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January 19, 2021

Community Development Department
City of Orange
300 East Chapman Avenue
Orange, CA 92866

Attention: Robert Garcia rgarcia@cityoforange.org
re: Historic Resources Assessment of 363 S. Main St., Orange

To the Community Development Department:

As an architect and historian, I would like to state my concerns about the Historic Resources Assessment of 363 Main St., Orange, prepared by LSA (July 2020.) This report is insufficient for making planning decisions about this office building.

The report's conclusions that "the City may reach a finding of *No Impact* regarding historic-period built environment resources. No mitigation measures are recommended for historic-period built environment resources" (p. 24) are not proven by its evidence.

This report contains many historical inaccuracies, leading to its misleading conclusion about the building's significance. I would recommend that the city have a peer review performed by an independent expert selected by the city from a list of qualified and certified architectural historical professionals.

I reach this conclusion as a historian. I have published twenty books on twentieth century architectural history. Many of these books are on Modern architecture, especially in Southern California. I am also a resident of Orange County, and serve as a Commissioner on the California State Historical Resources Commission, though I am writing as an independent professional and not on behalf of the Commission. My resume is attached.

I will not itemize each mistaken element in the report; that would be the job for the peer review. But I will draw your attention to a few of the building's key characteristics that were inaccurately assessed.

- I. **The report misidentifies 363 S. Main St. as "International Style" (p. 10) and assesses it based on a misinterpretation of that style.**
 - A. Though similar to the International Style, Southern California's Midcentury Modernism is a distinct entity with particular relevance to the climate,

culture, and city planning of our region. These factors were not assessed in determining its actual significance.

1. In comparing 363 S. Main to buildings by European Modernists Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Walter Gropius, the report overlooks more relevant comparisons to the work of American Modernists such as Minoru Yamasaki and Edward Durell Stone, both of whom used ornamental sunscreens related to the one at the 363 S. Main building.
- B. This flawed comparison to the International Style leads the report to mistakenly compare it unfavorably to buildings on S. Main St. south of LaVeta. Those buildings are 10-12 stories (not two) and appear to be built at least 10-20 years later. The report gives no dates for those buildings, nor any analysis to support the claim that they are “better” examples of the International Style.
 1. Instead of these irrelevant comparisons, 363 S. Main should have been assessed in comparison with numerous professional commercial office buildings of similar size and style. Examples of this building type can be found throughout the City of Orange and Orange County. The report did not undertake the necessary research that would be expected in an accurate and thorough assessment.

II. 363 S. Main St. is an excellent example of Southern California Midcentury Modern architecture. It retains its integrity.

- A. The important character defining features that make this building significant as a Midcentury Modern building are either misinterpreted or overlooked in the report.
 1. Where the report states that the “mosaic tiles, terrazzo floors, and perforated metal screen are decorative elements not typical of the style” (p. 23) it is entirely mistaken. These are each characteristic features of Midcentury Modern architecture evident throughout Southern California.
 - a) The report incorrectly identifies the metal sunscreen on the facade of the building as a “perforated” metal screen (ie, holes pierced in a solid sheet.) It appears, rather, to be a constructed 3-D metal honeycomb. An inaccurate description of a key element like this calls into question the thoroughness of the report.
 - b) The abstract ceramic tile artwork in the entry breezeway are incorrectly identified. Such ceramic tile artwork is a key and characteristic element of Midcentury Modern design; one widely-known example (ignored in the report) is the similarly tiled underground walkways by Charles Kratka at Los Angeles International Airport (1961.)
 2. An accurate description of 363 S. Main would note specific elements of its Midcentury Modern style: the fine detailing of the metal screening, the vertical I-beam columns framing the screening, the sophisticated proportioning of the facade elements and its recessed glass wall, the interior atrium and its floating stairs, the terrazzo flooring, and the well-handled asymmetry of the southern bay for car access, responding directly to Southern California’s car culture in this era. All of these are

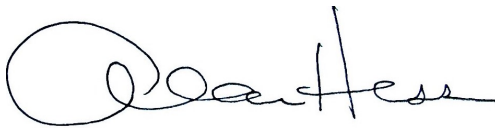
key defining characteristics of Midcentury Modern architecture that were overlooked in the report.

