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June 7, 2023

BY ONLINE SUBMISSION AND HAND DELIVERY

Los Angeles City Council
200 North Spring Street, Room 395
Los Angeles, CA 90012

LACouncilComment.com

Re: 06-07-23 Agenda Item 16; Kight House Historic Cultural Monument Nomination (CF 20-1341)

Honorable Councilmembers:

I represent Westlake Apartment Development, the owner of the residence at 1822 W. 4th Street (“Owner”) which is the subject of the Historic Cultural Monument nomination before you today as Item 16 on today’s agenda.

As noted in the Council File the last day for the Council to act under Administrative Code is this Friday June 09, 2023. However, with written consent of the Owner the time for the City Council to act may be extended up to an additional 60 days. See Administrative Code Section 22.171.10 (f).

On behalf of the Owner, for the reasons set forth below this letter serves as written consent to an additional 60-day period for the Council to act.

To put this matter into context, since the property was first nominated three years ago, the Owner has expressed a willingness to sell the property to an LGBTQ organization or other party with the ability to rehabilitate and reuse the property for a community-serving purpose. In addition, however, the Owner has taken a number of steps to try to find a preservation solution. Attached is a summary of the Owner’s concerted efforts.

The Owner has stated its willingness to sell the property at no profit seeking only to be reimbursed its costs and offered to provide a one-year option to allow an interested party time to obtain financing and/or approvals for a reuse project. The Owner also enlisted the assistance of an architectural firm with expertise in historic preservation to develop reuse options. These options were considered by interested parties and City staff, including the Office of Historic Resources.

Candidly, the Owner was disappointed that the nominator, a very well-funded nonprofit whose mission is to serve the LGBTQ community, declined to assist with a reuse project. Further, no other party stepped forward to participate in such an effort, despite significant outreach by the Owner and City staff.



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At PLUM yesterday, some speakers urged reuse for a community purpose. Given the three years of effort with no success, we were surprised that this was raised at the last minute. Yet, if there is a possibility that a qualified party would now step forward, the Owner remains open for a brief period of time to explore a sale for preservation purposes.

The Owner is willing to agree to a 60-day extension for the Council to hear this matter with the goal of a refocused effort to determine whether preservation is feasible through a community-based acquisition and reuse.

It is unfortunate that the Owner's Transit Oriented Community project that would provide housing, including affordable units, has been delayed for three years. After an additional 60-day extension, we respectfully will urge the Council to resolve this matter with either a reuse project or to allow the Owner to proceed with its proposed housing project.

In the event that the Council does not extend the consideration of the Monument nomination, the Owner respectfully urges the Council to designate the site only and not the physical improvements for the reasons stated in my May 15, 2023, letter to PLUM which is incorporated herein by this reference.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "William F. Delvac".

William F. Delvac

Cc: Councilmember Eunisses Hernandez
City Attorney Hydeec Feldstein Soto
Helen Campbell, CD 1
Ken Bernstein, OHR
Lambert Giessinger, OHR
Mickel Khayat, Westlake Apartment Development

ATTACHMENT 1
Owner's Efforts to Find a Reuse Solution

- Shortly after the nomination was submitted in May 2020, the Owner:
 - Solicited interest with 15 LGBTQ community organizations to undertake a project that would save the house and serve the LGBTQ community.
 - Offered to sell the property at his cost.
 - Expressed a willingness to provide an option to purchase the property to provide time to put together a transaction.
 - Asked AIDS Healthcare Foundation to purchase the property on the above terms or at least participate in a solution.
 - None of these efforts resulted in any interest.
- While the matter was tolled under the Mayor's Executive Directive, City staff worked extensively with the property owner, the nominator, and interested parties to determine if preservation would be feasible by retention of the house while building new affordable housing behind it.
- The Owner secured the pro bono assistance of an architectural firm with expertise in preservation and site planning to accommodate new construction.
- City staff convened a number of meetings with the participation of the Owner's team and the nominator and, at times, with the Office of Historic Resources.
- Furthermore, the Owner again committed to selling the property at cost without profit to an entity able to preserve it and add new construction.
- While preliminary plans were developed that demonstrated what might be built, an extensive effort was made to identify an entity that would undertake a project to preserve the house.
- Staff spoke with real estate developers and other City departments.
- Over two years of time went into the effort to preserve the house. This was an intensive effort far beyond a typical case, and far beyond the tools and resources the Cultural Heritage Commission or the City could or would bring to bear.
- The exploration of alternatives was much more detailed than analysis of alternatives under the California Environmental Quality Act.