CAUTION - EXTERNAL SENDER. Please do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the source of this email and know the content is safe.

Please enter this statement into the City Council’s packet as an exhibit for its Feb. 18, 2020, public hearing regarding 1251 N. Detroit. Thank you.

-- Victor Omelczenko, WHPA Board President, 213-200-5103
West Hollywood Preservation Alliance
501(c)(3) Tax Exempt Non-Profit Organization

The West Hollywood Preservation Alliance (WHPA) urges the City Council to deny the appeal regarding 1251 N. Detroit and to adopt the Historic Preservation Commission’s recommendation that this distinctive 106-year old craftsman duplex property be designated as a local cultural resource.

WHPA has reviewed the 3 different Historic Resource Assessments (HRA) as well as the Aug. 30, 2018, peer review memorandum from Chattel, Inc. The Chattel review ultimately supports the thorough April 2017 HRA prepared by Leslie Heumann and attests to discrepancies and oversights in the succeeding Brooks HRA (July 2017) and the Kaplan Chen Kaplan HRA (Dec. 2017).

The staff report ultimately prepared for the HPC hearing on Oct. 28, 2019, confirms that the recommended designation meets historic preservation criteria in the municipal code. Particularly noteworthy is that “The building retains sufficient levels of all seven aspects of integrity and continues to convey its historic significance” (Staff report, Page 6 of 7).

Furthermore, quoting from the Leslie Heumann HRA, staff reemphasizes that the building is “one of the few remaining examples in the City that embodies the character-defining features of the Craftsman style that was once dominant in West Hollywood residential development during the first two decades of the 20th century….It is also a rare example of a Craftsman duplex in West Hollywood, a property type not abundantly built, and the survival of one with its character-defining features intact is noteworthy” (Staff report, Page 7 of 7)

A previous effort to establish a thematic district of 30 early 20th century homes in the area of Curson/Lexington/Norton did not come to fruition. But by denying the current appeal and by designating this one rare craftsman duplex, the City Council can reconfirm its commitment to historic preservation on the city’s Eastside.
LYNN RUSSELL
ART. ANTIQUES. DESIGN

February 7, 2020

WEST HOLLYWOOD CITY COUNCIL
8300 SANTA MONICA BLVD.
WEST HOLLYWOOD, CA. 90049

RE: APPEAL OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
RESOLUTION NO. HPC 19-137
1251 N. DETROIT AVE., WEST HOLLYWOOD, CA. 90046

HONORABLE COUNCILMEMBERS:

The thorough and impressive HRA submitted by Leslie Heumann (4/28/17) had a distinct ring of authenticity in its articulation of all merits giving the property a recommendation for Historic Resource Status in West Hollywood. The considerably lesser HRA of Anne Marie Brooks (7/14/17) unnecessarily minimizes its elements. Further, the HRA submitted by Kaplan Chen Kaplan (12/15/17, format updated 6/4/18) denigrates the property with phraseology typical of many of its customary HRA reports, lacks specificity and demonstrates an approach to undercut the integrity, context, significance of type and remaining examples of the Craftsman Duplex style in West Hollywood, particularly the East Side.

The peer review executed by Chattel, Inc. (8/30/18)* is in near perfect alignment with that of the Heumann HRA using different but very specific language. The original report by Heumann executed for a potential buyer, had no realistic element of bias and was subsequently underscored by Chattel, Inc.

lenabydesign@mac.com
323.850.8689
A conflict of interest claim suggested by the Appellant/Applicant at the 10/28/19 Historic Preservation Commission Meeting, that led to unfounded speculation regarding previous professional contact between Leslie Heumann and Chattel, Inc., lacks credibility. The errant suggestion drew discussion between commissioners away from the main event, the Craftsman Duplex itself and created unnecessary confusion. Possible collaboration on previous projects does not evidence ethical challenges on behalf of either Heumann or Chattel, Inc.

On the other hand, the Appellant/Applicant, has unfortunately, rarely championed the spirit of Historic Preservation despite positions on the HPC and Planning Commission. Public statements that West Hollywood should not become a "Historic Petting Zoo" were offensive then, as have been recent efforts to give short shrift to potential historic elements in development projects within the city under his guidance when, conversely that could have become uniquely integrated projects.

I strongly urge the City Council to deny this appeal and allow the opportunity for this property to become a rightfully burnished gem and an authentic example of an early Craftsman Duplex on the East Side of West Hollywood.

*mistakenly noted in the 10/28/19 Staff Report as 8/30/19 on page 7/7.