

Appendix C-b Cultural and Paleontological Report Mitigation Measures

Appendix

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July 9, 2021 (revised)

Cogstone 5217

To: Dina El Chammas Gass, PE
From: John Gust, PhD, RPA
Re: Mitigation Measures for the Cultural and Paleontological Resources Assessment for the Starlite Residential Project, City of South El Monte, Los Angeles County, California

This study was conducted to determine the potential impacts to cultural and paleontological resources during the Starlite Residential Project (Project) in the City of South El Monte (City; Figure 1), Los Angeles County, California.

As a result of this study, the Starlite Drive-In theater sign (constructed in 1950) is recommended eligible for individual listing on the California Register of Historic Resources (CRHR) under Criteria 1 and 3. The sign is important for its historical association with drive-in movie theaters and car culture in the United States. It is also an excellent example of a Streamline Modern/Googie style theater sign and work of an important architect, J. (Jonas) Arthur Drielsma. The sign is a key element of the Starlite Drive-In theater; the theater as a whole has lost integrity due to demolition of important features, but the sign remains significant in its own right as a freestanding historic resource and retains much of its integrity.

The following includes recommended mitigation measures intended to provide guidance for the future treatment of the Starlite Drive-In theater sign and cultural resources (archaeological) monitoring. These measures incorporate National Park Service U.S. Department of the Interior standards, local ordinances for the treatment of historic properties for the City of South El Monte, and requirements under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Mitigation Measures

CUL-001: Prior to the beginning of ground disturbances, the project proponent shall retain an archaeologist meeting Secretary of the Interior Standards (SOI) to oversee spotcheck cultural resources monitoring of all excavations two feet and deeper within the project area. Spotchecks should occur weekly on average, and no less often than once every seven days that ground disturbance occurs. If a cultural object is uncovered the qualified monitor shall be empowered to temporarily redirect work away from the find while it is evaluated. Work can continue a minimum of 50 feet away from the find. For finds that are not significant, work may resume immediately after the find is documented and removed. If a find is significant, a mitigation plan must be developed, and mitigation completed, prior to work continuing within the 50-foot cordon.

CUL-002: Prior to the beginning of ground disturbances, the qualified monitor will give a short Worker Environmental Awareness Program training presentation prepared by the SOI qualified supervising archaeologist to all construction staff. This presentation will inform construction personnel what cultural

resources may be uncovered during the ground-disturbing phases of the project and what to do who to in case of a find.

CUL-003. Prior to any rehabilitation, restoration, or relocation, a thorough documentation of the sign, similar to a HABS/HAER report, will be completed. This report will document the sign's materials, design, character defining features, measurements, and condition of materials. This report will be used to track changes of the sign and provide a guide for future repair work. Copies will be submitted to one local and one state repository. Restoration, movement, and other handling of the Starlite Drive-In sign will be documented as an update to the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) record for the sign by the qualified architectural historian if restored, or similarly qualified personnel of the recipient organization if donated, and filed at the South Central Coastal Information Center and at a local library or historical society.

CUL-004: The project proponent shall preserve, restore, or rehabilitate the Starlite Drive-In sign, including all historic components, in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior standards based on guidance in NPS Technical Brief 25, The Preservation of Historic Signs <https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/25-signs.htm>. To this end, the proponent shall retain a qualified architectural historian to develop a treatment plan for the work detailing a general timeline, changes to be made to the sign, which tasks are anticipated to be completed off-site (e.g. welding, soldering, glasswork), and to oversee the work. Following approval of the HABS/HAER similar documentation, the qualified architectural historian will ensure that the materials are placed on file with the City of South El Monte and responsible agencies, historical societies and preservation groups, local university and community libraries, and other appropriate national and local repositories and archives, as identified by the City of South El Monte. The qualified architectural historian will prepare a brief report detailing the restoration process to show compliance with standards in NPS Bulletin 25.

CUL-005: The Starlite Drive-In sign may be moved a short distance, so long as it remains within the property boundaries of the drive-in and remains highly visible from Rosemead Boulevard. Alternatively, the sign may be donated to a local historical society for eventual restoration and display. In either case the sign shall be moved by a construction company experienced in handling historic building and structures. The move shall be supervised by the qualified architectural historian, in case of restoration, or recipient organization, in case of donation.

This mitigation measure pertains to movement of the sign from its current location to an eventual new final location. Temporary removal of portions of the sign for repair, refurbishment, or replication is anticipated to be necessary, and will be covered in the treatment plan.

