
Support for HCM Las Palmas / Selma Courtyard Apts / CHC-2018-1040-HCM CEQA: ENV-2018-1041-CE

Art Deco Society Los Angeles ADSLA

Aug 20, 2018 5:49 AM

Posted in group: **Clerk-PLUM-Committee**

THE ATTACHED PDF VERSION OF THIS LETTER CONTAINS SOME PHOTOS OF THE PROPERTY.

August 19, 2018

RE:
CHC-2018-1040-HCM
CEQA: ENV-2018-1041-CE
Council District: 13 – O'Farrell

clerk.plumcommittee@lacity.org; councilmember.blumenfield@lacity.org;
andrew.pennington@lacity.org; councilmember.harris-dawson@lacity.org;
lynell.washington@lacity.org; councilmember.price@lacity.org;
lakisha.hull@lacity.org; councilmember.englander@lacity.org;
hannah.lee@lacity.org; councilmember.huizar@lacity.org;
Kevin.Ocubillo@lacity.org; councilmember.ofarrell@lacity.org;
Craig.bullock@lacity.org

Dear PLUM Committee Members:

I am writing to support the Historic Cultural Landmark nomination for the Las Palmas/Selma Apartments at 1535-1555 North Las Palmas Avenue and 6700-6718 West Selma Avenue.

I have been involved with the Art Deco Society of Los Angeles as a member for over 20 years. I am currently the president of the board. Art Deco, Streamline Moderne and Hollywood Regency Moderne architecture are like the fancy pastries of architecture. The craftsmanship and building techniques simply don't exist today. Our organization believes that these pre-WWII buildings should be looked at as treasures of Los Angeles – icons of the city. Once they disappear, nothing like them will ever be built again.

These charming Hollywood Regency Moderne garden apartment buildings are iconic for other reasons. They epitomize the indoor/outdoor, healthy Los Angeles lifestyle that was peddled to the rest of the country as a lure to move West. This apartment building style is seen in countless movies set in Los Angeles, to elicit a sense of place. Think about where Humphrey Bogart lives in IN A LONELY PLACE. Soon, low slung apartment buildings that open onto a courtyard will become obsolete, since by today's standards they lack the necessary density. Your committee knows better than anyone that the projects coming through currently, are for smaller rental units, densely packed into a skyscraper structure.

Furthermore, when these garden apartments were built in 1939, they were constructed by developer Ben Weingart (whose philanthropy continues today in the guise of The Weingart Foundation) under the philosophy that there should be pleasant places for the lower and middle classes to live. Green space for exercise, windows for light and units spacious enough for a family to live comfortably. Weingart was a firm believer in providing for those who could not provide for themselves and while he certainly could have sold off the Las Palmas/Selma Garden Apartments at any time, he retained ownership until his death in 1985. It goes without saying, that he wasn't making serious money off these apartments. 85-year old former LA Times Film Critic Kevin Thomas recently told me that Weingart was his landlord in a building downtown when he was first starting his career at the paper in the early 1960s. Again, not a building that Weingart was making a lot of money from.

Incidentally, Kevin Thomas is a descendant of the family for which the Eulalie tract (directly adjacent to the Las Palmas/Selma apartments) is named.

Yet, despite the fact that Weingart did not conceive the Hollywood complex as luxury housing, his engineer J.J. Rees went for Hollywood Regency style which was an architectural style taken straight from the glamour of the movies! Rees turned in a detailed, regal design that involved several different decorative treatments around the doors, a variety of window shapes and sizes, varied façade treatments (including weeping brick work) and other architectural details that made the units in the three building complex as unique as a series of single-family homes.

The architecture continued to speak to those hoping to catch a whiff of some of the glamour of the Hollywood of yesteryear. Noted photographer and prolific author on photographer George Hurrell and various themes and icons of the Golden Age of Hollywood Cinema, Mark Vieira, wrote about these apartments in his book [George Hurrell's Hollywood](#) (page 310) citing that in 1974 as a newbie in Hollywood, he first started attending gatherings for the Golden Age of Hollywood obsessed at an apartment at 1555 N. Las Palmas, the home of film historian Myron Braun who wrote [The Films of Norma Shearer](#) (1976).

