HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
PUBLIC HEARING

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR CULTURAL RESOURCE DESIGNATION FOR
PROPERTY LOCATED AT 1251 DETROIT STREET, WEST
HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA.

PREPARED BY: DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
(Jennifer Alkire, AICP, Acting Planning Manager / HPC Liaison)
(Doug Vu, ASLA, Senior Planner)
(Gurdeep Kaur, Assistant Planner)

STATEMENT ON THE SUBJECT
The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) will consider an application to nominate
the front duplex on the property located at 1251 Detroit Street as a local cultural
resource.

RECOMMENDATION
Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission hold a public hearing,
consider all pertinent testimony, and adopt the following resolution:

1) Draft Resolution No. HPC 19-137: “A RESOLUTION OF THE HISTORIC
PRESERVATION COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD,
RECOMMENDING THAT THE CITY COUNCIL DESIGNATE THE FRONT
DUPLEX ON THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 1251 DETROIT STREET, WEST
HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA AS A LOCAL CULTURAL RESOURCE.”
(EXHIBIT A)

BACKGROUND
On May 6, 2019, Michael Younessi of Via Alegre LLC submitted an application on
behalf of the property owner, Kathy Younessi, to nominate the front duplex on the
property located at 1251 Detroit Street as a Local Cultural Resource. The nomination
materials are contained in Exhibit B and include a description of the site, statement of
significance, historic background, photographs and a bibliography. The historic
resources assessment completed in April 2017 by Leslie Heumann is included as
Exhibit C. Another historic resources assessment completed in July 2017 by Anna
Marie Brooks is included as Exhibit D, and a third historic resources assessment
completed in December 2017 by Kaplan Chen Kaplan is included as Exhibit E. An
application for demolition of all structures on the site, and construction of a new five-
unit apartment building are currently pending.

ATTACHMENT D
**Application Information**

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<tr>
<td>A. Date of Application:</td>
<td>May 6, 2019</td>
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<td>B. Application Deemed Complete</td>
<td>June 5, 2019</td>
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<td>C. Applicant:</td>
<td>Via Alegre LLC (represented by Michael Younessi)</td>
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<td>D. Property Owner:</td>
<td>Kathy Younessi</td>
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<td>E. Location:</td>
<td>1251 Detroit Street</td>
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<td>F. Zoning / General Plan:</td>
<td>Residential, Multi-Family Medium Density (R3C)</td>
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<td>G. Environmental Status:</td>
<td>Categorically Exempt under Section 15331 of CEQA Guidelines (Historical Resource Restoration/Rehabilitation)</td>
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<td>H. Public Notices:</td>
<td>The public hearing was noticed in accordance with the West Hollywood Municipal Code Section 19.58.070(B).</td>
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**Site and Area Conditions**

The subject property is a 6,725 square-foot rectangular shaped lot located on the west side of Detroit Street near the southwest intersection of Fountain Avenue that contains two buildings. At the front, is an approximately 2,064 square-foot, one-story Craftsman style residential duplex that was constructed in 1914, and is generally rectangular in plan with a U-shape at the rear. At the rear is a two-story duplex of no discernable style that was built between 1946 and 1948, and is not considered for designation because it does not contribute to the historical significance of the property. The surrounding neighborhood is developed with multifamily buildings on the west side of Detroit Street and the Ralph's grocery store development on the east side. Staff conducted a site visit to the property on June 13, 2019 and confirmed the south unit is vacant, and the porch is in disrepair.
Architectural Description

The 1914 front duplex that is considered for designation is a representative example of vernacular Craftsman architecture, and this type of bungalow was extremely popular in Southern California residential architecture during its zenith between 1910 and 1926. A duplex in this architectural style is a rare property type in West Hollywood. Based on the 2008 Multi-Family Survey Report conducted for the City of West Hollywood, the structure possesses all the character-defining features of West Hollywood Craftsman architecture including: compact massing and plan, gable roof with overhanging eaves, exposed rafters and purlins, wood clapboard siding, and windows with stylized muntin patterns.

Architectural elements featured on this duplex are also consistent with elements typical of Craftsman architecture including a strong horizontal massing, stylized clapboard siding, two capacious front porches with nested gables that span the front façade, and broadly proportioned window and door openings on each unit. Continuous header moldings link the doorways and window openings that are composed of large fixed sashes flanked by narrower casements and feature a decorative lozenge pattern of muntins in their upper panes.

