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eastwestplayers.org

120 Judge John Aiso Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

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#1

To: L.A. City Councilmember Jose Huizar
City Hall
200 N. Spring Street, Room 465
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Tuesday, January 10, 2017

RE: In support of option B3, the demolition of Parker Center

Dear Councilmember Huizar,

As someone who works every day in Little Tokyo at a vibrant and vital non-profit arts organization, I care deeply about the future of the block where our theatre is located.

I am writing to you today to advocate for the demolition of Parker Center (option 3B). I support the Little Tokyo Community Council's (LTCC) position calling for "the complete demolition of the former Parker Center building thus allowing for the maximum number of community concerns ... to be implemented" as written in LTCC's October 2016 letter to CD 14.

The City must be able to accommodate its needs for additional administrative space so as not to interfere with the Historic First Street North (FSN) and Mangrove parcels in Little Tokyo. The best plan for this is to demolish Parker Center and develop that location into office spaces, employee parking, public parking, and ground floor retail. Keeping in mind the Parker Center entire block was originally part of Little Tokyo until the city took it for civic expansion in the 1960s and destroyed many family-owned businesses and a temple integral to the community, it only seems just and fair to listen to the voices and needs of the Little Tokyo community today when considering the future of this lot.

Little Tokyo already has a vision for what we want to see at FSN, and it's vital to the community that what gets developed in LT is for the community, by the community! The first step to achieving these goals is to demolish Parker Center, redevelop that lot with connectivity and access into Little Tokyo, and leave and civic development out of FSN.

Respectfully submitted,

Meredith Patt
Audience Services Manager
East West Players
in DTLA's historic Little Tokyo neighborhood

Date: Jan 10, 2017
Submitted in EF Committee
Council File No: 14-1604 & 15-0554
Item No.: 1
Deputy: public



LITTLE TOKYO SERVICE CENTER

Positive Change for People and Places

231 E. Third Street, Suite G106, Los Angeles, CA 90013

Tel: 213.473.3030 | Fax: 213.473.3031 | www.LTSC.org

January 10, 2017

Councilmember Mitch O'Farrell

Chair of Entertainment Facilities Committee, City Hall

200 North Spring Street

Los Angeles, CA 90012

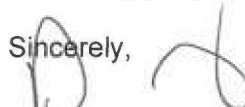
Dear Honorable Councilmember Mitch O'Farrell,

