

Agenda Report

TO: CITY COUNCIL **DATE:** NOVEMBER 24, 2008
FROM: CITY MANAGER
SUBJECT: DESIGNATION OF 940 EAST COLORADO BOULEVARD AS A
LANDMARK

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Find that the designation of a historic resource is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act under Class 8, Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment (CEQA Guidelines, Article 19, §15308);
2. As recommended by the Historic Preservation Commission, find that the property at 940 E. Colorado Boulevard is significant under Criterion "A" for landmark designation (PMC §17.52.40) as a representative example of the tourist hotel property type constructed during a significant period in the City's history under the historic context theme of tourism;
3. Approve the designation of the property at 940 E. Colorado Boulevard as a landmark;
4. Adopt the resolution approving a Declaration of Landmark Designation for 940 E. Colorado Boulevard, Pasadena, California;
5. Authorize the Mayor to execute the Declaration of Landmark Designation for 940 E. Colorado Boulevard, Pasadena, California; and
6. Direct the City Clerk to record the declaration with the Los Angeles County Recorder.

RECOMMENDATION FROM THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

On November 3, 2008, at a noticed public hearing, the Historic Preservation Commission voted unanimously to recommend approval of the designation of 940 E. Colorado Boulevard as a landmark.

BACKGROUND

On April 30, 2008, Historic Resources Group (on behalf of the property owner Park Place Commercial, LP) submitted the application for designation of 940 E. Colorado Boulevard, originally the Hotel Constance, as a landmark. The staff evaluated the property according to the landmark criteria in Title 17 of the P.M.C., preliminarily determined that the building qualifies for designation, and forwarded the application to the Historic Preservation Commission.

DESCRIPTION

The site, on the southwest corner of E. Colorado Boulevard and Mentor Avenue, includes the Hotel Constance, a parking garage and two one-story commercial buildings. (The designation is only for the hotel tower.) The seven-story Italian Renaissance Revival building, with 164 guest rooms and five retail spaces, was designed by McNeal Swasey and built in 1926. It is oriented to Colorado Boulevard with a secondary entrance on Mentor Avenue (east elevation).

The 68,374 SF hotel is sited near the property lines, with only minimal setbacks in some areas of the façade. Above the first floor, portions of the building facing Colorado Blvd. are set back almost 16 feet, adding prominence to the main entrance. Rectangular in plan, the building has a tall first floor with elaborate detailing. Architectural details like a rounded band course, frieze, decorative parapet, and bas-relief panels are concentrated on the first and seventh floors with little decoration on floors two through six. A more detailed description of the building and its history is in the attachment report from Historic Resources Group.

The building retains all of the following character-defining features of Italian Renaissance Revival architecture referenced in the *Design Guidelines for Historic Districts*:¹

- Symmetrical with rectangular plan
- Shallow hipped roof with red-clay tile
- Stucco walls
- Prominent entry bay with pilaster surrounds and distinctive classical detailing
- Arched openings
- Quoins and other classical detailing

The hotel is relatively intact with only minor reversible alterations. The second-floor terrace on the north elevation has been enclosed and arched openings have been filled in above with doors or windows below. Arched openings on the west elevation have been closed off and an access ramp has been added. The Mentor entrance has been blocked off and most of the storefronts and secondary entrance have been boarded up.

¹ Nore Winter, *Design Guidelines for Historic Districts in the City of Pasadena*, April 2002, p. 18.

McNeal Swasey (1891-1946)²

The son of an architect, McNeal Swasey, worked in his father's New York City architecture office and attended Yale University before serving in World War I. After the war, he moved to southern California and was a project manager for Myron Hunt from 1919-1922. Although he operated his own private practice in Los Angeles, he also partnered with Henry C. McAfee for his work on the Arrowhead Village Plan, Arlington Lodge, and Norman Village at Lake Arrowhead circa 1922-1923 and later as Swasey and Hayne on two Bank of America branch buildings in Bakersfield and Redlands, both built in 1928.