The Los Angeles Conservancy launched a campaign called "We Love Garden Apartments" to call attention to a vanishing form of "attractive and affordable" housing from the 20th century. "With low density and vast open space, historic garden apartments are

increasingly vulnerable to demolition or excessive alteration.” (<https://www.laconservancy.org/issues/garden-apartments>) They commissioned a 2012 study, executed by Architectural Resources Group’s Katie Horak and landscape historian Steven Keylon, which can be read here: <https://www.laconservancy.org/sites/default/files/files/documents/Garden%20Apartment%20Context%20Statement.pdf>

“Urban planners Clarence S. Stein and Henry Wright spearheaded the Garden City Movement in the United States in the early twentieth century, envisioning orchestrated environments that included buildings of low density, human scale, and acres of shared open space.

While garden apartment communities sprung up around the country, this design philosophy truly flourished in Los Angeles.”

While there are larger garden apartment complexes in the city, there are not more in Hollywood. This pocket of Hollywood illustrates the residential neighborhood it has been since the late 1800s. It absolutely tells the story of early Hollywood, with several houses that have been quietly residing on these little side streets for more than 100 years. Also submitted for historic cultural monument status are the Major Kunkel Bungalow and the Wood Talbot Double Dwelling (a duplex that dates to 1908). There are two churches (Blessed Sacrament and First Baptist) and an elementary school (Selma Avenue) and high school (Hollywood High), plus a 1920s built YMCA and the historic Wilcox post office and Crossroads of the World, all within walking distance. To the north, historic structures include the 1922 Egyptian Theatre and the 1931 Redwine Building (landmarked by the Art Deco Society of Los Angeles in 2016). A series of one-story brick commercial buildings lining both sides of Las Palmas to the north, date to the 1920s.

This is authentic Hollywood. You can look down Las Palmas and see what people have seen for a century. This is a pocket that can be pointed to as an example of what a community looked like in early 20th century Hollywood. This is a street to be discovered. I have been aware of this section of Las Palmas for over 20 years, because I work in the neighborhood, but the Cultural Heritage Commission got to experience the element of discovery, when a walk through on Sunset Boulevard we had assembled for, didn’t happen. They took the opportunity to walk around the block and they stumbled on these apartments and were enthused with them. Ultimately, we nominated the complex and CHC supported the nomination. The buildings are well maintained, relatively unchanged and the interiors are largely intact in most of the 84 units.

I urge you to vote to landmark this apartment complex. Below are four photos.

Sincerely,

Margot Gerber

--
Margot Gerber
President
Art Deco Society of Los Angeles
Preserve, Protect, Cherish
Facebook
Instagram
Twitter
www.adsla.org

Join us in saving The Hollywood Reporter Building. Sign our petition now!

August 19, 2018

RE:

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CEQA: ENV-2018-1041-CE

Council District: 13 – O'Farrell

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Sincerely,

Margot Gerber



A view of the Las Palmas/Selma Garden Apartments (far right) taken from the porch of the 1908 Wood-Talbot Double Dwelling and a view of the First Baptist Church in between. To the left of the church is Blessed Sacrament Church and Crossroads of the World (both historic buildings). This area is just east of Highland by two short blocks.

The Las Palmas/Selma Apartments have varied window designs and façade treatments as well as architectural details. Hollywood Regency Moderne was a fantasy architecture used in Hollywood movies and adopted briefly for real-life architecture. Little of it remains. The Hollywood Reporter Building



(landmarked 2017) is another example and resides around the corner from these apartments, on Sunset.





**Selma Las Palmas Apartments: Support for Historic Cultural Monument Nomination:
CHC-2018-1040-HCM / CEQA: ENV-2018-1041-CE**

Susan Seligman

Aug 20, 2018 9:31 AM

Posted in group: **Clerk-PLUM-Committee**

*Selma Las Palmas Apartments: Support for Historic Cultural Monument Nomination: CHC-2018-1040-HCM
/ CEQA: ENV-2018-1041-CE*

City Clerk
Room 395,
City Hall, 200 N. Spring St. LA, CA 90012

Dear PLUM Committee:

I support the Art Deco Society of Los Angeles' application to make the Las Palmas/Selma Apartments an historic cultural monument. I feel that this building meets the criteria and is an excellent example of the endangered garden apartment style of residential architecture. I understand that this well maintained apartment complex is largely intact inside and out and that historic building permits show relatively few alterations to the property since 1939.

I encourage you to vote to recommend adopting the proposal at the City Council level.

