

Communication from Public

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Council File No: 24-0093

Comments for Public Posting: Hi, I am the owner representative for the property referenced in the above council file number (621 S. Gramercy Pl). I will be unable to attend the public hearing scheduled of March 5th 2024 at 2pm. Therefore, I am submitting my argument against including said property in the list of historic cultural monuments on this form. The designation of a building as a Historic/Cultural Monument in Los Angeles is a significant matter that can impact not only the fabric of the city but also the sustainability of the housing market, particularly for owners and tenants who have been navigating the tumultuous economic aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to the criteria put forth for such a designation, we present the following refined arguments against the nomination of our building for Historic/Cultural Monument status: Criteria: Association with a "Master" Architect, Builder, or Designer Counterpoint to Notability: The assertion that the building in question was created by a "master" architect, in this case, Louis Seldon, hinges on a relatively obscure mention within the LA Times. Recognition in a newspaper does not elevate an individual to the status of a master architect whose works demand preservation. Were we to accept such a premise, we would inadvertently set a precedent that could qualify innumerable structures in Los Angeles for similar designation based solely on brief public mention. This would not only dilute the special recognition intended by a Historic/Cultural Monument designation but would also threaten the practical use and necessary evolution of the city's housing stock. Criteria: Association with Important Historic Events or Personages Lack of Direct Historical Connection: It is critical to differentiate between buildings that are directly associated with historically significant events and those that are tangentially related. The construction of apartment buildings in the Wilshire area, spurred by the expansion of railway lines, was a common response to urban growth rather than a direct reflection of the railways' historical significance. To equate the two would be to misconstrue the nature of urban development and to unjustly elevate common responses to infrastructure changes to the status of historic importance. Doing so could indiscriminately sweep a broad array of properties into the historic fold, which is neither practical nor intended by the guidelines of designation. Criteria: Association with Important Movements or Trends Social

and Cultural Significance: While the development trends of the early to mid-20th century have indeed shaped Los Angeles, it is the broader pattern of development rather than individual, unremarkable examples of housing that are historically significant. The building in question does not embody any particular social or cultural movement distinct from countless similar structures erected in the same period. Its designation as a Historic/Cultural Monument based on this criterion would be tantamount to a freeze on the organic evolution of the city's housing landscape, which must be allowed to adapt to current and future needs.

Practical and Economic Hardships Post-Pandemic Viability Concerns: The economic realities faced by property owners, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, must be weighed heavily. With the pandemic's lingering effects causing hardships such as decreased rent collection and stringent eviction restrictions, the added constraints of a historical designation pose a significant threat to the economic viability of maintaining such properties. A Historic/Cultural Monument designation typically comes with rigorous restrictions on alterations, enhancements, and repairs, which can lead to increased maintenance costs and decreased ability to adapt to market demands—factors that could potentially make serving tenants and operating the building unsustainable. In conclusion, while we respect and appreciate the intent behind the preservation of Los Angeles' historical and cultural heritage, the proposed designation of our building does not meet the requisite criteria and threatens to impose undue hardship on property owners and tenants alike. It is our position that this designation is not only inappropriate considering the specific historical context and economic implications but could also set a concerning precedent for the indiscriminate conservation of buildings, thereby hampering the dynamic growth and adaptation essential to the city's future. Please confirm receipt of this document Thank You,

Matthew Soufer