



AGENDA REPORT

Meeting Date: July 24, 2012
Item Number: F-1
To: Honorable Mayor & City Council
From: Susan Healy Keene, AICP, Director of Community Development
Subject: A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS DESIGNATING THE BEVERLY HILLS HOTEL AS THE FIRST LOCAL LANDMARK AND PLACING THE HOTEL ON THE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES
CONSIDERATION OF THE BEVERLY HILLS HOTEL COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUE
CONSIDERATION TO DESIGNATE SEPTEMBER 12, 2012 AS "THE BEVERLY HILLS HOTEL DAY"

Attachments:

1. Landmark Assessment Report – Beverly Hills Hotel
2. Recommendation of the Cultural Heritage Commission
3. Resolution Designating the Beverly Hills Hotel as the City's First Historic Landmark
4. Letter from the Beverly Hills Hotel Requesting the City Council Designate September 12, 2012 as "The Beverly Hills Hotel Day"

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City Council adopt a resolution designating the Beverly Hills Hotel as the first local landmark in the City and placing the Hotel on the local Register of Historic Properties. Additionally, staff recommends that the City Council consider a recommendation from the Cultural Heritage Commission for the hotel's name on the commemorative plaque to be in the Hotel's signature lettering, and third, that the City Council considers a request by representatives of the Beverly Hills Hotel to designate September 12, 2012 as "the Beverly Hills Hotel Day".

INTRODUCTION

This report includes three items associated with designating the Beverly Hills Hotel as the City's first local landmark. These items are as follows:

- Designation of the Hotel as the City's first local historic landmark
- Consideration of a recommendation from the Cultural Heritage Commission to spell the name of the Hotel on the commemorative plaque using the Hotel's signature font
- Consideration of a request from representatives of the Hotel to designate September 12, 2012 as "the Beverly Hills Hotel Day".

BACKGROUND

The Beverly Hills Hotel was the first major building in the City of Beverly Hills. Opened in 1912, the Hotel was constructed as the centerpiece of the new residential community of Beverly Hills and designed to attract tourists and potential residents from the East and Midwest to the beauty and mild climate of southern California. The Hotel was designed by architect Elmer Grey and, in 1949, an addition designed by Paul R. Williams was added to the eastern side of the property.

On April 19, 2012 the owners of the Beverly Hills Hotel submitted a request to be locally recognized as a City of Beverly Hills landmark. On May 23, 2012, the Cultural Heritage Commission reviewed a preliminary assessment of the Beverly Hills Hotel and directed staff to initiate designation proceedings. On June 13, 2012, the Cultural Heritage Commission reviewed the *Landmark Assessment Report – Beverly Hills Hotel* (Attachment 1) completed by Jan Ostashay of Ostashay Associates Consulting and recommended that the City Council designate the Hotel as the first local landmark and place the Hotel on the City's Register of Historic Properties (Attachment 2). A resolution designating the Hotel as the City's first landmark is provided for the City Council's consideration at Attachment 3.

On June 13, 2012 the Cultural Heritage Commission also reviewed designs for the City's commemorative plaque. The Commission developed a standard plaque design, which the City Council approved with revisions for commercial properties on June 3 (the City Council requested that a smaller version be developed for single-family properties and returned for consideration at a later date). When the Cultural Heritage Commission was developing the standard plaque design, it expressed a desire to allow the Beverly Hills Hotel to use its signature lettering for the name of the Hotel on the plaque (Attachment 4). This would be an exception to the City's standard plaque design and would be reserved only for those properties which have historically significant lettering associated with them (the Beverly Hills Hotel's lettering was designed by architect Paul Williams and is historically significant).

On July 3, 2012 the owners of the Beverly Hills Hotel submitted a request for the City Council to designate September 12, 2012 as "the Beverly Hills Hotel Day"

(Attachment 5). This date would coincide with the Hotel's planned landmark ceremony.

DISCUSSION

Each of the decision items is presented separately in the following section.