THE PROPOSED MONUMENT:
SELMA LAS PALMAS COURTYARD APARTMENTS
CHC-2018-1040-HCM
CEQA: ENV-2018-1041-CE
Council District: 13 - O'Farrell

PROPERTY ADDRESS: 1535-1555 North Las Palmas Avenue;
6700-6718 West Selma Avenue

Sincerely,
Susan Seligman

**Selma Las Palmas Apartments: Support for Historical Culultural Monument
Nomination: CHC-2018-1040-HCM/CEQA: ENV-2018-1041-CE**

Todd Calvin

Aug 20, 2018 12:10 PM

Posted in group: **Clerk-PLUM-Committee**

City Clerk
Room 395,
City Hall, 200 N. Spring St. LA, CA 90012

Dear PLUM Committee:

I support the Art Deco Society of Los Angeles' application to make the Las Palmas/Selma Apartments an historic cultural monument. The building is an excellent example of the endangered garden apartment style of residential architecture. I understand that this well-maintained apartment complex is largely intact inside and out and that historic building permits show relatively few alterations to the property since 1939. The city has so few intact residents from this period. I recently returned from Prague and one of the things that makes the city such a draw is that it is culturally pristine -- it was neither bombed during WW2 nor re-developed by the Communists, so that today, one can see this authentic city. This uniqueness attracts visitors from all over the world as well as film companies. Similarly, we don't want to look back one day at Los Angeles, and realize that short-sighted development has erased the unique stamp of what makes Los Angeles great. These kind of garden apartments are a unique view into the Los Angeles of the 1930s and the film community's behind-the-scene workers. It is even more rare to find a building in which so much of the original interior and exterior have survived intact.

I encourage you to vote to recommend adopting the proposal at the City Council level.

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SELMA LAS PALMAS COURTYARD APARTMENTS
CHC-2018-1040-HCM
CEQA: ENV-2018-1041-CE
Council District: 13 - O'Farrell

PROPERTY ADDRESS: 1535-1555 North Las Palmas Avenue;
6700-6718 West Selma Avenue

Sincerely,

Todd Calvin

Mobile: 310-433-9039
I work in the 13th district

[Re: Selma Las Palmas Apartments: Support for Historical Culultural Monument Nomination: CHC-2018-1040-HCM/CEQA: ENV-2018-1041-CE](#)

Todd Calvin

Aug 20, 2018 2:48 PM

Posted in group: [Clerk-PLUM-Committee](#)

Here is an interesting article I found in this month's HARPER's magazine that should help guide us to not turn Los Angeles into NYC.

[The Death of a Once Great City | Harper's Magazine](#)



The Death of a Once Great City | Harper's Magazine

The fall of New York and the urban crisis of affluence

In support of the proposal to make the Selma and Las Palmas Courtyard Apartments an historic cultural monument

Amy Condit

Aug 20, 2018 4:46 PM

Posted in group: **Clerk-PLUM-Committee**

Ms. Zina Cheng, Legislative Assistant
City Clerk, Room 395
City Hall
200 N. Spring St.
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Ms. Cheng:

I support the Art Deco Society of Los Angeles' application to make the Las Palmas/Selma Apartments an historic cultural monument. Garden style apartments are not only a dying breed of apartment architecture in today's day and age, but these particular apartments also offer affordable housing. Affordable housing opportunities are not necessarily accessible to Los Angeles residents in 2018. I understand this as 5 years ago, I was living in an apartment with rent that was 60% of my monthly income. I am seeing friends exit the L.A. area in droves as salaries are not growing in accordance with higher rents. To demolish the Las Palmas/Selma apartments, a lovely example of Southern California living in the 1930s-1950s, would be criminal. This architectural style has merit as it is indicative of the Los Angeles area in a post-depression era America, and due to the fact that this style of apartments are no longer being built. Apartments such as these provide community and a less-isolating quality of life with easy access to nature. In an area with a lack of green space, this type of apartment complex offers a healthy living environment.

Garden style courtyard apartments enrich the cultural experience of appreciating Los Angeles with a tip of the hat to our past. There are other styles of apartments and buildings in the Los Angeles area that have become endangered species. Please allow the Las Palmas/Selma Courtyard apartments to have the opportunity to remain a splendid example of Hollywood Regency architecture. These 84 units would then provide affordable housing to those unable to make a down payment on a house in the area. This remarkably intact rental complex is a shining representation of what it was like for the middle class to live domestically in 1939, and can remain as such today. The Hollywood Regency style of architecture grew out of the film industry in the 1930s, and the residents of these apartments have worked as the backbone of that industry for nearly 80 years.

As a Los Angeles historian, I feel we are losing a sense of place and history when I go into Hollywood. Traces of our past---restaurants, shops, homes----are being demolished, and there are fewer reminders of the glory of Hollywood's history and examples of gracious living. By adopting the proposal to make the Las Palmas/Selma apartments a historic monument, you will preserve a well-maintained apartment complex that is an example of gentility and architectural significance as well as providing affordable housing to workers in the entertainment community, among other industries, with a place to thrive with their families.

