



PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

STAFF REPORT

DATE: December 10, 2020

TO: ARTS & CULTURE COMMISSION

FROM: ROCHELLE BRANCH, CULTURAL AFFAIRS MANAGER

SUBJECT: REVIEW & APPROVAL OF ART RELOCATION PLAN FOR *TWO OPEN RECTANGLES EXCENTRIC VII, TRIANGULAR SECTION*, A SCULPTURE BY GEORGE RICKEY AT THE PARSONS DEVELOPMENT/100 W WALNUT STREET

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Arts & Culture Commission:

Approve the proposed new location on the Parsons campus for George Rickey's *Two Open Rectangles Excentric VII, Triangular Section* as outlined by Lincoln Properties in the Art Relocation Plan (Attachment A).

Conditions of Approval:

- a) The final artwork placement shall be consistent with all aspects of the approved Art Relocation Plan. Any proposed alterations to the Art Relocation Plan must be submitted for advance staff review and approval. Those proposed changes to the Art Relocation Plan that are not approved at the staff level must be presented to the Arts and Culture Commission for review and approval;
- b) The property owner shall submit structural plans for review by the City's Building and Safety Division to determine if a Building Permit is required for installation;
- c) The artwork's surface shall be conditioned prior to installation;
- d) The artwork shall remain publicly accessible during normal business hours without enclosure;
- e) The artwork shall be sited without interference from commercial signage;
- f) The artwork shall be appropriately lighted and maintained;

- g) Staff shall review for compliance and approve all Final Documentation materials including: the Owner's Manual with long-term care instructions including appropriate cleaning products & application methods and any applicable warranty information, and professional documentation of the work in situ (a minimum of six digital image files suitable for web and print);
- h) Cultural Affairs Staff shall conduct a site inspection after project installation and plaque placement are complete, and the status of any associated building permit/s required for installation have been finalized, prior to Final Sign Off; and
- i) The property owner shall record the artwork maintenance stipulations in the OPA or DDA under covenants affecting real property at the time of installation--to ensure ongoing, permanent maintenance of the artwork per the Owner's Manual--and provide documentation of such to Cultural Affairs Staff within a period of one year from the Final Sign Off date.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

City Council approved Lincoln Properties' Master Plan for Parsons on April 27, 2015. A Condition of Approval outlined that the existing George Rickey sculpture on the property shall be maintained at the site or replaced with a new artwork of equal or greater value in compliance with the Cultural Affairs approval process. The associated Development Agreement further stipulated that the sculpture was to remain on the property and, should the sculpture require relocation to accommodate the significant construction plans, an art relocation plan shall be approved by the Arts & Culture Commission, with all artwork removal or relocation compliant with both California State and Federal Artists Rights Laws.

BACKGROUND

In 1978, the sculpture *Two Open Rectangles Excentric VII, Triangular Section* by George Rickey was purchased by the Ralph M. Parsons Company as part of the City's Implementation Agreement for the property. The sculpture was originally sited at the entrance of Annex I on Holly Street. In 1982, the sculpture was resited to its most recent location at Holly Street and Leonard J Pieroni Street. This was a result of the construction of Annex II, which included a linear park and plaza to prominently feature *Two Open Rectangles Excentric VII, Triangular Section* as part of the Fine Arts Program of the Pasadena Redevelopment Agency. In 2008, the sculpture was temporarily removed in order to repair damage that had resulted from a fallen tree branch. After being restored by Stephen Day, a former assistant to George Rickey, the sculpture was reinstalled at Holly Street and Leonard J Pieroni Street later that same year.

Lincoln Properties purchased the Parsons campus in June 2013, and City Council approved their Parsons Master Plan on April 27, 2015. Lincoln Properties formalized their intention to relocate the sculpture, per the terms of the Development Agreement, with an Information Only item presented to the Arts & Culture Commission on January 10, 2017.

At the time, Staff found that the temporary removal and storage of the sculpture was an appropriate and necessary step to protect and maintain the integrity of the artwork. Staff also advised Lincoln Properties to consider a new location that will provide increased visibility of the sculpture for pedestrians and vehicular traffic along Walnut Street, as well as for visitors and residents of the new mixed-use development.

In addition to providing an update that the sculpture would be removed and temporarily stored, the corresponding Staff Report outlined that Lincoln Properties would return to the Arts & Culture Commission with an Art Relocation Plan for their approval. The Art Relocation Plan was to include written approval from the artist's estate or legal representative, a budget with full project expenses, an artwork maintenance plan, a proposed site map, and relevant engineering or structural plans for review by the Department of Transportation and Building & Safety Division, as appropriate. The relocated artwork will remain a permanent part of the City of Pasadena's Public Art Collection and the Parsons campus.

Please note—although the City's Conditions of Approval for the Parsons Master Plan in April 2015, as well the Staff Report to the Arts & Culture Commission in January 2017 each made reference to sculpture's title as *Two Open Rectangles Gyrotory*—the George Rickey Foundation has confirmed that the correct title is *Two Open Rectangles Excentric VII, Triangular Section*. In addition to the Foundation's documentation, the correct title was featured on the artwork's plaque at its recent location in the Annex II plaza at Holly Street and Leonard J Pieroni Street, as well as in the City's Development Agreement from April 2015.