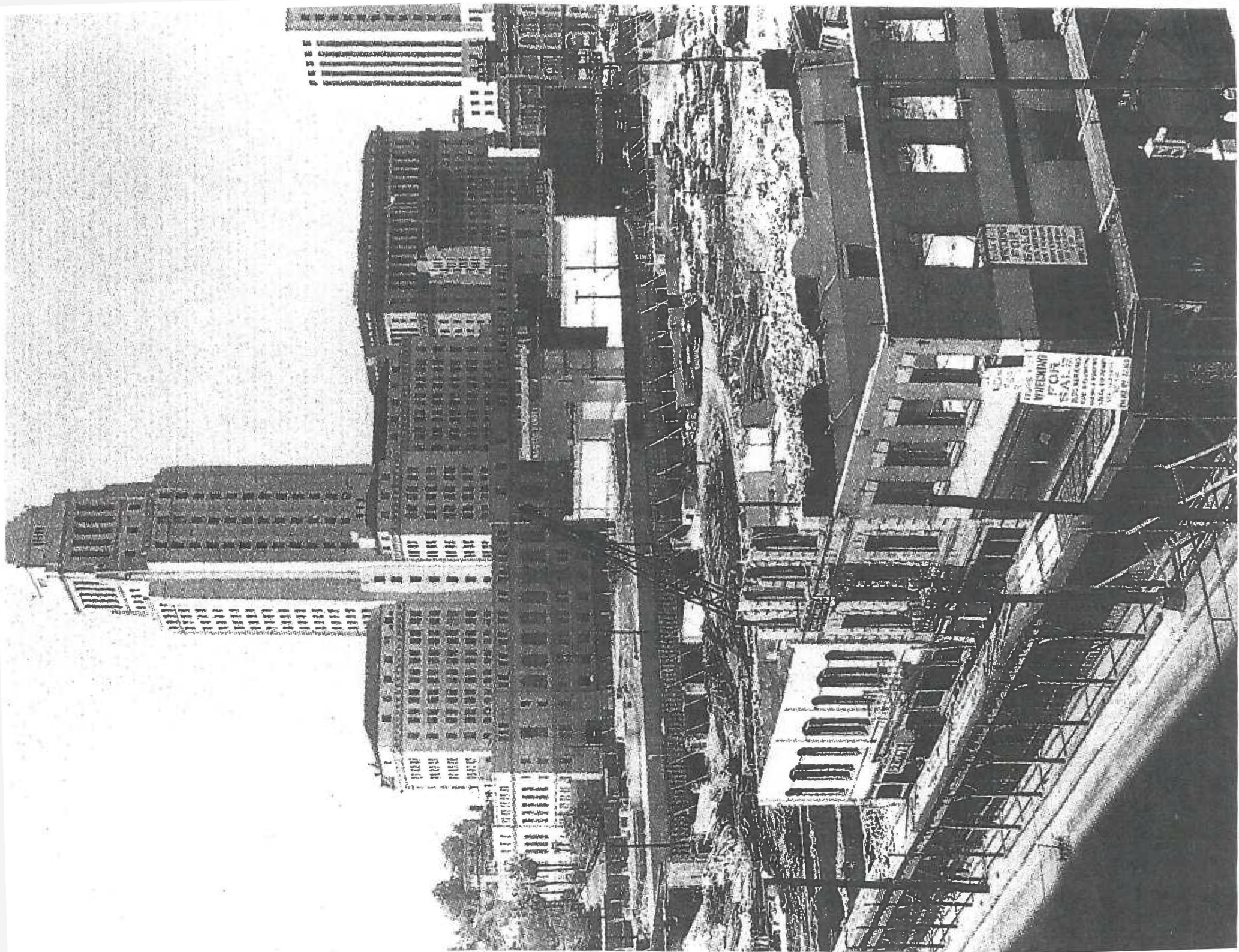
This letter is submitted on behalf of Little Tokyo Service Center (LTSC), a Little Tokyo-based social service and community development organization committed to improving the lives of individuals and families through culturally sensitive social service care, strengthening neighborhoods through housing and community development, and promoting the rich heritage of our ethnic communities. LTSC strongly supports the City of Los Angeles' Parker Center **EIR Alternative B3** for the following reasons:

- Alternative B3 is the alternative most likely to result in a building that does not "turn its back" on Little Tokyo and has the potential to actually connect Little Tokyo to Downtown Los Angeles by creating pedestrian access from Judge John Aiso Street west to Los Angeles Street and beyond, essentially reactivating historic Jackson Street. The site of the current Parker Center was previously a vibrant and vital part of Little Tokyo up until it was taken in the 1950s. This was shortly after the internment camps were closed and the Little Tokyo community was rebuilding itself and did not have the means to oppose the displacement of numerous family-owned businesses, up to 1,000 units of affordable housing, and community facilities including the early site of Nishi Hongwanji Buddhist Temple.
- Alternative B3 will provide development that activates the ground floor and has greater potential to link to Little Tokyo. Conversations have already been ongoing between the Little Tokyo Community Council, of which LTSC is a member, and the Office of the Chief Administrative Office about preferred uses to the Little Tokyo community - including, but not limited to, community public spaces and neighborhood-serving retail (preferably small businesses).
- Alternative B3 proposes all parking as below ground, facilitating greater pedestrian orientation, ground floor activation, and the connectivity referenced above. Furthermore, this alternative calls for a total of 1,173 parking stalls, which could serve as replacement parking for City and public parking currently being provided on Lots 2 & 7.
- Last, but certainly not least, LTSC strongly supports the demolition of the Parker Center building. As an organization rooted in the civil rights and community empowerment movements of the 1970's and founded by a group of Japanese American activists, LTSC stands for principles of racial equity and justice. Unfortunately, Parker Center - and its Chief namesake, William H. Parker - represents a painful era of strained relations between LAPD and communities of color. Furthermore, in light of increased public attention to the disproportionate loss of black and brown lives at the hands of law enforcement in this country, we do not support the idea that Parker Center should be preserved and celebrated as an important historic asset for the City of Los Angeles.

