

**SUPPLEMENTAL DETERMINATION OF THE CITY OF SANTA MONICA  
LANDMARKS COMMISSION ESTABLISHING EXTERIOR CHARACTER DEFINING  
FEATURES FOR THE CITY HALL SITE**

**I. PURPOSE**

The Landmarks Commission hereby prepares and adopts a Supplemental Determination that identifies the contributing historic elements and features of the landscape and grounds surrounding Santa Monica City Hall ("City Hall") relative to its status as a designated City Landmark.

**II. REGULATORY SETTING**

Santa Monica Municipal Code (SMMC) Section 9.36.060(a) states that the Landmarks Commission shall have the power to "Designate Structures of Merit, Landmarks and Landmark Parcels, and to make any preliminary or supplemental designations, determinations, or decisions, as additions thereto, in order to effectuate the purposes" of Santa Monica Municipal Code Chapter 9.36. SMMC 9.36.120 (f) further states that the Landmarks Commission has the power to make preliminary or supplemental designations, determinations or decisions, as additions to its designation determinations.

**III. HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND SETTING**

The City Hall building dominates the broad, relatively symmetrical and formal landscape which visually supports the structure's monumentality and prominence on the site. The building exterior is an example of the 1930s PWA Moderne style of architecture, which emphasized balanced massing, smooth lines, symmetrical fenestration, faceted corners, and the use of understated decorative elements. The architectural composition of City Hall consists of a three-story central pavilion flanked by two-and-a-half story symmetrical wings. The building's distinctive architectural features include the stepped and faceted mass, stylized vertical fluting, horizontal streamline detailing, a variety of decorative ornamental features and tile work. The foot print, scale, form, balanced massing, classical proportions and concrete masonry construction of the building are the primary architectural and design characteristics that have a direct relationship with the landscape setting. The projecting central pavilion, the L-shaped wings to the north and south with recessed courts, a rear U-shaped courtyard to the east, and the faceted treatment of the building's corners, all directly influence the figure/ground relationship of the architecture with the surrounding landscape. Likewise, the site layout, design, and proportions of the various landscape components relates directly to the building's footprint, scale, massing, design composition, and distinctive monumental architecture.

City Hall is oriented facing west toward Main Street and is situated in the center of a generally flat site which consists of approximately 6.24 acres. The existing setting for Santa Monica City Hall is defined by its open character and symmetrical organization which presently appears much as it did during the historic period of significance (1938-1957). The

landscape setting is distinguished by an expansive front lawn that encompasses the majority of the western front of the site. The symmetrical layout of the sidewalks, planters and planting beds reinforces the architectural design of the PWA Moderne City Hall, and the original Palm tree plantings still enliven the west and south facades of the building and define the northern border of the site.

#### **IV. CITY OF SANTA MONICA LANDMARKS COMMISSION ACTIONS**

- A. On October 16, 1979, the Landmarks Commission designated the structure and site known as Santa Monica City Hall as a City Landmark pursuant to Landmark Designation Criteria #1, #2, #3, #4, and #5 identified in SMMC Section 9.36.100. (Attachment A)
- B. On January 9, 2011, the Landmarks Commission filed a request to supplement the Landmark designation of City Hall to identify exterior character defining features.
- C. On May 9, 2011, the Landmarks Commission reviewed and considered the analysis presented in the "Character Defining Features Analysis – Santa Monica City Hall Landscape and Grounds", prepared by PCR Services Corporation, dated April 2011, and conducted a public hearing in accordance with the requirements established by Santa Monica Municipal Code Section 9.36.120(f), and voted by motion to adopt this supplemental determination identifying and establishing the character defining features of the landscape and grounds surrounding City Hall.

