

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Sam Siegel

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**Council File No:** 26-0622

**Comments for Public Posting:** To the Members of the Planning and Land Use Management Committee, My name is Sam Siegel, and I am a lifelong resident of Westwood, a UCLA alumnus; designer; planner; historian; preservation professional; and an advocate for public transit and traditional architecture and urbanism. In the past, I submitted two letters to the Cultural Heritage Commission pertaining to the architectural and historical significance of the Fox Apartments building, and the necessity that it become a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument, as based upon my years of academic and professional experience. I am submitting this comment today to reiterate my past remarks and my unyielding commitment that the Fox Apartments building is absolutely deserving of HCM status, regardless of false claims and ineffectual arguments made by its current owner, who neither understands nor appreciates both the building's importance to the history and culture of Los Angeles, or the nature of what HCM status confers and the limits it does and does not place upon property owners. Please, follow the recommendations of the CHC, and landmark this irreplaceable structure. As my previous materials pertaining to the Fox Apartments building and its nomination process have not been automatically forwarded to PLUM, I am including a PDF of the two prior letters I submitted to the CHC. Thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter to Westwood residents invested in urbanism and history, and I do sincerely hope—as I stated at the final CHC meeting on the Fox Apartments—that voting “yes” on this landmarking proposal will be one of the easiest things your committee has ever done. Regards, Sam Siegel

## **Second Letter: 15 April 2026**

To The Members of the CHC,

Last year, at the first meeting pertaining to the landmarking of the Fox Apartments Building at 10251-10257 W Santa Monica Blvd, I submitted a letter of support for the nomination, as well as called in to the meeting to express that same sentiment.

I am writing this letter today, which includes a copy of that first letter below, to echo my prior statement, and strongly urge a “yes” vote on landmarking the Fox Apartments Building.

Apart from my own affection for the building and the two cherished restaurants within it, as someone with expertise in planning, preservation, design, and local history, I speak with full confidence in recommending this course of action, as well as in saying that landmarking the Fox Apartments will be one of the easiest decisions the CHC has ever made.

Inextricably tied to the very origins of modern development here in Westwood, the Fox Apartments represents a tangible, surviving link to the legacies and processes that built up these western hinterlands of Los Angeles.

From the native Tongva communities to Spanish exploration and colonization; to the 1843 Mexican land grant of Rancho San Jose de Buenos Ayres to Spanish soldier Maximo Alanis by Governor Manuel Micheltoarena; Alanis’ sale of the land to famed American entrepreneur Don “Benito” Wilson; the sale to John Wolfskill in 1883; the failed 1887 speculative development of the town of Sunset by the Santa Monica Land and Water Company; the dedication of westernmost portion of the land for the creation of a new National Soldier’s Home that same year; and the completion of the Pasadena and Pacific Railroad (later the Los Angeles Pacific Railroad) on what is today Santa Monica Boulevard in 1896—ultimately came the 1919 purchase of the rancho by English-born department store magnate Arthur Letts for a master planned development that would be seen through by his son in law Harold Janss and his brother Edwin—a development that would come to be known as Westwood.

While today associated with the formation of UCLA and the once-thriving Westwood Village, both of those concepts were not even a dream in the minds of the Jansses or UC Regents during its initial development phases, which began in Southern Westwood along Pico at the start of the 1920s, and then proceeded north.

Early Westwood was instead defined by the Pacific Electric Railway's "Santa Monica via Sawtelle" Line, and the initial scheme of the Jansses to establish Westwood as a "Second Hollywood," a new home for major motion picture studios. There is no better surviving landmark that perfectly synthesizes and represents these two elements of Westwood's early history than the Fox Apartments Building itself, completed 101 years ago in 1925.

It is a stellar example of mixed-use brick vernacular commercial "streetcar urbanism" architecture, and one of the earliest commercial structures in the area—a true survivor and silent storyteller of a Westwood associated not with the University of California, but with Fox Movietone Studios, as well as a very well-utilized Pacific Electric interurban connecting 4th and Hill to Venice Beach.

I urge you, to landmark this truly iconic and over century old historic structure to ensure that it continues to tell this story long into the future, a future that could very well one day (in my sincerest wishes for the transit evolution of Los Angeles) be home to a well-used rail transit line down Santa Monica Boulevard once more.

Let the Fox Apartments stand as an example for many generations of Angelenos of the attractive, human scaled, mixed-use transit oriented development that we achieved in our past, and as a model for our present and future work to amend the worst excesses of car-oriented planning and craft a Westwood, and a Los Angeles, that respects and carries on the legacy of traditional planning and architecture built by and for human beings.

Regards,  
Sam Siegel

## **First Letter: 4 December 2025**

To The Members of the CHC,

My name is Sam Siegel, I'm a lifelong resident of Westwood, as well as a UCLA alumnus, urban planner, designer, historian, and preservationist.

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the application to designate the Fox Apartments Building at 10251-10257 W Santa Monica Blvd as an Historic-Cultural Monument.

My family has called Westwood home since the beginnings of its modern development in the early 1920s, and I have deep affection for my community its history, culture, as well as the past, present, and future of its built environment.

As a scholar with published works in both streetcar history and Westwood history; graduate training in city planning and urban design; and professional experience in preservation, it is my opinion that the Fox Apartments is indeed deserving of HCM status.

Of all the surviving pre-war structures between the city limits of Beverly Hills and the former city of Sawtelle, the Fox Apartments building stands out as a singular example of brick-clad vernacular commercial architecture built during Westwood's initial period of modern development.

While subtle in its architectural presentation, it catches the eye due to its brick-clad facade and overall massing reminiscent of traditional smaller commercial buildings of the Midwest and East Coast.

In terms of its urbanist character, the building is a true standout in Westwood given it is a pedestrian-oriented mixed-use structure built with little consideration for the automobile; and is representative not only of Los Angeles' past, but emblematic of its goals for the future: embracing pedestrians and human-powered mobility, activated storefronts, outdoor dining, density, and mixed-use development.

The fact that the Fox Apartments have stood for a century is testament to not only its historic significance, but the lasting appeal of human-oriented architecture and planning. It is prudent to ensure that all is done to guarantee this rare survivor's continued existence for many years to come.

On a more personal level, as a Westwood resident, I simply adore the building. Sitting across from the sprawling and futuristic Westfield Mall, it is a precious piece of Old Los Angeles hiding in plain sight, placed atop a quiet little perch and tucked away from the roar of traffic on Santa Monica Boulevard.

It is a stalwart sentinel, having kept watch over Santa Monica Blvd from the days when Pacific Electric Streetcars gracefully glided along their own right-of-way past Fox Studios' enormous backlot of historical scenes, battlefields, and foreign vistas.

My family has picked up too many pizzas and garlic knots from Johnnie's to count, and one of my great little pleasures in life is walking with my father to Clementine, and enjoying breakfast or brunch there together or with the whole family before often continuing on to Holmby Park.

While sitting and enjoying our meals, it is hard not to fall in love with this living piece of Westside history—replete with subtle architectural details, a sense of traditional city living, and its role as a charming bulwark of old school urbanism amid a Westside that is admittedly all-too oriented towards automobiles rather than the human experience.

The Fox Apartments building is, in that regard, a socio-spatial treasure: the purveyor of cherished little moments, an urban oasis amid sprawl, and the source of many fond memories which the city would do well to ensure future generations can experience for themselves by giving this remarkable building the recognition it so deserves, and in doing so, encouraging Angelenos to learn more about the histories, cultures, and experiences of their city.

Regards,  
Sam Siegel