

To: Alston & Bird LLP

Attn: Andrea Warren, Associate

From: John LoCascio, AIA, Principal

Date: October 2022

INTRODUCTION

We have evaluated the proposed voluntary seismic retrofit and ADA upgrade of the Barry Building, an Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) located at 11973 San Vicente Boulevard. We reviewed seismic retrofit recommendations by Englekirk Structural Engineers in their report dated June 2022; and ADA upgrade recommendations by Gruen Associates in "Barry Building ADA Upgrade Requirements," dated June 2021. We reviewed the recommendations for compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation ("the Standards") as required by the City of Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Ordinance. Our evaluation included a site visit to observe existing conditions and identify extant character-defining features; review of the property's HCM designation and other documentation of the property's history and development; and review of the proposed voluntary seismic retrofit scheme. We have determined that the proposed seismic retrofit would not destroy historic materials and features that characterize the property and would be compatible with the historic features, size, scale and proportion; and therefore would meet the Standards. The ADA upgrade as proposed would destroy some historic materials and features that characterize the property but would meet the Standards if the recommendations provided in this report are incorporated.

Research, field inspection and analysis were performed by John LoCascio, AIA, a qualified Historic Architect who meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards (36 CFR 61) in Architecture and Historic Architecture.

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

The Barry Building was designated City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument No. 887 in 2007. The property is significant because it reflects "the broad cultural, political, economic or social history of the nation, state, or community." The building was the

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longtime home of Dutton’s Brentwood Books, whose sponsorship of book signings and readings with local writers made it a symbol for the Los Angeles literary scene and fostered a sense of cultural identity along the San Vicente commercial corridor in Brentwood. The Barry Building is also significant because it “embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural-type specimen, inherently valuable for a study of a period, style or method of construction,” as an excellent example of International Style architecture.¹

Description

The Barry Building is located on the north side of San Vicente Boulevard between Montana Avenue and South Saltair Avenue in the Brentwood area of Los Angeles. The two-story commercial building was designed in the International Style by architect Milton H. Caughey and was constructed in 1951. The building consists of four ranges of offices around a central garden courtyard, forming an open square in plan. The second story of the south range is supported only on slender steel pipe columns, leaving the ground floor open to both San Vicente Boulevard and the courtyard. The building has a flat roof and its exterior walls are veneered in smooth cement plaster. Fenestration consists of fixed, wood-framed windows and window walls, and steel-sash casement windows. The landscaped courtyard has raised concrete planters and two curvilinear concrete-and-steel staircases with metal pipe guardrails.

Photographs of the subject property are included in Appendix A. An inventory of character-defining features is included in Appendix B.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Seismic Retrofit

The voluntary seismic retrofit proposed by Englekirk Structural Engineers would include strengthening existing walls, adding new two-story shear walls and new floor and roof diaphragm sheathing, and adding new steel moment frames.

- Strengthening the existing shear walls would include adding new plywood sheathing and nailing to existing framing; adding new hold-down anchors at each end of each wall and new floor-to-wall connections; and enhancing existing footings or adding new footings. These include exterior and interior walls of the north, east and west wings.

¹ “Barry Building Resource Report,” *Historic Places LA*, www.historicplacesla.org/reports/f9bb1c73-ef15-471a-13889f5d6cdd.

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- Construction of new two-story shear walls would include new 2x stud framing with new plywood sheathing and nailing, new hold-down anchors at each end of each wall, and new footings. These would be located on the perimeter and courtyard walls of the north, east and west wings. Each wall would have a minimum length of 5 feet. Actual locations of the new shear walls has yet to be determined.
- New floor and roof diaphragm sheathing would include the addition of new 3/4" plywood sheathing over the entirety of the existing floor and roof sheathing.
- New two-story steel moment resisting frames would be constructed at the south wing. The frames would consist of wide flange steel columns and beams, and new concrete footings. These would be installed in two L-shaped plan configurations, within the two ground-floor tenant spaces of the south wing.

ADA Upgrade

The ADA upgrade proposed by Gruen Associates would include accessible path of travel, plumbing, stairs and balcony railing, vertical transportation, and tenant space improvements.

