

DEPARTMENT OF
CITY PLANNING
200 N. SPRING STREET, ROOM 532
LOS ANGELES, CA 90012-4801
CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION

MARY KLAUS-MARTIN
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CITY OF LOS ANGELES
CALIFORNIA



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Date: October 3, 2006

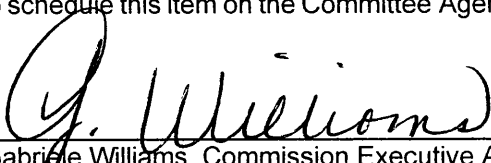
Capitol-EMI Music Inc., Owner
1750 N. Vine Street
Hollywood, CA 90028

CERTIFIED MAIL
RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

CASE NUMBER: **CHC-2006-3592-HCM**
CAPITOL TOWER AND ROOFTOP SIGN
1740-50 N. VINE, 6236 YUCCA

As you will note from the attached copy of our communication to the Los Angeles City Council, the Cultural Heritage Commission has moved to include the above-referenced property (including the Les Paul Echo Chamber) in the list of Historic-Cultural monuments, subject to adoption by the City Council.

In due course, our transmittal will be given a council file number and will be referred to the Council's Planning and Land Use Management Committee for review and recommendation. If you are interested in attending the Council Committee meeting, you should call Barbara Greaves at (213) 978-1068 for information as to the time and place of the Committee and City Council meetings regarding this matter. Please give Ms. Greaves at least one week from the date of this letter to schedule this item on the Committee Agenda before you call her.



Gabrielle Williams, Commission Executive Assistant II
Cultural Heritage Commission

GW: gw

Attachment: CHC Declaration Letter to Council and Staff Report with Findings

C: Daniel Paul, Applicant
Notification List
GIS

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
CALIFORNIA



ANTONIO R. VILLARAIGOSA
MAYOR

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Date: October 3, 2006

Los Angeles City Council
Room 395, City Hall
200 North Spring Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

ATTENTION: Barbara Greaves, Legislative Assistant
Planning and Land Use Management Committee

CASE NUMBER: **CHC-2006-3592-HCM**
CAPITOL TOWER AND ROOFTOP SIGN
1740-50 N. VINE, 6236 YUCCA

At the Cultural Heritage Commission meeting of August 17, 2006, the Commission moved to include the above property (including the Les Paul Echo Chamber) in the list of Historic-Cultural Monuments, subject to adoption by the City Council.

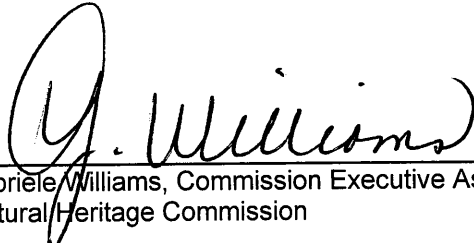
As required under the provisions of Section 22.126 of the Los Angeles Administrative Code, the Commission has solicited opinions and information from the office of the Council District in which the site is located and from any Department or Bureau of the city whose operations may be affected by the designation of such site as a Historic-Cultural Monument. Such designation in and of itself has no fiscal impact. Future applications for permits may cause minimal administrative costs.

The City Council, according to the guidelines set forth in Section 22.125.1 of the Los Angeles Administrative Code, shall act on the proposed inclusion to the list within 90 days of the Council or Commission action, whichever first occurs. By resolution, the Council may extend the period for good cause for an additional 15 days.

The Cultural Heritage Commission would appreciate your inclusion of the subject modification to the list of Historic-Cultural Monuments upon adoption by the City Council.

