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October 8, 2009

Los Angeles City Council
City Hall
200 N. Spring St., Rm. 395
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Attn: Barbara Greaves, Legislative Analyst

Re: CF-09-1676

Dear Councilmembers:

Pursuant to Council File 09-1676 (07-07-2009) and a directive of a Planning and Land Use Management Committee Report (08-04-2009), the Office of Historic Resources, Department of City Planning submits a proposed list of character-defining features and non-character-defining features for the Century Plaza Hotel, located at 2025 Avenue of the Stars in Century City. Constructed in 1966, this 20-story hotel building was designed by architect Minoru Yamasaki and commissioned by Western International Hotels.

Upon formal initiation of consideration as a City Historic-Cultural Monument by the City Council, the Office of Historic Resources will complete a staff report further assessing the possible eligibility of the Century Plaza Hotel for local designation. The list of character-defining features provided below summarizes the visual aspects and physical features that comprise the contributing elements of the building. Further staff research and input submitted at the Cultural Heritage Commission hearing by Commission members and the public may further refine this list of character-defining features and may also reveal possible social and cultural significance. This listing of physical features is most directly relevant to the possible eligibility of the building based on architectural merit and association with a notable architect. Eligibility related to historic personages, events, or social significance may highlight character-defining features not listed below.

LIST OF CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES

- 1) Curvilinear shape and building plan
- 2) View-shed from Avenue of the Stars
- 3) Setback from Avenue of the Stars

- 4) Sunken plaza
- 5) One-story "C" shaped penthouse on rooftop
- 6) Flat rooftop and projection
- 7) Horizontal cornice-like element running full length of building, consisting of a transparent grille made of aluminum panels arranged in a pressed pattern, resembling classical egg-and-dart molding
- 8) Identical uninterrupted 14 horizontal rows of beveled balconies arranged in 30 vertical rows on main elevation facing Avenue of the Stars
- 9) Two off-center elevator towers on western elevation, sheathed in aluminum panels
- 10) Identical 14 horizontal rows of beveled balconies arranged in 25 rows bisected by two elevator towers, creating three balconied sections on western elevation
- 11) Centered horizontal row of 14 beveled balconies flanked by aluminum panels located on northern and southern side elevations
- 12) Paired aluminum panels that run length of building from ground floor to roof top between balconies
- 13) Balcony railings with distinctive inward curved corners and 37 vertical rectangular bars
- 14) Floor to ceiling transparent glass sliding doors separating balcony spaces from hotel rooms
- 15) Extant original exterior building materials and finishes
- 16) Unpainted anodized aluminum panels located on elevator towers, rooftop penthouse, rooftop grille, balcony railings, and ground floor to rooftop paired vertical panels
- 17) Curved configuration of upper-floor interior corridors

LIST OF NON-CHARACTER DEFINING FEATURES

- 1) Building interior (except corridor configuration of upper floors)
- 2) Main entrance canopy and signage (original canopy was replaced)
- 3) Exterior ground floor openings on main elevation and western elevation
- 4) Landscaping features and buildings on western and eastern sections of property
- 5) Equinox building and all accessory buildings and landscape features on western portion of property, including patio covers, gardens, fountains, and swimming pools
- 6) Parking structure (on separate legal parcel from hotel building and grounds)

Sincerely,

S. GAIL GOLDBERG, AICP
Director of Planning



KEN BERNSTEIN, AICP
Manager, Office of Historic Resources

**TO THE COUNCIL OF THE
CITY OF LOS ANGELES**

FILE NO. 09-1676

Your

PLANNING AND LAND USE MANAGEMENT

Committee

reports as follows:

PLANNING AND LAND USE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT relative to the proposed designation of the Century Plaza Hotel located at 2025 Avenue of the Stars in the list of Historic-Cultural Monuments.

