

October 14, 2019

CHAIR AND CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSIONERS
City of Long Beach
California

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness to modify the exterior of the Metropolitan Apartments, a designated local landmark building located at 501-505 East Broadway. (District 2)

APPLICANT: Nancy Downs
P.O. Box 21680
Long Beach, CA 90801
(Application No. COAC1907-02)

THE REQUEST

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness to modify the exterior of the Metropolitan Apartments, a designated local landmark building located at 501-505 East Broadway. The modifications include repairing the deteriorated stucco walls; replacing the non-original storefronts; installing new transom windows and new doors; removing 22 existing vinyl windows and replacing them with single hung wood windows in the same opening; repairing the original column located on the Linden Avenue elevation; repainting the building; and replicating the original main entry door on the Broadway elevation. The modifications will restore the building to its post-1933 design in accordance to the Secretary of the Interior Standards.

BACKGROUND

The subject site, 501-505 East Broadway, is located at the northeast corner of Broadway and Linden Avenue (Exhibit A – Location Map). The site is located within the PD-30 (Downtown Planned Development District) zoning district. The site is developed with a three story, mixed-use building built in 1922. The building is known as the “Metropolitan Apartments” and is a designated local landmark building.

The Metropolitan Apartment Building original 1922 façade was damaged during the 1933 Long Beach earthquake. The building’s current Streamline Moderne façade was designed by noted local architect W. Horace Austin. The building embodies many of the distinctive characteristics associated with the Streamline Moderne style. The structure retains a high level of integrity and maintains several original features, including: the original bays; many of the original windows,



CHAIR AND CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSIONERS

October 14, 2019

Page 2 of 5

speed-inspired horizontal banding; a curved bullnose, the original fire escape; and the original spire. Currently, the ground floor is occupied with five retail spaces and the upper floors consist of 20 individual apartment units. Historically, the upper floors have been used as both hotel and apartments and the ground floor housed commercial uses. The ground floor has been substantially altered. The storefront systems were removed and replaced, all of the transom windows were removed and the openings were framed in. (Exhibit B - Photos).

On June 12, 2017, the Cultural Heritage Commission recommended that the City Council approve the landmark designation of this building. On August 13, 2017, City Council adopted the Ordinance approving the building as a designated landmark (Exhibit C – Metropolitan Apartment Building Ordinance and Resolution). Subsequently, a Mills Act contract was executed between the City and the property owner. The contract agreement detailed a work plan for the building renovation to restore the storefronts, remove inappropriate alterations, restore original features, replace missing architectural features, and repaint the building. All items listed in the work plan are required to be reviewed and approved by the Cultural Heritage Commission.

This application was originally agendized for the September 9, 2019 Cultural Heritage Commission hearing. The applicant requested the item to be continued to "a date uncertain", prior to the September 9, 2019 hearing. This application has been re-noticed and is being re-agendized for the Commission's review.

ANALYSIS

Under the review of this application, the applicant is requesting approval to restore the building to its original post-1933 Streamline Moderne design. The proposed modifications include repairing the deteriorated stucco walls; replacing the non-original storefronts; installing new transom windows and new doors; removing 22 existing vinyl windows and replacing them with single hung wood windows in the same opening; repairing the original column located on the Linden Avenue elevation; repainting the building; and replicating the original main entry door on the Broadway elevation.

Over the years repairs were made to the building and at some point the walls were stuccoed over with a heavy texture finish. In some areas the stucco has cracked or has severely deteriorated. As a result, the applicant is requesting to repair all the exterior walls. The walls will be sanded and new stucco will be applied to the walls to create a historically appropriate smooth stucco finish.

The proposed improvements are described in greater detail below:

Storefront Improvements. Two of the storefront windows on the Linden Avenue (west) building elevation were framed in and installed with smaller window systems. The applicant is proposing to remove the inappropriate windows and framing and install full-length storefront windows to match the remaining original storefront systems. All the transom windows located above each storefront system were removed and framed in.