The above Cultural Heritage Commission action was taken by the following vote:

Moved: Stalford
Seconded: Barron
Ayes: Martin
Absent: Carlisle, Singer
Vote: 3-0


Gabriele Williams, Commission Executive Assistant II
Cultural Heritage Commission

GW: gw

Attachment: Staff Report with Findings

c: Councilmember Eric Garcetti, CD 13
Captiol-EMI Music, Inc., Owner
Daniel Paul, Applicant

Los Angeles City Planning Department
RECOMMENDATION REPORT

CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION

CASE NO. CHC-2006-3592-HCM

Location: 1740-50 N. Vine, 6236 Yucca

DATE: August 17, 2006

Council District: 13

TIME: 10:00 a.m.

Community Plan Area: Hollywood

PLACE: City Hall Rm. 1010
200 N. Spring St.
Los Angeles, CA

Area Planning Commission: Central

Neighborhood Council: Hollywood Hills W.

Legal Description: Tract 18237, Lot 1

Expiration Date: September 16, 2006

PROJECT: Historic-Cultural Monument Application for
CAPITOL TOWER AND ROOFTOP SIGN

REQUEST: Declare the building a
Historic-Cultural Monument

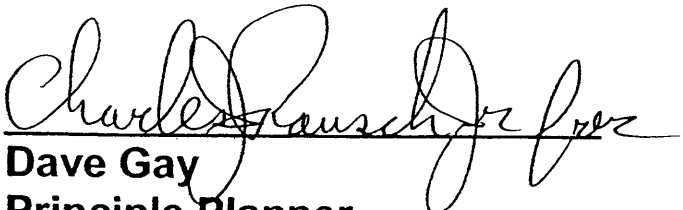
APPLICANT: Daniel Paul

OWNER: BMI CORP.

RECOMMENDATION:

Declare the building as a Historic-Cultural Monument and find that it meets the Cultural Heritage Ordinance Definition of a Monument criteria as set forth in Los Angeles Administrative code Section 22.130 because it is a good example of Modern architecture and is associated with the music recording industry in Los Angeles.

S. Gail Goldberg, AICP
Director of Planning


Dave Gay
Principle Planner


Jay Oren
Historic Preservation Officer

Findings

- Built in 1956, the tower, as described in a Historic-Cultural Monument Application dated April 2006, exhibits character-defining features of International style (Modern) architecture as evidenced by architectural features such as light, horizontal volumes, walls and glass kept in the same plane, flat roofs, and extensive use of glass, as evidenced in the attached photo exhibit.
- Character-defining features are as specified in the book, Architecture in Los Angeles, A Compleat Guide by Gebhard and Winter, 1985 edition, page 186.
- Historic building materials and character defining design features are generally extant as evidenced by the attached photo exhibit.

Criteria

The criterion is the Cultural Heritage Ordinance which defines a historical or cultural monument as any site (including significant trees or other plant life located thereon) building or structure of particular historic or cultural significance to the City of Los Angeles, such as historic structures or sites in which the broad cultural economic or social history of the nation, State or community is reflected or exemplified, or which are identified with historic personages or with important events in the main currents of national, State or local history or which embody the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen, inherently valuable for a study of a period style or method of construction, or a notable work of a master builder, designer or architect whose individual genius influenced his age. At issue is whether the Commissioners determine the building may be significant enough to warrant designation.

Discussion:

The Capitol Tower appears to meet the criteria of the ordinance as a site of particular importance in the architectural and social history of the Hollywood community. It embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural-type specimen, particularly its use of a circular floor plan. In addition, the tower exhibits originality in combining modern design with cylindrical massing. It is valuable as a study of a period style and notable for its use of tower shape. The building has also played an important role in the broad cultural history of Hollywood and Los Angeles as one of the city's most important sites associated with the music recording industry.

