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TO: HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: ED SHIKADA, CITY MANAGER

DATE: JUNE 22, 2020

SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM 28 - 235 Hamilton Ave: Upgrade Historic Inventory From Category 3 to Category 2 Title: Adoption of a Record of Land Use Action Approving a Change to the Local Historic Resources Inventory Classification for 235 Hamilton Avenue (Cardinal Hotel) From a Category 3 (Contributing Building) to a Category 2 (Major Building) Historic Resource. The Historic Resources Board Recommends Adoption of the Record of Land Use Action. Approval of This Historic Designation is Exempt From the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in Accordance With Section 15301 of the CEQA Guidelines

Attached is an updated Record of Land Use Action providing expanded description in underlined text for findings A and B for the Cardinal Hotel historic resource category upgrade.

DocuSigned by:

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Jonathan Lait
Director
Planning & Development Services

DocuSigned by:

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Ed Shikada
City Manager

ACTION NO. -----2020

RECORD OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PALO ALTO'S LAND USE ACTION TO UPGRADE 235 HAMILTON AVENUE FROM HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY CATEGORY III TO CATEGORY II

On June 22, 2020, the Council _____ the property owner's request to reclassify the commercial building (Cardinal Hotel) at 235 Hamilton Avenue from a Category 3 to a Category 2 historic resource on the City's Historic Resources Inventory, making the following findings, determination and declarations:

SECTION 1. Background. The *City Council of the City of Palo Alto ("City Council")* finds, determines, and declares as follows:

- A. In August 2019, the property owner met staff to discuss a façade remodel and explore the possibility of reclassifying the building related to a rehabilitation proposal. With the owner's request and funding, staff obtained a historic resource evaluation from the City's consultant, Page and Turnbull, which supported the classification upgrade and described the building's eligibility for individual listing on the California Register under Criterion 1 and criterion 3.
- B. On May 14, 2020, the HRB received a staff report (ID #11087) and conducted a public hearing and concurred with the evaluation regarding the building's eligibility for upgrade from local inventory historic category 3 to category 2.

SECTION 2. Environmental Review. This project is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), per Section 15301.

SECTION 3. Designation Findings.

- A. The following criteria, as specified in Municipal Code Section 16.49.040 (b), shall be used as criteria for designating historic structures/sites to the historic inventory:
 - 1. The structure or site is identified with the lives of historic people or with important events in the city, state or nation;
 - 2. The structure or site is particularly representative of an architectural style or way of life important to the city, state or nation;
 - 3. The structure or site is an example of a type of building which was once common, but is now rare;
 - 4. The structure or site is connected with a business or use which was once common, but is now rare;
 - 5. The architect or building was important;
 - 6. The structure or site contains elements demonstrating outstanding attention to architectural design, detail, materials or craftsmanship.

The building at 235 Hamilton Avenue met many of the above criteria when it was first listed on Palo Alto's Inventory. With its inclusion in the National Register Ramona District,

and the 2019 assessment, the building's status as a historic resource has improved. The building is significant for its refined Italian Renaissance Revival façade and Arts and Crafts interior, and for being the work of a prolific California architect, William H. Weeks, and an important early project in the career of Birge Clark, Palo Alto's most important architect. Given its role in the development of Palo Alto and the University South neighborhood it is significant; the Ramona district was central in the 1920s and 30s expansion of Palo Alto's downtown commercial district and its location addressed concerns that the town center was growing too laterally along University.

- B. The definition of Category 2 in Municipal Code Section 16.49.020 (b) must be met to allow the upgrade to the structure's category designation: Category 2 Definition: "Major building" means any building or group of buildings of major regional importance, meritorious works of the best architects or an outstanding example of an architectural style or the stylistic development of architecture in the state or region. A major building may have some exterior modifications, but the original character is retained."

The building at 235 Hamilton Avenue meets the Palo Alto Inventory Category 2 definition, as per the HRB's determination. The building retains a high degree of all seven aspects of integrity (defined as location, setting design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association), which effectively explain why, where, when and how this property is significant, and enable the building to convey its significance and original character. As noted, Cardinal Hotel is of major regional importance as the first commercial anchor in the Ramona Street Architectural District and represents the meritorious work of William H. Weeks and Birge Clark. It is evident the Cardinal Hotel exceeds the criterion set forth for Category 3 buildings and it is more appropriately classified as a Category 2 resource in the local historic inventory.

- C. California Register of Historical Resources listing: The structure appears eligible for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources, under two of the four criteria. The property's eligibility under Criteria 1 and 3 is described in the report prepared by Page and Turnbull, October 2019 (Attached to ID #11087).

SECTION 5. Category Upgrade Approved. The City Council approves the property owner's request for re-designation of 235 Hamilton Avenue to a Category 2 historic resource on the City's Historic Resources Inventory.

PASSED:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTENTIONS:

ATTEST:

City Clerk

APPROVED:

Director of Planning and Development Services

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Senior Asst. City Attorney

Certificate Of Completion

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Time Zone: (UTC-08:00) Pacific Time (US & Canada)	250 Hamilton Ave
	Palo Alto , CA 94301
	Madina.Klicheva@CityofPaloAlto.org
	IP Address: 199.33.32.254


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Jonathan Lait
Jonathan.Lait@CityofPaloAlto.org
Interim Director Planning and Community
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City of Palo Alto
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Ed Shikada
Ed.Shikada@CityofPaloAlto.org
Ed Shikada, City Manager
City of Palo Alto
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