Description of Artwork

Two Open Rectangles Excentric VII, Triangular Section, George Rickey's 25-foot-high abstract steel kinetic sculpture was created in 1977. It consists of two movable rectangular forms mounted on a two-pronged fork element and set in a concrete base. The sculptural forms rotate on precision bearings that were devised by the artist. The sculpture is recognizable in style to several of Rickey's rectangular kinetic works that have been exhibited and installed throughout the United States.

Artist

Internationally renowned artist George Rickey was born in Indiana in 1907. Rickey was raised near Glasgow, Scotland and took drawing classes at the Ruskin School. He later studied painting in Paris. In WWII, Rickey served in the Army Air Corps testing computing instruments used by bomber gunners. The work required both mechanical skill and an understanding of the effects of wind and gravity on ballistics--thus providing the foundation for his transition from painting to kinetic sculpture.

Rickey later studied at New York University's Institute of Fine Arts and the Institute of Design in Chicago. Influenced by the kinetic mobiles of Alexander Calder, Rickey began creating his own kinetic sculptures in the 1950's and 1960's, and developed systems of motion that responded to the slightest variation in air currents. Over several decades, he refined his works to include an emphasis on lines, planes, rotors, volumes, and churns, shifting from simple oscillation to conical gyrations. Rickey developed large-scale works in this style for sites in the United States, Europe, and Japan.

Former Site

Two Open Rectangles Excentric VII, Triangular Section was initially installed on Holly Street in 1978—at the entrance to the Parsons Headquarters—and relocated in 1982 to the west side of the intersection of Holly Street and Leonard J Pieroni Street. Because the Parsons Master Plan construction, now underway, includes the extension of Holly Street

from Fair Oaks Avenue through to Pasadena Avenue, temporary removal & storage of the sculpture was required until it could be relocated. Lincoln Properties worked with Pasadena-based fine art services company Curatorial Assistance to appropriately remove and store the sculpture.

ART RELOCATION PLAN

Staff has received updates from Tim Walker as Lincoln Properties worked with both the George Rickey Foundation and the Pasadena-based fine art services provider Curatorial Assistance on components of the Art Relocation Plan. In March 2020, Tim and Skidmore Owings & Merrill architect Houston Drum met with Staff to share their progress on the Art Relocation Plan and discuss their intended approach to relocating the sculpture.

The proposed new location will place the sculpture at a site that allows visibility from both Walnut Street and Fair Oaks Avenue, along the most active confluence within the interior plaza. An elevated base to maximize the sculpture's visibility at the proposed new location has also been designed.

Staff supports the proposed new location for the artwork. They find that the plans developed by Lincoln Properties have thoughtfully integrated the sculpture into its surrounding environment, creating an even stronger setting than its most recent location. The geometric qualities of the kinetic sculpture will have a dynamic presence in their interplay with the campus' architecture, as well as the pedestrian activity throughout the plaza, adjacent buildings, and sidewalks. Moreover, by placing the sculpture on an elevated base in a context that has site lines from several different levels, it allows the public to experience the artwork from various vantage points and distances, including directly underneath it at close range.

Working with the Artist's Estate

Lincoln Properties has consulted the George Rickey Foundation throughout the process of developing the Art Relocation Plan, and has received written approval from the artist's estate, as required. The George Rickey Foundation has provided not only their consent to the Art Relocation Plan as outlined, but have also advised Lincoln Properties on key components of installation and ongoing maintenance of the artwork, which includes custom hardware designed by the late artist.

Maintenance Plan

Lincoln Properties has worked with the George Rickey Foundation to develop a comprehensive maintenance plan. It includes a reconditioning of the sculpture's surface prior to installation and also informs methods of installing the sculpture, detailing custom hardware to be used. The maintenance plan further outlines the proactive attention that must be paid to the both annual cleaning of the sculpture and maintenance of the surrounding trees. Lincoln Properties intends to hire Curatorial Assistance to condition the sculpture prior to install and provide the annual maintenance treatments as outlined, in addition to transporting the artwork from their storage facility and installing the artwork per specifications.

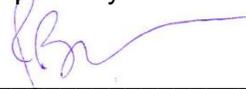
Project Budget

Lincoln Properties acknowledges the costs of \$2,810.00 for Curatorial Assistance's services to condition, store, transport, and install the artwork. In addition, the costs for Curatorial Assistance to execute the yearly maintenance treatment of the sculpture are estimated to be \$1,460.00 annually. The proprietary hardware to be used for install has the minor cost of \$14.00.

CONCLUSION:

Staff finds that the proposed new location for *Two Open Rectangles Excentric VII, Triangular Section* by George Rickey, as outlined in the Art Relocation Plan, has been designed to maximize the public's experience of the sculpture on the Parsons campus. Moreover, Staff finds that Lincoln Properties has taken appropriate steps with the George Rickey Foundation to secure their permission, as well as the benefit of their expertise to confirm the most proper installation methods and ongoing maintenance needs of the artwork. With this dynamic new setting, and updated assessment by the George Rickey Foundation, the sculpture is well poised to remain a permanent part of the City of Pasadena's Public Art Collection on the Parsons campus.

Respectfully Submitted,



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Attachment A – Art Relocation Plan submitted by Lincoln Properties