- Accessible path of travel improvements would include new compliant parking paving, layout, stalls and signage; widening the sidewalk along the east façade; modification or replacement of exterior doors on the east façade; addition of a floor-mounted handrail on the courtyard steps; addition of a curb to the courtyard ramp; addition of a rail or landscape element as a barrier to the underside of the stairs; and addition of handrails for the ramp leading to the CMU addition.
- Plumbing improvements would include upgrading the first-floor men's room and second-floor women's room to compliance; addition of single unisex restrooms on both floors; code-compliant signage; and installation of an ADA-compliant drinking fountain.
- Stair and balcony railing improvements would include the addition of solid or perforated panels to the floating stair risers; contrasting stripes at each tread; replacement of existing stair handrails and balcony guardrails with new handrails at code-compliant height; and addition of wall-mounted handrails at each of the four stairs between the second floor levels.
- Vertical transportation improvements would include addition of elevators and/or lifts to provide access to the second floor; and addition of two exterior areas of assisted rescue on the second-floor balcony.

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- Tenant space improvements would include widening all tenant doorways; modifying interior doors, landings and steps; providing code-compliant entry signage; replacement of all door hardware with lever-type; relocation of hardware mounted outside required range; modification of 9" bottom rails on glazed doors; removal and infill of mail slots in doors; relocation of all switches and outlets mounted outside required range; and modification or replacement of at least one window in each unit with operating parts within the required range.

ANALYSIS OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS

The Barry Building is a designated City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument. Designation as an Historic-Cultural Monument requires Cultural Heritage Commission review for proposed exterior and interior alterations in accordance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*, the nationally-accepted criteria for evaluating change to historic properties.²

The Standards provide guidance for reviewing proposed projects that may affect historic resources. The intent of the Standards is to assist the long-term preservation of a property's significance through the preservation, rehabilitation, and maintenance of historic materials and features. The Standards pertain to historic buildings of all materials, construction types, sizes, and occupancy and encompass the exterior and interior of the buildings. The Standards also encompass related landscape features and the building's site and environment, as well as attached, adjacent, or related new construction.

The treatment "rehabilitation" assumes that at least some repair or alteration of the historic building will be needed in order to provide for an efficient contemporary use; however, these repairs and alterations must not damage or destroy materials, features or finishes that are important in defining the building's historic character. From a practical perspective, the Standards have guided agencies in carrying out their historic preservation responsibilities including State and local officials when reviewing projects that may impact historic resources. The Standards are a useful analytic tool for understanding and describing the potential impacts of substantial changes to historic resources. The Standards have also been adopted by state and local jurisdictions across the country including the City of Los Angeles.

² "What Does Historic-Cultural Monument Status Mean?," *Office of Historic Resources*, <http://www.preservation.lacity.org/commission/what-does-historic-cultural-monument-status-mean>.

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The following analysis evaluates the proposed seismic retrofit and ADA upgrade for compliance with the Standards for Rehabilitation:

Standard 1: A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.

The project does not propose to change the building's use. The project would meet Standard 1.

Standard 2: The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.

The recommended seismic retrofit would minimize potential impacts by adding new plywood shear paneling to the interior face of the walls, to avoid removal of the existing plaster; locating new shear walls to avoid closing existing window or door openings; and locating the new moment frames at the building interior, which is not character-defining. The exterior materials and configuration of the building would remain unaltered. The seismic upgrade would therefore meet Standard 2.

The recommended ADA upgrade as proposed would potentially remove distinctive materials and alter features that characterize the property by modifying or replacing exterior doors on the east façade; adding panels to the floating stair risers; replacing existing stair handrails and balcony guardrails; widening all tenant doorways and replacing hardware; modifying the bottom rails of glazed doors; removing or infilling mail slots; and replacing some windows. The cumulative effect of these alterations would negatively impact the building's historic integrity and significance, and would not meet Standard 2.

Standard 3: Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.

The project does not propose to add conjectural features or elements from other historic properties. It would meet Standard 3.

Standard 4: Changes to a property that have acquired significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.

The project does not propose to alter or remove any changes to the property that have acquired significance in their own right. The project would meet Standard 4.

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Standard 5: Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.

As noted under Standard 2 above, the recommended seismic project would be accomplished without altering or eliminating distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques that characterize the building, and therefore would meet Standard 5. The recommended ADA upgrade project, however, would modify or replace exterior doors on the east façade; add panels to the floating stair risers; replace existing stair handrails and balcony guardrails; widen all tenant doorways and replace hardware; modify the bottom rails of glazed doors; remove or infill mail slots; and replace some windows. The ADA upgrade project as proposed therefore would not meet Standard 5.