III. The historical urban context of this type and style of building was not sufficiently addressed.

1. The history of roads, highways, and commercial strips is now recognized to be as important as the history of center cities (such as Orange's Old Towne.) This relevant historical context is absent from the report, and therefore the contextual significance of this building is missing.
 - a) This was an era when the region built a wide range of creative and influential designs that served a growing population (especially in Orange County); Modern design as represented in this building reflected a widespread optimism about modern life in growing suburban areas like Orange. The broad appeal and spread of this phenomenon are demonstrated by Orange's Eichler residential tracts. This building is a comparable and well-designed example of a Modern commercial building.
 - (1) It should be noted that the Eichler tracts have been recognized only relatively recently as historic and valuable assets to the community. For years they were largely overlooked as insignificant. Commercial buildings of the same era such as 363 S. Main are now being recognized as equally significant and valuable to the community.
 - b) While the report has an extended discussion of the Orange Plaza's history (p. 6), it does not contain any mention of the commercial strip history of Main St. That would have been more relevant to assessing this building. The report should have surveyed and listed other comparable buildings so that an accurate assessment could be made. Without that evidence, the claim that the building is not a significant contributor to a potential district is unsupported.
 - c) In contrast to the report's claim (p. 22), this small commercial building definitely does convey the building boom of the 1960s which the report sets as its standard.

In conclusion, this report contains substantial inaccuracies, missing data, and misinterpretations which call its conclusions seriously into question. A thorough report would, in my opinion, confirm the significance of this building as an excellent and intact example of Southern California Midcentury Modern design.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alan Hess". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "A" and "H".

Alan Hess

RESUME OF ALAN HESS, ARCHITECT

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alanhes@gmail.com

- WORK** 1981- Alan Hess, Architect
1986-2012 Architecture critic, **San Jose Mercury-News**
- EDUCATION** 1975-78 M.Arch. I, School of Architecture and Urban Planning,
University of California, Los Angeles
1970-74 B.A., Principia College, Elsau, IL
- DESIGN** Jamm's Coffee Shop exhibit, Petersen Automotive Museum,
Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History; principal contributor to interpretive exhibits
Gordon Onslow-Ford guesthouse, Marin County, CA
- TEACHING** 1989-91 Instructor, University of California, Los Angeles
1986-90 Lecturer, Southern California Institute of Architecture
- PUBLIC SERVICE** Commissioner, California State Historical Resources Commission 2018-2022
Board of Directors, Palm Springs Modernism Week
Chairman, Board of Directors, Preserve Orange County
Board of Directors, DesignOnScreen Foundation
Juror, George Matsumoto Design Awards 2020
Juror, DocomomoUS Design Awards 2020
Juror, AIA Wester Regional Design Awards 2017
- PRESERVATION** Consultant, restoration of Stanley Burke's Restaurant (1958)
Consultant, Survey LA, Los Angeles Planning Department
Consultant, Architectural Survey, City of Palm Springs
Design Guidelines, Heatherstone Community, Mountain View, CA
Qualified for National Register of Historic Places/Historic Cultural Monument:
CBS Television City (Pereira & Luckman, 1952), Los Angeles, CA
Norm's Coffee Shop (Armet & Davis, 1957), Los Angeles, CA
Johnie's Coffee Shop (Armet & Davis, 1955), Los Angeles, CA

Stuart Pharmaceutical Factory (Edward Durell Stone 1958), Pasadena, CA
Bullock's Pasadena Department Store (Wurdeman & Becket 1947)
McDonald's Drive-In (Stanley C. Meston 1953), Downey, CA
Valley Ho Hotel (Edward Varney, 1957), Scottsdale, AZ
Expert testimony on behalf of landmark designations for Century Plaza Hotel, Los Angeles (Minoru Yamasaki, 1966); Bob's Big Boy, Burbank (Wayne McAllister, 1949); Wichstand, Los Angeles (Armet & Davis, 1957), Columbia Savings, Los Angeles (1964), Stanford Hospital (Edward Durell Stone, 1959), National Theater, Westwood (1969) and other mid-century modern structures

FELLOWSHIPS Fellow, National Arts Journalism Program, Columbia University School of Journalism, 1997-98

GRANTS Clarence Stein Foundation grant, research on Irvine, CA, 2018
Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, research on Brazilian landscape architect Roberto Burle Marx, 1990

