

LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT

LANDMARK/SITE NAME: Texas State Hotel

AGENDA ITEM: IVa

OWNER: Mr. Sam Lutfak

APPLICANT: Interloch Management Corp., Inc.

LOCATION: 720 Fannin Street

30-DAY HEARING NOTICE: Dec-15-96

MEETING DATE: Jan-16-97

HPO FILE NO.: 97L012

DATE ACCEPTED: Dec-5-96

HEARING DATE: Jan-16-97

SITE INFORMATION

Lots 1, 2 and 3, Block 80, SSBB, City of Houston. The Texas State Hotel is located on the corner of Fannin Street and Rusk. The building, located in the downtown business district of Houston, is a 16 story, steel frame building with masonry veneer.

TYPE OF APPROVAL REQUESTED: Landmark Designation

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE:

The Texas State Hotel was constructed in 1929 from the design of prominent Houston architect, Joseph Finger. A partial list of Houston landmarks of his design include: The Commerce Building (914 Main Street), City Hall (901 Bagby), the Houston Turnverein (demolished), the Jefferson Davis Hospital (1801 Allen Parkway), Houston Municipal Airport Terminal and Hangar Buildings, Cohen Building (2935-2925 Main), Temple Beth Israel (Houston Community College), Tower Theatre, Clarke & Courts Building, Stephen F. Austin Senior High School (1700 Dumble), Citizens State Bank Building (3620 Washington Avenue), the Lunar & Planetary Institute Building as well as many smaller office buildings and numerous residences.

The Texas State Hotel, consisting of sixteen stories, was constructed with a steel frame with a brick and limestone veneer. The windows are double-hung, wood sash windows with 8/1 lights. Original windows still exist as part of the building. Elaborately decorated stamped, metal cantilevered canopies still grace the Fannin Street and Rusk Avenue facades. According to Stephen Fox's "Houston Architectural Guide," "Joseph Finger emerged as something of a specialist in the design of multistory hotels during the boom years of the 1920s. This building was one of his biggest commissions. As was typical, it featured historically derived decoration (in this case, of Spanish Plateresque origin) at the base level and the summit. Sandwiched between these layers of terra cotta were sheer walls of brown tapestry brick." According to the article, "Historic Texas State Hotel To Undergo Transformation" by Ralph Bivins (Houston Chronicle, Sunday, July 21, 1996), the hotel featured 300 rooms. In its day, the Texas State Hotel stood alongside the Rice Hotel, the Lamar Hotel (demolished in 1985) and the Auditorium Hotel (today known as the Lancaster) as one of the finest hostelries in downtown Houston.

On November 13, 1996 the Texas Historical Commission determined that the property appears to meet the National Register criteria for evaluation and will likely be listed in the National Register of Historic Places if nominated according to the procedures set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

RESTORATION HISTORY/CURRENT CONDITION:

The building has been vacant for a number of years. There have been no structural changes or modifications of any consequence since the construction of the building although the Fannin Street and Rusk Avenue facades have been secured by plywood and two modern garage doors have been installed on each street facade. According to

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the applicant, the interior of the building has been modernized and is in poor condition. The only items in the interior to be restored are the first and second floor ornate metal elevator entrances and the first and second floor lobby-mezzanine stairs and balconies. The exterior of the building will be cleaned only and the few missing exterior decorations will be restored to match original.

APPROVAL CRITERIA FOR LANDMARK DESIGNATION....:

Sec. 33-224. Criteria for designation of a Landmark.

(a) The HAHC and the commission, in making recommendations with respect to designation, and the city council, in making a designation, shall consider one or more of the following criteria, as appropriate for the type of designation:

S D NA

S - satisfies D - does not satisfy NA - not applicable

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- (1) Whether the building, structure, object, site or area possesses character, interest or value as a visible reminder of the development, heritage, and cultural and ethnic diversity of the city, state, or nation;
- (2) Whether the building, structure, object, site or area is the location of a significant local, state or national event;
- (3) Whether the building, structure, object, site or area is identified with a person who, or group or event that, contributed significantly to the cultural or historical development of the city, state, or nation;
- (4) Whether the building or structure or the buildings or structures within the area exemplify a particular architectural style or building type important to the city;
- (5) Whether the building or structure or the buildings or structures within the area are the best remaining examples of an architectural style or building type in a neighborhood;
- (6) Whether the building, structure, object or site or the buildings, structures, objects or sites within the area are identified as the work of a person or group whose work has influenced the heritage of the city, state, or nation;
- (7) Whether specific evidence exists that unique archaeological resources are present;
- (8) Whether the building, structure, object or site has value as a significant element of community sentiment or public pride.

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STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Recommends that the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission recommends designation of the Texas State Hotel as a landmark to the Planning Commission since the application complies with the applicable criteria of Section 33-224.

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SITE LOCATION MAP
TEXAS STATE HOTEL
720 FANNIN STREET
NOT TO SCALE

