



January 28, 2020

VIA EMAIL: CLERK.PLUMCOMMITTEE@LACITY.ORG

The Honorable Members of the Planning and Land Use Management
Committee
The Los Angeles City Council
c/o City Clerk, Room 395,
City Hall, 200 North Spring Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Council file No. 20-0015; CHC-2019-3798-HCM/C.B. Van Vorst Co.
Manufacturing Plant/Santa Fe Art Colony

Honorable Members of the Planning and Land Use Management Committee:

I am a representative of the owner of the C.B Van Vorst Co. Manufacturing Plant/Santa Fe Art Colony (the "*Property*"). This Committee will be considering the designation of the Property as an historic-cultural monument at its meeting today. The property owner is **supportive** of the nomination based upon the record developed at November 7, 2019 meeting of the Cultural Heritage Commission (CHC). Specifically, the Commission expressly acknowledged the flexibility needed to allow different artists to occupy the loft spaces (i.e. a sculptor's interior will necessarily be different than a painter's), as well as the fact that the 1953 warehouse on the property could be adaptively reused as artist's lofts consistent with the conversion of the original furniture factory in the 1980's.

By way of background, the ownership has been supportive of the designation of the Art Colony, but had concerns regarding (1) the ability to modify interior spaces as different tenants occupied the studios, and (2) the inclusion of a 1953 warehouse building that was built some thirty-years after the original buildings and was never utilized as part of the original furniture factory. At the CHC meeting, we presented an analysis prepared by the Historic Resources Group (HRG) (the "*HRG Report*"), demonstrating that the 1953 warehouse was built long after the original factory had moved operations to Western Blvd., was expressly excluded from the Art Colony by the Redevelopment Agency when the colony was created in the 1980's, and falls outside of the period of significance for the Early Industrial Development theme established by SurveyLA. In addition, the continuous alterations made to the live/work interiors of the four structures of the Property that comprise the Art Colony suggested that the specific interiors of the units were not part of the "character defining features" and should be excluded from the nomination.

The Commissioners indicated that while they supported flexibility in the interior remodeling, they wanted the Commission staff to be able to review future modifications.

The Commission confirmed, however, that a variety of changes to accommodate future tenants' live/work needs and preferences would be acceptable, and that future tenants would be free to customize their spaces.

Commissioners noted, for example: "any building, any house that we designate has the ability for upgrades, changes.. I can put in a new bathroom, I can modify a kitchen, which is the same as the sculptor moves out and the painter moves in, and they need some vertical lift..." (hearing, minute 1:05:12). (audio recording for November 7, 2019 accessed via <https://planning.lacity.org/about/commissions-boards-hearings>).

On the topic of the 1953 warehouse, the Commission indicated that the warehouse was on the same legal parcel as the Art Colony, and therefore the City's policy is to include it in the designation.

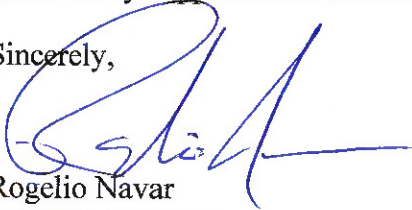
The staff indicated that the 1953 was not the focus of the nomination and the building was not as significant. Other comments included:

- Commissioner Kennard: "I just want to assuage your fears about this, you were just here this morning when we talked about the Bryson Apartments, very similar thing, because it was all one parcel, this is all one parcel. They came before us to ask for an exemption on that parking garage, and it was granted... this is not going to be the huge hurdle that you might think this is" (beginning ~1:11:00, ending 1:11:40)
- From the CHC staff: "I think the only other comment we could provide to the commissioner and the owner is just as one sort of imagines the original building were adaptively reused into artist lofts, if we take the 1953 building, and it's more or less in its original configuration as a 1953 building, and imagine it being converted into artists' lofts, I think when you look at the original 1919 buildings and how they were adaptively reused, and the changes that took place, if you apply all that to the 53 building, I don't see that as a big issue. The issue would be, you know, doubling the size, or demolishing it.." (~1:14:10)
- "I think this building, especially if you want to make it an artists' loft building, I mean that's, it's very easy to make a warehouse into an artist loft, we all know that, right" (~1:15:00)
- "This discussion is part of the public record; I think you have a pretty clear idea of what the issues would be if you want to make modifications to it [the 1953 building]." (~1:15:50)

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With the additional clarification provided at the CHC meeting, the Art Colony ownership is now fully supportive of the historic-cultural designation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R. Navar', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Rogelio Navar
FIFTEEN GROUP

cc: Councilmember Marqueece Harris-Dawson, councilmember.harris-dawson@lacity.org
Councilmember Bob Blumenfield, councilmember.blumenfield@lacity.org
Councilmember Gilbert A. Cedillo, councilmember.cedillo@lacity.org
Councilmember Curren D. Price, Jr., councilmember.price@lacity.org
Councilmember John S. Lee, councilmember.lee@lacity.org
Councilmember José Huizar, councilmember.huizar@lacity.org