ANALYSIS

The property at 940 E. Colorado Boulevard is eligible for designation under Criterion "A," (§17.62.040 PMC):

(The property) is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of the history of the City, region, or State.

Under this criterion, 940 E. Colorado Boulevard is significant as an example of the tourist hotel property type constructed during a significant period in the City's history under the historic context theme of tourism. As opposed to the more well-known resort hotels, the Constance was planned and built as a "popular-price hotel which should be the last word in comfort convenience and safety."³ The owner, Constance Victoria Lewis Perry, was born in Paris, France, educated in New York City and came to Pasadena as a tourist. She was so impressed by the climate, vegetation and architecture she decided to move here and purchase property.⁴

The National Park Service defines integrity as the ability of a property to convey its significance; the seven aspects of integrity are location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association⁵. To retain historic integrity, a property will always possess several of these aspects, and essential physical features must be present. The former Hotel Constance retains historic integrity through its design, setting, materials, workmanship and feeling. The *design*, including the massing, arrangement of spaces and pattern of fenestration, reflects the historic functions, technologies and aesthetics common to hotels from this period. The *setting* refers to the character of the place; this hotel sited on Colorado Boulevard, adjacent to commercial is appropriate for a hotel built in 1926. The choice and combination of *materials* (reinforced concrete and cast stone) reveal preferences of the designer and availability of products and technologies. The *workmanship* of the property is evident in the bas-relief and

² Architect Database: <https://digital.lib.washington.edu>

³ "Hotel Result of Woman's Vision," *Pasadena Star News*, December 2, 1926.

⁴ "Pasadena to Have New Hotel," *Pasadena Star News*, November 20, 1925.

⁵ NR Bulletin 15, Section VIII. HOW TO EVALUATE THE INTEGRITY OF A PROPERTY.

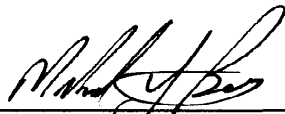
other decorative elements and reveals the technology of a craft and aesthetic principles. The *feeling* (a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular time) of the hotel is apparent from the surviving physical features.

The City has properties in National Register under the context of tourism⁶ but no landmarks—properties that qualify for landmark designation include: the Livingston Hotel and Stanley Apartments at 131-139 and 141-149 S. Los Robles Avenue, Le Chateau at 34 S. Mentor Avenue, and the Brookmore Hotel at 189 North Marengo Avenue.

FISCAL IMPACT

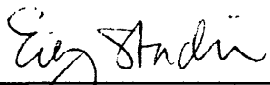
Designation of a landmark does not affect revenues to the City. In some instances, though, owners of designated properties may apply to the City for a Historic Property Contract, which allows for a reduction in property taxes in exchange for a long-term commitment to invest in rehabilitation of a property. The City Council reviewed the projected loss of property tax revenue from this program in 2002 when it adopted a local Historic Property Contract (Mills Act) ordinance.

Respectfully submitted,



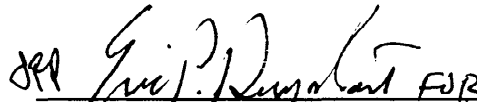
Michael J. Beck
City Manager

Prepared by:



Emily Stadnicki
Senior Planner

Reviewed by:



Richard J. Bruckner
Director of Planning & Development

ATTACHMENTS

- A: Landmark Application
- B: Selected Photographs
- C: Effects of Landmark Designation

⁶ Other hotels associated with tourism like the Hotel Green, the former Vista del Arroyo Hotel and Bungalows, the Maryland Hotel and the Mira Monte Hotel are either listed individually in the National Register or are contributors to National Register Districts.

RESOLUTION NO.

