

Clerk for PLUM Committee
City of Los Angeles
Council File #18-0659
VTT-73056-SL-1A
Re 4321-23 W. Burns Ave.

September 16, 2018

To the PLUM Committee:

You are taking under consideration a project for a small lot subdivision which proposes demolishing an existing Craftsman duplex. I am writing to address the alarming rate of demolishing these characteristic early Los Angeles buildings, and the missed opportunity of saving them by prejudging them in the City Planning process.

An historian who is one of the most familiar experts to prepare historic evaluations for the Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Commission has reported to you that the integrity of this Craftsman duplex is greater than what has been reported by the developer's hired historians, and that the increasing rarity of buildings of this age and type in central Los Angeles neighborhoods should be analyzed to understand the significance of its demolition. . His report calls for a more thorough investigation than afforded so far.

This VTT application was processed with a Categorical Exemption. In their appeal of the VTT approval, the appellant called for a more thorough investigation of historic status and the effect of the proposed demolition in an EIR.

In denying the appeal, the City argues that the appellant's historian has not delved far enough into the description of the property's integrity or into the cumulative loss of buildings of this type and style. That is precisely the point. The appellant shouldn't have to do the work of an EIR. Our City is catching up, but we don't have thorough-enough historic listings yet to skip the investigation in an EIR.

I encourage you to take the appellant's request seriously, and allow further facts to be evaluated on the significance of this building through the requested EIR. (An EIR also affords a critical step of looking at project alternatives, which in this case might include retaining the duplex as a part of the new small lot project.)

My office is very close to a project where the developer's historic consultant (Kaplan) integrated two quotidian West Hollywood Craftsman homes into a new development -- when the Commission I served on would not allow their demolition. The project was a great success.

Respectfully submitted,


Frances Offenhauser