**Attachments: Historic-Cultural Monument Application
Parcel Profile Report and Map**

HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT APPLICATION

TYPE OR PRINT IN ALL CAPITAL BLOCK LETTERS

IDENTIFICATION

1. **NAME OF PROPOSED MONUMENT:** THE CAPITOL TOWER AND ROOFTOP SIGNAGE
2. **STREET ADDRESS:** 1750 N VINE ST
CITY: LOS ANGELES **ZIP CODE:** 90028 **COUNCIL DISTRICT:** 13
3. **ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NO:** 5546-030-028
4. **COMPLETE LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** LAND DESC IN DOC 1453831,970917 POR LOT 1 TR NO 18237 AND POR LOT 12 M B 6-144
5. **RANGE OF ADDRESSES ON PROPERTY:** 1750 N VINE ST, 6236 W YUCCA ST, 1740 N VINE ST
6. **PRESENT OWNER:** CAPITOL- EMI MUSIC INC.
STREET ADDRESS: 1750 N. VINE ST.
CITY: HOLLYWOOD **STATE:** CA **ZIP CODE:** 90028-5274 **PHONE:** (323) 462-6252
OWNER IS: PRIVATE
7. **PRESENT USE:** OFFICE BUILDING/ RECORDING STUDIO **ORIGINAL USE:** SAME

DESCRIPTION

8. **ARCHITECTURAL STYLE:** MID-CENTURY MODERN
9. **STATE PRESENT PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE OR STRUCTURE** (SEE OPTIONAL DESCRIPTION WORKSHEET)
PLEASE SEE ATTACHMENT A

HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT APPLICATION

NAME OF PROPOSED MONUMENT: THE CAPITOL TOWER AND ROOFTOP SIGNAGE

10. **CONSTRUCTION DATE: FACTUAL:** 1955-1956
11. **ARCHITECT, DESIGNER, OR ENGINEER:** WELTON BECKET AND ASSOCIATES
ENGINEER: MURRY ERICK ASSOCIATES
AUDIO DESIGN CONSULTANTS: JAMES W. BAYLESS, LES PAUL
12. **CONTRACTOR OR OTHER BUILDER:** C.L. PECK
13. **DATES OF ENCLOSED PHOTOGRAPHS:** MARCH, 2006
14. **CONDITION:** EXCELLENT
15. **ALTERATIONS:** INTERIOR REMODELING, STUDIO ALTERATIONS, REAR ENTRY REMODEL CIRCA 2000; FRONT FACING DISPLAY BOXES REMOVED CIRCA 1969; ADDITION OF NON-ARCHIVAL PLANT SPECIMENS; BASE LEVEL SIGNAGE REMOVED; ATTACHMENT TO BASE LEVEL NORTH ELEVATION; OPERABLE WINDOWS REPLACED WITH FIXED TINTED, FIXED WINDOWS.
16. **THREATS TO SITE:** TENANT MAY VACATE
17. **THE STRUCTURE IS:** ON ITS ORIGINAL SITE

SIGNIFICANCE

18. **BRIEFLY STATE HISTORICAL AND/OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE; INCLUDE DATES, EVENTS, AND PERSONS ASSOCIATED WITH SITE.**

PLEASE SEE ATTACHMENT B

SOURCES

PLEASE SEE ATTACHMENT C

19. **DATE FORM PREPARED:** APRIL 20, 2006 **PREPARER'S NAME:** DANIEL PAUL
CONTRIBUTING RESEARCH: MARCELLO VAVALA
20. **ORGANIZATION** THE LOS ANGELES CONSERVANCY MODERN COMMITTEE **STREET ADDRESS:** 523 W. SIXTH ST. SUITE 826 **CITY** LOS ANGELES **STATE** CA **ZIP CODE** 90014 **PHONE** (213) 623-2489
E.MAIL: Kbernstein@laconservancy.org

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
SIGNIFICANCE WORK SHEET

TYPE OR HAND PRINT IN ALL CAPITAL BLOCK LETTERS

COMPLETE ONE OR BOTH OF THE UPPER AND LOWER PORTIONS OF THIS PAGE

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

THE CAPITOL TOWER IS AN IMPORTANT EXAMPLE OF MID-CENTURY MODERN ARCHITECTURE, THE WORLD'S FIRST ROUND OFFICE TOWER, AND THE FIRST SKYSCRAPER BUILT IN HOLLYWOOD AFTER WORLD WAR II. IT MEETS THE CULTURAL HERITAGE ORDINANCE BECAUSE OF THE HIGH QUALITY OF ITS DESIGN AND THE RETENTION OF ITS ORIGINAL FORM, DETAILING AND INTEGRITY.