We strongly urge the City to move forward with Alternative B3.

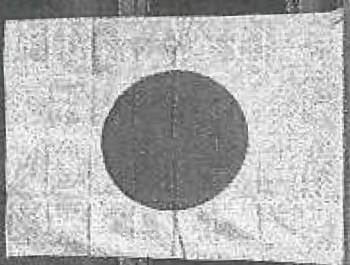
Sincerely,


Dean Matsubayashi, Executive Director





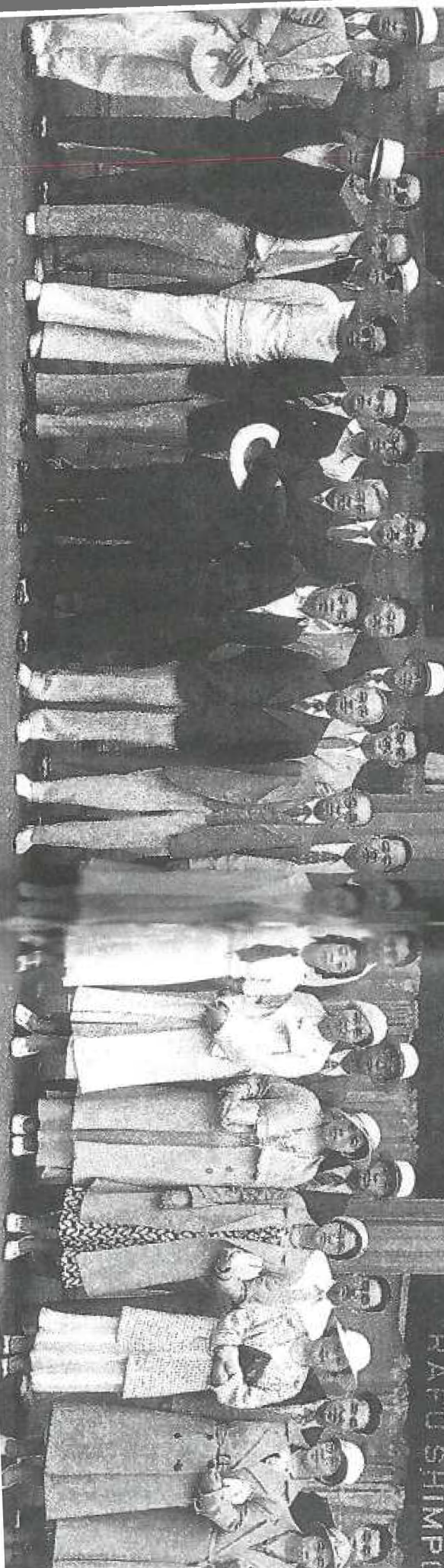
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THE GREAT SHIMPO





Bunkado, Inc.
340 East First Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012
Phone: 213-625-1122
bunkado@att.net
bunkadoonline.com

Irene Tsukada Simonian

January 10, 2017

To whom it may concern:

I am writing regarding plans that are being discussed for the Parker Center building, as I am regretfully unable to attend the hearing today.

I am a third-generation business and property owner of Bunkado store, located at 340 East First Street. Last year, we celebrated our 70th year in business. I serve on the boards of the Little Tokyo Community Council and the Little Tokyo Public Safety Association.

