

PRESERVATION PLANNING ASSOCIATES

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Members of the Historic Landmarks Commission
630 Garden Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93102

Re: Letter Addendum for 1601 State Street, El Prado Inn. Proposal to Retain Porte Cochere and Original Sign

Dear Members of the Historic Landmarks Commission:

I wrote an Historic Structures Sites Report in May 2013 analyzing the significance of the El Prado Inn and evaluating the proposed changes to it. In it I determined that the El Prado Inn was eligible as a City Structure of Merit; it was considered significant as an intact representation of the commercial vernacular version of the Mid-Century Modern style, prevalent from the 1940s to the 1960s. Its character-defining features were considered to be the scored concrete blocks on the first floor, canted balcony walls on the second and third floors, the pierced concrete screens, the overscale jazzy "El Prado" and "Inn" signs, and the open-tread staircases.

Since that time, several proposals for the facade on Arrellaga Street have come before the Commission, including the installation of the porte cochere as drawn from original plans. This porte cochere was never constructed as drawn. This design solution was accepted and approved in 2016. Currently the proposal is to retain the original, existing port cochere and to reinstall the El Prado sign on top of it as was illustrated in the historic postcards of the time (see Plates 1 and 3). The porte cochere is existing and part of the original construction. It contained not only the jazzy El Prado sign on the top, but also back-lit lighted advertising rectangles on all three sides (see Plate 1 from the 1960s). Because this part of the sign has been removed, it cannot be recreated because it was not part of the character-defining signage. The El Prado sign will sit lower on the canopy as a result.

Evaluation of Potential Project Effects:

According to the latest CEQA guidelines, if a project involving significant historical resources follows *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties With Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings (Standards)* (Weeks and Grimmer 1995), the project is considered to be mitigated to a level of less than a significant impact on the historic resource (PRC Section 15064.5 (b) (3)). Because the project proposes retaining the original canopy and reinstalling the character-defining El Prado sign, it meets the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation 5 and 6:

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

6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in

design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.

Because the project meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, it will not have a significant impact on the historic resource (Class III).

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at 450-6658.

Sincerely,

Alexandra C. Cole



Plate 1. 1960s postcard view of canopy and sign



Plate 2. 2012 photo of canopy and sign



Plate 3. Proposed reinstatement of historic sign. *Courtesy Cearnal Collective LLC*