The subject site's design is characteristic of typical duplexes that largely resemble the density, form, and style of the surrounding modest single-family housing in the neighborhood. The duplex has a strong sense of symmetry in its twin gabled raised porches with mirror image features. Each porch has exposed beams with overhanging
Although famous for a study conducted in 1958, concrete scoring was modified due to subject conditions. A north-south alignment and a base centered at the eaves that meet at the center, and open truss-work supported by perpendicular beams located at the front of each porch to form a king post. The side elevations also have wood-framed sash windows topped by lintels that extend slightly beyond the edges. Painted clapboard siding is laid in a pattern that alternates between tall and short boards. The rear elevation is U-shaped with front-gabled wings of each unit projecting out, flanking a small open space in the rear yard. The rear façade is also symmetrical with a central gable set over an attic vent. This elevation contains one-over-one, double-hung sash windows centered beneath the side gables, and rear doors flanked by half-height windows located in the central recess beneath the central gable.

Early residential developments in West Hollywood featured modest wood-frame cottages and Craftsman bungalows. West Hollywood provided small affordable homes for the workers of the railroad and movie industries. The duplex property type was popular between the 1920s and 1940s. Charles Dodge was listed as the property owner in 1906 and is responsible for the construction of the Craftsman duplex. Dodge was a barber and resided at the property with his wife, Mildred, a gardener, in 1916. Although famous examples of Craftsman architecture are associated with renowned architects such as Greene & Greene and Frank Lloyd Wright, the style was proliferated due to its unique adaptability to vernacular interpretations by contractors and owner builders, such as Charles Dodge. The property has since passed through multiple owners.

The subject property has undergone alterations over time including a roof replacement to asphalt, the addition of security grilles to the windows and a thru-wall air conditioning unit, and the partial removal of window framing and molding on the south unit. However, the building continues to possess a high degree of integrity. Although analysis suggests the building’s rafter tails were shortened and the concrete flooring on the porches and bases of the porch columns have been covered with stucco that may compromise the structure’s material integrity, it is difficult to know for sure because no documentation of the original conditions of the rafter tails or the porches has been presented. More evidence is needed to verify the claims that these features have been altered since many Craftsman style duplexes exhibit similar conditions as the subject property, such as rafter tails that are cut in plane with the edge of the extended eave, scored concrete porch flooring and stuccoed pillars.

Historical Resource Assessments

In 1986-1987, the City completed its first historic resources survey that included a reconnaissance level survey of approximately 1,750 properties, including the subject property. In 2008, the City conducted a multi-family survey of all parcels zoned R2, R3 and R4, which also listed the subject property with the notation that its architectural style was Craftsman and its integrity as “good.”

A Historic Resource Assessment (HRA) for the subject property dated April 28, 2017 was conducted by Leslie Heumann on behalf of Towne Capital Ventures, which concluded that the 1914 Craftsman duplex is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, California Register of Historic Resources, and West Hollywood Register of Cultural Resources. The Heumann HRA was not conducted on behalf of the
current property owner, nor is it associated with the current development application. On February 8, 2018, a Development Permit application was submitted by Towne Capital Ventures. This application included another Historic Resource Assessment dated July 14, 2017, which was prepared by Anna Marie Brooks and concluded that the same duplex does not satisfy the criteria for designation at the federal, state or local levels. Upon the review of both reports, the City concurred with the Heumann report’s finding that the duplex was individually eligible for local, state, and national registers, and determined the Brooks report contained inaccurate information to support its conclusion, including the assumption that the building lacked integrity. According to the National Park Service, a property is eligible for designation if it retains the essential physical features that made up its character or appearance during the period of significance. The current condition of a property alone does not determine the criteria for eligibility.

The applicant then submitted a subsequent Historic Resource Assessment prepared by Kaplan Chen Kaplan dated June 4, 2018, which also concluded that the Craftsman duplex was neither eligible for the listing on the National nor California Registers, nor as a West Hollywood Cultural Resource. While the HRAs concurred on some of the character-defining features of the property, they did not agree as to whether the subject duplex meets the criteria for significance, namely integrity. The City’s historic preservation consultant subsequently reviewed all three HRAs and issued a memorandum on August 30, 2018 that found the Heumann HRA presented the most measurable and specific findings in accordance with CEQA requirements, and recommended the City consider the subject property a historical resource for the purposes of CEQA (Exhibit F).

On May 6, 2019, the property owner submitted this nomination in order to receive a final determination from the City regarding the historic resource status of the property. This determination does not necessarily affect the status of the property as a qualified resource with respect to CEQA regarding any future actions.

