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Submitted Electronically

Lindsey Horvath
Los Angeles County Supervisor, Third District
Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors
500 W Temple St.
Los Angeles, CA 90012
Email: thirddistrict@bos.lacounty.gov

RE: Venice Lifeguard Station (2300 S. Ocean Front Walk, Venice, CA, 90219)

Dear Supervisor Horvath,

On behalf of the Los Angeles Conservancy, I am writing to request an updated repairs assessment for the Venice Lifeguard Station at 2300 South Ocean Front Walk.

SurveyLA identified the Venice Lifeguard Station as a “[r]are example of a lifeguard station headquarters building in Venice; appears to be the only example along this stretch of the beach.” The Lifeguard Station was designed for the City of Los Angeles in 1968 by the Los Angeles-based architectural firm Prescott, Whalley, and Weit and the esteemed landscape architecture firm Cornell, Bridgers, and Troller. The building is an excellent example of Mid-Century institutional development, with a hexagonal first story and a two-story central tower. The 40-foot tower, also hexagonal in shape with a third story observation deck, is the building’s most distinctive feature. It served as the Venice Lifeguard Headquarters from 1968 to 1975 when the Joint Powers Agreement was established, then as the County Lifeguard Headquarters from 1975 to 2017.

In 2014, the County of Los Angeles commissioned a Building Assessment Report for the Venice Lifeguard Station. The report identified the need for structural, electrical, and mechanical and plumbing repairs. Since that report, the County Department of Beaches and Harbors deferred maintenance and repairs and instead filed for a De Minimus Waiver from the Coastal Commission to demolish the second and third story of the tower, stating that the building is “County-owned” and the tower has “reached the end of its development lifecycle.” According to the Joint Powers Agreement, the Lifeguard Station is owned by the City, which it leases to the County along with three other City-owned lifeguard stations for one dollar a year. Moreover, while the 2014 Building Assessment Report did recommend structural repair due to dry rot on the observation at the floor and roof, it did not recommend demolition, but rather rehabilitation.



In 2022, advocates for the Lifeguard Station and its preservation and reuse prompted the City's Recreation and Park Facilities and Maintenance Task Force to defer the County's demolition permit. Due to outpouring of community support for preservation and the historic significance of the Venice Lifeguard Station, we ask the County to commission an updated Building Assessment Report. As the entity entitled to oversee maintenance of the Venice Lifeguard Tower, we strongly urge the County to prioritize building rehabilitation and implement resulting recommendations from the reassessment to preserve the Venice Lifeguard Tower.

About the Los Angeles Conservancy:

The Los Angeles Conservancy is the largest local historic preservation organization in the United States, with nearly 5,000 members throughout the Los Angeles area. Established in 1978, the Conservancy works to preserve and revitalize the significant architectural and cultural heritage of Los Angeles County through advocacy and education.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at (213) 430-4203 or afine@laconservancy.org should you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Adrian Scott Fine
Senior Director of Advocacy

cc:

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