Standard 6: Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.

The project does not propose to replace historic features of the Barry Building that would not be directly affected by the seismic retrofit or the ADA upgrade. The project would meet Standard 6.

Standard 7: Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.

The project does not propose chemical or physical treatments to historic materials that are not directly affected by the seismic retrofit or the ADA upgrade. The project would meet Standard 6.

Standard 8: Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.

If the owner identifies, protects, preserves, and/or documents potential archaeological resources that may be uncovered on the project site as recommended by a qualified archaeologist, the project would meet Standard 8.

Standard 9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

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As noted in the discussion of Standards 2 and 5 above, the recommended seismic retrofit project would not destroy historic materials and features that characterize the property and would meet Standard 9. The recommended ADA upgrade project would modify or replace exterior doors on the east façade; add panels to the floating stair risers; replace existing stair handrails and balcony guardrails; widen all tenant doorways and replace hardware; modify the bottom rails of glazed doors; remove or infill mail slots; and replace some windows. The proposed addition of elevators could alter the building's profile by adding height and bulk that did not exist historically, in the form of elevator penthouses. The ADA upgrade project as proposed therefore would not meet Standard 9.

Standard 10: New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

The recommended seismic retrofit project would be undertaken in such a manner that only the building's interior, which is not character-defining, would be affected. The essential form and integrity of the building would be unimpaired. The seismic retrofit project meets Standard 10.

The recommended ADA upgrade project, however, would permanently alter the essential form and integrity of the building by modifying or replacing exterior doors on the east façade; adding panels to the floating stair risers; replacing existing stair handrails and balcony guardrails; widening all tenant doorways and replacing hardware; removing or infilling mail slots; replacing some windows; and potentially altering the building's profile and massing by adding height and bulk in the form of elevator penthouses. The ADA upgrade project as proposed therefore would not meet Standard 10.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following alterations to the design of the proposed ADA upgrade project should be considered in order to minimize potential impacts to the historic integrity and significance of the Barry Building and bring the project into compliance with the Standards:

1. If egress and entrance are not required on the east façade, retain the existing doors in place and fix them in the closed position to avoid modifying or replacing them. If egress and entrance are required, modify or replace the minimum number of doors required to provide the necessary egress and leave the remaining doors intact and in place.
2. If possible, avoid closing the risers of the floating stairs in the courtyard by utilizing the California Historical Building Code (CHBC). If it is determined by the building

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official that the open risers present a hazard and must be closed, utilize a fine wire mesh or clear Plexiglass, rather than solid panels, to maintain the open appearance.

3. If possible, avoid replacing or altering the existing stair handrails and balcony guardrails by utilizing the California Historical Building Code (CHBC). If it is determined by the building official that the existing handrails and guardrails present a hazard, retain the existing railings in place and add new, differentiated rails or clear Plexiglass panels to achieve the required height and spacing.
4. If possible, avoid widening all tenant doorways and replacing all hardware by utilizing the California Historical Building Code (CHBC). Modify only the minimum required number of doors and hardware, leaving the remainder intact and in place.
5. If possible, avoid modifying the bottom rails of glazed doors by utilizing the California Historical Building Code (CHBC). If it is determined by the building official that the existing condition presents a hazard, add panels that can be removed in the future to preserve the original doors in place.
6. Do not remove or infill mail slots; retain in place and fix in the closed position.
7. Avoid replacing windows. If possible, modify a minimum number of existing windows with new interior ADA compliant hardware. If some window replacement is unavoidable, avoid replacing windows on the primary (south) façade or the courtyard façades.
8. Avoid adding elevators and ramps, especially within the historic courtyard. The preferred option, presented in the Gruen report, is the use of two Limited Use Limited Application elevators that would make two stops on each floor to account for the varying floor levels. Install the LULA elevators within the existing building envelope, in locations that will minimize material and visual impacts to the historic primary façade and courtyard.

CONCLUSION

As demonstrated in the analysis above, the voluntary seismic retrofit of the Barry Building, as proposed, would meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, as required by the City of Los Angeles. The ADA upgrade would meet the Standards if it is amended to adopt the recommendations presented in this report, to minimize potential impacts to the historic integrity and significance of the Barry Building.

