

**CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS
FINDINGS
335 Pacific Avenue (Dolly Varden Rooftop Sign)
Application No. COAC2212-02
May 30, 2023**

ANALYSIS:

In compliance with Section 2.63.080 of the City of Long Beach Municipal Code (Cultural Heritage Commission), the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings (the Standards)*:

The subject site is located at 335 Pacific Avenue in the Downtown Plan (PD-30) Planned Development District. The site is currently developed with a 35-room, 3-story, hotel, 44 surface parking spaces, and a historic rooftop sign. The hotel building was constructed in 1929. While no building permits exist for the rooftop sign, building permits for post-earthquake repairs were taken out in August 1933, including work on the roof and it is assumed that the sign was erected at that time. In 1995, the City Council designated the historic sign to local landmark status in Ordinance No. C-7345. The physical hotel building is not subject to the landmark ordinance and was not identified as a historic resource in the Downtown Plan Certified Final EIR (SCH No. 2009071006). The sign consists of two panels of neon lettering, each positioned in a diagonal fashion, on the front of the roof and joined at the corners in the shape of a "V." The sign reads "DOLLY VARDEN HOTEL...BATH IN EVERY ROOM."

In compliance with Section 2.63.080 of the City of Long Beach Municipal Code (Cultural Heritage Commission), the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings (the Standards)*, staff has analyzed the proposed project, the for temporary removal, preservation, and relocation of the Dolly Varden Rooftop Sign to be re-located onto a replacement building at 335 Pacific Avenue, meets these requirements and those of the City's zoning codes.

FINDINGS: (from Section 2.63.080(D) of the Long Beach Municipal Code)

- 1. (It) will not adversely affect any significant historical, cultural, architectural or aesthetic feature of the Landmark or subject property within the Landmark District and that issuance of the Certificate of Appropriateness is consistent with the spirit and intent of this chapter.**

The proposed project, as conditioned, will not adversely affect any significant historical, cultural, architectural or aesthetic features of the subject property. As conditioned, all work will be conducted pursuant to the guidelines and recommendations of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. The temporary removal, preservation, and relocation of the Dolly Varden Rooftop Sign would ensure the continued presence of the historic landmark in the downtown skyline. The design of the building would be designed to complement the new location of the rooftop sign.

The existing three-story hotel building is not designated as a local historic landmark. The conditions of approval include specific requirements related to treatment and preservation procedures for the relocation of the historic sign. The protected historic components established in Ordinance No. C-7345, such as the sign content and relationship to the downtown skyline would not be modified as part of the project.

- 2. (It) will remedy any condition determined to be immediately dangerous or unsafe by the Fire Marshal and/or Building Official.**

There are no active code enforcement cases or dangerous conditions at this site. Thus, this finding is not applicable.

- 3. (It) will comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and Guidelines for Preservation, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings.**

The proposed project is consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

- 1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.**

The current and previous use of the existing building at 335 Pacific Avenue is a hotel. The existing 3-story hotel and surface parking lot are not protected under Ordinance No. C-7345, the landmark ordinance which protects the sign. Only the rooftop sign is identified as a historic landmark. The proposed project would relocate the historic rooftop sign onto a new multi-family residential building.

The historic Dolly Varden Rooftop Sign will be temporarily removed, preserved, and relocated onto a replacement building at 335 Pacific Avenue. The landmark sign will continue to be used for its intended purpose (rooftop sign). While the building use would change, the content and location of the sign would remain. The landmark ordinance identifies the significance of the sign's notable design of the period and for its charming, nostalgic message and visual impact to the downtown skyline. The sign would be relocated onto the rooftop of the new 8-story building and would maintain the same sign content. Although the use of the underlying building would change and the height of the sign would be increased to the 8th story of the replacement building, the historic message, rooftop location, and visual impact of the sign in the downtown area would remain intact.

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 character defining features of the original historic Dolly Varden Rooftop sign will be retained and preserved with completion of the proposed project. Procedures for treatment of the historic sign have been prepared to serve as framework for the temporary removal, preservation, and relocation of the historic sign. The historic treatment procedures require the preparation of a written plan for historic treatment for the whole project, including each phase or process and protection of surrounding materials during operations. The final treatment plan will describe in detail the professional staff qualifications, materials, and equipment to be used, methods of preservation, and equipment to be used for each phase of work.

3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.

