

AMENDED FINDINGS AND DETERMINATION  
OF THE LANDMARKS COMMISSION  
OF THE CITY OF SANTA MONICA IN THE MATTER OF  
AMENDING THE PRIOR DESIGNATION OF A LANDMARK

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AMENDED DESIGNATION OF CERTAIN IMPROVEMENTS  
LOCATED AT 101 WILSHIRE BOULEVARD (MIRAMAR HOTEL)  
AS CITY LANDMARKS AND THE REAL PROPERTY LOCATED AT  
101 WILSHIRE BOULEVARD AS A LANDMARK PARCEL

12LM-002

SECTION I. The Landmarks Commission designated by its own motion the Moreton Bay fig tree (also known as the Founders Tree) located at 101 Wilshire Boulevard as a City Landmark on August 17, 1976, per Landmarks Commission Case No. LC-03-007, and designated a 50-foot radius from the center of the tree trunk (100 feet in diameter) as a Landmark Parcel. Subsequently, an application was filed by the property owner, Ocean Avenue LLC, on March 15, 2012 to amend this designation. The Landmarks Commission, having held public hearings on November 12, 2012 and January 14, 2013, hereby amends the designation of the Moreton Bay fig tree as a City Landmark by designating the real property commonly known as 101 Wilshire Boulevard (APN 4292-028-001; Block 98 of the Town of Santa Monica) as the new Landmark Parcel with two contributing improvements, (1) the previously designated Moreton Bay fig tree and (2) the Renaissance Revival-style Palisades wing building based on the following findings:

- (1) *It exemplifies, symbolizes, or manifests elements of the cultural, social, economic, political or architectural history of the City.*

The Miramar site manifests elements of the cultural and social history of Santa Monica through its association with the formation of the town of Santa Monica and the development of Santa Monica's identity as a tourist and recreation destination. The full city block site was reportedly one of two reserved for hotel use on the original platting map of the City of Santa Monica, and is one of the few un-subdivided blocks remaining intact from the City's founding in 1875. Senator John P. Jones, one of Santa Monica's founding fathers, originally reserved the property for his estate, the Miramar. The Moreton Bay fig tree, planted in approximately 1899, dates to the period of Senator Jones' ownership of the estate and was reportedly planted by members of the Jones family, including his wife Georgina.

Santa Monica was a popular tourism and leisure destination beginning in the 1850s and by 1921, the Miramar site had been converted into a destination resort. The site has served continuously in the capacity. It was also briefly used as a Redistribution Center by the Army Air Force (AAF) during World War II, where AAF staff assessed returning officers and crew and reassigned them either back to the war front, or to other duties. At the height of its operations, Redistribution Center No. 3 included five other Santa Monica hotels, the Shangri-La Hotel, Club Casa Del Mar, Ocean Palms Hotel (1215

Ocean (demolished)), Edgewater Beach Club and the Grand Hotel (both located at Pico Boulevard on the beach and later demolished).

With its seaside location and amenities, the Miramar site has continuously evolved to attract destination resort visitors. As a result, only one improvement from the site's early history, other than the Moreton Bay fig tree, retains sufficient integrity to convey its significance: the Palisades Wing. Constructed in 1924, the Palisades Wing is a rare local example of an early 20<sup>th</sup> century apartment hotel, an important property type that is representative of Santa Monica's development as a popular tourism and leisure destination. Frequently designed in popular architectural styles of the period, apartment hotels accommodated both seasonal visitors and year-round residents in beach resort towns and reached the height of popularity in the 1920s. The Palisades Wing has several character-defining features of the apartment hotel property type, including the use of a revival architectural style (Renaissance Revival) and increased ornamentation on a primary garden façade.

(2) *It has aesthetic or artistic interest or value, or other noteworthy interest or value.*

The Moreton Bay fig tree is an excellent botanical specimen of its species, with important interest.