The preservation of historically and culturally significant buildings is important work, and I have deep appreciation for conservationists and the work they do. In fact, I would generally be sitting with them in support of conservation. However, a line must be drawn as to what is worth saving and what is not. The Parker Center building is not one of them. The Parker Center building served as a backdrop for movies and tv shows, served as LAPD's headquarters during significant moments in history, and it was considered state of the art in 1955, but these reasons do not qualify it to be preserved forever. As I understand it, the cost for retrofitting this building to survive future earthquakes and removing asbestos and other detritus of 60 years is staggering, especially when its practical use after all the renovations is questionable. I have heard from those who have worked inside this building that it leaked "constantly" and the windows made it extremely energy inefficient. As much as one would like to romanticize it as being "mid-century modern", it is basically a glass block with little aesthetic or architectural interest.

There is a temptation to save as many older buildings as one can from the wrecking ball as a reaction to all the great buildings this City has lost over the years. However, I personally look forward to seeing a vibrant, practical, forward looking and hopefully more attractive building in its place as a positive addition to the residents, visitors and businesses of neighboring Little Tokyo.

Sincerely,



LOS ANGELES
CONSERVANCY



523 West Sixth Street, Suite 826, Los Angeles, CA 90014 | laconservancy.org

Reusing Parker Center: Fiscally Responsible Stewardship

Reject the City's Preferred Project Calling for Demolition

- Oppose the plan to demolish Parker Center and reject the City's B3 project alternative.
- Complete an independent and detailed cost analysis involving preservation experts.
- Schedule the pending Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) nomination for Parker Center for the Planning and Land Use Management (PLUM) Committee before voting on its demolition.

Reuse Can Save Nearly \$50 Million, Possibly Far More

Reusing Parker Center can save the City nearly \$50 million, in comparison to the City's preferred project calling for demolition. This makes sense as experience has shown that reusing an existing building can be less – often much less – than demolition and new construction.

Based on a convening on January 6, 2017 by the Conservancy of a panel of preservation experts (comprising highly experienced developers, architects, a cost estimator, and a seismic engineer), we strongly believe that **the reuse of Parker Center can actually result in a savings of millions for the City**. We have double-checked and believe our cost analysis to be accurate and extremely conservative in approach, and think **the actual savings could be well more than \$50 million**.

The City's numbers do not add up.

Our analysis directly contradicts claims made by the City that preservation will cost \$107 million more (as part of a preservation alternative known as "Alt. B4," developed by the City in 2016) than new construction (\$536,381,078/Alt. B3 vs. \$487,317,706/Alt. B4 = \$49,063,372 cost difference/savings). The Conservancy and others have repeatedly asked the City to provide details to back up its claim that reusing Parker Center would be more expensive than replacing it – all to no avail. In the absence of this we thoroughly reviewed the City's cost estimates and asked experts to evaluate the numbers within the context of a typical rehabilitation scope of work. We strove to offer a comparative, "apples to apples" analysis. Based on this we found an actual cost savings of nearly \$50 million or more that can be achieved through the reuse of Parker Center.

What accounts for the City's higher costs for reuse?

The Conservancy and the experts we consulted believe the City's estimates are heavily inflated, described by some as "putting the thumb on the scale." The City also makes several assumptions that indefensibly disadvantage preservation and sometimes don't make sense. Without justification or reasoning that is based on actual building rehabilitation in practice, the City sets in motion a scope that repeatedly assures costs will quickly escalate for preservation.

The City insists this be a "restoration" approach. This is not required or warranted in this case, as "rehabilitation" is the more commonly applied approach to reusing a historic building of this type. Rehabilitation and restoration are fundamentally different approaches to preservation, whereas restoration will always be more expensive. The Conservancy has pointed this out to the City.



