

RESOLUTION NO. HPC 24-170

A RESOLUTION OF THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD APPROVING A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR THE REHABILITATION AND EXPANSION OF THE WEST HOLLYWOOD RECOVERY CENTER (LOG CABIN) AT 621 N. ROBERTSON BOULEVARD, WEST HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA.

The Historic Preservation Commission of the City of West Hollywood does hereby resolve as follows:

SECTION 1. In April 2022, the City purchased the property located at 621 N. Robertson Boulevard, known as the Log Cabin, from the City of Beverly Hills. This purchase included a deed restriction that prohibited the redevelopment of the property for any use other than recovery-related services and public parking. In May 2022, the City entered into a contract with Lehrer Architects LA, Inc. (Lehrer) to provide professional services for the programming, pre-design, and rehabilitation of the Log Cabin property based on their experience with historic preservation and projects similar to the program requirements for the recovery community. On June 26, 2023, the City Council approved an agreement with Lehrer for the design development phase for purposes of bidding, permitting, expansion, and rehabilitation of the Log Cabin. The Log Cabin property has been identified as eligible for listing in the National Register and California Register, and for designation as a West Hollywood Cultural Resource.

SECTION 2. On May 16, 2024 the Economic Development Department of the City submitted an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness in conjunction with the rehabilitation of the Log Cabin for the use by the West Hollywood Recovery Center. The project consists of alterations to the existing Log Cabin building including demolition of two non-historic additions on the south and west facades, repair or replacement of the faux log and board and batten exterior cladding, reroofing, replacement of non-compatible non-historic windows with wood clad aluminum double-hung windows, removal of non-compatible, non-historic doors with wood paneled doors, reconstructed front entry steps, the cleaning and reposition of the dedication plaque on east façade, retention of the flag pole and pine trees, and removal of fan from east elevation with interior work including repair of the wood truss ceiling and cleaning of the brick chimney and fireplace; the construction of three new detached structures totaling approximately 3,413 square feet and trellises with photovoltaic panels attached to these buildings to shade the parking area; and site improvements including a regraded and paved public parking lot with EV charging stations, ADA access ramp and connecting walkways, metal security gates, and planting beds for landscaping.

SECTION 3. On June 25, 2024, the Historic Preservation Commission properly reviewed and considered this matter at a public hearing noticed in accordance with West Hollywood Municipal Code. Notice of the public hearing was mailed to the occupant on June 4, 2024, and the staff report and attachments have been available online at weho.org since June 10, 2024.

SECTION 4. Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the proposed project does not have a significant effect on the environment and is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to Section 15331 (Historical Resource Restoration/Rehabilitation) of the CEQA Guidelines that exempt projects limited to maintenance, repair, stabilization, rehabilitation, restoration, preservation, conservation, or reconstruction or historical resources in a manner consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (SOI Standards). The subject property is considered a historical resource for the purposes of CEQA review, and the proposed project is consistent with the SOI Standards as fully described in Section 5 below. Additionally, construction of the new detached buildings is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to Section 15303 (New Construction of Conversion of Small Structures) of the CEQA Guidelines that exempt the construction and location of limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures including up to four commercial buildings not exceeding 10,000 square feet in floor area in urbanized areas where the surrounding area is not environmentally sensitive. The three new buildings contain approximately 3,413 square feet in total floor area and the project site is located in a fully developed and urbanized area that is not environmentally sensitive.

SECTION 5. In accordance with Section 19.58.100(D) of the West Hollywood Municipal Code, the Historic Preservation Commission makes the following findings regarding Certificate of Appropriateness 24-0009:

- a. The proposed work will neither adversely affect the significant architectural features of the cultural resource nor adversely affect the character or historic, architectural, aesthetic interest or value of the cultural resource and its site in that the proposed project was evaluated by a qualified historic preservation professional who determined that the project, which will rehabilitate the Log Cabin structure, renovate the site, and construct two adjacent but separate new buildings complies with the Standards and will not have an adverse impact on the historical resource. The project was found to fully comply with the SOI Standards as described in Section 5.b below. The cultural resource building will maintain all aspects of integrity and will maintain all identified character-defining features relative to its association with the social history of West Hollywood as a clubhouse for the Boy Scouts of America within the 1936-1977 period of significance.
- b. The proposed work conforms to the prescriptive standards and design guidelines, if any, prepared by the Historic Preservation Commission for this particular resource, to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, and does not adversely affect the cultural resource in that the following demonstrates how the proposal conforms to the SOI Standards:
 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 proposed project will rehabilitate the Log Cabin to continue the building's current use as a meeting hall for the West Hollywood Recovery Center (WHRC) and provide expanded facilities and services at the property for the organization. The building has served as a meeting space for various recovery programs since the early 1970s, within the property's 1936-1977 period of significance. While the property's current user differs from its original and longest-standing use by the Boy Scouts of America, the building's general role as a community meeting space will continue. The expansion of WHRC services at the property will require the construction of additional meeting spaces and support facilities on the property, as well as related site improvements. The locations of this new construction are in areas of the property that are not character-defining nor historically significant and will not alter distinctive spaces or spatial relationships. The project will require limited alterations to the Log Cabin building itself, which will retain its existing use as a meeting hall and its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.

