

Los Angeles Department of City Planning

RECOMMENDATION REPORT

CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION

CASE NO.: CHC-2010-2698-NR

HEARING DATE: October 7, 2010
TIME: 10:00 AM
PLACE: City Hall, Room 1010
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA
90012

Location: State Route 110
Council District: 1 and 14
Community Plan Area: Multiple
Area Planning Commission: Multiple
Neighborhood Council: Multiple
Legal Description: Route of the Pasadena
Freeway (State Route 110) from the Four-
Level Interchange in Los Angeles to East
Glenarm Street

REQUEST: Comments to State of California Office of Historic Preservation on proposed listing of the Arroyo Seco Parkway to the National Register of Historic Places

APPLICANT: California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)
Division of Environmental Analysis
1120 N St. (M.S. 27)
Sacramento, CA 95814

OWNER: California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)

City of Los Angeles

RECOMMENDATION That the Cultural Heritage Commission:

Adopt the proposed resolution.

MICHAEL J. LOGRANDE
Director of Planning

[SIGNED ORIGINAL IN FILE]

Ken Bernstein, AICP, Manager
Office of Historic Resources

[SIGNED ORIGINAL IN FILE]

Lambert M. Giessinger, Preservation Architect
Office of Historic Resources

Prepared by:
[SIGNED ORIGINAL IN FILE]

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

Built in three different phases (1938-1940; 1940-1943; 1948-1953), the proposed Arroyo Seco Parkway Historic District encompasses a 6-lane, 8.21 mile, limited-access roadway (State Route 110, "Pasadena Freeway") traveling in southwesterly direction through the cities of Pasadena, South Pasadena, and Los Angeles from Glenarm Street to the Four Level Interchange. A total of 60 components (grade separations, tunnels, bridges, overcrossings, pedestrian overpasses, pedestrian and equestrian undercrossings, the roadway itself, the Four Level Interchange, Arroyo Channel, and two building) encompass the nomination. Of these elements, 45 are considered contributors to the Arroyo Seco Parkway Historic District while 15 are deemed non-contributors.

Phase I of the proposed historic district consists of the first 6.2 mile section from East Glenarm Street in Pasadena to Avenue 22 in Los Angeles, constructed between 1938 and 1940. The Arroyo Seco Parkway enters Los Angeles city limits near Bridewell and Hough Street, adjacent to San Pascual Park, in the Garvanza area of northeastern Los Angeles.

Phase II (the Southerly Extension) is the 1.7 mile stretch built in 1940-1943 during the second phase of construction, between Avenue 22 in Cypress Park/Lincoln Heights to Adobe Street in Chinatown. This portion utilizes the Figueroa Street Viaduct and the Los Angeles River Bridges to separate north and southbound traffic, routing it on different elevations. Northbound traffic travels through the four Figueroa Street tunnels and across the Figueroa Street Viaduct onto the Arroyo Seco Parkway section. The Figueroa Street Tunnels (1931) and the Figueroa Street Viaduct (1937) were constructed by the City of Los Angeles predate the Arroyo Seco Parkway

Phase III, constructed between 1948-1953, completes the Arroyo Seco Parkway's last half-mile to its terminus at the Four Level Interchange about a quarter mile northwest of downtown Los Angeles. The 154 foot high steel and reinforced concrete interchange acts as a master route separator, guiding traffic from the Hollywood, Santa Ana, Pasadena, and Harbor Freeways through four stacked interwoven roadways. Five additional bridges were constructed between Adobe Street and the Four Level Interchange

BACKGROUND

In 1983, the Arroyo Seco Parkway (Phases I and II) was deemed eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places as the first grade-separated, limited-access, high-speed divided road in the urban western United States.

The National Register application was received by the Office of Historic Resources, Department of City Planning, City of Los Angeles in September, 2010.

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 the Arroyo Seco Parkway (State Route 110); and

WHEREAS, the City of Los Angeles deems that the applicant (Caltrans) 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 of significance; and

WHEREAS, the City of Los Angeles acknowledges its ownership and partial ownership of seven bridges in the proposed Arroyo Seco Parkway Historic District as well as the Arroyo Seco Maintenance Station; and

WHEREAS, the City of Los Angeles concurs with the stated period of significance (1938-1953) and believes that the Arroyo Seco Parkway successfully meets Criterion A, B, and C of the National Register of Historic Places criteria, as the first freeway constructed in the western United States and for its influence in the development of mass transportation in the Los Angeles Basin; and

WHEREAS, while the City of Los Angeles concurs with the finding that Lloyd Aldrich is a significant person under Criterion B, the City of Los Angeles also believes that Merrill Butler, Engineer of Bridges and Structures for the City of Los Angeles for nearly forty years, should be included as a significant person for his contributions to bridge design in the proposed Arroyo Seco Parkway Historic district; and

WHEREAS, the City of Los Angeles has concerns over the ongoing loss of historic fabric associated with Caltran's "Side Barrier, Median Barrier, and Lighting Project" and its associated construction work in 2010 and hopes that the nomination will serve to guide work on the proposed Arroyo Seco Parkway Historic District; and

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 Arroyo Seco Parkway to the National Register of Historic Places.