By the Numbers

	ALT. B3 (City of LA, Preferred Project)	ALT. B4 (City of LA)	ALT. B4 (LA Conservancy)
Gross Square Feet	27 Stories 753,730 GSF	29 Stories 753,730 GSF	29 Stories 753,730 GSF
Net Square Feet	588,399 NSF	588,399 NSF	588,399 NSF
	2,945 employees	2,945 employees	2,945 employees
Parking	1,173 Spaces	819 Spaces	1,173 Spaces
Maximum Height	450 Ft. (max envelope)	450 Ft. (max envelope)	450 Ft. (max envelope)
Est. Project Cost	\$537,000,000	\$621,000,000	\$488,000,000
Difference in Project Cost		\$84,000,000 Shortfall	\$49,000,000 Savings

*See detailed analysis

Benefits of Reusing Parker Center

Can Parker Center be saved and be re-purposed for a new use? Yes, the Conservancy strongly believes that it can and should. The City has an important role as a steward of historic, publicly owned resources. It expects better stewardship from the private sector than it's providing for its own Parker Center, which is a double standard.

Reusing Parker Center:

- Repurposes and reinvests in an existing historic resource, meeting fire-life safety and seismic safety objectives, as well as complying with the City Green Building Code – resulting in a more sustainable outcome over the proposed new construction.
- Allows for the expansion of City offices to house 2,945 employees within a historic building with modern, 21st-century investments and technology;
- Provides a “win-win” alternative to demolition that results in a significant cost savings for the City without needlessly throwing away an important historic place or wasting taxpayer money.

Just the Facts

- Parker Center was designed by the renowned architectural firm of Welton Becket & Associates.
- When opened in 1955, Parker Center was considered one of the most modern and advanced centralized police headquarters facilities in the nation, noteworthy for its crime-fighting technological capabilities.
- Parker Center is the backdrop to many important and often controversial stories in L.A.'s mid-20th century era.
- Parker Center's significance as a historic place is not in question by the City, as it has been identified as a historic resource as part of the environmental review process.

PROBABLE COST ANALYSIS

	EIR ALT B3 (City of LA)		EIR ALT B4 (City of LA) ¹		EIR ALT B4 (LAC) ²		Difference B4 (LAC) - B3 (LA)		Difference B4 (LAC) - B4 (LA)	
BUILDING AREA (Gross)	753,730	GSF	753,730	GSF	753,730	GSF	0	GSF	0	GSF
BUILDING AREA (Net)	588,399	NSF	588,399	NSF	588,399	NSF	0	NSF	0	NSF
PARKING COUNT	1,173	Stalls	1,173	Stalls	1,173	Stalls	0	Stalls	0	Stalls
DIRECT CONSTRUCTION COSTS ³	\$ 354,537,095	\$ 470.38 /GSF	\$ 394,553,964	\$ 523.47 /GSF	\$ 320,185,919	\$ 424.80 /GSF	\$ (34,351,176)	\$ (45.57) /GSF	\$ (74,368,045)	\$ (98.67) /GSF
INDIRECT CONSTRUCTION COSTS ⁴	\$ 67,447,137	\$ 89.48 /GSF	\$ 75,059,946	\$ 99.58 /GSF	\$ 60,912,169	\$ 80.81 /GSF	\$ (6,534,968)	\$ (8.67) /GSF	\$ (14,147,777)	\$ (18.77) /GSF
OWNER/DESIGN CONTINGENCY ⁵	\$ 84,396,846	\$ 111.97 /GSF	\$ 93,922,782	\$ 124.61 /GSF	\$ 76,219,617	\$ 101.12 /GSF	\$ (8,177,229)	\$ (10.85) /GSF	\$ (17,703,164)	\$ (23.49) /GSF
SOFT COSTS ⁶	\$ 30,000,000	\$ 39.80 /GSF	\$ 30,000,000	\$ 39.80 /GSF	\$ 30,000,000	\$ 39.80 /GSF	\$ -	\$ - /GSF	\$ -	\$ - /GSF
TOTAL PROJECT COST	\$ 536,381,078	\$ 711.64 /GSF	\$ 593,536,692	\$ 787.47 /GSF	\$ 487,317,706	\$ 646.54 /GSF	\$ (49,063,372)	\$ (65.09) /GSF	\$ (106,218,986)	\$ (140.92) /GSF
FF&E	\$ 60,000,000	\$ 79.60 /GSF	\$ 60,000,000	\$ 79.60 /GSF	\$ 60,000,000	\$ 79.60 /GSF	\$ -	\$ - /GSF	\$ -	\$ - /GSF

*More detailed cost analysis is available from the Los Angeles Conservancy.



