

# Los Angeles Department of City Planning

## RECOMMENDATION REPORT

**CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION**

**CASE NO.: CHC-2011-2487-NR**

**HEARING DATE:** October 6, 2011  
**TIME:** 10:00 AM  
**PLACE:** City Hall, Room 1010  
200 N. Spring Street  
Los Angeles, CA  
90012

Location: 1521 N. Highland Avenue  
Council District: 13  
Community Plan Area: Hollywood  
Area Planning Commission: Central  
Neighborhood Council: Central Hollywood  
Legal Description: LT A of Tract 8930

**REQUEST:** Comments to State of California Office of Historic Preservation on proposed listing of the Hollywood High School District to the National Register of Historic Places

**APPLICANT:** Hollywood High School Alumni  
c/o Historic Resources Group  
12 South Fair Oaks Avenue  
Pasadena, CA 91105

**OWNER:** Los Angeles Unified School District  
333 South Beaudry Ave  
Los Angeles, CA 90017

**RECOMMENDATION** That the Cultural Heritage Commission:

**Adopt the proposed resolution.**

MICHAEL J. LOGRANDE  
Director of Planning

**[SIGNED ORIGINAL IN FILE]**

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Ken Bernstein, AICP, Manager  
Office of Historic Resources

**[SIGNED ORIGINAL IN FILE]**

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Lambert Giessinger, Preservation Architect  
Office of Historic Resources

Prepared by:  
**[SIGNED ORIGINAL IN FILE]**

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Edgar Garcia, Preservation Planner  
Office of Historic Resources

Attachments: A) Resolution

## **FINDINGS**

See Resolution in Attachment A.

## **INTRODUCTION**

In 2007, the State Office of Historic Preservation and the National Park Service approved the City of Los Angeles' application to become a "Certified Local Government" (CLG) for historic preservation under the National Historic Preservation Act. This action provided official recognition to the City of Los Angeles for its new comprehensive historic preservation program with the establishment of the Office of Historic Resources. CLG status gives the City of Los Angeles formal authority to comment on nominations of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects to the National Register of Historic Places and California Register of Historical Resources. Both National Register and California Register nominations are ultimately reviewed by the State Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) and presented for approval before the State Historical Resources Commission (SHRC).

With input from the Rules and Government Committee and the City Council, the Office of Historic Resources developed a procedure to provide comments from the City of Los Angeles to the SHRC while conforming to the City's Intergovernmental Relations process. Approved in December 2008, this process calls for preparation of a proposed resolution (Support/Opposition/General Comments), for approval by the Cultural Heritage Commission, City Council, and concurrence by the Mayor.

## **NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA**

Criterion 1: Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

Criterion 2: Associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

Criterion 3: Property 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, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

Criterion 4: Has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

## **SUMMARY**

Hollywood High School is located on approximately fourteen acres in Hollywood, California. The campus is bounded by Orange Drive (originally Orlando Road) to the west, Highland Avenue to the east, Hawthorn Avenue to the north, and Sunset Boulevard to the south. It is located in a dense, urban environment in the heart of Hollywood's primary commercial center, approximately one-half mile from Hollywood Boulevard. Entrance to the campus is through gates on Orange Drive or Highland Avenue. A wrought iron fence was added to the campus in 1983. The fence is set back from the street and runs between the buildings, instead of around the outer perimeter of the campus. Therefore, it is not a significant visual intrusion and the campus remains visible from the public right-of-way. There are three small staff parking lots – one in the southeast corner of the campus, one along Highland Avenue, which replaced the original front lawn in 1963, and one between the Library and the Science Building. The athletic facilities are located in the northwest portion of the campus. The primary historic

circulation patterns have been retained. The buildings are set among a lush collection of mature trees. There are low hedges and limited lawn space separating the buildings from the sidewalk. The majority of the campus facilities had to be rebuilt following the 1933 Long Beach Earthquake. The replacement structures were all designed in the PWA Moderne architectural style, lending the campus a unique visual continuity. The current campus, a landmark on Sunset Boulevard as much for its entertainment industry connections as for its architecture, was largely designed by the firm of Marsh, Smith and Powell in 1934-1935.