ANALYSIS

According to West Hollywood Municipal Code (WHMC) Section 19.58.050, the Historic Preservation Commission may approve a nomination application and recommend City Council designation of a cultural resource if the resource meets one or more of the designation criteria contained in subsections A through D.

Staff recommends that the HPC approve the proposed designation of the duplex at the front of the property based on staff’s analysis of the information contained in the nomination application. The designation can be supported by the following criteria contained in WHMC Section 19.58.050:

A. **Exemplifies Special Elements of the City.** It exemplifies or reflects special elements of the city’s aesthetic, architectural, cultural, economic, engineering, political, natural, or social history and possesses integrity of design, location,
materials, setting, workmanship feeling, and association in the following manner:

1. It embodies distinctive characteristics of a period, method, style, or type of construction, or is a valuable example of the use of indigenous materials or craftsmanship.

The duplex is a highly representative example of vernacular Craftsman architecture that maintains many of the character-defining features of the distinct style, which was primarily used in the design of single-family and sometimes duplex buildings in West Hollywood at the time. The period of significance is from the 1910s through 1926, which includes the construction of 1251 Detroit Street in 1914.

The distinctive characteristics of the building’s 1914-era Craftsman style bungalow design have been retained and include: compact massing and plan, gable roof with overhanging eaves, exposed rafters and purlins, wood clapboard siding, and windows with stylized muntin patterns.

The building retains sufficient levels of all seven aspects of integrity and continues to convey its historic significance. It remains on its original site and retains integrity of location. The building has a majority of the original exterior character-defining features of its original Craftsman design employed by original owner-builder Charles Dodge. Although there have been some alterations including a roof replacement, boarded windows and doors, and other general disrepair, the building retains sufficient integrity to convey its Craftsman design. The building’s setting has been altered with gradual development in the surrounding neighborhood, particularly the commercial development of the grocery store shopping center on the east side of the street. However, the west side of the street where this building is located is in keeping with the residential nature of the street and is comprised of one- and two-story residential buildings. The building retains a majority of its original exterior materials and workmanship with the exception of some materials that have been replaced, thus reflecting the craftsmanship of early 20th century Craftsman design and construction. The building reflects the feeling of a 1914 Southern California Craftsman bungalow residence through its exhibition of original aesthetics and sense of time. The building retains integrity of association including the look, feel, and appearance associated with the early development of West Hollywood and therefore continues to convey its Craftsman design.

B. Example of Distinguishing Characteristics. It is one of the few remaining examples in the city, region, state or nation, possessing distinguishing characteristics of an architectural or historical type or specimen.

The City of West Hollywood had two early periods of development; the 1890s with the establishment of the railyards in Sherman, and then the first two decades of the 20th century with the growth of the entertainment industry and the expansion of the
streetcar line. The subject property was constructed during this second period, and many of the structures from this time have either been demolished or inappropriately remodeled resulting in a loss of integrity. It is one of the few remaining examples in the City that embodies the character-defining features of the Craftsman style that was once dominant in West Hollywood residential development during the first two decades of the 20th century. It is also a rare example of a Craftsman duplex in West Hollywood, a property type not abundantly built, and the survival of one with its character-defining features intact is noteworthy.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The nomination request has been reviewed for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This proposal qualifies for a Categorical Exemption pursuant to section 15331 (Historic Resource Restoration/Rehabilitation) of the CEQA Guidelines. The exemption is applicable to projects entailing the maintenance, repair, and preservation of historical resources in a manner consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

SUMMARY

Staff has determined that the front building at 1251 Detroit Street qualifies for designation as a cultural resource under criteria A1 and B of WHMC Section 19.58.050. The proposed cultural resource embodies the distinctive characteristics of its original 1914-era date of construction. It embodies the elements of the Craftsman architectural design, craftsmanship, and details (Criterion A1). It is a representative example of a Craftsman bungalow as well as a rare surviving example of the West Hollywood Craftsman duplex (Criterion B). Staff recommends approval of the nomination, and recommendation to Council to designate the building a local cultural resource.

EXHIBITS

A. Draft Resolution No. HPC 19-137
B. Cultural Resource Designation Application
C. Historic Resource Assessment #1 (Heumann, April 28, 2017)
D. Historic Resource Assessment #2 (Brooks, July 14, 2017)
E. Historic Resource Assessment #3 (Kaplan Chen Kaplan, December 15, 2017)