DESIGNATION OF THE BEVERLY HILLS HOTEL AS A LOCAL LANDMARK

The report provided by Jan Ostashay (Attachment 1) presents findings justifying the Hotel's eligibility as a local historic landmark. Based on the evidence, the Beverly Hills Hotel meets the City's criteria for designation as a local Landmark as required in Section 10-3-3212 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance as follows:

Landmark Designation Criteria (BHMC 10-3-3212)

- The Hotel satisfies the requirement of subsection 10-3-3212 A. 1., in that the property "is identified with important events in the main currents of national, state, or local history, or directly exemplifies or manifests significant contributions to the broad social, political, cultural, economic, recreational, or architectural history of the nation, state, city, or community" because of the Hotel's exceptional contributions to local history as both a hotel, and as an entertainment venue for social life in the City and in the southern California region during the first half of the twentieth century.
- The Hotel also satisfies the requirements of subsection 10-3-3212 A. 3., in that it "embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction" because of the Hotel's architectural design, which embodies the distinctive characteristics of a large luxury hotel and represents the work of Elmer Grey and Paul R. Williams who are each important creative individuals recognized as master architects.
- In addition, the Hotel satisfies subsection 10-3-3212 A. 6., in that it "[i]s listed or has been formally determined eligible by the national park service for listing on the national register of historic places..." because the Hotel has been formally determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places by the National Park Service.
- The Hotel meets the requirements of subsection 10-3-3212 B., which requires that: "The property retains integrity from its period of significance. The proposed landmark retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, and association. ..." This criterion is met because the majority of the structures on the site date from the Hotel's period of significance which encompasses the period of time between the years 1912 and 1954.
- The Hotel meets the requirements of subsection 10-3-3212 C., which requires that: "The property has historic value. The proposed landmark is of significant architectural value to the community, beyond its simple market value, and its designation as a landmark is reasonable, appropriate, and necessary to

promote, protect, and further the goals and purposes of this article.” This criterion is met because the Hotel is one of the oldest and most intact resort hotel facilities in southern California. During its period of significance and continuing through the present day the Hotel has catered to the elite of the region and the nation.

In summary, the Hotel warrants designation because it represents the work of important creative individuals who are recognized master architects, Elmer Grey and Paul R. Williams, because of its exceptional contributions as both a hotel and entertainment venue to the social life of the City of Beverly Hills and the southern California region during the first half of the twentieth century, and because the Hotel embodies the distinctive characteristics of a particular property type from its period of significance, which is a large luxury hotel. Additionally, the Hotel retains integrity and historic value. Based on the evidence presented in the landmark assessment report, the Beverly Hills Hotel meets the criteria for designation as a local historic landmark.

COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUE DESIGN

When the Cultural Heritage Commission was developing a standard design for the City’s commemorative plaque, the Commission expressed a desire to allow the Beverly Hotel to use its signature lettering to spell out the hotel’s name. The Commission unanimously recommended that the City Council consider allowing this modification to the plaque in the specific situation for the following reasons:

- The Beverly Hills Hotel lettering is considered historically significant having been designed by Paul R. Williams and introduced during renovations completed in 1949.
- The Beverly Hills Hotel lettering is unique and distinctively representative of Beverly Hills.

Examples of the plaque will be presented at the meeting. If the City Council felt that it was appropriate for the commemorative plaque to incorporate the Hotel’s lettering, this would be an exception to the standard plaque design and would only be available upon consent of the City Council to those properties and businesses that meet these two criteria.

DESIGNATION OF “THE BEVERLY HILLS HOTEL DAY”

Hotel representatives have requested that the City Council designate September 12, 2012 as “the Beverly Hills Hotel Day”. This would coincide with the Hotel’s plans to hold a ceremony commemorating designation of the hotel as the City’s first landmark and placement of the plaque at the hotel’s entrance. With Council direction, staff will prepare a proclamation designating the day.

PUBLIC NOTICE

As required by the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance, the owner of the Beverly Hills Hotel was notified in writing on June 1, 2012, that the Cultural Heritage Commission would consider recommending designation of the Hotel as a local historic landmark on June 13, 2012. No further public notice is required. As of the writing of this report, no public comments have been received.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Designation of the Beverly Hills Hotel, located at 9641 Sunset Boulevard, as a local historic landmark was assessed in accordance with the authority and criteria contained in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the State CEQA Guidelines, and the environmental regulations of the City. It has been determined that designation of the Hotel would not have a significant environmental impact and is exempt from CEQA pursuant to Sections 15061(b)(3), 15308, and 15331 of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations. It can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the designation of the Hotel may have a significant effect on the environment, as no specific development is authorized by this resolution, and any future development proposed pursuant to this resolution will require separate environmental analysis when the details of those proposals are known. Further, designating the Hotel is an action of the City to protect and preserve an historic resource.

GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY

Designation of the Beverly Hills Hotel as a local historic landmark is consistent with the objectives, principles, and standards of the General Plan. General Plan Policy "HP 1.3 – Promote National, State, and Local Designation of Historic Resources" encourages the establishment of programs encouraging the nomination of landmarks.

FISCAL IMPACT

There are no fiscal impacts associated with this report.

Susan Healy Keene
Director of Community
Development

Approved By

Susan Healy Keene