THE CAPITOL TOWER ROOFTOP SIGNAGE IS SIGNIFICANT FOR ITS STRONG HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION TO CAPITOL RECORDS INC, THE PRIMARY TENANT OF THE CAPITOL TOWER SINCE 1956.

AND/OR

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

THE CAPITOL TOWER: WAS BUILT IN 1955-1956

CAPITOL RECORDS: WAS IMPORTANT TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF LOS ANGELES BECAUSE:

THE COMPANY WAS THE FIRST MAJOR RECORDING LABEL ON THE WEST COAST AND THE BUILDING WAS THE SITE OF PIONEERING RECORDINGS MADE BY ARTISTS SUCH AS FRANK SINATRA AND NAT "KING" COLE.

ARCHITECT WELTON BECKET: WAS IMPORTANT TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF LOS ANGELES BECAUSE HIS LOCAL FIRM IS RESPONSIBLE FOR INNOVATIVE STRUCTURES THAT SUCCESSFULLY MELDED THE MODERN STYLE WITH RATIONAL DESIGN PRINCIPLES, AS EXEMPLIFIED IN THE CAPITOL TOWER, ONE OF HOLLYWOOD'S BEST KNOWN ICONS.

ATTACHEMENT A: DESCRIPTION.

THE CAPITOL TOWER AND ROOFTOP SIGNAGE

OVERVIEW

The Capitol Tower is a Mid-Century Modern structure incorporating office space, three recording studios, and various related facilities. The structure is located mid-block facing Vine St. between Hollywood and Yucca Blvds in Central Hollywood. The Capitol Tower is also near the 101 freeway, from where its iconic, circular tower and signage are highly visible. The multi-story, circular tower rests upon a rectangular base accommodating the site's southward-sloping grade. The structure is built on the western side of a 210' x 180' lot. Behind the building is a fenced, 60'x180' elevated parking lot with a burnished metal, c.2001 Post-Moderne style parking kiosk at its north end. On a gateway above this kiosk in large polished metal letters are the words "Capitol Records," added c. 2001. The 1930s former headquarters of KFWB radio is northeast of the property and partially encloses the parking lot. In the lot adjacent north of the Tower is a two story 1929 Deco-style former animation studio designed by H.L. Gogerty. A 2001 tax credit reuse project preserved its façade and assimilated this building into the Capitol campus. The two buildings are now connected by a Modern rectangular addition. The reuse project and the addition were both conducted in 2001 by M2A Architects; a preservation-oriented architecture firm. Directly in front of the Capitol Tower is the Hollywood Walk of Fame, and the stars of various Capitol artists including John Lennon, Tina Turner, Natalie Cole, Garth Brooks, Helen Reddy, Bonnie Raitt and Duran Duran. The Capitol Tower is thirteen stories, or 150' high; the City height limit in 1955, when the original building permits were pulled.

BASE EXTERIOR

The rectangular, monolithic base is one tall story, and is a plinth for the circular tower upon it. The centered front entrance to the complex is located within the base and faces west onto Vine St. This plaza-style entry is recessed in a low, rectangular-shaped space and is bordered by planters. The entryway floor is paved with a black and white terrazzo similar to that on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. The words "The Capitol Tower" are inset in large white block font in the entryway floor. A round column is present at either end of the entry. Between these columns is an exposed metal leg and beam framework overhang. Attached to it are cylindrical light fixtures that shine light from top and bottom, and conical light fixtures above the planters. The entry door is framed on either side by large vertical window panes. The entryway planters step with the sloping grade and continue in a recessed strip running north to the building's edge. The running planter was a gesture to the residential neighborhoods that once had a greater presence north of the building. Within these planters are mature palm and eucalyptus specimens, fern, and large lava rock boulders. Palm specimens are also present at the front elevation south of the entry.