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PROPERTY ADDRESS: 1535-1555 North Las Palmas Avenue;
6700-6718 West Selma Avenue

Thank you for your consideration,

Amy Condit

Wholeheartedly Support 'Historic Cultural Monument' designation for Las Palmas-Selma Apartments

Bill Miller

Aug 20, 2018 5:47 PM

Posted in group: **Clerk-PLUM-Committee**

Dear Los Angeles PLUM Committee,

I wholeheartedly support the Art Deco Society of Los Angeles' application to make the beautiful Las Palmas/Selma Apartments an Historic Cultural Monument.

I urge you to recommend this Historic Cultural Monument designation to your full City Council.

These are an example of classic Hollywood Garden style apartments that are no longer being built. They are part of the fabric of a real community, a neighborhood, that looks like it will soon all be gone..will tragically disappear....

They provide community and a quality of life that includes easy access to nature.

Philanthropist Ben Weingart built this complex in 1939 for the middle class.

He owned the building until his death.

He amassed a fortune during his lifetime and his Weingart Foundation is still active in philanthropy.

These apartments have largely intact interiors from 1939 and represent part of Hollywood's architectural story.

The Garden Apartment is becoming an endangered species, but it once typified the experience of Southern California and Hollywood Apartment living, and the Las Palmas-Selma apartments were conveniently located in the heart of Hollywood to studios and work for film and TV industry people like 'Perry Mason' and 'Ironside' actor Raymond Burr, before they moved to more lavish private homes..

Hollywood is rapidly being wiped out and replaced with non-character, neutered, oversized, over dense, very ugly development projects, totally out of scale and character for the area, and sadly, soon, the 'Hollywood' that people travel here to see, will no longer exist.

Thank goodness for our preservation organizations, who understand the importance of preserving what remnants of Hollywood history can be saved from this..

There are 84 units.

Older apartments tend to be larger than new construction, so these are spacious one and two bedrooms.

Also, these apartments were 'affordable' for the residents tossed out.

I hope along with the HCM designation the residents who lost their homes there, and had to move far away to more affordable areas, from the neighborhood they called 'home', will be able to go back to their homes there, or somewhere in the area, at the same rate, as some residents were older and had resided there for many years.

It has been heartbreaking witnessing the destruction of Hollywood history and neighborhoods.

The backlash of destroying Hollywood, it's uniqueness, it's architecture, and it's character, will be enormous..

Seriously, who will ever want to visit Hollywood to see luxury Manhattan skyscrapers and towers, multicolored and primary colored circus like oversized tin-looking and concrete boxes, beyond abusive traffic and chaos, more crime, and nothing even remotely reminiscent of HOLLYWOOD or even attractive to look at here....

...and the most tragic results of all of this are the homeless sleeping on the streets, and living in encampments and tents in this neighborhood, and along just about every Hollywood street...

..a crisis so bad, NBC Dateline just did a show about it.

The Hollywood area Displacement Holocaust, partly the result of affordable classic Hollywood buildings like the Las Palmas Selma Apartments being destroyed, is adding to the homeless crisis.

Please help preserve and save these buildings.

They definitely deserve to be designated an Historic Cultural Monument.

Thank you,
William A. Miller
Hollywood

Frank Gehry...

"In the end, the character of a civilization is encased in its structures."

Russell Baker...

"Usually, terrible things that are done with the excuse that progress requires them, are not really progress at all, but just terrible things."

N.Y. Times..(the destruction of Penn Station)

"We will probably be judged not by the monuments we build but by those we have destroyed."

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CEQA: ENV-2018-1041-CE

Council District: 13 – O'Farrell

PROPERTY ADDRESS: 1535-1555 North Las Palmas Avenue;
6700-6718 West Selma Avenue

**SUPPORT..SELMA-LAS PALMAS COURTYARD APARTMENTS CHC-2018-1040-HCM
CEQA: ENV-2018-1041-CE**

poons...@aol.com

Aug 20, 2018 7:05 PM

Posted in group: **Clerk-PLUM-Committee**

*SELMA LAS PALMAS COURTYARD APARTMENTS
CHC-2018-1040-HCM
CEQA: ENV-2018-1041-CE*

*1535-1555 North Las Palmas Avenue
6700-6718 West Selma Avenue*

To L.A. PLUM Committee Members and Councilmember O'Farrell,

We would like to express our support for the Historic Cultural Monument preservation of The Las Palmas-Selma Ave. Garden Apartments

We are grateful to The Art Deco Society of L.A. for their effort having them designated Historic Cultural Monument because they are not only vintage, classic Hollywood architecture, beautiful and in great shape, very much represent Hollywood of the 1930's and 40's, but they also are in character with, and complimentary to, the iconic, historic 'Crossroads of the World' across the street from them.