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PASADENA
ADOPTING A DECLARATION OF LANDMARK DESIGNATION FOR 940 E.
COLORADO BOULEVARD PASADENA, CALIFORNIA**

WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission has found that 940 E. Colorado Boulevard meets criterion A, as set forth in Section 17.62.040(C) of the Pasadena Municipal Code; and

WHEREAS, the commercial building (formerly known as the Hotel Constance) at 940 E. Colorado Boulevard, is significant under Criteria A for designation as a landmark (P.M.C. §17.62.40 C);

WHEREAS, the application for landmark designation is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15331;

WHEREAS, the owner of the property, Park Place Commercial, LP, nominated the property for landmark designation; and

WHEREAS, the City Council may approve a recommendation from the Historic Preservation Commission to designate a landmark and evidence such approval by adopting a declaration executed by the Mayor pursuant to Subsection 17.62.050 (C) of the Pasadena Municipal Code;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Pasadena that the attached declaration of Landmark designation for 940 E. Colorado Boulevard is hereby adopted.

Adopted at the _____ meeting of the City Council on the _____ day of _____, 2008 by the following vote:

AYES:


NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

Mark Jomsky, CMC
City Clerk

Approved as to form:



Theresa E. Fuentes
Assistant City Attorney

DECLARATION OF LANDMARK DESIGNATION FOR:

**940 E. COLORADO BOULEVARD
PASADENA, CALIFORNIA**

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 17.62.070 of the Pasadena Municipal Code, the City Council of the City of Pasadena by this declaration hereby designates as a Landmark certain real property described as:

(See attached Exhibit "A")

Under Pasadena Municipal Code Section 17.62.090, all work affecting designated landmarks, except ordinary maintenance and repair, such as but not limited to new construction and additions, exterior alterations, relocation, and demolition, is subject to review by the Planning Director or City of Pasadena Historic Preservation Commission for compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings.

DATED: _____

ATTEST:

CITY OF PASADENA
A municipal corporation

By: _____
Bill Bogaard, Mayor

Mark Jomsky, CMC
City Clerk

**EXHIBIT A
LEGAL DESCRIPTION**


THOSE PORTIONS OF LOTS 7 AND 8 OF THOMAS AND FARRIS SUBDIVISION OF LOT 1 AND A PORTION OF LOT 4, IN BLOCK "L" OF THE SAN PASQUAL TRACT, IN THE CITY OF PASADENA, COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, STATE OF CALIFORNIA, AS PER MAP RECORDED IN BOOK 10, PAGE 100 OF MISCELLANEOUS RECORDS, IN THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY RECORDER OF SAID COUNTY, MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:

PARCEL 2:

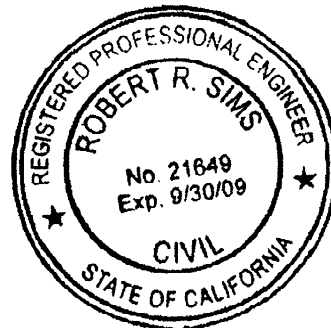
BEGINNING AT THE INTERSECTION OF THE SOUTHERLY LINE OF COLORADO BOULEVARD, 100 FEET WIDE, WITH THE WESTERLY LINE OF MENTOR AVENUE, 60 FEET WIDE; THENCE WESTERLY ALONG SAID SOUTHERLY LINE OF COLORADO BOULEVARD, SOUTH 89°59'40" WEST 99.97 FEET TO THE WESTERLY LINE OF SAID LOT 7; THENCE SOUTHERLY ALONG SAID WESTERLY LINE AND ITS SOUTHERLY PROLONGATION, SOUTH 00°00'35" WEST 177.35 FEET TO A LINE PARALLEL WITH AND 2.00 FEET SOUTH OF THE SOUTHERLY LINE OF SAID LOT 7; THENCE PARALLEL TO SAID SOUTHERLY LINE OF LOT 7, NORTH 89°59'59" EAST 100.00 FEET TO SAID WESTERLY LINE OF MENTOR AVENUE; THENCE ALONG SAID WESTERLY LINE, NORTH 00°00'00" EAST 177.35 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING.

AREA: 17.732 SQUARE FEET, 0.41 ACRES

EXHIBIT "B" IS ATTACHED HERETO AND MADE A PART HEREOF.


