representing the aerospace and defense industry's presence in Long Beach. The sign is also important because its Mid-Century Modern style and space age graphics reflect the original Douglas Company mission and because within the community, the sign has become a familiar visual representation of this period.

PERMIT HISTORY

A search of building permit records is a standard research protocol for a historic landmark designation. These records are valuable for the purpose of identifying architects, contractors, craftsmen or other historically significant persons affiliated with the construction of a potential designated resource. A search of building permits was completed for the construction of the sign, but no record was found.

REMOVAL OR RELOCATION CRITERIA

Currently, the Fly DC Jets sign has a limited and unclear standard of protection against alterations. The PD-19 Planned Development ordinance identifies the sign as being considered a potential historic resource and broadly describes the standard of protection as: "... the "Fly DC Jets" sign shall be retained in place, protected and maintained as is." Landmark designation establishes clarity in the standards that are used to evaluate alterations, and the applicable review process. If approved, any future alterations to the sign will require review by the City's Cultural Heritage Commission in order to verify compliance with the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the Cultural Heritage ordinance.

The City's consultant, Environmental Science Associates (ESA) prepared an intensive level evaluation of the sign as a potentially significant historic resource (Exhibit D – Local Landmark Evaluation Report). The evaluation provides a more detailed examination of the area and historic context. This level of evaluation is designed to gather complete information about the resource in order to evaluate it against the established landmark criteria. This evaluation concluded that the sign is historically significant and eligible under the City's landmark designation criteria. The report's conclusion of landmark eligibility applies to the sign only, not the building on which it is located; the building is not subject to this landmark designation.

Maintaining the historic sign in its original location, with which it is historically associated, is generally the ideal situation. However, keeping a sign in its original location is not always feasible. A future sign relocation is feasible when the building is redeveloped and designation of the sign as a historic landmark ensures that the Cultural Heritage Commission will review any future sign relocation proposal. Such a project, will require a Certificate of Appropriateness to be filed and a plan demonstrating how the sign will be removed from the rooftop; lowered from the building; and how it will be transported to the new building on site or off site in a manner that results in the least harm to the sign. City staff has been in contact with the property owner. The property owner has expressed a willingness to work with the City regarding the sign and its relocation, when it processes redevelopment plans for this site in the future.

During that process a licensed historic preservation consultant and/or historic architect would be consulted on a proposed relocation plan. A documentation plan would also be prepared with photographs of the sign in its original location, including sketches/drawing, and written documentation describing the sign.

Staff and the property owner have worked cooperatively on the nomination of this iconic. Staff and the property owner have discussed the future relocation of the sign and agreed to work cooperatively through a Certificate of Appropriateness application process when the relocation occurs.

DESIGNATION CRITERIA

The updated Cultural Heritage Ordinance contains four criteria for designation: associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history (Criterion A), associated with the lives of persons important to the City's past (Criterion B), embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic values (Criterion C), or has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important in prehistory or history (Criterion D).

The subject property is eligible for Long Beach Historic Landmark designation under Criteria A and B. The sign is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of the City's history. The establishment of the Douglas Company aircraft manufacturing plant (later Boeing) in Long Beach had a tremendous effect on the City's history. Much like the oil industry, the aircraft manufacturing and aerospace industries are closely associated with the City's history and development patterns. The City's Historic Context Statement is important because the Context Statement establishes specific periods of time for evaluating historic resources. As the heart of the aerospace industry in Long Beach, Douglas Company's lasting impacts shaped the City's history, geography, culture, economy and built environment. The sign is a familiar visual sight that has become an icon of the City's aircraft manufacturing and aerospace heritage.

With much of the Douglas Aircraft facilities having been demolished, the Fly DC Jets sign is one of the most prominent, visible and unique features that are associated with

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Donald Douglas Jr. and Douglas Aircraft. As a roof mounted sign, this historic resource is important and valued for its history, size, appearance, and familiarity. The sign is a representative example of the City's aircraft and manufacturing history. The sign evokes a sense of place of a past era for the community.

The sign is also eligible under Criteria B as it associated with Douglas W. Douglas Jr, and Douglas Commercial. The aircraft manufacturing facilities provided revenue and jobs to the area as well. Douglas also contributed to the early development of the aerospace industry. Douglas was at the forefront of the aeronautics field especially in Southern California. Therefore, the Fly DC Jets Sign meets the standard for Criteria B.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff has analyzed the landmark nomination and has determined that it meets the requirements set forth in Title 21 of the City's Zoning Code, Section 2.63.050 (Cultural Heritage Commission) of the Long Beach Municipal Code which state that a cultural resource qualifies for designation as a Landmark if it retains integrity and meets one or more of the four findings. Staff supports the nomination, and finds that the nomination meets Criteria A and B.

The proposed nomination is complimentary to the surrounding neighborhood. The sign is currently located within the former Douglas Company aircraft manufacturing plant and mounted atop the roof of the airplane hangar. Its location is within an industrially zoned area, with nearby offices, commercial, Long Beach City College, and a residential neighborhood to the east. The historic sign is important because it's an iconic symbol of the City's long aerospace history in this area of the City. It's historically significant because of its association with Donald W. Douglas who built his airplane manufacturing facilities in Long Beach and because it was constructed within the Aerospace Subtheme. The designation of the sign as a historic landmark protects it from inappropriate alterations and raises awareness of the City's aerospace legacy. The nomination for Landmark status is consistent with the General Plan Land Use Historic Preservation Goal of protecting historic resources from inappropriate alterations.

Staff recommends that the Cultural Heritage Commission make a recommendation to the City Council to approve the nomination.

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Public notices were distributed on July 20, 2016. As of this date no letters have been received.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

In accordance with the 15331 Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), environmental review is not required for actions taken for the preservation or restoration of historic structures.

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Respectfully submitted,



CHRISTOPHER KOONTZ, AICP
ADVANCE PLANNING OFFICER



LINDA F. TATUM, AICP
PLANNING BUREAU MANAGER

LFT:CK:ap

Attachments: Exhibit A – Location Map
Exhibit B – Photographs
Exhibit C – Findings
Exhibit D – Local Landmark Evaluation Report

Exhibit B