CHAIR AND CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSIONERS

October 14, 2019

Page 3 of 5

The wood framing and walls will be removed, and new period-appropriate transom windows will be installed. All new storefronts and transom windows will feature wood frames. Building plans for the 1933 Streamline Moderne design were found on file and will be used to aid in the renovations to the building (Exhibit D- Plans).

Windows. All original steel casement and wood windows will be repaired. Twenty-two (22) single hung vinyl windows will be removed and replaced with single hung wood windows.

Removal of Stone Veneer. A stone veneer that is not consistent with the architectural style or the period of construction was applied to the base of the building wall under each storefront window. The applicant is proposing to remove the stone veneer entirely; and apply smooth stucco to the base of the building, consistent with building materials characteristic of the style of the building.

Exterior Paint. The proposed project includes repainting the building exterior. The applicant conducted a color analysis for the building (Exhibit E - Color Analysis Study). The analysis determined that the body of the building was originally painted a light green color, the speed bands were painted yellow, and the doors were painted an off-white color. The applicant is proposing to repaint the building using the same colors as the post-1933 design.

Building Entry. The post-1933 building entry door located on the Broadway elevation was a coffin-style door which has since been altered. This door will be replicated based on photos and original plans for the building.

CONCLUSION

In accordance with the Secretary of Interior's Standards the proposed project is compliant with the following Standards:

Standard No. 2: "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." The proposed improvements will remove inappropriate material and reverse inappropriate remodels that occurred to the structure over time, restoring the building to its post-1933 design. The improvements, such as repairing the exterior stucco and repainting the building, is an effort to retain and preserve original features.

Standard No. 5, "Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved." The proposed improvements will repair deteriorated stucco, repair the original deteriorated column located on the Linden Avenue elevation, and restore the distinctive horizontal speed lines featured on the south- and west-facing elevations. The exterior painting of the building will highlight these distinctive features in efforts to restore the building's distinctive features. All original character defining features will be retained and preserved.

CHAIR AND CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSIONERS

October 14, 2019

Page 4 of 5

Standard No. 9: "The renovations to the building will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property". The proposed improvements to the building will repair cracked and deteriorated material which will extend the life of the building. The installation of new wood storefronts and windows will remove inappropriate material previously installed and reverse inappropriate past remodels of the building. The replication of the original coffin-style entry doors located on the Broadway elevation will restore a character defining feature of the building and remove the historically incorrect entry door that was installed in its place. All new materials will be selected and designed to match the post-1933 character of the building. (Exhibit F – Findings and Analysis).

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 of the Long Beach Municipal Code, the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the Metropolitan Apartment Building Ordinance (No. 17-0013).

All the findings can be made in the affirmative for the proposed improvements, which will restore the building to its original post-earthquake design. Staff recommends approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness, subject to the conditions of approval (Exhibit G – Conditions of Approval).

As conditioned, staff supports approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed rehabilitation of the exterior of the "Metropolitan Apartments" building. The modifications include repairing the deteriorated stucco walls; replacing the non-original storefronts; installing new transom windows and new doors; removing 22 existing vinyl windows and replacing them with single hung wood windows in the same opening; repairing the original column located on the Linden Avenue elevation; repainting the building; and replicating the original main entry door on the Broadway elevation. The modifications will restore the building to its post-1933 design, in accordance to the Secretary of the Interior Standards.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

In accordance with Section 15301(e), Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), this project was found to be exempt from further environmental review.

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Public notices were redistributed on September 25, 2019.

CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION

September 9, 2019

Page 5 of 5

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachments: Exhibit A – Location Map
Exhibit B – Photos
Exhibit C – Metropolitan Apartment Building Ordinance and Resolution
Exhibit D – Plans
Exhibit E – Color Analysis Study
Exhibit F – Findings and Analysis
Exhibit G – Conditions of Approval