#### **V. ESTABLISHMENT OF CONTRIBUTING HISTORIC ELEMENTS AND FEATURES OF THE LANDSCAPE AND GROUND SURROUNDING CITY HALL**

The Landmarks Commission hereby determines that the following are the character defining features of the City Hall site:

- A. Windmill Palms in the north and south gardens at front of City Hall;
- B. Concrete planters flanking the front entrance of City Hall;
- C. Dedication marker for City Hall;
- D. Rectangular planting bed and brickwork in the center of the main entrance walkway;
- E. Concrete curbs and brickwork flanking the main entrance walkway;
- F. Concrete sidewalks and brickwork throughout much of the site including the scoring pattern, proportions, textures, color and finish;
- G. Concrete entry steps and brickwork at the front, rear, and south side;
- H. Lawn areas (north and south) in the front of City Hall and at the southeast corner of the site;
- I. Council Parking lot and design configuration, north of City Hall;
- J. Canary Island Date Palms (3) in the Council Parking lot area;
- K. Mexican Fan Palms (7) overlooking the Santa Monica Freeway and adjacent to the south elevation;
- L. The steeply-graded terraced hill, adjacent to the Freeway and remnants of

- the retaining walls;
- M. Foundation planting beds surrounding City Hall;
- N. Flagpole;
- O. Memorial Rose Garden and dedication marker; and
- P. Symmetrical configuration of the landscape and hardscape elements at the front of City Hall

**VI. RECORD OF DETERMINATION**

I hereby certify that the above supplemental determination to its October 16, 1979 designation of City Hall as a City Landmark accurately reflects the determination of the Landmarks Commission of the City of Santa Monica on May 9, 2011 as determined by the following vote:

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

Respectfully Submitted  
May 23, 2011

  
Ruth Shari, Chair Pro-Tem

Attest:

  
Scott Albright, AICP  
Landmarks Commission Secretary

FINDINGS AN DETERMINATION OF THE  
LANDMARKS COMMISSION OF THE CITY  
OF SANTA MONICA IN THE MATTER OF  
THE DESIGNATION OF A LANDMARK

DESIGNATION OF A LANDMARK  
1685 MAIN STREET  
LANDMARKS COMMISSION HEARING  
OCTOBER 16, 1979

CASE NUMBER LC-01-019  
SANTA MONICA CITY HALL

SECTION I. Having initiated on its own motion an application to designate the structure and site at 1685 Main Street (known as the Santa Monica City Hall) as a Santa Monica Landmark and having held a public hearing on the matter on October 16, 1979, the Landmarks Commission of the City of Santa Monica hereby makes the following Findings of Fact and Determination:

1. The building symbolizes elements of the cultural, social, economic, and political history of the City because it has been the center of city government since 1939 and because it was constructed by the W.P.A.;
2. It has aesthetic value because of the notable tile work on the exterior and interior and because of the interior murals designed by Stanton McDonald-Wright;
3. It is identified with historic personages and with important events in local history;
4. It embodies distinguishing architectural characteristics valuable to a study of a period in that the design is in the Classical Moderne style; and
5. It is representative of the work of notable architects Donald B. Parkinson and J.M. Estep.

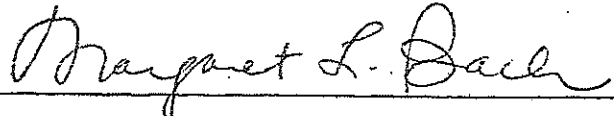
SECTION II. The Landmarks Commission of the City of Santa Monica, in accordance with the provisions of Section 9608 of Article IX of the Santa Monica Municipal Code, hereby determines that the structure and site at 1685 Main Street is designated as a Santa Monica Landmark with the following condition:

That the new fourth floor office addition be exempt from the Certificate of Appropriateness requirements of Section 9612 of Article IX of the Santa Monica Municipal Code.

SECTION III. I, Margaret L. Bach, Chairperson of the Landmarks Commission of the City of Santa Monica, hereby certify that the above Findings of Fact and Determination were adopted on October 16, 1979, by the following vote:

AYES: Commissioners Bambrick, Kliegman, LaTour, Maler, Plukas, Bach  
NOES: None  
ABSENT: Commission Stern

Respectfully submitted October 16, 1979



Margaret L. Bach, Chairperson

Attest:



CER

James W. Lunsford, Secretary