Editorial What's next for L.A.'s Parker Center?



Parker Center, the Los Angeles Police Department's former headquarters, is seen from the intersection of First St. and San Pedro St. in downtown L.A. in 2002. (Los Angeles Times)

By **The Times Editorial Board**

DECEMBER 29, 2016, 5:00 AM

There was a time in Los Angeles, and not too long ago either, when progress meant bulldozing aging, out-of-style structures and replacing them with gleaming new buildings that better reflected the tastes of the moment. The Romanesque Revival City Hall that was too 19th century for the roaring 20s? Tear it down and replace it with a trendy Art Deco municipal tower. Out with the old and in with the new was the mantra. And why not? If there was any U.S. city that embodied the spirit of reinvention it was L.A.

Happily, the demolish-and-replace philosophy has itself gone out of style, to one degree or another. It is not entirely gone; tearing down bungalows to make way for supersized mansions is still a thing. In downtown Los Angeles these days, contemporary buildings exist comfortably next to vintage beauties. Just one example: The revitalized 140-year-old Cathedral of Saint Vibiana, now a restaurant and event space, sits across the street from the modern masterpiece by Thom Mayne that serves as Caltrans' District 7 headquarters.

The creative retrofitting of some of L.A.'s old buildings has turned dusty ex-factories into clean, new lofts. The long-shuttered and neglected Hall of Justice on Temple Street was restored to its early 20th century Beaux Arts

glory with 21st century upgrades. This is known as “adaptive reuse” and it honors the city’s history while serving the practical needs of the present.

It is a philosophy that the Los Angeles City Council should embrace when it considers whether to bulldoze Parker Center, the former LAPD headquarters on Los Angeles Street downtown. City staff is recommending razing the building to make room for a 750,000-square-foot office building for city workers. The alternative — preserving and renovating the 62-year-old Parker Center and building an addition as well — would cost \$100 million more, according to a city engineer’s report.

But as preservationists and the city’s own Cultural Heritage Commission have argued, it would be a shame to lose this architecturally important building that figures so prominently in the city’s history. The City Council should find some way to save all or part of Parker Center — and surely there’s a way of doing that for a lot less money than the engineer’s report suggests.

Parker Center, named for LAPD Chief William H. Parker, was designed by Welton Becket, a well-known and prolific Los Angeles architect who also designed the Capitol Records building, the Cinerama Dome and the Los Angeles Music Center. It’s a classic example of midcentury modern architecture and projected the aspirations of the city to transform its corrupt police department into professional, respectable contemporary force. Some consider it unlovely, but its image has come to define the two contrasting visions of the LAPD of the late 20th century — the somewhat mythologized department that Americans watched on TV in “Dragnet” and “Adam-12,” and the soiled department brought low by the Rampart scandal and the [Rodney King](#) beating.

Council members should also push back on the city engineer’s cost projections and ask for more flexibility. It shouldn’t cost more to reuse an existing building than to start from scratch. Renovating the old Broadway department store building into state offices, for example, cost a third less per foot than constructing the all-new Ronald Reagan state office building a few blocks away.

The city’s estimates seem to assume that Parker Center must be restored to its original state and that a big new addition needs to be put on as well. Perhaps there are other ways to do it. Maybe the addition is not necessary. Or maybe some parts of the building could be preserved, such as the first-floor auditorium, while other parts are not. Maybe it is not essential to provide expensive under-the-building parking for staff.