The proposed project will remove the existing historic rooftop sign, temporarily store the sign at a secure off-site location, and reinstall the sign on a new building at the same address, 335 Pacific Avenue. While the hotel building will be replaced with a new 8-story multi-family residential building, which is of a different architectural style and height, the historic sign itself will be preserved and rehabilitated consistent with the SOI for Rehabilitation.

The location on the proposed building will continue to ensure the sign is recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. The sign location would have a similar relationship to the street frontage (Pacific Avenue) but would be located at a greater height from the ground level. The location of the sign has been located north of the historic location, and the building articulation has been designed to include considerations of sign visibility. The replacement building was designed to avoid creating a false sense of history since the placement is modified from the original condition. No changes that create a false sense of historical development will be undertaken and no conjectural features added to the sign.

4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.

The proposed improvements will not change the historic significance of the sign or affect the integrity of the sign. The existing protected sign remains unchanged from historic conditions and its content and association with the downtown skyline would remain unchanged with installation of the sign on the rooftop of the new 8-story building.

5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.

The Historic Dolly Varden Rooftop Sign consists of two panels of neon lettering each positioned in a diagonal on the front of the roof and joined at the corners in the shape of a “V.” The sign reads: “DOLLY VARDEN HOTEL...BATH IN EVERY ROOM.” The top panel is shaped in a basic “T”-form, with the words “Dolly Varden” forming the top bar, of the “T”, and “Hotel” the bottom section. The outline is irregular, with a flattened peak at the top. The words “Bath In Every Room” are located on a bar shape slightly below the top panel. The sign panels are elevated by supporting steel struts. The sign letters are in block capitals with a serif. They are made of neon lights for nighttime illumination.

A condition of approval has been included to ensure that the distinctive features, finishes and construction techniques of Dolly Varden Rooftop Sign are preserved, consistent with SOI Standards for Rehabilitation. The project would not change the design, finish or features of the sign, as it would be relocated in its entirety onto the new building.

6. 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.

While the non-historic hotel building will be replaced with a new 8-story multi-family residential building, the historic sign itself will be preserved and rehabilitated, if damaged, consistent with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation. The proposed historic treatment plan will include preparation of a detailed assessment of existing conditions, which includes photographic evidence of the existing conditions. In the event deteriorated features require restoration or repair, the photographs will serve with a record of the existing condition. In addition, a qualified historic professional is required to be onsite for all removal, storage, restoration, and relocation activities associated with the historic sign. In addition to the treatment program for construction, the applicant shall prepare a maintenance program that outlines a schedule and methods for ongoing maintenance, cleaning, and neon light repair for the historic sign.

7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.

The project would not include physical treatments that would damage the historic sign. As outlined in the historic treatment procedures, prior to issuance of building permits, a historic treatment program and fire-prevention plan would be prepared and submitted to the Department of Development Services. The fire-prevention plan would include compliance with standard procedures while addressing risk related to heat-generating equipment and combustible materials. All restoration would be overseen by a Historic Treatment Specialist with prescribed qualifications and experience. The final historic treatment program will use the gentlest means possible for all restoration efforts.

8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.

No known archeological resources are located at this property. The sign relocation would not include excavation activities. The Site Plan Review (SPR) entitlement (App. No. 2212-09) includes analyses and reports regarding archaeological resources in conformance with Downtown Plan Certified Final EIR (SCH No. 2009071006).

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

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..." As conditioned, the historic sign shall be removed prior to the initiation of construction activities onsite related to the new 8-story building. The sign would be stored in a climate safe storage location until the new building is completed for installation.

The design of the new building provides a step-down mass to provide a lower scale rooftop that highlights the historic rooftop sign. In addition, the folded facade design on the north side of the building intends to accent verticality and reference Downtown's Art Deco legacy. The design of the new building is differentiated from the existing hotel structure, but the relocation of the historic sign to the new rooftop amenity area would maintain its spatial relationship to the downtown skyline.

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

Consistent with Standard No. 10, any modifications undertaken during the temporary removal, preservation, and relocation of the Dolly Varden Rooftop Sign shall be done in such a manner that, “if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.” The project does not propose additions or alterations to the historic sign but preservation treatment plans will be implemented for instances where the sign is damaged at any time during the removal, storage and reinstallation of the sign. Should rehabilitation measures require new construction, the essential form and integrity of the historic sign will be unimpaired.

- 4. (It) will comply with the Design Guidelines for Landmark Districts, for a property located within a Landmark District.**

The landmark sign is not located in a Landmark District; therefore, the project is not subject to consistency with the Design Guidelines for Landmark Districts.