(3) *It is identified with historic personages or with important events in local, state or national history.*

The history of the Miramar site is connected to a series of historic personages including Senator John P. Jones, razor magnate King Gillette, and hoteliers Gilbert F. Stevenson, Thomas E. Hull and Joseph Massaglia, Jr. The property boundaries of the Miramar site were established by Senator Jones, who first purchased the block. Aside from the property boundaries, the only remaining improvement from Jones' ownership that can be conclusively identified is the Moreton Bay fig tree. The Palisades Wing was developed by Gilbert F. Stevenson, whose initials are depicted on the terra cotta ornamentation on the building. The other personages listed above were noted developers who made improvements to the site throughout their ownership; however, only the Palisades Wing retains sufficient integrity to be significant for its association with Stevenson. Other historic personages had fleeting association with the site. These associations are not closely connected with the productive work of any historic personage's life and do not rise to any level of significance.

(4) *It embodies distinguishing architectural characteristics valuable to a study of a period, style, method of construction, or the use of indigenous materials or craftsmanship, or is a unique or rare example of an architectural design, detail or historical type valuable to such a study.*

The Palisades wing and associated historic property setting is a rare example of a Renaissance Revival style historical type in Santa Monica. The Palisades wing was designed in the Renaissance Revival style in 1924 by William Ache. The period revival

styles grew in popularity just after World War I, and were patterned after buildings of earlier stylistic periods. The Renaissance Revival style was a common architectural style for public and commercial buildings throughout Southern California. Renaissance Revival commercial buildings were characterized by their Palladian style arched apertures, hipped roof, and wide eaves with brackets. The Palisades wing retains its Renaissance Revival-style exterior, while the interior has been remodeled and rooms reconfigured at various times throughout its history. The exterior of the Palisades wing is organized using the design principles of classical architecture with its base, recessed central section, and topped with a cornice. The Palisades wing has many character-defining features of the Renaissance style, including a low-pitched hipped roof: arches above doors; entrance area accentuated by small classical columns; symmetrical and tripartite elevations, brickwall cladding, terra cotta ornamentation and window and door openings accentuated by decorative surrounds with classical design elements

(6) *It has unique location, a singular physical characteristic, or is an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community or the City.*

The Miramar site property features the singular physical characteristic of a block-sized parcel, which is on the few from the original subdivision to not be further subdivided. Furthermore, the Miramar site occupies a prominent location at the intersection of Wilshire Boulevard and Ocean Avenue, directly across from and with views toward Palisades Park. Although no individual elements of the landscape, other than the Moreton Bay fig tree are historically significant, the property has a verdant landscape character, which is heightened by the palm plantings within the adjacent public street rights-of-way.

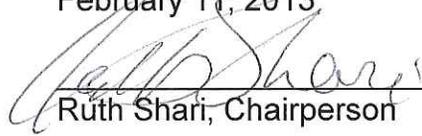
SECTION II. The Administration Building, Ocean Tower and the bungalows are excluded from the Landmark designation since each has undergone significant alterations that have diminished their respective historic integrity.

SECTION III. I hereby certify that the above Findings and Determination accurately reflect the final determination of the Landmarks Commission of the City of Santa Monica on January 14, 2013 as determined by the following vote:

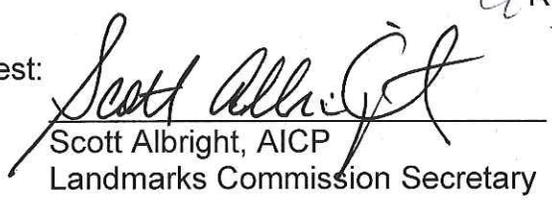
AYES: Berley, Fresco, Kaplan, Lehrer, Chair Shari  
ABSTAIN: Bach  
ABSENT: None  
NAYES: Genser

Each and all of the findings and determinations are based on the competent and substantial evidence, both oral and written, contained in the entire record relating to the Project. All summaries of information contained herein or in the findings are based on the substantial evidence in the record. The absence of any particular fact from any such summary is not an indication that a particular finding is not based in part on that fact.

Respectfully Submitted  
February 11, 2013

  
Ruth Shari, Chairperson

Attest:

  
Scott Albright, AICP  
Landmarks Commission Secretary