

LYTTON SAVINGS

Historic-Cultural Monument Nomination

File No. 16-1074 CD 4 #14



Lytton Savings is a Mid-Century Modern bank building at the corner of Sunset Boulevard and Crescent Heights, noted for its dramatic, folded plate concrete zig-zag roof and glass-walled banking floor.

Designed by master architect Kurt W. Meyer in 1960, it's an eclectic example of California Mid-Century Modern and Googie architecture.

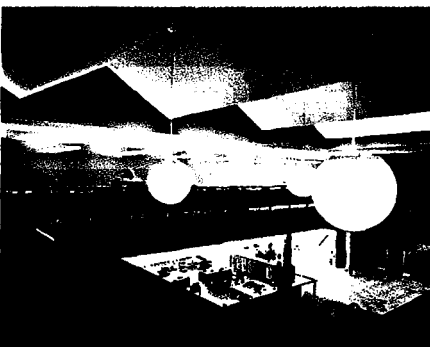
Kurt Meyer was born in Switzerland and moved to Los Angeles in 1949. He dedicated much of his life to making Los Angeles a vibrant city, both with his professional work as an architect and in his service to many city and civic committees and agencies.

Lytton Savings qualifies for two of the HCM criteria:

It "reflects the broad cultural, economic, or social history of the nation, state, or community" as an early example of the transformative shift in postwar-era bank design, with the rise of the savings & loan industry.

It also "embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural-type specimen, inherently valuable for study of a period, style or method of construction" as an excellent example of Mid-Century Modern architecture.

The New York Times called the building "...breathtaking architecture dedicated to the financial services of Mr. Lytton..." in a 1965 article.



Please join in supporting this landmark building as a HCM when it comes before the PLUM committee.

Steven Luftman, Keith Nakata
-applicants

FRIENDS OF
LYTTON
SAVINGS

The HCM nomination of this landmark building is supported by:

- CD4 Councilperson David Ryu, whose district it is located in
- Cultural Heritage Commission (CHC)– unanimously voted in support of the HCM
- Office of Historic Resources (OHR) recommended to declare the property a HCM
- SurveyLA as eligible for historic listing on the National, State and Local levels—It is featured on the cover of the report
- It has strong support from the L.A. Conservancy
- Historic Resources Assessment in the EIR for 8150 Sunset Blvd
- Alan Hess, noted expert on mid century modern architecture, architect, lecturer, and author of 19 books on modern architecture

"This (HCM) goes into the realm of a no brainer."

Barry Milofsky— CHC Commissioner

Overwhelming support from the Cultural Heritage Commission (CHC)

Quotes from the CHC Commissioners before their unanimous vote in favor of the Lytton HCM

Richard Barron— President

“We got a very long presentation from an attorney showing every little nickel and dime thing that had been changed on the building. In my mind this building has maintained its integrity to be worthy of being supported as a monument. I think it’s a really interesting building. (Kurt Meyer) was a talented architect, I think that this was maybe one of his best examples of his work... He was a very passionate and creative guy and was really involved with our city and he did a lot of contributions to our city. I’m totally in support of this as a monument.”

Barry Milofsky— Commissioner

“Well I was in support of this until I read the attorney’s letter and noticed the landscaping has gotten overgrown in the last 60 years. I agree (In support of this as a monument), one of the things we typically look at is character defining features and this building has probably 90% of the character defining features intact. And as a symbol too—within the city and to the layperson without an architectural background, it probably has 110% [of its features] intact. So I’m in favor of it.”