ATTACHEMENT A: DESCRIPTION.
THE CAPITOL TOWER AND ROOFTOP SIGNAGE

Suspended by metal bar and cable above the entrance is a 13-section rectangular screen of expanded metal. In a row across the front elevation are light fixtures consisting of a small, protruding metal bar that suspend can shaped lights of a slotted, black painted metal.

The north elevation of the base is now connected to the 2001 addition, which straddles it and the front elevation, leaving the base intact. Where the addition's Vine St. elevation meets the original base, its walls are composed of a light green fiberglass material with a continuous white grid upon it. The east-facing rear elevation of the base contains a shipping entrance remodeled in 2001 with a recessed glass wall of aluminum mullion and large multi-glazed units. A convex, burnished metal "Capitol Records" sign is suspended above the rear entry. Vertical scoring is present across the rest of the rear elevation. The entire south elevation of the base is covered with a wall mural titled "Hollywood Jazz: 1945-1972" painted in 1990 by Richard Watt Jr. The base roof due south of the tower doubles as an outdoor patio and sitting terrace.

BASE INTERIOR AND UNDERGROUND CHAMBERS:

A small lobby is just inside the west-facing front entry. The lobby space is framed by two large octagonal columns. A desk is located in front of the lobby's south wall. Framed gold and platinum records cover the north and south walls of the lobby. The overhanging steel framework present in front of the entrance continues through the glass transom across the lobby, where it is covered with material from a recent remodeling. Hanging saucer lamps, which also appear to be from a recent remodeling, are affixed to the framework. The lobby floor features an abstract black pattern of three rays emanating from a circle design present at the front door. The ray pattern ends at three metal elevators located at the rear of the lobby. The marble flooring around this pattern appears to be from a recent remodeling.

In addition to the lobby, the base of the Capitol Tower contains three recording studios, recording department offices, two mastering rooms, and six production rooms. The larger recording studios "A" and "B" are adjacent one another inside the base's southern portion. The smaller studio "C" is located in the base due north of the Tower. The floors of each recording studio feature a layer of concrete that "floats" upon a layer of cork to provides better insulation from sound vibration. Aside from resting upon this specially designed floor, the interiors of the studios themselves are their own enclosures, separated from rest of the building by a one-inch gap with ten-inch thick concrete walls on the other side of it. Movable Birchwood and fiberglass acoustical panels were installed to control soft and hard sounds for recording purposes. The studio ceilings were of a shaped zig-zag pattern to better modulate sound travel.

ATTACHEMENT A: DESCRIPTION
THE CAPITOL TOWER AND ROOFTOP SIGNAGE

Roughly 75' east of the building and located 25' beneath the parking lot are four reverberation chambers attached in a trapezoidal form around a vestibule. The chambers are accessible by a subterranean tunnel from the Capitol Tower. Such chambers allow for the use of sound reverberation to add depth, texture and "space" to recorded music. The earliest music recordings often had a "flat" affect that reverberation chambers mitigate. The trapezoidal form combined with the sloped ceilings of the chambers present no parallel surfaces, which prevents the occurrence of echoes or sound flutter. The chambers are shock mounted to 10" thick concrete outer walls and like the studios, have concrete and cork floors to insulate them from outside sounds.

THE CIRCULAR TOWER AND ROOFTOP SIGNAGE

Visually, the rectangular base serves as a plinth for the circular tower component that comprises 12 levels. Set back and off-center due north of the centered entry, the tower appears to float above the base itself. This effect is conveyed by the round tower's first exposed story being 78' in diameter, compared to the larger 92' diameter for the remaining levels above that. Twelve continuous concrete piers that run the height of the tower visually unite all of the circular levels. Each floor of the tower is comprised of reinforced concrete spandrels surmounted by a band of fixed double-glazed window units set into aluminum mullions. Each semi-circular arc between the piers contains six windows. A horizontal concrete awning rings each floor of the tower, projecting beyond the plane of the vertical piers to visually create the sense of "stacked" circular floors raised up on the piers. Porcelain-enameled "eyelid" sunshades project at a 40-degree angle from the perimeter of each ring, further enhancing the building's circular form while also shading the office windows. The paint scheme of the tower's exterior is currently light gray with white awnings and a gray colored crown.