In the 1950s and 1960s minor improvements on the campus were undertaken. In 1953 the Auditorium was upgraded to make it more earthquake resistant by the structural engineering firm of Murray Erick Associates. At the same time, the architectural firm of Marston & Weston was commissioned to modernize the façade and make other improvements that were completed in the spring of 1956. In early 1962 the School Board announced that a design plan was underway for expansion and alteration of the campus and would include buildings to be built over the next five years. In 1965 the original Girls' Gym was condemned and torn down to the gym floor. Construction on a new Gymnasium that included Girls' and Boys' facilities and an Olympic-sized pool was completed in 1968.

Hollywood High School is a prominent, cohesive, and intact collection of PWA Moderne educational buildings constructed following the 1933 Long Beach Earthquake. PWA Moderne buildings were constructed during the Great Depression as part of various government relief projects sponsored by the Public Works Administration (PWA) and the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Also called Depression or Classical Moderne, stylistically PWA Moderne buildings are a stripped down version of Streamline Moderne. The Hollywood High School buildings constructed in the aftermath of the Long Beach Earthquake were designed by the renowned local firm of Marsh, Smith and Powell. The first to be constructed was the Science (and now Administration) Building (1935), followed by modifications to the Library (1935), and then the Liberal Arts and Arts Buildings, both completed in 1938. The Science Building was given an Honor Award by the Southern California Chapter of the American Institute of Architects in recognition of its outstanding architectural qualities in 1939. The exterior modernization of the Auditorium was undertaken by the firm of Marston and Weston, another prominent local architectural practice.

The Hollywood High School Historic District is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A at the local level of significance. Hollywood High was originally founded in 1903 as the first school serving the newly incorporated municipality of Hollywood. It has been in continuous use as an educational facility since its inception, and has significant associations with the entertainment industry and the development of Hollywood. It is also eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C at the local level of significance for its PWA Moderne architecture designed by the regionally significant firm of Marsh, Smith and Powell. The period of significance is 1910-1956, signifying the original construction date of the Library, the earliest extant building on campus, through the completion of alterations to the Auditorium which have achieved significance over time. The campus has a unified visual character and retains a high degree of integrity. It is a prominent institutional example of Marsh, Smith and Powell's work from the 1930s and a significant example of New Deal-era PWA Moderne architecture in Southern California.

## **BACKGROUND**

The National Register application was received by the Office of Historic Resources, Department of City Planning, City of Los Angeles on September 1 , 2011.

## **ATTACHMENT A: Proposed Resolution**

WHEREAS, any official position of the City of Los Angeles with respect to legislation, regulations or policies proposed to or pending before a local, state or federal governmental body or agency must have first been adopted in the form of a Resolution by the City Council with the concurrence of the Mayor; and

WHEREAS, the City of Los Angeles through the Cultural Heritage Commission and its duties as a Certified Local Government has reviewed the National Register of Historic Places nomination for Hollywood High School located at 1521 North Highland; and

WHEREAS, the City of Los Angeles deems that the applicant submitted a complete application and followed proper notification procedures for National Register of Historic Places nominations; and

WHEREAS, the City of Los Angeles believes that the application thoroughly provides an exhaustive architectural description and statement significance; and

WHEREAS, the City of Los Angeles believes that the Hollywood High School Historic District successfully meets Criterion A and C of the National Register of Historic Places criteria as the first school to serve the newly incorporated municipality of Hollywood and as an excellent example of New Deal-era PWA Moderne architecture in Southern California.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, with the concurrence of the Mayor, that by adoption of this Resolution, the City of Los Angeles SUPPORTS the proposed listing of the Hollywood High School Historic District in the National Register of Historic Places.