

Communication from Public

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Comments for Public Posting: Dear Councilmembers, I'm writing to advocate for the Yucca-Vine Tower's Historic-Cultural Monument nomination and the negative impact of its amendment put forth by Councilmember Hugo Soto-Martinez, which you will be voting on this Friday, May 31. Simply put: The amendment needs adjustment and cannot be passed as-is. The amendment rejects the Cultural Heritage Commission's expert recommendation on April 18 to fully designate the building's exteriors and interiors. On May 9, CD13 planning director Emma Howard stated in an email: "For HCMs, generally speaking our office lets the CHC make recommendations and we uphold those recommendations at Council. I don't believe there's any issue with the Yucca nomination." However, at the PLUM meeting on May 21, she announced the amendment, citing the Office of Historic Resource's staff report as context ... but the staff report was distributed on April 4. Why did she tell concerned constituents otherwise ahead of PLUM? Councilmember Soto-Martinez's decision to narrow the period of significance from 1929-1931 to only 1929 is without merit: The east and west wings are not "alterations" as the amendment and OHR staff report erroneously claim. Both structures were built along with the main tower by Henry L. Gogerty, one of the most prominent Los Angeles architects, and all three are his earliest examples of Art Deco. Construction began on the East Wing in October 1929 and was completed before January 11, 1930, according to the Los Angeles Times. Without question, the East Wing should be included in the HCM nomination. The east and west wings are significant character-defining features, and if not protected under the HCM, the two structures are vulnerable to redevelopment that will destroy the Yucca-Vine Tower's overall architectural integrity. And the threat is real: City Council sponsored a \$35 million municipal redevelopment bond for the property owners in October 2023. Please don't acquiesce to an amendment that can be easily improved. Please revise the amendment and mitigate the tremendous negative impact on one of Hollywood's remaining Art Deco masterpieces. Please seek further discussion and do not rush to a final vote on Friday. Thank you, Steven Houska