Inside the tower, the office spaces correspond to the round plan, and abut most of the windows of each floor. In addition to the twelve columns at the perimeter of the tower, each floor contains six square structural columns in a circular formation, just as the lobby does. The center of each floor is a continuous vertical concrete core that houses elevators, two sets of stairs, restrooms, and storage spaces. On each floor between this core and the offices themselves is a circular walkway.

Atop the roof is a semi-circular equipment tower with a low-pitched conical roof. This equipment tower is enclosed by a circular, 30' tall gray-painted metal screen of slotted vertical bar, similar in style to the light fixtures across the base at the front elevation. Suspended via cable and bar from it is a floating, 9' tall circular metal drum. Upon it are individual, white,

ATTACHEMENT A: DESCRIPTION.
THE CAPITOL TOWER AND ROOFTOP SIGNAGE

internally lit block font letters that spell out "Capitol Records" three times. At the northwest quadrant of the roof is an 82' tall perforated metal trilon spire that is supported at its back by two small metal posts. Attached atop this spire is a red aviation beacon light that in international Morse Code repeatedly blinks "H-O-L-L-Y-W-O-O-D." A 50' metal flagpole added in 1989 is present upon the roof's south side.

ATTACHMENT B: SIGNIFICANCE

THE CAPITOL TOWER AND ROOFTOP SIGNAGE

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Capitol Tower, commonly known as the Capitol Records Building, was seen as a landmark the day it opened and is now, unarguably, a Hollywood and entertainment industry icon. Such revered status is due to its architecture, the social significance of the company itself, and the various legendary artists who have recorded world-famous music at the on-site studios.

The Capitol Tower was designed in 1954 by the firm of Welton Becket and Associates, with Louis Naidorf as the Project Designer. Naidorf was 24 years old when he first conceived the round tower design. Led by founder Welton Becket (1902-1969), Welton Becket Associates was responsible for other iconic local buildings including the Pan Pacific Auditorium (Wurdeman and Becket, 1935, destroyed 1989), the Theme Building at LAX (1962, with Pereira & Luckman and Paul R. Williams), the Cinerama Dome (1963), the Santa Monica Civic Auditorium (1959), and the Los Angeles Music Center (1964-1969). By the 1960s, Welton Becket & Associates was the largest architectural firm in the Country, and Becket's work extended around the world including a US embassy in Warsaw, numerous Hilton Hotels, plus the Ford and General Electric Pavilions at the 1964 New York World's Fair.

As expressed in many of the above listed buildings, the Becket firm was known for buildings that were distinct and technologically innovative in their design, amenities and construction. Efficiency, from a highly standardized in-house design process to a proven ability for final cost savings, was a major goal of the Becket firm that created many, and often large-scale buildings. The output, order, and scale of Becket's firm matched the scale and needs of post World War II Los Angeles: a vast city with a rapidly growing population. For the combination of all the above traits, Author Alan Hess has written of Welton Becket Associates as designing the City of Tomorrow (Nichols, Ed. Built by Becket: 7).

The Capitol Tower is the first high-rise in Hollywood's post World War II era. Furthermore, the Capitol Tower was cited upon its completion as the first round office building in the history of architecture (Time Magazine, 16 Apr. 1956: 96,98; Architectural Forum Mar. 1955: 147). The Capitol Tower included the highest technical amenities of its time including an automated elevator system, Hollywood's first fully air-conditioned office tower, and a very early use of backlit signage that is now the region's earliest remaining example of such signage atop a corporate high-rise. The three studios were the first anywhere designed for the purpose of high-fidelity recording. The underground reverberation chambers, designed with help from guitar pioneer Les Paul, are relatively rare, and have remained in high demand.

