

Los Angeles Department of City Planning

RECOMMENDATION REPORT

CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION

CASE NO.: CHC-2013-844-HCM
ENV-2012-845-CE

HEARING DATE: April 18, 2013
TIME: 10:00 AM
PLACE: City Hall, Room 1010
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA
90012

Location: 6433 W. La Tuna Canyon Rd
Council District: 7
Community Plan Area: Sunland-Tujunga-Lake
View Terrace-Shadow Hills-East La Tuna Canyon
Area Planning Commission: North Valley
Neighborhood Council: Sunland-Tujunga
Legal Description: Lot PT 29 of Tract V. Beaudry's
Mountains

PROJECT: Historic-Cultural Monument Application for the
SITE OF TUNA CANYON DETENTION STATION

REQUEST: Declare the property a Historic-Cultural Monument

OWNER: Snowball West Investments L.P., Attn: Michael A. Hoberman
PO Box 64277
Los Angeles, CA 90064

APPLICANT: Council District 7
200 N. Spring St., Rm. 470
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RECOMMENDATION That the Cultural Heritage Commission:

1. **Not declare** the property a Historic-Cultural Monument per Los Angeles Administrative Code Chapter 9, Division 22, Article 1, Section 22.171.7
2. **Adopt** the report findings.

MICHAEL J. LOGRANDE
Director of Planning


Ken Bernstein, AICP, Principal City Planner
Office of Historic Resources



Lambert M. Giessinger, Preservation Architect
Office of Historic Resources

Prepared by:


Edgar Garcia, Preservation Planner
Office of Historic Resources

Attachments: Historic-Cultural Monument Application

SUMMARY

The site of the former Tuna Canyon Detention Station is located in the Tujunga area, bounded by La Tuna Canyon Road on the south and Tujunga Canyon Blvd. on the east. Nearly 30 acres, the property serves as the current site of the Verdugo Hills Golf Course, a fully developed golf course consisting of an 18-hole course, driving range, driving range shelter, parking lot and maintenance compound. Mature oak and sycamore trees and other vegetation make up the general landscape.

The subject property is located on a portion of land originally used as a work camp for the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), a federal public works program established in 1933 as part of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal during the Great Depression. Constructed by Army contractors in 1933, the camp compound consisted of seven barracks, a mess hall, administration building, office building, and infirmary. The camp was in use until the fall of 1941, when it was vacated by the CCC while maintaining the buildings intact. Immediately following the attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941, the site transitioned into a temporary internment camp for Japanese, Japanese-American, German and Polish detainees. The subject property became one of the first temporary detention facilities established and was renamed the "Tuna Canyon Detention Station, Immigration, and Naturalization Service." The existing buildings on the property were repurposed for detention use with no new buildings constructed. The only alteration to the site at the time was the installation of a high fence with barbed wire and attached lighting which enclosed the entire compound.

Following the internment camp's closure, the subject property changed ownership twice and was significantly altered from its original condition. In 1947, Los Angeles County purchased 10 ½ acres of the property to establish a Los Angeles Probation school for young boys. During construction of the Verdugo Hills Golf Course in 1960, all original buildings were demolished. The landscaping and topography of the site were also significantly altered from its original condition to accommodate the golf course facilities.

CRITERIA

The criterion is the Cultural Heritage Ordinance which defines a historical or cultural monument as any site (including significant trees or other plant life located thereon) building or structure of particular historic or cultural significance to the City of Los Angeles, such as historic structures or sites in which the broad cultural, economic, or social history of the nation, State or community is reflected or exemplified, or which are identified with historic personages or with important events in the main currents of national, State or local history or which embody the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen, inherently valuable for a study of a period style or method of construction, or a notable work of a master builder, designer or architect whose individual genius influenced his age.

DISCUSSION

The Council Motion argues that the site of Tuna Canyon Detention Station meets specified Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) criteria, as a site "in which the broad cultural, economic, or social history of the nation, State or community is reflected or exemplified."

The events related to the internment of Japanese-Americans and other detainees at this site during World War II are unquestionably significant, and are deserving of wider recognition and deeper understanding. The site's association with the Great Depression and the activities of the CCC are also significant. However, local history may be only be "reflected" or "exemplified" in a

Site of Tuna Canyon Detention Station

CHC-2013-844-HCM

Page 3 of 3

property if the site still retains an ability to convey the historic associations that made it significant. Based on a site inspection performed on April 4, 2013, staff of the Office of Historic Resources has determined that the subject property no longer retains integrity relating to these 1933-1946 historical associations. The demolition activity in 1960 removed all physical buildings and structures associated with the internment camp. Some alterations were also made to the landscape and topography. Based on these findings, the subject property does not appear to be eligible for local designation as a Historic-Cultural Monument.

To commemorate the site's important historical associations, staff recommends that the City Council and local community organizations consider appropriate interpretive displays, signage, markers, or exhibits on the property, to educate and inform visitors about the site's history and its role during the World War II internment.

BACKGROUND

On April 4, 2013, the Cultural Heritage Commission toured the subject property.









