



William Lamborn <william.lamborn@lacity.org>

8150 Sunset: Gehry Partners Letter

1 message

Nytzen, Michael <michaelnytzen@paulhastings.com> Mon, May 9, 2016 at 2:08 PM
To: Luci Ibarra <luciralia.ibarra@lacity.org>, William Lamborn <william.lamborn@lacity.org>
Cc: "Haber, Jeffrey S." <jeffreyhaber@paulhastings.com>

Luci and Will:

Attached for your review is a letter from Gehry Partners regarding Alternative 9 design considerations.

Please let us know if you have any questions or would like to discuss.

Thanks,

Michael



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E. Michael Nytzen | Senior Land Use Project Manager
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Gehry Partners, LLP

Frank Gehry

Brian Aamoth
John Bowers
Anand Devarajan
Jennifer Ehrman
Berta Gehry
Meaghan Lloyd
David Nam
Tensho Takemori
Laurence Tighe
Craig Webb

March 24, 2016

Mr. Tyler Siegel
Mr. John Irwin
Townscape Partners, LLC
8899 Beverly Blvd, Suite 710
West Hollywood, CA

Dear Tyler and John:

We are writing to you in response to the letter that has been filed by the Los Angeles Conservancy dated October 26, 2015 regarding the Mixed-Use Project at 8150 Sunset Boulevard. The letter objects to the proposed removal of the Lytton Savings and Chase Bank building that currently occupies a portion of the project site. While we are in support of the Los Angeles Conservancy's mission to protect culturally and architecturally significant buildings where practical and economical, we do not agree with their position regarding the Lytton Savings building.

As your architect on the project, we are sympathetic to their concerns. Our office has had several of our older projects torn down or significantly altered over the last few years to make room for newer development. Though it was hard news to receive, we did not protest nor did we implore anyone to reconsider despite our belief in their significance as a part of our complete body of work. We didn't because we believe that it is as important to look forward as it is to look backward and that each building plays a role in the city and over time, those roles change. As populations evolve, the structure of the city needs to evolve with them.

By way of explaining our logic, we would like to offer a brief explanation of our design for this project and the process that we used to arrive at the current design. Our design for the project is intended to create a unique architectural identity for the site by crafting the project as an ensemble of buildings. The location and height of each of the buildings are carefully designed in order to achieve, among other design objectives, the following three goals:

- To create a pedestrian friendly retail destination
- To extend the landscape from the hills by creating multiple outdoor terraces
- To preserve the view corridor from the hills.

In addition to these design objectives, we have designed the project to meet the following:

- Provide an attractive retail face along street frontages;
- Redevelop and revitalize an aging and underutilized commercial site;
- Build upon the existing vitality and diversity of uses in Hollywood;

- Provide high - quality commercial uses that enhance the character of the area;
- Create a development that complements and improves the visual character of the westernmost area of Hollywood and promotes quality living spaces that effectively connect with the surrounding urban environment through high quality architectural design and detail; and
- Enhance pedestrian activity and neighborhood commercial street life in the westernmost area of Hollywood.

We have used these guiding principles to create a design that we believe will foster a new and exciting commercial and retail destination, add much-needed affordable housing, and create an iconic gateway to Hollywood.

We do not believe that the Lytton Savings and Chase Bank building helps meet any of the goals and objectives set forth above. The bank building belongs to an outdated commercial real estate model. It does not provide street-front engagement along Sunset Boulevard, it turns its back to Havenhurst Drive, and it impedes pedestrian access to the project from Havenhurst and Sunset. The size and layout of the building limits the number and types of tenants that could occupy the space. We do not believe that this building has the flexibility to adapt to a new usage, which would severely limit the programming of that building to the detriment of the excitement that you are trying to create on the site. The bank consumes a sizeable portion of the available property, which if preserved, would leave insufficient space to design buildings with comparable function to the ones that we would have to abandon.

Our landscape design has also been sensitively composed with the design objectives in mind, particularly our design of the stepping terraces and the corridor leading from Sunset Boulevard to the central plaza. It has been designed in order to invite and draw people into the beautiful central public plaza. The existing bank building, with its non-porous facade, extends right up to the existing narrow sidewalk on Sunset, and is at odds with the vision for a pedestrian-friendly development.

We have been aware of the Los Angeles Conservancy's interest in the preservation of the bank from the beginning of our design process, and we considered whether it would be feasible to meet the design objectives and overall project objectives with a design that preserved the bank building. For the reasons set forth above, we determined it was not feasible to meet these objectives with a design that preserved the bank.

Sincerely,

Gehry Partners, LLP