ATTACHMENT B: SIGNIFICANCE
THE CAPITOL TOWER AND ROOFTOP SIGNAGE

During the years after World War II, wholly new architectural forms, often influenced by the local aerospace industry, were not uncommon within the Los Angeles region. This era's local coffee shop architecture is one example, in which architects used futuristic designs to catch the attention of motorists. John Entenza's Case Study House program, originally conceived to provide efficient but well-designed mass housing of common industrial materials, is another. Lagging behind in this regard was Modern high-rise architecture, which typically employed the standard rectangle that was seen by architect Mies van der Rohe as a "universal" form.

In the popular press and even in Los Angeles architectural guidebooks, the Capitol Tower is described as a stack of records topped by a needle. The reference is compared to programmatic architecture on a giant scale in the earlier regional tradition of food stands shaped like oversized hot dogs or giant chili bowls. According to all past and present statements by architects associated with the design, the round office tower was not intended to represent a stack of records topped by a needle. Naidorf did not know the identity of the client when he proposed his circular design, and the spire was a redesign of what was to be a derrick-like antenna that Capitol wanted placed atop the tower. Initially, Capitol had hoped to have its own radio station broadcast from the facility—the FCC rejected this idea. Upon viewing the round-towered model, Capitol Founder Glenn Wallichs, fearing the "stack of records" jokes to come, demanded a rectangular design, which Becket provided. After accepting Becket's cost arguments and after Wallichs' own insurance company recommended the round tower over the rectangular model, only then did Wallichs endorse the unique yet highly efficient shape.

The circular shape of the office tower was not just highly unique and experimental, but was primarily intended to achieve unabashed cost-efficiency. The shape required 13%-20% less outer wall than a rectangular structure, which saved on construction costs. Because of reduced heat loss and gain through the glass, less wall space made climate control easier and more affordable. In addition, light was more evenly distributed in a round building. The 92' diameter circular floorplan provided the optimum amount of space needed for the work occurring within the tower. The circular shape allowed for a smaller central core. Not including the studio chambers which were built as separate enclosures, the Capitol Tower was constructed for \$15.00 a square foot.

"(Welton) convinced me it would be the best possible design for our purposes. And it has turned out beautifully. Making the building round has not been more expensive; in fact, we may have saved some money on the final cost. And we've got a building that will be a real landmark."

----- Capitol Records Co-Founder Glenn Wallichs, 1956.

ATTACHMENT B: SIGNIFICANCE
THE CAPITOL TOWER AND ROOFTOP SIGNAGE

SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

Capitol Records was founded in 1942 by nationally known singer and songwriter Johnny Mercer ("That Old Black Magic," "Hooray for Hollywood"), Glenn Wallichs, who owned "Wallichs Music City": the largest music store in Los Angeles, and songwriter/ Paramount Producer Buddy DeSylva ("California Here I Come"), who fronted the initial \$25,000 to fund the endeavor. Capitol was the first major record label on the west coast and early on was seen as competition to the "big three" record labels: RCA-Victor, Columbia, and Decca, all based in Manhattan. Capitol's first offices were located at 1483 Vine St. and in 1946 were moved above Wallichs Music City at 1507 Vine St. This area was the hub of 1940s Hollywood nightclub life.

Early recordings were conducted at rented studios until 1948, when Capitol purchased its first studios at 5515 Melrose Avenue; now occupied by KCAL channel 9. During this period the company became a leader in sound technology. Capitol was the first label to use tape machines rather than acetate disks, allowing for higher recording quality. Capitol was also the first of the major labels to fully exploit echo chambers: specially designed rooms that in correspondence with the microphone and speaker placement within them captured a richer sound. The company grew rapidly, and signed popular early acts in the 1940s such as Stan Kenton, Jo Stafford, Louis Prima & Keely Smith, Les Baxter, Alan Livingston (creator of "Bozo the Clown"), Mel Tormé and Nat "King" Cole. Having sold 15 million records by 1952, Cole's success is credited with vaulting Capitol Records into the same pantheon of the above-mentioned labels. In 1955, the British company EMI Inc. purchased Capitol Records Inc., an 8.5 million dollar purchase that was at the time the most expensive transaction in the history of the recording industry. EMI remains the parent company.

