

Communication from Public

Name: Ray

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Council File No: 23-0953

Comments for Public Posting: Does Los Angeles Want a Historical Monument That Can't Be Seen? Does Los Angeles Want a Historical Monument That Can't Be Seen? The purpose of a monument is to be seen. A monument is a tangible embodiment of a historical legacy that is protected for future generations. But the Los Angeles City Council is about to consider adding to the list of L.A. Historic Monuments the "Marilyn Monroe House" that will not be able to be seen or experienced by the public, nor by the celebrity home tour buses and sightseers who would nevertheless seek out the address if it is added to the list of Los Angeles Monuments. What they would see is a wall and gate. The result would be traffic, noise, and a general nuisance endangering the safety and peace and quiet of the neighbors on a narrow cul-de-sac street. Councilwoman Traci Park, the Cultural Heritage Commission, and the Planning and Land Use Management Committee of City Council have proposed the designation of the privately-owned property in Brentwood as a Historical Monument because Marilyn Monroe lived there for less than a year in 1962 and it was the place, according to the L.A. County Coroner, of her "probable suicide." Proponents of historic designation can cite only one interview Marilyn Monroe had with a reporter during her short residency at the house and only two photo sessions. Opposed to the designation are the current owner of the property, the Brentwood Community Council (representing approximately 35,000 stakeholders), the Brentwood Homeowners Association, the Brentwood Park Property Owners Association, and the Mandeville Canyon Association. Marilyn Monroe undoubtedly played a significant role in the entertainment industry on a national level and continues to be a Hollywood icon with fans throughout the world. But should this particular property be a Los Angeles Historic Monument? After the president of the Cultural Heritage Commission was able to tour the property, he said at the Hearing that "When I stood in the bedroom, I was moved." But the public will not have access to the house. The Commissioners were able to enter the locked gate and view the exterior and interior of the house which are hidden to anyone else behind a high wall. The public will not be able to see the house from the public roadway or experience the house in the way that influenced the Commissioners. This would be the only Los Angeles Historic Monument that the public will not be able to

experience or see. The Motion by Councilwoman Park to designate was made quickly to stop demolition and was emotional and impulsive. But now that there has been time for a rational, analytical review of the issue, designating a Monument that no one can see or experience, and that would have serious nuisance side effects for thousands in the nearby neighborhood, should not be done. Even Marilyn Monroe would oppose designation to preserve her house. An article in LIFE magazine written after an interview in her house around the time of Marilyn Monroe's death said: "She had refused LIFE any pictures of it, saying, 'I don't want everybody to see exactly where I live, what my sofa or my fireplace looks like. Do you know the book Everyman? Well, I want to stay just in the fantasy of Everyman.'" In other words, Marilyn Monroe would be opposed to designating the Brentwood house as a Monument. Councilwoman Traci Park and City Council should grant her wish. Disclaimer: The opinions and views expressed by the author are strictly personal and do not necessarily represent the views of any group or organization with which he is affiliated.



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Comments for Public Posting: The Findings of the Commission attribute no architectural significance to the property. Restricting an owner of private property from dealing with structures on that property based solely on who owned the property for 6 months over 60 years ago must be done with extreme caution. Monroe's ownership of the property for 6 months added nothing to the history or culture of Los Angeles. Designating a house as a cultural-historical monument that can't be seen from the street and which can't be accessed by the public makes a farce of the whole process!