- 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 proposed project will preserve and retain a majority of the historic materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships of the Log Cabin property including the building's single-story massing, false log and wood board exterior wall cladding, wood structure, dominant low-pitched front-facing gabled roof with intersecting cross-gables, exposed rafters and eaves, entry porch with a projecting front gable supported by wood posts, and centered entrance. At the interior, horizontal wood siding inside the east cross-gabled wing and the large, high volume of the meeting hall, its open queen truss roof framing, and brick fireplace and mantel will also be retained. The project will also retain the two character-defining mature Canary Island pine trees. To meet structural requirements, a character-defining flagpole will be replaced with a new pole to match the original in height, material, and finish but with a wider diameter that will be relocated several inches south of its original location to enhance site circulation.

Some existing features and materials of the property will be removed or altered. Exterior features that will be removed include the infill kitchen addition at the south façade between the two cross gabled wings and the west façade and partial north façade, with its shed roof; existing concrete steps at the front façade and east cross-gabled wing; aluminum windows and window security coverings; and exterior slab doors. The kitchen addition and the

existing west façade clad in narrow vertical wood board were constructed after the fire that damaged the building in 1972. It appears the Log Cabin's original stepped west end, along with a small addition constructed between 1950 and 1969 were demolished following the 1972 fire and a new west façade with the narrow vertical wood board cladding was built several feet to the east, within the massing of the original building. Although the kitchen and west wing alterations took place within the building's 1936-1977 period of significance, they are not considered character-defining features of the property that reflects the property's significance as an intact example of one of a small number of institutional buildings remaining from 1926 to World War II. The aluminum windows, windows coverings, and slab doors proposed for removal also are not character-defining and do not contribute to the historic significance of the building. As such, the removal of these features will not impact the distinctive features that characterize the Log Cabin property. The removal and replacement of the character-defining flag pole and the front entry porch will result in the loss of these two features, though they will be replaced by similar features that will not significantly alter the Log Cabin's historic character.

The proposed project also includes reroofing the Log Cabin building with new composition shingles, removing the westernmost existing, non-historic skylight, and replacing the remaining seven non-historic skylights with larger units to bring more natural light into the space. The building's roof was also replaced following the fire in 1972 and has been clad with composition shingles since it was first constructed. Existing skylights on the roof were likely installed around 1972, as well, or in the years after. As the roof has been previously modified and will be replaced in-kind, replacing the existing roofing material and skylights will not impact any distinctive features or materials nor be highly visible to alter the building's historic character.

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 any changes to the building or site that would create a false sense of historical development. No architectural elements will be installed from other historic properties. The original cladding at the Log Cabin's original west façade is not known, as it was not called out in the 1937 assessor's building records. As such, new horizontal tongue and groove siding that is compatible with the imitation log cladding is proposed rather than making conjectures about the original cladding.

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

The period of significance for the Log Cabin property extends from 1936 to 1977. No alterations dating outside of the period of significance have acquired significance in their own right. Some of the alterations that occurred during the period of significance, such as the west end alterations and kitchen infill at the south façade, have not gained significance. Their removal will either return the building to an earlier configuration or retain the existing configuration.

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

As proposed, the project will preserve the distinctive features, finishes, construction techniques, and examples of craftsmanship that characterize the Log Cabin as a historic property. The character-defining features of the building which convey the techniques and craftsmanship of its construction include the false wood log and wide pine board cladding at the north façade, and exposed wood trusses and rafters. The proposed project will retain these features.

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 character-defining flagpole is deteriorated and is not structurally sufficient. It will be replaced with a new flagpole that matches in height, materials, and finish, although it will have a wider diameter to meet structural requirements.

The set-back wall between the two historic cross-gabled wings at the south façade of the building, originally an exterior wall that was enclosed by the kitchen addition, will be converted back into an exterior wall. Historic documentation in the 1936 assessor's building records noted that the south façade was clad in imitation log, which will be reinstalled to match existing adjacent log cladding on the rest of the south façade.

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.*

Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, are not proposed as part of the project. If surface cleaning of historic materials is determined to be necessary as part of the proposed project, such cleaning would be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.

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

This Standard is not applicable to the proposed project in that the subject property is not a documented archeological site and has been disturbed for past construction.

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.*

As discussed with respect to Standards 2 and 5, the proposed project would retain a majority of the character-defining features of the Log Cabin building. The three new structures will not destroy historic materials, features, or spatial relationships that characterize the property. The site work will involve removing the character-defining entry porch and short flight of concrete steps at the front east entry to provide disable access to the building. The new plinth or landing across the front east façade will be partially sheltered below the projecting front gable and will be accessed by a small central flight of steps similar to the existing condition.