On April 6, 1956, the Capitol Tower opened to great fanfare, including a Time Magazine article (which called the building a "smogscraper"), and the appearance of Leila Morse, the granddaughter of Samuel Morse, who activated the "Hollywood" beacon via telegraph. The site was located in the heart of the entertainment industry. Nearby studios included ABC, NBC, CBS, Warner Bros, RKO, Columbia, Paramount, Universal, and Disney.

During these early years Capitol Records executives signed a variety of artists whom others had perceived as in decline. These included Judy Garland, Bing Crosby, Peggy Lee, and perhaps most notably of all, Frank Sinatra. On April 22, 1956, it was Sinatra who conducted the first recording in the Capitol Tower Studios. In Studio A, Sinatra conducted Nelson Riddle's 56-piece orchestra through "Tone Poems in Color." In this same studio, Sinatra would go on to record some of his most memorable songs and albums, including "The Lady is A Tramp," "Night and Day," "Witchcraft," "Chicago," "Something's Gotta Give" (written by Johnny Mercer),

ATTACHMENT B: SIGNIFICANCE
THE CAPITOL TOWER AND ROOFTOP SIGNAGE

"Embraceable You", and "Nice N' Easy," among many, many others. During this period, Sinatra's friend Dean Martin would record at these facilities, as would Nat "King" Cole himself. Capitol's three studios: A, B, and C, located at the base of the tower, were the first in the industry designed specifically for high fidelity recording.

By the mid-1960s, Capitol Records became a powerhouse in the music industry. Though founded with a focus on a smooth, melodic, pre-rock n' roll style sensibility, Capitol shifted with the trends of the decade, and hired music producers who often were younger than 21 years old. In part as a result of this, its label included two of the truly stratospheric pop bands of the decade: The Beatles and The Beach Boys. Based out of Hawthorne, CA., the Beach Boys were the first youth-oriented rock band signed with Capitol. By their third album, *Surfer Girl*, the Beach Boys would become the first self-produced group in rock. Brian Wilson would become the first rock musician from a group to release a solo single, titled "Caroline, No," in 1966. The group would also become the first rock band to get their own custom label—Brother Records—distributed by Capitol. For the Beatles, Capitol was the primary American distributor and marketer of their music from December 1963 until the band's breakup in 1970 (In the early 1960s however, Capitol initially passed on the band). By 1965, the Beatles and the Beach Boys provided 56% of Capitol Records' entire revenue.

Since the 1960s, among the acts that have recorded within the Capitol Studios are Bobby Darin, Lou Rawls, Natalie Cole, Linda Ronstadt, Nancy Wilson, Whitney Houston, MC Hammer, and Prince. In addition, Capitol has continued to sign other significant, platinum-selling pop acts including The Band, Pink Floyd, Duran Duran, Tina Turner, Garth Brooks, Bonnie Raitt, The Beastie Boys, and Radiohead.

The Capitol Tower is literally the beacon of Hollywood. As architecture, it is thoughtful, innovative, and expresses the optimism and ambition of post-WWII Los Angeles and its entertainment entrepreneurs. The design of the rooftop signage is unchanged from opening day, and is significant for its strong association to Capitol Records Inc., which has occupied the Tower since 1956. The Capitol Tower has become the very symbol of the company itself, displayed prominently in publications, and on the company website. The talent represented by Capitol Records includes legendary figures of the pop music genre. Among the music recorded within the in-house studios are songs instantly recognizable and iconic, much like the Capitol Tower itself.

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