Robert R. Sims, R.C.E. 21649
License Expires: 9-30-09

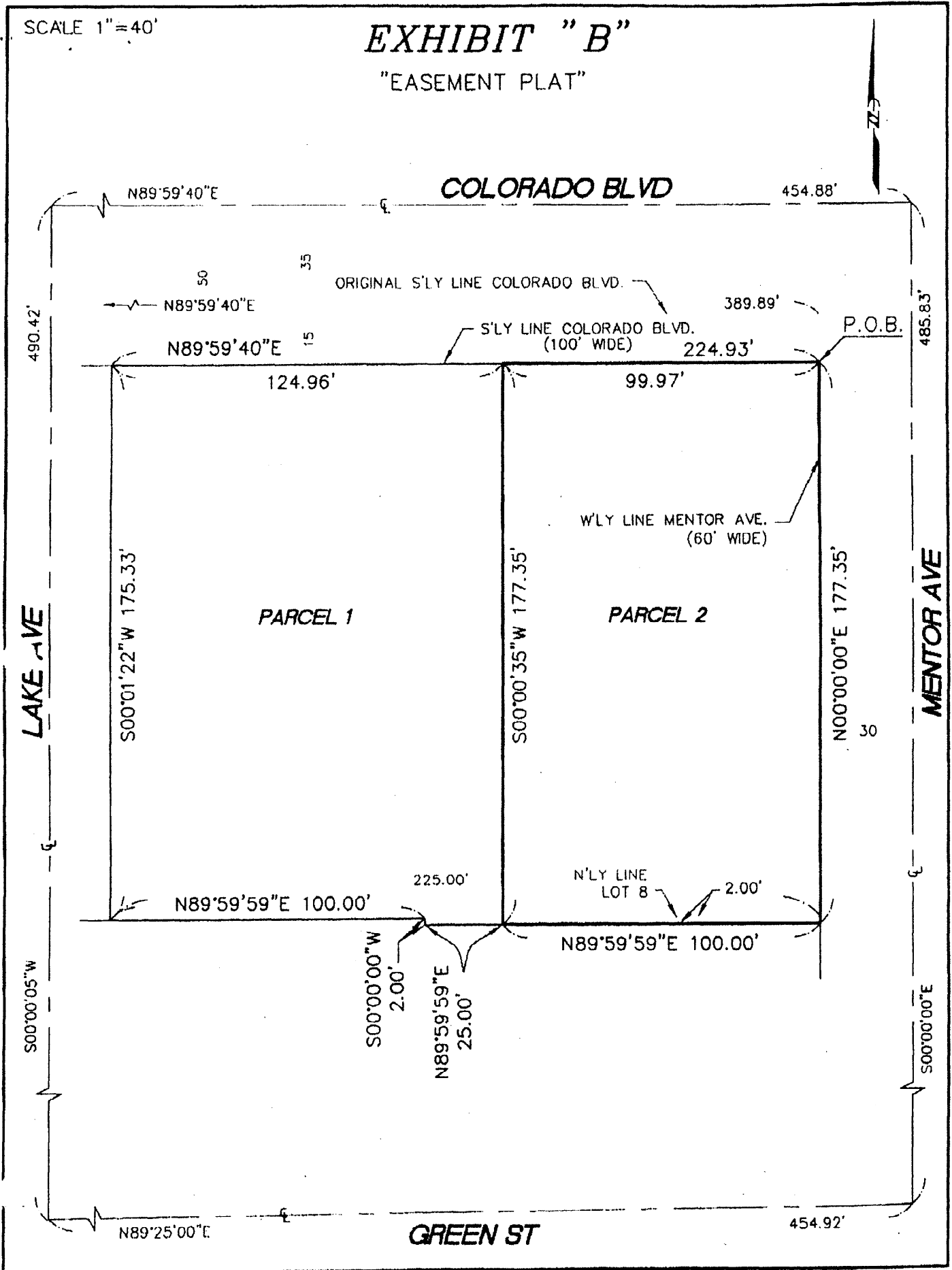
Dated: 11/7/07



SCALE 1" = 40'

EXHIBIT "B"

"EASEMENT PLAT"



J:\PROJ\98060008\MAPPING\2008\11\07\07 14:16:37 .dwg