Jeremy Irvine— Commissioner

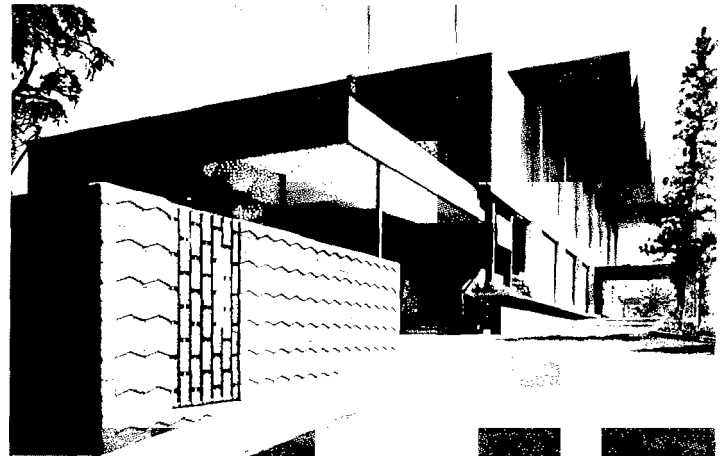
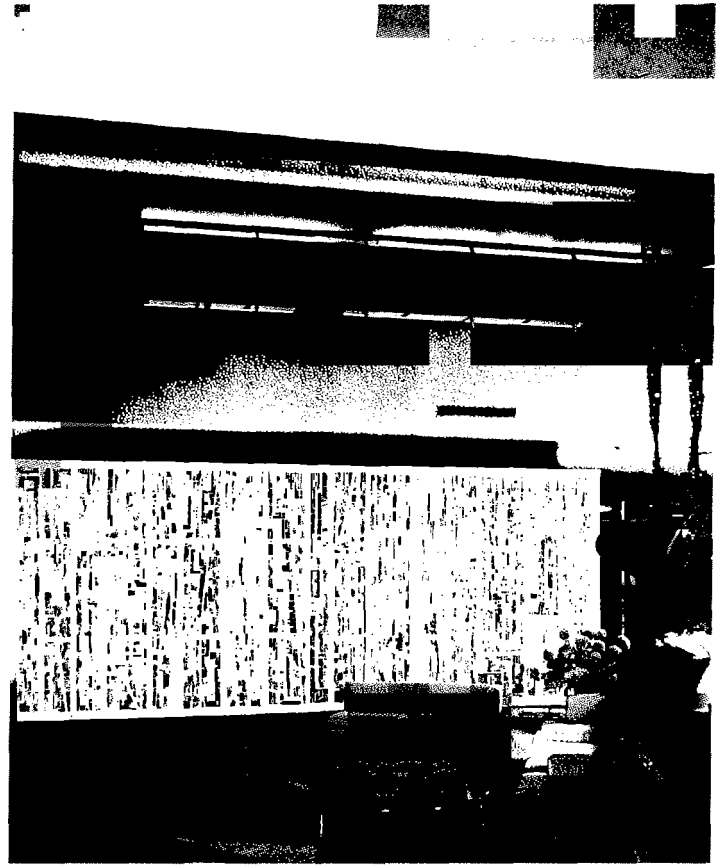
“I’m in favor of it too. I mean anyone that was saying that this building has diminished significance, or diminished character, would be grasping at straws. It’s in excellent condition. And in the frenzy over single family residences from this period, I find it shocking and sad that a commercial building like this, which was so groundbreaking, would be threatened. So I’m in MAJOR favor of it.”

Gail Kennard—Vice President

“I had the privilege of touring the bank. When you walk in you just have this amazing sense of being in this space that I think is really emblematic of mid century modern architecture. I commend the applicants “Friends of Lytton Savings.” Thank you very much for your work on this, I wholeheartedly support the nomination.”

Richard Barron— President

“This building is under threat because of a development. Hopefully the powers that be will be enlightened by our recommendation and make this a monument, and the architect who is planning to develop this site will be able to incorporate it into his project, which I think he can.”



