

Communication from Public

Name: Kim Cooper & Richard Schave

Date Submitted: 05/08/2024 11:29 PM

Council File No: 23-0953

Comments for Public Posting: Attached for the public record, please find the Esotouric newsletter about the Petition for Writ of Mandate filed by the property owners of 12305 Fifth Helena Drive on May 6, 2024, with a link to the filing. The direct link to this newsletter is <https://esotouric.substack.com/marylynmonroe4>

We're in the lawsuit against the City of Los Angeles for trying to landmark Marilyn Monroe's house



ESOTOURIC'S SECRET LOS ANGELES
MAY 08, 2024



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Gentle reader,

The owners of Marilyn Monroe's house at 12305 Fifth Helena Drive in Brentwood have just sued the City of Los Angeles to halt the process of a pending City Council vote to declare the property a protected Historic-Cultural Monument, alleging improprieties in how the process played out.

We're in it!

No, we haven't been sued by the billionaires who bought the house in an off-market deal and obtained a demolition permit, despite no proper public notice being placed in the public view. But they do mention us quite a bit in their Petition for Writ of Mandate, which you can read [here](#).

Since it's now a matter of public record, you should know that we were the first members of the preservation community to reach out to the office of Councilmember Traci Park, alerting her planning staff to the immediate demolition threat to Marilyn Monroe's home.

According to the billionaires next door, our motives for doing this were personal financial benefit. A dozen times in the 115 page writ, we're described as "for profit" or "mercenary" tour operators.

The fact is that we've never given a tour about Marilyn Monroe or any celebrity of her mainstream allure, nor have we taken groups into the Brentwood community. It's hard to think of anything we'd like to do less. Esotouric is a niche, preservation-focused enterprise dedicated to illuminating the lives of obscure people and lesser known places in Los Angeles, mainly in Downtown and early streetcar suburbs like Angeleno Heights and Westlake. Our tours reflect our personal passions, and we're just not deeply interested in big stars or in 21st century Brentwood.

But we are interested in the proposed demolition of Marilyn Monroe's home, because it's a stunning example of the City and a property owner having failed to follow LADBS [policies](#) for obtaining a demolition permit for any property more than 45 years old: a public notice is required to be posted on site by the applicant, and notification provided to the City Council office and Neighborhood Council by LADBS.

CELEBRITY REAL ESTATE EXCLUSIVE

The only home Marilyn Monroe ever owned, and where she died, faces demolition

By Mary K. Jacob

Published Sep. 5, 2023, 2:55 p.m. ET



But because apparently neither property owner nor LADBS followed these rules, the world only learned of the pending demolition when some anonymous angel in City Hall [tipped off](#) the *New York Post* that a demolition plan check had been approved!

We have no financial interest in Marilyn Monroe, but we admire her as an actress and person, and as an exemplar of a native Angeleno who rose from poverty and neglect to a place of honor and lasting fame. Marilyn's cool.

As [independent preservationists](#) deeply concerned with [public corruption](#) around land use, we see the threat to this famous home—and the [recent demolition](#) by Chris Pratt and Katherine Schwarzenegger of the neighboring Zimmerman House—as a rare opportunity to have real journalists cover the real world manifestations of this corruption, and for the wider public to see how the system has broken down, so that only the very rich benefit from all Los Angeles has to offer, and everyone else scrambles around in the dregs trying to survive.

**Jack Flemming**[Twitter](#) [Instagram](#) [Email](#) [Facebook](#)

Jack Flemming covers luxury real estate for the Los Angeles Times. A Midwestern boy at heart, he was raised in St. Louis and studied journalism at the University of Missouri. Before joining The Times as an intern in 2017, he wrote for the Columbia Missourian and Politico Europe.

It's a perfect example of how lousy our [billionaire owned](#) *Los Angeles Times* has become that we had to have a legal pal pull the court filings this morning to even learn that we are cited in them. That's because "luxury real estate" (!?) writer Jack Flemming's [story](#) about the writ of mandate [fails to mention](#) the newsworthy and disturbing allegations against us, the Los Angeles Conservancy, Hollywood Heritage and others, while highlighting the property owners' gripes.

Jack, you could have called us, if you wanted to get the story right.

If you'd like to support our preservation work,
you can do that below. You can also tip us on
Venmo (Esotouric) or [here](#). Your support helps
us look out for Los Angeles and we thank you!

Anyway. If you actually read the filing, as we have, you'll see we have nothing to be ashamed of. **Exhibit E** (pages 53-55) is a forwarded email from our Richard Schave to Councilmember Traci Park's Planning Liaison Sean Silva, sent on Wed, Sep 6, 2023 at 1:22 PM. In it, Richard alerts Sean to the existence of a pending demolition permit—something that the surprised council office should have been informed of "at least 30 days prior"—linking to an [urgent blog post](#) just published by Nathan Marsak on RIP Los Angeles and pasting in important LADBS information, because the Building and Safety website was down.

The owners of Marilyn Monroe's house quote a portion of Richard's email, apparently as evidence of some kind of conspiracy to deprive them of their property rights. This is bolded in yellow by someone preparing the exhibits.