It’s hard to image that so many downtown developers would be embracing adaptive reuse if it was so much more expensive than all-new construction. They recognize that there can be value in retaining and creatively using the city’s historical buildings, and the City Council should too.

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This article is related to: [Architecture](#), [Rodney King](#), [Thom Mayne](#)

Op-Ed Parker Center isn't lovable, but it should be preserved



LAPD Honor Guard members fold the American flag as it is retired from the Parker Center flagpole for the last time during a ceremony on Jan. 15, 2013. (Los Angeles Times)

By **Gail Kennard**

DECEMBER 25, 2016, 5:00 AM

In the last 40 years, Los Angeles has faced major decisions about our civic center. We almost demolished the 1928 City Hall, but decided to save it, and today it is a cherished landmark. We considered tearing down the 1926 Central Library, but decided to save it, and today it anchors a vibrant downtown hub.

Now a similar choice confronts us with the former LAPD headquarters, Parker Center. Unlike City Hall and the Central Library, Parker Center is, in the words of Richard Barron, the city's Cultural Heritage Commission president, "not an easy building to love."

More than 60 years old, Parker Center's simple Midcentury Modern lines aren't to everyone's taste. Its systems and engineering are undoubtedly outdated, and it has been empty since 2009, when the Los Angeles Police Department moved to a new building around the corner. Now some city officials want a complete do-over:

Demolish Parker Center and replace it with an up-to-the-minute high-rise that will allow City Hall to consolidate offices and staff.

But Parker Center deserves to be preserved. In November, the Cultural Heritage Commission, of which I'm vice president, unanimously voted to declare it a City Historic-Cultural Monument. That alone won't protect it; even if the City Council confirms its monument status, the council members may also ultimately decide to tear the building down.

“

By preserving Parker Center, we hold on to a part of L.A.'s story that needs to be remembered.

The Cultural Heritage Commission strongly believes this isn't an either/or situation. We recommend “adaptive reuse.” In other words, the city could design a substantially new building that nonetheless incorporates what is an architecturally and socially significant piece of the city's past. City engineers claim that reusing Parker Center will be too expensive, but other planners dispute their cost estimates. Adaptive reuse makes good sense economically, aesthetically and historically.

In the 1950s, architects Welton Becket, whose firm also designed the Music Center, the Capitol Records building and other L.A. landmarks, and J. E. Stanton were commissioned to design a headquarters for a forward-looking city's modern police force.

The building's style was innovative for its time. It rejected historical forms and decoration (the very things that make City Hall and the Central Library so lovable) in favor of new materials and a straightforward aesthetic — a box made of aluminum, lightweight steel and plastics, set in a garden by landscape architect Ralph E. Cornell.

For much of the early 20th century, police departments in major cities were mired in corruption and nepotism. When William H. Parker became LAPD chief in 1950, he instituted changes that created a more disciplined, equitable and efficient force. The LAPD was the first department in the nation to have a crime lab, and its reputation grew when it was the setting for the popular television show “Dragnet.”

Mayor Tom Bradley benefited from Parker's leadership. Los Angeles was one of the first cities in the country to have black uniformed police officers. Bradley, who served in the LAPD for 20 years, was promoted up the chain of command with increasing responsibility. By 1960, he was put in charge of the Wilshire District.

But here is where Parker's legacy gets complicated. Under Parker, the LAPD earned a reputation for its brutality toward communities of color, and when the 1965 Watts riots erupted, the chief further inflamed the situation, describing blacks as “monkeys in a zoo.” Parker later acknowledged that he was ill-prepared to handle a riot.

When Parker died in 1966, the LAPD headquarters were named Parker Center in his honor, and for decades, the building was a focal point for demonstrations against police misconduct.

It is this history, as well as elements of the architecture and design of Parker Center, that deserves preservation.

