

Westwood Neighborhood Council

April 8, 2026

Agenda Item #10

MOTION

RE: Proposed Historic-Cultural Monument – Fox Apartments

CHC-2025-6217-HCM; CEQA: ENV-2025-6218-CE; Plan Area: Westwood

Property Address: 10251-10257 West Santa Monica Boulevard; 1749-1755 South Ensley Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90024

Owners: SM Ensley Property LLC; Sandra Borie, Trustee, Sandra Borie Trust

Applicant: Los Angeles Conservancy, Adrian Scott Fine, President and CEO

Motion to be sent to: chc@lacity.org

Whereas, the Fox Apartments, built in 1925 in the early days of Westwood at 10251-10257 West Santa Monica Boulevard and 1749-1755 South Ensley Avenue, was nominated by the Los Angeles Conservancy as a Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) in the City of Los Angeles; and

Whereas, in 1922 the Janss Investment Corporation, led by brothers Edwin and Harold Janss, acquired the 3,300 acre Wolfskill Ranch from the Letts Estate, and soon thereafter announced they would develop “The Second Hollywood,” inspired by the successful development of the original Hollywood and the fledgling motion picture industry; and

Whereas, in May 1923 newspapers announced that Fox Film Corporation, led by Studio founder William Fox, had purchased 450 acres spanning from Santa Monica Boulevard to Pico Boulevard from the Janss Investment Corporation and would develop “Fox Movietone City,” the world’s first master-planned and purpose-built movie studio built for sound, including the first soundproof stages ever designed, which would be the world’s largest Talking Picture plant; and

Whereas, Fox Studios built its ceremonial Front Gate in a magnificent Spanish Colonial Revival design on Santa Monica Boulevard, directly across from the Fox Apartments site, and celebrated its Opening Day Dedication of the Fox Studio backlot on October 28, 1928; and

Whereas, in touting the multi-million dollar investment of the new “Fox Movietone City,” the Janss Corporation noted that “hundreds of workers are to be regularly employed” and since “a great number of Motion Picture Studio employees are essentially ‘renters’ it is not difficult to foresee the effect this project should have on adjacent income lots”; and

Whereas, Fox Apartments was developed in 1925 across from the Fox Studio Front Gate in a classic streetcar design, as a two-story, vernacular, mixed-use commercial building with ground floor storefronts and display windows, and modest second story studio and bachelor apartments perfect for Studio employees, and known as the Fox Apartments since 1936, along the Pacific Electric Railway route on Santa Monica Boulevard that became part of “Historic Route 66,” and

Whereas, in the late 1920s and 1930s, the building’s commercial storefronts as well as some of the second-floor residential units, were used as offices by real estate companies and brokers who sold lots in the adjacent Janss Investment Company residential development of Westwood Hills, a portion of which is now known as Comstock Hills; and

Whereas, in its 101-year history the Fox Apartments has been home to several significant ground floor businesses, including a neighborhood market and General Store in the 1920s and 30s, and three iconic Legacy Businesses cherished in the Westwood and Comstock Hills communities including famed Emil’s Swiss Pasty from 1965 through the late 1990s, Johnnie’s New York Pizzeria from 1994 through the present day, and beloved Clementine Bakery & Cafe from 2000 to the present day, during which time this charming red brick building has served as a treasured neighborhood and community gathering place for more than 100 years; and

Whereas, acclaimed baker Emil Hug, founder of Emil’s Swiss Pastry, lived with his wife Violeta on Ensley Avenue in the Comstock Hills neighborhood for decades, just blocks from his eponymously named bakery, and where his widow still lives in the family home today; and

Whereas, Minnesota native and culinary trained and expert Pastry Chef Annie Miler also moved with her husband David to the Comstock Hills neighborhood in the late 1990s, where she raised her family and served as President of the Fairburn Avenue PTA, and where she founded her iconic Clementine Bakery & Cafe in 2000, where she could walk to work each day and lead her acclaimed bakery and restaurant that, for 26 years, has served as the sidewalk cafe “living room” for countless Comstock Hills and Westwood neighbors and Century City executives; and

Whereas, during the building’s 101 year life, the several property owners have thoughtfully maintained and sensitively repaired the red brick structure from any damage resulting from earthquakes and ordinary wear and tear, including an appropriate seismic upgrade and rehabilitation, and sensitive repairs and replacement of damaged materials, in accordance with building’s original architectural design and the Secretary of the Interior’s standards; and

Whereas, the City’s “Survey L.A.” found in May 2014 that as the Fox Apartments was a “rare example of early commercial development located along a former streetcar line in Westwood,” of which “few examples of this type from this period remain,” it appeared eligible for designation as a City Historic-Cultural Monument, as well as for inclusion on the California Register of Historic Resources and the National Register of Historic Places, the official Federal list of the districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture that are worthy of preservation; and

Whereas, the Fox Apartments “exemplify significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city, or community” as a rare example of 1920s commercial development along a former streetcar line in Westwood, of which precious few examples of this property type remain from this period; and

Whereas, the Fox Apartments also “embody the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction” as a rare example of the multi-story, mixed-use residential and commercial property type developed along a former streetcar line:

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Westwood Neighborhood Council strongly supports the nomination of the Fox Apartments by the Los Angeles Conservancy and the Recommendation Report of the Office of Historic Resources (OHR) which urges the Cultural Heritage Commission to declare the 1925 Fox Apartments in Westwood as a Historic-Cultural Monument in the City of Los Angeles; and

Be it finally resolved that we urge Councilwoman Katy Yaroslavsky, the Los Angeles City Council, and Mayor Karen Bass to support this highly worthy designation of this cherished historic landmark in our Westwood community and the City of Los Angeles.