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1906 Prosser Avenue
Los Angeles, California 90025

August 2, 2009

Re: File 09-1676

Planning and Land Use Committee
Councilmembers Huizar, Reyes and Koretz

Date: 8-4-09
Submitted in PLU Committee
Council File No: 09-1676
Item No.: 2
Deputy: B. GRAYES

With all due respect, we are urging you to support the motion before your Committee providing social and cultural landmark status for the Century Plaza Hotel. The building is a notable example of the work of celebrated architect Minoru Yamasaki, and is one of his most important designs. The elegant curved design was a cornerstone of the development of Century City, and should remain as a graceful counterpoint to the proliferation of towers which are being developed there. It has both architectural and historical significance, and should be preserved in this city which has rarely honored that legacy.

On a personal note, having grown up in Detroit, Michigan with its bleak and uninspired architectural landscape, the arrival of Minoru Yamasaki brought fresh and elegant design to the city. He left a legacy there incorporating elements of exquisite international architectural style. A half-century later, they are still exciting and adventurous.

The other relevant note is a plea based upon a sad event in the history of Los Angeles which is etched in my memory. The Dodge House on Kings Road, designed by celebrated architect Irving Gill, was built in 1914. The American Institute of Architects ranked it among the 15 most architecturally significant American houses. Architects from all over the world came to see this site-specific home, an early example of the modernist architectural style.

Despite efforts of architecture preservationists, one rainy night in 1970, the building was demolished with no advance notice. The bulldozing of the Dodge House has been called one of "the most shameful chapters in L.A.'s legacy of self-destruction," and The New York Times called it a "tragic commentary on how we throw our national heritage away."

We hope that the City of Los Angeles has matured in its appreciation of our cultural legacy. Please help us preserve one of the major buildings in our midst.

Thank you,
Bennett and Marilyn Cohon