Kurt W. Meyer AIA 1922-2014

Career highlights:

- 1949 Arrives in Los Angeles
- 1957 opened architectural practice
- **1959 Lytton Savings building, his first major commission**
- 1967 developed plan to save the Dodge House, Irving Gill's masterpiece
- 1968-1971 Director-Southern California Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA)
- 1973 Named a Fellow of the AIA
- 1973 appointed by Mayor Bradley to the Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA)
- 1976 -1978 Named chairman of the CRA
 - Brought about Japanese Village Plaza
 - Retained Broadway as an ethnic shopping street
 - Saved Central Library from demolition
 - Kept the Jewelry District downtown
 - Created elderly and market rate housing on Bunker Hill, the largest senior affordable housing community in the US
 - Developed housing in Watts and Pico-Union
 - Developed Downtown Los Angeles Plan
- 1975 Huntington Beach Civic Center
- 1982 Plaza de la Raza Cultural Center

Meyer told the L.A. Times in 1983, "I don't believe that it comes down to a choice of serving the community or running a successful practice... it is possible to do both."

- 1983 Exxon's western headquarters
- 1985 San Bernardino County Government Center
- 1986-1992 Chairman of the board of Southern California Institute of Architecture (SCI-Arc)
 - Started working group to revitalize the Los Angeles River (1990)
- 1987-1992 Urban Design Advisory Coalition- president
 - Saved the Central Library for a second time
- 1988 Jet Propulsion Laboratory Master Plan
- 1989 CalTech Master Plan, Pasadena
- 1990 300 Medical Plaza at UCLA
- 1992 South Coast AQMD Headquarters
- 1992 University of Redlands Master Plan
- 1992 LA Chamber of Commerce Lifetime Achievement Award
- 2013 Received a Modern Masters award from the Los Angeles Conservancy



Kurt Meyer and Bart Lytton breaking ground in 1966.



Martin Luther King with Lytton Center's curator, Josine Ianco Starrels Kline.

The linked Lytton Center featured groundbreaking gallery shows, it was one of the earliest corporate art programs in the country.



The following are reasons that the Friends of Lytton Savings believe that the Townscape 8150 Sunset Blvd. Environmental Impact Report and associated Tract Map is deficient.

The lead agency cannot merely adopt a statement of overriding consideration and approve a project with significant impacts; it must first adopt feasible alternatives and mitigation measures.

- 1) Alternative 9, the current Proposed Project, fails to address significant adverse impacts to a known cultural resource when feasible alternatives to demolition are provided within the DEIR
- 2) Preservation Alternatives Would Eliminate Significant Historical Resource Impacts.

CEQA prohibits approvals of projects with significant adverse environmental impacts if there are feasible alternatives or mitigation measures that would reduce or eliminate those impacts.

- 3) The Preservation Alternatives Would Meet the Majority of the Project Objectives.

The RDEIR, which included an analysis of Alternative 9, the currently proposed Project, concluded that Preservation Alternatives 5 and 6 both fully meet 12 of the objectives and would partially meet the remaining three objectives. Project Alternative 5 is a Bank Preservation Alternative which retains the historic Lytton Bank building along with a proposed project and Project Alternative 6 is a Reduced Height and Bank Preservation Alternative.

The DEIR and RDEIR both found the Preservation Alternatives would fully meet all but one of these objectives. The only exception is the objective to "Provide high-quality commercial uses...", which would only be partially met because of a reduction of commercial square footage.

The DEIR also found the Preservation Alternatives to be consistent with the applicable design guidelines and that they would provide visual improvements

"which would incorporate elements of pedestrian scale." The Preservation Alternatives would link pedestrians to a landscaped plaza, extend the pedestrian environment to retail businesses and residential access points within the Project Site, and include numerous design features to enhance the neighborhood character and pedestrian environment.

Lastly and most importantly, the fact that the Project proponent's current architect would prefer to start from a clean slate and not integrate the historic Lytton Savings building is not a relevant factor in determining the feasibility of the Preservation Alternatives.

On September 15, 2016 the Lytton Bank building was recommended for Historic Cultural Heritage designation by the Cultural Heritage Commission and is awaiting a recommendation and a vote by the City Council. It is also deemed eligible for the California Register.

We urge you to consider that Project Alternative 9 fails to address a significant environmental impact and the unwarranted, needless demolition of a cultural resource. We urge you to seriously evaluate alternatives 5 and 6 in the current Final Environmental Impact Report.

ENV-2013-2552-EIR and the associated Tract Map VTT-72370-CN-2A.