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APPENDIX A



Figure 1: Barry Building, exterior, view of south and east façades looking northwest, May 2017 (HRG).



Figure 2: Barry Building, south façade, view looking northwest, May 2017 (HRG).

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Figure 3: Barry Building, view looking northwest from street into courtyard, May 2017 (HRG).



Figure 4: Barry Building, view looking northwest of courtyard entrance, May 2017 (HRG).

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Figure 5: Barry Building, courtyard, view looking southwest, May 2017 (HRG).



Figure 6: Barry Building, Courtyard, view looking northeast, May 2017 (HRG).

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Figure 7: Barry Building, east façade, view looking southwest, May 2017 (HRG).



Figure 8: Barry Building, north façade, view looking southwest, May 2017 (HRG).

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Figure 9: Barry Building, west façade, view looking southeast, May 2017 (HRG).



Figure 10: Barry Building, north and east façades, view looking southwest, May 2017 (HRG).

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APPENDIX B

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Character-Defining Features Inventory
Barry Building, 11973 San Vicente Boulevard
 June 2017

<i>Exterior</i>			
Location	Character-Defining Features	Notes	Photographs
Site and Setting	<p>Concrete-paved setback and flush planters along San Vicente Boulevard</p> <p>Access driveway to east</p> <p>Parking at rear (north) of the building on APN 4404-025-008</p>		
Massing	<p>Hollow square plan</p> <p>Central garden courtyard</p> <p>Two-story height</p> <p>Sculptural rectangular volumes</p> <p>"Floating" overhanging second-story volume at south façade supported on slender, steel pipe piloti; ground floor below open to courtyard</p> <p>Staggered floor and roof planes</p>		

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Character-Defining Features Inventory
Barry Building, 11973 San Vicente Boulevard
 June 2017

Exterior			
Location	Character-Defining Features	Notes	Photographs
South (Primary) Façade	Asymmetrical composition Smooth cement plaster veneer "Floating," overhanging second story volume raised on slender, steel pipe piloti Ground floor open to courtyard Plaster soffit with square, recessed lights Skewed, freestanding volume at ground floor at southeast corner Fixed wood-framed window walls Louvered metal window grilles in wood frames Angled concrete steps to courtyard	Window walls are currently covered with plywood	



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<i>Exterior</i>			
Location	Character-Defining Features	Notes	Photographs
East Façade	Asymmetrical composition Smooth cement plaster veneer Projecting, overhanging second-story volume Steel sash casement windows Fixed wood-framed window walls Wood-veneered flush doors with metal hardware	Some windows have been replaced with fixed glass or aluminum sliders Window walls are currently covered with plywood	
North Façade	Asymmetrical composition Smooth cement plaster veneer Fixed wood-framed window walls and windows Wood-veneered flush doors with metal hardware Passage to courtyard	Window walls and some windows are currently covered with plywood CMU receiving/storage room is a later addition	









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<i>Exterior</i>			
Location	Character-Defining Features	Notes	Photographs
West Façade	Asymmetrical composition Projecting end volumes Smooth cement plaster veneer Steel sash casement and hopper windows		
Roof	Flat roofs with parapets Cantilevered canopies with plaster soffits, wood fascias and square, recessed light fixtures		


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<i>Exterior</i>			
Location	Character-Defining Features	Notes	Photographs
Courtyard	<p>Location, configuration and spatial relationships</p> <p>Asymmetrical composition</p> <p>Walls veneered in smooth cement plaster</p> <p>Fixed wood-framed window walls and windows</p> <p>Wood-veneered flush doors with metal hardware</p> <p>Curvilinear steel-and-concrete “floating” stairs with steel pipe handrails</p> <p>Cantilevered balconies with canted, steel pipe guardrails and plaster soffits with square recessed light fixtures</p> <p>Wood lattice and louvered metal screens</p> <p>Wall-mounted building directory</p> <p>Wall-mounted suite numbers</p> <p>Concrete walks</p> <p>Planters with lush landscaping</p>	<p>Window walls and windows are currently covered with plywood</p> <p>Flagstone paving in center of courtyard is a later addition</p>	       

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<i>Interior</i>			
Space	Character-Defining Features	Notes	Photographs
General	Acoustical ceiling finish Plaster walls Wood-veneered flush doors with metal hardware	Interiors have been reconfigured and refinished over time	

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