All other new construction proposed as part of the project will be generally compatible with and differentiated from the historic Log Cabin. The new Meeting Room Building at the rear of the Log Cabin will be larger in scale than the historic building, rising to 19'-4" tall at the high point of its shed roofline compared to the 15'-1" tall at the ridgeline high point of the Log Cabin's gable roof, and will have a larger overall footprint. Although larger in height and scale, the new building will be located at the rear of the historic building at the northwest corner of the property and separated from the Log Cabin by an open landscaped buffer. This location minimizes its visibility from the street and allows the Log Cabin to retain its form and prominence as the most visually important feature of the property. The general form, massing, and materials of the new building clearly draw inspiration from and are visually compatible with the historic building, echoing its rectangular footprint, wood frame construction, and gable roof.

Other details of the Meeting Room Building design also relate to the Log Cabin's character but are differentiated enough to clearly distinguish it as new construction. While the building will have a shed roof, distinct from the gabled roof of the Log Cabin, two attached trellises - one with a shed roof profile and one with a gable roof profile - will give the overall impression, when viewed from the public right-of-way, that the building has front-facing gabled roofs. The trellises will be supported by wood posts and be open to differentiate them as structures, and not enclosed buildings. The shed roof trellis will feature patterned metal screens and wood benches. The gable roof trellis will feature wood louvers in its gable end. The setting deep into the property of the new Meeting Room Building and Restroom Building with the trellises will diminish the sense of their height from Robertson Boulevard and the Log Cabin.

The Meeting Room Building's exterior cladding will consist of wood rain screen on the south façade and stucco on the east, west, and north façades with a glazed curtain wall system from the walls on the south, east, and west facades to the clearstory's roofline. Overall, the use of wood or wood-like exterior materials and gabled roof forms will create visual consistency between the new building and the historic Log Cabin, while the inclusion of contemporary glazed curtain walls, stucco siding, and patterned metal screens will clearly distinguish the Meeting Room Building as new construction.

A small new Office Building will be constructed at the southeast corner of the property, containing an additional meeting room and office. The new building will be smaller in scale than the Log Cabin and will feature a similar design to the new larger Meeting Room Building. The smaller scale will allow the new building to be visually deferential to the Log Cabin from the public right-of-way, while the use of wood construction, a shed roof with an attached wood trellis, and stucco cladding will be compatible with and differentiated from the historic materials, features, and overall design of the Log Cabin.

The proposed new site features will also comply with this Standard 9 in that a series of trellises constructed to the south of the new Meeting Room Building and at the west and south property lines will be constructed of wood, consistent with the wood construction and cladding of the Log Cabin but will feature a contemporary design. New landscaping around the front east entrance consisting of a new concrete plinth with concrete steps, a concrete ramp, and planting beds are contemporary interpretations of the existing concrete entry steps and use of vegetation to enhance the natural setting and aesthetics of the Log Cabin. A new concrete pathway along the south side of the

Log Cabin and in the opening between the east and west cross-gables will provide planting beds for the existing character-defining Canary Island pines and the replaced flagpole.

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will 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.

If the new additions and related new construction are removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the Log Cabin will be minimally altered. The Meeting Room Building, Office Building, and Restroom Building, covered trellises, and new concrete plinth, steps, ramp, and walkways can be removed from the site without any impact to the Log Cabin building.

- c. The new use and new construction will not adversely affect, and will be compatible with, the use and design of the existing cultural resource in that the existing cultural resource and new detached buildings will continue to be used as a recovery center which has been the use at this location since the 1970s. The property is not part of a designated historic district.
- d. Wherever feasible, the project will take full advantage of the State Historic Building Code and Uniform Code for Building Conservation in that this has been made a condition of approval of this resolution.

SECTION 6. Based on the above findings, the West Hollywood Historic Preservation Commission hereby approves Certificate of Appropriateness 24-0009 for the proposed rehabilitation and new construction at 621 N. Robertson Boulevard, subject to the following conditions:

- a. This approval is for the Certificate of Appropriateness related to the rehabilitation of the Log Cabin including alterations to the existing building, the construction of three new detached structures totaling approximately 3,413 square feet, and site improvements.
- b. This approval is for those plans date stamped May 29, 2024, which were reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission at its meeting on June 25, 2024. A copy of said plans shall be maintained in the files of the Current and Historic Preservation Planning Division. The project shall be developed and maintained in substantial conformance with said plans, except as otherwise specified in these conditions of approval.
- c. Wherever feasible, the project shall take advantage of the State Historic Building Code and Uniform Code for Building Conservation in construction of the proposed project.

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY A MOTION OF THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD ON THIS 25th DAY OF JUNE 2024.

GAIL OSTERGREN, CHAIRPERSON

ATTEST:

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