Options

The following definitions for preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction of historic resources are provided by the National Park Service U.S. Department of the Interior.

Preservation is defined as the act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of an historic property. Work, including preliminary measures to protect and stabilize the property, generally focuses upon the ongoing maintenance

and repair of historic materials and features rather than extensive replacement and new construction. New exterior additions are not within the scope of this treatment; however, the limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and other code-required work to make properties functional is appropriate within a preservation project.

Rehabilitation is defined as the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.

Restoration is defined as the act or process of accurately depicting the form, features, and character of a property as it appeared at a particular period of time by means of the removal of features from other periods in its history and reconstruction of missing features from the restoration period. The limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and other code-required work to make properties functional is appropriate within a restoration project.

Reconstruction is defined as the act or process of depicting, by means of new construction, the form, features, and detailing of a **non-surviving** [emphasis Cogstone] site, landscape, building, structure, or object for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific period of time and in its historic location.

Reconstruction is different from the other treatments in that it is undertaken when there are often no visible historic materials extant or only a foundation remains. Because of the potential for historical error in the absence of sound physical evidence, this treatment can be justified only rarely and, thus, is the least frequently undertaken of the four treatments.

Option 1

- Resource will remain *in situ*.
 - If the resource remains *in situ* it will retain its integrity of location.
- The owner, occupant, or other person in actual charge of the resource may implement either NPS U.S. Department of the Interior standards for Preservation, Rehabilitation, or Restoration.

Option 2

- Resource is moved within the property boundaries of the Starlite Drive-In Theater but will remain highly visible from Rosemead Blvd.
 - Moving the resource from its current location will result in a notable loss of integrity of location; however, if the resource remains highly visible and adjacent to Rosemead Blvd. then a total loss of location will be avoided as the original function of the sign was to advertise the Starlite Drive-In to passing motorists.
- The owner, occupant, or other person in actual charge of the resource may implement either NPS U.S. Department of the Interior standards for Preservation, Rehabilitation, or Restoration.

Option 3

Option 3 is recommended only as a last resort in the event that the current owner expresses no desire to maintain or otherwise preserve the Starlite Drive-In theater sign.

- The resource will be donated to a local historical society or agency as approved by the South El Monte Department of Community Development.
 - Moving the resource off of the property boundaries of the Starlite Drive-In theater will result in a total loss of the sign's integrity of location, setting, and association.
- The owner, occupant, or other person in actual charge of the resource may implement either NPS U.S. Department of the Interior standards for Preservation, Rehabilitation, or Restoration.

South El Monte Historic Preservation Ordinance (2011)

17.78.060 Designation Criteria

For the purpose of this chapter, an improvement may be designated a landmark by the city council, and any area within the city may be designated an historic district by the city as hereinafter provided if it meets the following criteria:

- A. It exemplifies or reflects special elements of the city's cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, or architectural history; or
- B. It is identified with persons or events significant in local, state, or national history; or
- C. It embodies distinctive aesthetic characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction, or is a valuable aesthetic example of the use of indigenous materials or craftsmanship; or
- D. It is representative of the notable aesthetic work of a builder, designer or architect. (Ord. 963§39(part), 1995; Ord. 822 §1(part), 1989)

17.78.120 Maintenance and Repair

A. Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to prevent the ordinary maintenance or repair of any exterior architectural feature in or on any property covered by this chapter that does not involve a change in design, material or external appearance thereof, nor does this chapter prevent the construction, reconstruction, alteration, restoration, demolition, or removal of any such feature when the building officer certifies to the commission that such action is required for the public safety due to an unsafe or dangerous condition which cannot be rectified through the use of the California Historical Building Code.

B. The owner, occupant or other person in actual charge of a designated landmark, or an improvement, building or structure in an historic district shall keep in good repair all of the exterior portions of such improvement, building or structure, all of the interior portions thereof when subject to control as specified in the designating ordinance or permit, and all interior portions thereof whose maintenance is necessary to prevent deterioration and decay of any exterior architectural feature.

C. It shall be the duty of the department of community development and the building official to enforce this section. Where the owner of a designated landmark has been ordered by the city to make necessary repairs, but has failed to do so, the city may make improvements necessary for the maintenance of the landmark and charge the cost of those repairs to the owner as a lien upon his property. (Ord. 963 §39(part), 1995; Ord. 822 §1(part), 1989)

