

August 10, 2020

Sent Electronically

Ms. Elva Nuño-O'Donnell
City of Los Angeles, Department of City Planning
626 Van Nuys Boulevard, Suite 351
Van Nuys, CA 91401
Email: elva.nuno-odonnell@lacity.org

RE: The District NoHo Project, Notice of Preparation, ENV-2019-7241

Dear Ms. Nuño-O'Donnell:

On behalf of the Los Angeles Conservancy, I am writing to comment on the District NoHo Project Notice of Preparation (NOP). The proposed project is located on the 15.9-acre Project Site at the intersection of Lankershim and South Chandler Boulevards. The Conservancy is concerned about potential adverse impacts to the historic Lankershim Depot at the southwest corner of the intersection.

I. The Lankershim Depot is an important piece of Los Angeles's Transportation History

Constructed as a one-story railroad depot in 1895, the Lankershim Depot became a stop for the Pacific Electric Red Car line in 1911. As a Red Car stop, the depot was in continuous use from 1911-1952 when the City of Los Angeles systematically dismantled its light rail system.

Despite the end of the streetcar era, the depot found a new life as Hendrick's Building Supply until the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transit Authority (Metro) purchased the site in 1993 to construct the Red Line subway. For nearly three decades following the Red Line's completion, the Lankershim Depot's fate remained uncertain.

In 2017, the depot found a new use when it reopened as a coffee shop. In 2018, the depot received a Conservancy Preservation Award as an exceptional adaptive reuse project. Since reopening, the coffee shop has become an important community hub breathing new life into the corner.



II. The siting of the Lankershim Depot is important for its ability to convey its significance

The siting of the Lankershim Depot is an important character defining feature as it allows the building to convey its significance. This siting relates to both its context as a rail depot and its relationship to the intersection of Lankershim and Chandler Boulevards as a Red Car stop. At a meeting with project representatives earlier in the year, it was stated that the depot will be moved west, away from Lankershim Boulevard and transit new access points are to be constructed east of the depot. The Conservancy believes the project, as proposed in our meeting, will have significant and adverse impacts to the depot by altering its relationship with the street.

As stated, such alterations pose a concern about the depot's relationship with Lankershim Boulevard and its ability to continue to maintain eligibility and convey its significance as a historic resource. At its current location, both pedestrians and automobiles have clear views of the depot as they pass along Lankershim Boulevard. Relocation coupled with new construction at the corner will separate the depot from the street and obstruct views.

III. The Conservancy requests additional meetings with Project representatives to find a win-win solution early in the environmental review process.

The Conservancy requests additional meetings with Project representatives prior to the release of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR). We believe a "win-win" solution can be found before the City publishes the Draft EIR. Addressing such issues and working with the applicant early in the environmental review process will ensure the project smooth and speedy progress through the CEQA process.

IV. Conclusion

The Lankershim Depot is an important Los Angeles historic resource creating a tangible link to our City's transportation past. The Conservancy applauds Metro's work to rehabilitation and reactive this significant historic place, however we are concerned that the project may have adverse impacts to this historic resource. To address these issues early, we request a another meeting with the applicant so that we may find a "win-win" solution that meets all project objectives while protecting historic resources.



About the Los Angeles Conservancy:

The Los Angeles Conservancy is the largest local historic preservation organization in the United States, with nearly 6,000 members throughout the Los Angeles area. Established in 1978, the Conservancy works to preserve and revitalize the significant architectural and cultural heritage of Los Angeles County through advocacy and education.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at (213) 430-4203 or afine@laconservancy.org should you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Adrian Scott Fine

Adrian Scott Fine
Director of Advocacy