I am requesting a phone call with the two of you to discuss the feasibility of CM Park putting a motion on council floor to direct Office of Historic Resources to initiate an HCM application.

jfarruggia 5/1/2024, 5:44:38 PM

Not quoted is the final paragraph in this brief email, which makes clear Richard has no expectation that the councilmember will be interested in taking such action.

I do not think by making this meeting request that this implies your office agrees with my suggested direction, simply a willingness to explore the problem space around this important structure and its proposed demolition.

And why would we have such an expectation, after our [heartbreaking experience](#) with Traci Park's predecessor Mike Bonin, which resulted in the needless destruction of a National Register eligible giant Chili Bowl shaped restaurant for a vacant lot?





Unlike Mike Bonin, Traci Park agreed that Los Angeles history matters, and that places people care about are worthy of trying to preserve and protect. We're grateful to Ms. Park and her staff for acting as quickly as they did, to respond to an emergency demolition threat which should by City ordinance to have given concerned citizens and officials plenty of time to act.

We wish every demolition with serious protocol lapses received this type of attention. It would be the difference between housing and homelessness for so many vulnerable members of our community.

So save the date, [Tuesday, August 13 at 9:30am](#) in James C. Chalfant's courtroom (Department 85) in the Stanley Mosk Courthouse at 111 N. Hill Street for a trial setting conference. We've gotten familiar with Judge Chalfant from attending the hearings around Catholic Charities' attempts to demolish the Jewish/Labor landmark [B'nai B'rith Lodge](#) in the Pico-Union District for a vacant lot, and are curious to see how he'll handle this case. We'll continue to update you on this important preservation battle on our [dedicated](#) newsletter page.

And if you'd like to pour the tea about preservation and demolitions and the beauty of old buildings as places where Angelenos of courage and imagination can reinvent themselves and inspire future generations, then sign up for this Saturday's debut walking tour of [Charles Bukowski's Westlake](#).



We'll be trekking around a gorgeous neighborhood that couldn't be further removed from Brentwood's high walls and the insulation that comes with inherited millions, to talk about how an abused kid from West Adams found love, hope and inspiration in the bars and bungalow courts of mid-century Los Angeles, and became the most shoplifted writer in America. Join us, do!

And click over to our website to see tour dates listed through August, including some Sunday

outings by popular request, and an all new tour, [West Adams Sugar Hill and Angelus Rosedale Cemetery](#). And because the Know Your Downtown LA tour on July 27 is nearly sold out, we've added a visit to the seldom seen Dutch Chocolate Shop to the June 1 POP - Preserving Our Past tour. Plus a Real Black Dahlia walking tour on July 6. And absolutely no walks in Brentwood.

Yours for Los Angeles,

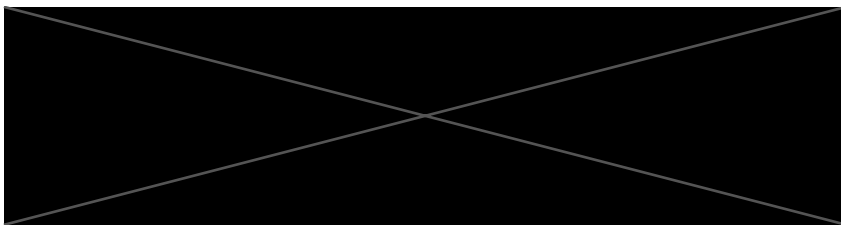
Kim & Richard

Esotouric

Psst... If you'd like to support our efforts to be the voice of places worth preserving, we have a [tip jar](#) and a [subscriber edition](#) of this newsletter, vintage Los Angeles [webinars](#) available to [stream](#), in-person [tours](#) and a [souvenir shop](#) you can browse in. We've also got recommended reading bookshelves [on Amazon](#) and the [Bookshop](#) indie bookstore site. You can [share this post](#) to win [subscriber perks](#). And did you know we offer private versions of our walking and bus tours for groups big or small? Or just share this link with other people who care.

UPCOMING BUS & WALKING TOURS

• [Charles Bukowski's Westlake](#) (Sat. 5/11) • [Hotel Horrors & Main Street Vice](#) (Sat. 5/18) • [Evergreen Cemetery, 1877](#) (Sat. 5/25) • [POP - Preserving Our Past Featuring the Dutch Chocolate Shop](#) (Sat. 6/1) • [Westlake Park](#) (Sat. 6/8) • [Highland Park Arroyo](#) (Sat. 6/15) • [Film Noir / Real Noir](#) (Sat. 6/29) • [The Real Black Dahlia](#) (Sat. 7/6) • [Angelino Heights & Carroll Avenue](#) (Sat. 7/13) • [Miracle Mile Marvels and Madness](#) (Sun. 7/21) • [Know Your Downtown L.A.: Tunnels To Towers To The Dutch Chocolate Shop](#) (7/27) • [Evergreen Cemetery, 1877](#) (Sun. 8/4) • [West Adams Sugar Hill and Angelus Rosedale Cemetery](#) (Sat. 8/10) • [Broadway: Downtown Los Angeles' Beautiful, Magical Mess](#) (Sun. 8/25) • [Raymond Chandler's Noir Downtown Los Angeles](#) (8/31)



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