



P.O. BOX 653  
SANTA MONICA, CA 90406  
310-496-3146  
[www.smconservancy.org](http://www.smconservancy.org)

July 17, 2023

Via email to [councilmtgitems@santamonica.gov](mailto:councilmtgitems@santamonica.gov)

Re: July 18 Closed Session Items 3E and 3F: Conference with Real Estate Negotiator pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.8: Property: 1855 Main Street, Santa Monica, California (Civic Auditorium)

Mayor Davis, Mayor Pro Tem Negrete and Councilmembers,

I am writing on behalf of the Board of the Santa Monica Conservancy to request that your discussions with the City's Real Estate Negotiating Team include the importance of the Civic Auditorium's designation as a Santa Monica Landmark. Designed by Welton Becket & Associates, it is an excellent example of mid-20<sup>th</sup> century International Style by world-famous master architect and Santa Monica resident Welton Becket. The history of activities at the Civic is woven into our community's memories, from the Academy Awards to celebrity musicians to Stairway of the Stars (SMMUSD) to cat shows and art fairs. When designated in 2002, it was determined to meet all 6 of Santa Monica's criteria for Landmark designation.

At this time the Conservancy is not taking a position on which proposal is a preferred solution to the City's needs and which one best facilitates a successful adaptive reuse of this cherished landmark. We are reminding you of the Civic's Landmark status because maintaining that designation should be part of any transaction regarding its future. You may not be aware that Barnum Hall at Santa Monica High School is designated as a Landmark at the request of the SMMUSD because of advantages accompanying that status.

Our expectations are that as a condition of sale there will be language to require the new owner retain permanent Landmark status and that all work at the property will comply with Secretary of the Interior Standards. The guidelines for Landmarks allow flexibility to accommodate new functional requirements while protecting key architectural elements, balancing preservation and change. Additionally, Landmark designation supports use of the California Historical Building Code which provides alternative building regulations that recognize the unique construction issues inherent in adaptively reusing historic buildings and facilitate a cost effective approach to preservation.

Sincerely,

Tom Cleys, President  
Santa Monica Conservancy Board of Directors