The building's garden entry, elegant wood-paneled auditorium, and other classic midcentury features could be integrated into a new office building. Though we may not universally appreciate Parker Center' understated lines and spaces today, future generations should have the opportunity to see how the city developed, how it expressed its aspirations through architecture: the monumental 1928 City Hall, with its art deco references, next to the sleek 1955 Parker Center and the contemporary 2009 police headquarters that faces City Hall across First Street.

By preserving Parker Center, we hold on to a part of L.A.'s story that needs to be remembered. There is a reason "white's only" drinking fountains are preserved in the South, and the Japanese internment camp at Manzanar is a national historic site on the east side of the Sierra. These places are lessons from the past.

And now, with Black Lives Matter demonstrators regularly voicing grievances at the new police headquarters, the evolution of the relationship between L.A.'s police and its citizens is especially relevant. Preserving Parker Center won't resolve L.A.'s troubled policing history. But restored and reopened, it can remind us how far we've come and how much more there is to do.

Is saving Parker Center as important to Los Angeles as saving City Hall or the Central Library? Lovable or not, the answer is yes.

Gail Kennard manages an architecture firm in Los Angeles and is vice president of the Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Commission.

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This article is related to: [Architecture](#), [Los Angeles Police Department](#)

#1
Keith Nakata
811 N Croft Ave
Los Angeles, CA 90069

January 10, 2017

Entertainment and Facilities Committee
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: Parker Center
150 North Los Angeles Street

Entertainment and Facilities Committee Members,

While reviewing the situation regarding Historic Parker Center, I am reminded of some of the parallels between Parker Center and the Lytton Savings/8150 Sunset Historic Cultural Monument Application of which I was a co-applicant for the HCM and was unanimously supported by the City Council on December 13, 2016 and is now listed at HCM #1137.

Both suffer from the dilemma created by a flawed process of the improper decision order created when a plan is approved prior to the clear direction of a Historic Cultural Monument Designation. Councilmember and PLUM Chair Huizar is currently attempting to remedy this situation. Both also discussed harvesting pieces of the building as somehow an acceptable alternative solution to preservation, which it is not. I can point to the Brown Derby as an example.

I believe you do not want to repeat this dilemma for yourself again today. This will create a problem for you when the HCM for Parker follows behind the Plan decision, especially with publicly owned property.

The building clearly rises to the standards for a Historic Cultural Monument both architecturally, culturally and the architect was a master architect with many significant mid-century buildings within the City.

Parker Center can easily be repurposed successfully to function as a space to house 2,945 city employees with updated infrastructure.

Why unnecessarily demolish a future Historic Cultural Monument and replace it with another faceless government high rise? Also, a new taller 28 story high rise has the potential to block views of City Hall, a very symbolic historic building and once the tallest building in the city.

I want to remind you that City Leaders also considered the demolition of both City Hall and the LA Central Library, utterly ridiculous ideas in hindsight with the perspective of time.

I would also like this opportunity to thank the Japanese American Community Leaders from nearby Little Tokyo for all of the many years of tirelessly working to preserve the Little Tokyo area both architecturally and culturally for many future generations of Angelinos to enjoy in the future.

They have effectively harnessed historic preservation tools such as the National Historic Register and Historic Cultural Monuments to preserve many historic buildings along 1st Street and others including the Japanese Hospital last year, a culturally significant place built because of discriminatory practices toward the Japanese American Community.

What they may have forgotten to include are the internment camps such as Manzanar in the Owens Valley.

You can visit a museum a block from here, The Japanese American National Museum which houses a major permanent exhibit that focuses on this seminal event and to try and instill in the memory the United States that this should never be allowed to happen again.

Why do I speak about this? It's speaks to the importance of both positive chapters in our history as well as negative chapters and the need to preserve both for future generations.

Trying to erase bad memories through demolition is a less useful means to prevent the past from recurring in the future.

I request that you take the time to make a responsible decision regarding the future of historic Parker Center and allow you the time to complete an intelligent and thoughtful solution for the people of Los Angeles.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Keith Nakata", written in a cursive style.

Keith Nakata