Recommendations for Council action, as initiated by Motion (Koretz - Reyes):

1. INITIATE consideration of the Century Plaza Hotel, located at 2025 Avenue of the Stars in Century City, as a City Historic-Cultural Monument, with the understanding that such proposal requires that there shall be a temporary (90 day) stay of demolition, substantial alteration or removal of any location or structure at this site pending designation.
2. REQUEST that Planning Department, Office of Historic Resources, in conformance with Los Angeles Administrative Code Section 22.171.10, prepare a report on the proposed designation of the Century Plaza Hotel, located at 2025 Avenue of the Stars in Century City, for consideration by the Cultural Heritage Commission within 75 days.

Community Impact Statement: None submitted.

Summary:

On August 4, 2009, the Planning and Land Use Management (PLUM) Committee considered and approved Motion (Koretz - Reyes) requesting that the City Council propose that the Century Plaza Hotel located at 2025 Avenue of the Stars in Century City, be included in the City's list of historic or cultural monuments, with the understanding that such proposal requires, pursuant to Section 22.171.12 of the Los Angeles Administrative Code, that there shall be a temporary (90 day) stay of demolition, substantial alteration or removal of any location or structure at this site pending designation. In addition, the PLUM Committee directed the Planning Department, Office of Historic Resources, to provide an inventory list identifying all defining structures and features that may be historic, and those features which would not qualify as historic or culturally significant, prior to the initiation Motion proceeding to Council.

Several speakers at the hearing provided testimony in support of Motion (Koretz - Reyes), and others spoke in opposition. At least one speaker requested that Motion requesting Council action on the initiation be postponed pending the completion of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for a proposed project. Councilmember Paul Koretz representing Council District Five provided testimony regarding his concerns, including his concerns regarding the EIR for proposed future development at the site.

Planning Department staff provided the PLUM Committee with alternatives to address some concerns expressed by Councilmember Koretz. The City Attorney advised the Committee relative to the matters that were in accordance with Brown Act requirements.

Respectfully submitted,

PLANNING AND LAND USE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

<u>MEMBER</u>	<u>VOTE</u>
REYES:	YES
HUIZAR:	ABSENT
KORETZ:	YES

BG:
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- Not Official Until Council Acts -

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PLANNING & LAND USE MANAGEMENT

MOTION

The *Century Plaza Hotel* located at 2025 Avenue of the Stars in Century City, opened in 1966 as the centerpiece of Century City. The 19-story curved hotel has been a prominent Los Angeles landmark for more than four decades. From its prime perch fronting the spectacular fountains on the Avenue of the Stars, the Century Plaza's sweeping modern design was designed by renowned architect Minoru Yamasaki, who would later design New York's World Trade Center twin towers.

The Century Plaza Hotel stimulated the development of Century City and led to its reputation as a world-class destination, having been a gathering place for celebrities, politicians and world dignitaries since its opening day. Once nicknamed the "West Coast White House," the Century Plaza was a favorite of both Presidents Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan. Nixon hosted a celebration for the Apollo 11 astronauts at the hotel, while Reagan presided over two presidential victory celebrations in the hotel's vast ballroom and conducted much of his business in the hotel's Presidential Suite while in California.

For these reasons alone this structure is historically significant and it should be included in the City's list of historic or cultural monuments.

The Administrative Code (§22.171.7) defines an 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.

The Administrative Code also provides that the Council can propose sites for inclusion on the list of historic or cultural monuments. The Cultural Heritage Commission after reviewing and investigating any such Council initiated amendment to the list, and after soliciting opinions and information regarding such potential site, shall approve or disapprove the proposed inclusion or deletion and submit a report upon such action to the Council. In addition, the Administrative Code provides that there shall be a temporary (90 day) stay of demolition, substantial alteration or removal of any such proposed location or structure pending designation.

I THEREFORE MOVE that pursuant to Section 22.171.10 of the Administrative Code, the City Council propose that the *Century Plaza Hotel* located at 2025 Avenue of the Stars in Century City, be included in the City's list of historic or cultural monuments, with the understanding that such proposal requires, pursuant to Section 22.171.12 of the Administrative Code, that there shall be a temporary (90 day) stay of demolition, substantial alteration or removal of any location or structure at this site pending designation.

PRESENTED BY

Paul Koretz
Paul Koretz
Councilmember, 5th District

SECONDED BY

Earl P. Reyes

JUL - 7 2009

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