They wrap around the corner of Selma Ave. and Las Palmas Ave., with green lawns, making it a green and aesthetically pleasing spot for walkers.

Although this little area is going through alot of redevelopment, and being transformed from a family friendly, safe neighborhood, there are still many youth venues and hopefully preserving these historic garden apartments will not only preserve a bit of Hollywood architectural history, but will help keep it somewhat safe for the many children from the surrounding schools (Selma Ave., Larchmont Charter, and Blessed Sacrament Schools) and from the Hollywood YMCA, who walk, ride bikes, and skate board along these avenues.

We urge you to approve the Historic Cultural Monument designation for these historic 1939 Hollywood Garden Apartments and very well preserved example of residential architecture from that period, since so little of it still exists, and it would be beyond sad to lose, and urge you to recommend L.A. City Council also support it.

*Thank you for your attention,
Jim and Ann Geoghan*

**Please Support Selma Las Palmas Courtyard Apartments CHC-2018-1040-HCM /
CEQA: ENV-2018-1041-CE**

Mary Mallory

Aug 20, 2018 10:34 PM

Posted in group: **Clerk-PLUM-Committee**

I strongly urge you to support naming the Selma Las Palmas Courtyard Apartments a City of Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument. The Apartments are an excellent example of Hollywood Regency architecture, taking the glamour of the Hollywood screen and transferring it to architecture of homes and businesses during the Classic Era of Hollywood filmmaking. Hollywood Regency architecture was rare for the middle class, so these apartments were designed to give their residents, many of whom worked or hoped to work in the screen, their own form of sophistication and success, offering style and elegance at an affordable price. The building is virtually intact, and also represents an excellent example of courtyard style apartment buildings, which were prevalent throughout Los Angeles from the 1920s-1950s and are now a dying breed, evoking a sense of community. They were built by Ben Weingart, a philanthropist now known for establishing the Weingart Foundation, who built them in 1939 and owned them until his death.

Sincerely,

Mary Mallory
Secretary, Hollywood Heritage
Secretary, Studio City Neighborhood Council's Cultural Affairs Committee



HOLLYWOOD HERITAGE, INC.
P.O. Box 2586
Hollywood, CA 90078
(323) 874-4005 • FAX (323) 465-5993

August 20, 2018

City Clerk
Room 395
City Hall, 220 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear PLUM Committee members:

The Board of Directors of Hollywood Heritage, its Preservation Issues Committee, and its members are writing to express our support for the Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) nomination of the Selma Las Palmas Courtyard Apartments at 1535-55 N Las Palmas Ave.

Most importantly, the Selma Las Palmas Courtyard Apartments are an intact example of the increasingly rare garden-style courtyard apartments that used to provide residents with affordable housing opportunities, a sense of community, and easy access to nature across Hollywood, and Southern California more generally. Many of the features of the Selma Las Palmas Courtyard Apartments, including their kitchens and windows, have never undergone alteration or replacement. The property is an excellent instance of Deco style and the courtyard/indoor-outdoor lifestyle of Southern California.

Garden-style courtyard apartments like the Selma Las Palmas property also enjoy a strong association with Hollywood's entertainment industry. Specifically, they provided housing during the Golden Era of Hollywood, when contributors to the industry were transient and needed housing close to commercial and industrial centers. The affordability of the Selma Las Palmas apartments is particularly appropriate given that the property's developer, philanthropist Ben Weingart, was a life-long advocate for the poor and built and owned multi-family housing complexes until his death in 1985. Yet despite their historic and economic value, we are losing this very type of housing in Hollywood's core, particularly in the area between Hollywood and Sunset Boulevards.

In sum, it is clear that the Selma Las Palmas Courtyard Apartments fulfill multiple criteria of the HCM nomination criteria. Therefore, we ask the Committee to support the Cultural Heritage Commission's positive assessment of the property.

Please let us know how we can assist the Committee in its consideration of this nomination. Together we can ensure that the City protects historic properties like the Selma Las Palmas Courtyard Apartments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Richard Adkins".

Richard Adkins
President, Hollywood Heritage, Inc.