



DEPARTMENT OF THE HISTORY OF ART
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April 15, 2016

Hon. Jose Huizar, Chair, PLUM Committee
Hon. Marqueece Harris-Dawson
Hon. Gilbert A. Cedillo
Hon. Mitchell Englander
Hon. Filipe Fuentes
Office of the City Clerk, c/o Ms. Sharon Dickinson
Attn: PLUM Committee
200 North Spring Street, Room 395, LA, CA 90012

Case Number: CHC-2015-4255-HCM
Albert Van Luit Complex
4000-4010 E. Chevy Chase Drive

Sent via email to:
sharon.dickinson@lacity.org

Dear Chairman Huizar and Councilmembers,

I write in support of designating the Albert Van Luit Complex as a Historic-Cultural Monument.

I am a professor of architectural history at the University of California, Riverside where I teach the history of modern architecture. I serve as the Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, the foremost academic journal on the history of the built environment. I have also been a registered architect in the state of New York. As an architect, I worked on the renovation of Carnegie Hall with James Stewart Polshek and Partners, and on several other historic preservation projects.

I consider the Van Luit Complex to have true importance for the history of architecture and of the LGBT community in Los Angeles.

The Van Luit Factory (J.R. Wyatt, 1950) is exemplary of the daylight factory type, which has been so important to the history of industrial development in Los Angeles. It has retained its distinctive sawtooth light monitors, concrete structure, roof trusses, and clear-span interior spaces, which are central characteristics of the type. It appears to be an ideal structure for conversion to other uses such as creative offices or live-work studios. The factory is sited in such a way as to respect the adjacent equestrian and residential properties, with ample setbacks and provision for equestrian access along the property boundary. While it is a large building, the appearance of its size is mitigated by its sensitive relationship to the neighborhood. Over the years, it has become a landmark in North Atwater Village.

The Van Luit showroom by Edward A. Killingsworth and Jules Brady (1965) is a gem of Killingsworth's work and of Mid-Century architecture. It has retained the essence of the design's historic integrity and characteristics. Killingsworth was renowned for his innovative residential buildings, notably his six designs for the Case Study House program. The showroom represents a less well-known facet of his output even while it displays many elements common in Killingsworth's celebrated opus. The showroom and offices open through glass walls and doors onto courtyards that were originally landscaped with tropical plants and water elements. The showroom is a classic display of Killingsworth's skill at creating a flow of space between interior and exterior spaces, typical of Mid-Century design. The elegance of the proportions, simplicity of detail, and gracious scale give this structure real architectural significance. Details such as interior wood paneling, light fixtures, exterior lattice screens, and casework doors remain intact.

The Van Luit factory and showroom are unusually well-preserved and significant examples of the daylight factory type and Edward Killingsworth's Mid-Century commercial work. The complex has been integrated into Atwater Village for more than 65 years. It is part of a fragile ecology of equestrian, residential, light industrial and park uses that can be found nowhere else in Los Angeles.

In addition to its architectural worth, the Van Luit Complex has significance for the history of Los Angeles's LGBT community. Albert Van Luit, who privately identified with the LGBT community, was an important figure in the history of architecture and interior design due to his innovations in wallpaper design and production.

In light of all aspects of its significance, I strongly support the designation of the Albert Van Luit Complex as a Historic-Cultural Monument in the City of Los Angeles.

Sincerely,



Patricia A. Morton
Associate Professor of Architectural History
Editor, *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*

cc:

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