DAVID E. RYU
COUNCILMEMBER, FOURTH DISTRICT

October 20, 2016

Councilmember Jose Huizar
Planning and Land Use Management Committee
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Councilmember Huizar,

On August 21, 2014 Townscape Partners submitted applications for their proposed project at 8150 Sunset. From the moment those applications were filed, my constituents have consistently expressed serious concerns about the project's size and the impacts it would have on their neighborhoods.

Over the past year I have demanded that Townscape Partners reach out to affected residents and find common ground on height, density, traffic mitigation, and historic preservation. While some attempts were made, no significant concessions were made by the developers to scale back the project.

On 07/28/16 the City Planning Commission (CPC) approved the proposed project without meaningfully addressing the single most important community concern: height. Additionally, while the CPC added affordable housing, the Commission removed parking which continues to be a significant issue for the neighborhood.

As stated at the CPC, I believe that we are disproportionately incentivizing developers at the expense of achieving more affordable housing, and that this exchange is not equitable for our residents, current or future, who both deserve affordability.

Throughout this time I have attentively listened to the valid concerns that have come to the forefront. My office has pushed for changes to the project design and scope through persistent and direct conversations with City staff and the developers. I cannot support the CPC approved project when it comes before City Council. The following changes must be made in order for this project to proceed:



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- Given the adjacent property height limits of 45 ft. the proposed height of the tallest 234 foot tower must be reduced by 20 to 30 percent.
- Reduce the FAR, or in the alternative, decrease the density of the residential units while maintaining the increased workforce and affordable units above Density Bonus requirements.
- Provide Community Benefits to the adjacent community. While I believe a Development Agreement should have been required for this project it was not. In order for the proposed project to proceed there must be a commitment by the Developers that the neighboring community will receive direct benefits.
- Increase affordability overall, with additional workforce housing units. Local low-income residents, those who are building and working in this project all must be included in the application process for these units through extensive and targeted outreach.
- The Lytton Savings Bank was evaluated as being possibly historically significant in the Environmental Impact Report. Subsequently, the Cultural Heritage Commission unanimously recommended that the bank be deemed a Historical Cultural Monument. I vigorously support the designation. I also suggest that the Committee discuss the alternatives within the EIR that factor into preservation.
- Increased parking to restore the parking spaces to those originally proposed by the developer of 494 spaces.
- Increased pedestrian access with 15 foot sidewalk widths on Sunset Blvd and relocating the current bus stop at the triangle to the west on the 8150 site rather than pushing it further to the east to an area without sufficient pedestrian access or safety.
- Traffic improvements and funding to make a safer, smarter intersection and follow the Bureau of Engineering and LADOT recommendations in terms of both process and implementation on this important city and neighborhood element of traffic infrastructure.



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Additionally, I have strongly requested that the developer work with the appellants in a good faith effort to address their specific concerns. These appellants include longstanding community groups and our neighbor, to the west, the City of West Hollywood. They have valid concerns regarding height, sewer hookup, and traffic impacts.

Finally, I have requested that the Planning Department revise their rules on how the City applies the State Density Bonus law (SB 1818). For a few affordable housing units here and there, we are providing developers large incentives, and thus profits, by claiming that the City can not reject their specific incentive requests and that the State is at fault. This is not true, as made clear in CA Code 65915.b.A where it says that the City does not, and should not, grant concessions if "the concession or incentive is not required in order to provide for affordable housing costs". This has to stop and I believe that we can approach projects that include affordable units with common sense to achieve better results for the community.

Mr. Frank Gehry's design is unique and has the potential to become a part of the architecturally significant fabric of this neighborhood. However, I want to be clear that I will not support a de facto revision to the Community Plan for this area. Zoning and the General Plan must be respected.

Let's continue to work with the community and the developers in a transparent manner to achieve the best result possible.

Sincerely,



David E. Ryu
Councilmember, 4th District

CC: Vince Bertoni, Planning Director
Hollywood Hills West Neighborhood Council