

ORDINANCE NO. C- 5787

AN ORDINANCE DESIGNATING THE WILLIAM
BENJAMIN DEARBORN SIMMONS TRACKER PIPE ORGAN
AND THE DR. ROWAN BUILDING AS HISTORICAL
LANDMARKS

The City Council of the City of Long Beach ordains as
follows:

Section 1. Pursuant to the provisions of Section 2399
et seq. of the Long Beach Municipal Code (Ordinance No. C-5364),
and in accordance with the recommendation of the Planning Com-
mission of the City of Long Beach, the City Council of the City
of Long Beach hereby designates the following structure and build-
ing as Historical Landmarks in the City of Long Beach:

(a) The William Benjamin Dearborn Simmons Tracker Pipe
Organ.

1. Location, Description and Reasons for Designa-
tion. Located within the Los Altos United Methodist
Church at 5950 Willow Street in the City of Long
Beach, this organ arrived in San Francisco on the
heels of the Gold Rush days. It has statewide signi-
ficance in that historians believe it to be the
oldest Tracker-type church instrument extant west
of the Mississippi. It was first played in 1852
after its journey around the Horn in a Clipper ship.
It was built in Boston, Massachusetts. It served

1 in two locations in San Francisco, survived the
2 1906 earthquake and is of such quality of con-
3 struction that there is every reason to believe
4 it can be played for another 130 years or
5 more. With such a past as well as this hope for
6 the future, it brings significance to Long Beach.
7 In addition to its history, it had an illustrious
8 builder. William Benjamin Dearborn Simmons of Boston
9 had been apprenticed to Thomas Appelton, a noted
10 organ builder, until 1845. He then formed his own
11 company in partnership with Thomas McIntyre. Simmons
12 died in 1876, aged 53. He is credited with bringing
13 several European Stops to organ building in the
14 United States. The premiere recital of this restored
15 organ commanded news items in 40 publications across
16 the United States. It played to a full house and the
17 audience included hundreds of organists. The Organ
18 Historical Society has placed a plaque in the
19 Sanctuary recognizing the Organ as authentic and
20 significant. It's place in history as an introduction
21 of culture during the excessive era of the Gold
22 Rush, its distinguished builder, its place as
23 a classical specimen of its kind, its fine crafts-
24 manship and promise for the future make it a valuable
25 cultural landmark in our community and state.

26 2. General Guidelines and Standards for Any
27 Changes. The "Standards for Rehabilitation and Guide-
28 lines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings"

1 prepared by the Secretary of the Interior (February,
2 1978), as amended, are hereby incorporated by reference,
3 and the following additional guidelines and standards
4 as recommended by the Cultural Heritage Committee are
5 hereby adopted:

6 (i) That the color of the organ case and
7 the guilding be maintained in their existing
8 condition.

9 (ii) That as soon as economically
10 possible, the church provide a display case
11 to house the memorabilia pertinent to the Organ
12 and its history. That this case should match
13 the overall color scheme of the Organ and the
14 Sanctuary.

15 (b) The Dr. Rowan Building.

16 1. Location, Description and Reasons for Designa-
17 tion. Located at 201-209 Pine Avenue in the City of
18 Long Beach, the Rowan Building brought an example
19 of Art Deco architecture to the City of Long Beach
20 in a truly elegant manner. The extensive use of
21 materials, pattern and livework made the structure a
22 true showcase of the style originated by the
23 Ecole de Beaux-Arts. Although other examples of
24 this style exist on other highrise buildings in
25 the area, none are found on a building of this scale
26 or with the elaborate detailing and use of materials
27 which were incorporated in this building. Located
28 in the center of the commercial area of the City,

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1 this building originally afforded a home for Dr.
2 Cowan (the Father of Southern California Credit
3 Dentistry), and for Nisley Shoes which was the
4 "best women's shoe store in the area". It was less
5 expensive to buy a new set of dentures than it was
6 to purchase a pair of women's shoes at the exclusive
7 Nisley's according to advertising which appeared
8 in late 1930.

9 2. General Guidelines and Standards for Any
10 Changes. The "Standards for Rehabilitation and Guide-
11 lines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings" prepared
12 by the Secretary of the Interior (February, 1978),
13 as amended, are hereby incorporated by reference,
14 and the following additional guidelines and standards
15 as recommended by the Cultural Heritage Committee are
16 hereby adopted:

17 The significance of this Art Deco
18 building is important to the City of Long Beach
19 because it portrays the environment in an era
20 of history characterized by a distinctive
21 architectural style.

22 The Certificate of Appropriateness shall
23 be granted for changes delineated in the Environ-
24 mental Impact Report number ERR-73-80, Negative
25 Declaration ND-60-80, written by the City Planning
26 Department, Environmental Division, June 18,
27 1981.

28 Normal maintenance of the facade shall

1 preserve and/or enhance the Art Deco architecture.

2 Proposed changes to the exterior eleva-
3 tions of the structure shall be reviewed
4 in accordance with the procedures set forth
5 in section 2399.6 of the Cultural Heritage
6 Ordinance relating to the Certificate of
7 Appropriateness.

8
9 Sec. 2. The City Clerk shall certify to the passage
10 of this ordinance by the members of the City Council and it shall
11 take effect on the 31st day after its final passage.

12
13 I hereby certify that the foregoing ordinance was
14 adopted by the City Council of the City of Long Beach at its
15 meeting of December 15, 1981, by the following vote:

16 Ayes: Councilmembers: Wilder, Hall, Clark, Kell, Wilson,
17 Tuttle, Rubley, Sato.

18
19 Noes: Councilmembers: None.

20 Absent: Councilmembers: Edgerton.

21
22 
City Clerk

23
24
25
26
27 WHK:jw
28 11/16/81
D-209 (3)

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