AWARDS President's Award, Los Angeles Conservancy 2015
Docomomo/US Survey Award of Excellence: Curating the City: Modern Architecture in L.A. Website (with Los Angeles Conservancy) 2014
Honor Award, National Trust for Historic Preservation 1997
President's Award, California Preservation Foundation

LICENSE Licensed architect, California # C 15747

PUBLICATIONS

BOOKS:

Hollywood Modern: Houses of the Stars Rizzoli International, New York, 2018

Frank Lloyd Wright: Natural Design, Organic Architecture Rizzoli International, New York, 2012

Casa Modernista: A History of the Brazil Modern House Rizzoli International, New York 2010

Oscar Niemeyer Buildings Rizzoli International, New York 2009

Frank Lloyd Wright: The Buildings Rizzoli International, New York 2008

Julius Shulman: Palm Springs Rizzoli International, New York 2008
Forgotten Modern: California Houses 1940-1970 Gibbs Smith Publisher, Layton, UT 2007
Frank Lloyd Wright: Mid-Century Modern, Rizzoli International, New York 2007
Organic Architecture: The Other Modernism Gibbs Smith Publisher, Layton, UT 2007
Frank Lloyd Wright: Prairie Houses, Rizzoli International, New York 2006
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Frank Lloyd Wright: The Houses, Rizzoli International, New York 2005
The Ranch House, Harry Abrams, Inc., New York 2005
Googie Redux: Ultramodern Roadside Architecture, Chronicle Books, San Francisco 2004
Palm Springs Weekend: the Architecture and Design of a Midcentury Oasis, Chronicle Books, San Francisco 2000
Rancho Deluxe: Rustic Dreams and Real Western Living, Chronicle Books, San Francisco 2000
The Architecture of John Lautner, Rizzoli International, New York 1999
Hyperwest: American Residential Architecture on the Edge, Thames & Hudson, London 1996
Viva Las Vegas, Chronicle Books, San Francisco, CA 1993
Googie: Fifties Coffee Shop Architecture, Chronicle Books, San Francisco, CA 1986

INTRODUCTIONS/FOREWORDS/CHAPTERS OF BOOKS:

Motel Vegas by Fred Sigman. "Foreword: Sky Ranch." Las Vegas: Smallworks Press, 2019.
Power and Place: Culture and Conflict in the Built Environment, "A Martian's Guide to Los Angeles," Critical Conservation Colloquia, vol 3: Spring 2018. Harvard University Graduate School of Design
Hugh Kaptur by Steven Keylon, "Introduction," Palm Springs Preservation Foundation 2019
Herbert Burns by Steven Keylon, "Introduction," Palm Springs Preservation Foundation 2018
Frank Furness: Architecture in the Age of the Great Machines, by George E. Thomas, "Foreword," University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018
Michigan Modern: An Architectural Legacy by Conway and Haefner, "Essay," New York: Visual Profile Books 2018
A Birdhouse in Paradise: William Mellenthin and the San Fernando Valley Ranch Homes by Christian Lukather, "Introduction," Los Angeles: The Writing Disorder 2017
Lautner A-Z by Kikkert and Saariste, "Introduction," The Netherlands: ArtEZ Press, 2018
Aaron G. Green: Organic Architecture Beyond Frank Lloyd Wright by Randolph Henning, "Foreword," Oro Editions, 2017
Michigan Modernism: Design that Shaped America, "Introduction," "Victor Gruen," Layton UT: Gibbs Smith Publisher, 2016

The Desert Modernists: The Architects who Envisioned Midcentury Modern Palm Springs, "Paul R. Williams," Modernism Week and Desert Publications, 2015

Outside In: The Architecture of Smith and Williams, "Running Daily Errands: Commercial Architecture of Suburbia," Getty Publications 2014

Australian Modern Design: Mid 20th Century Architecture and Design, Chris Osborne, ed. "The Architectural Axis: California and Australia," Carina, Queensland: Chris Osborne, Publishing, 2013

Andrew Geller: Deconstructed, by Jake Gorst, "Foreword," New York: Glitterati Inc, 2015

William Krisel's Palm Springs: The Language of Modernism, "Modernism Is a Language" Layton UT: Gibbs Smith Publisher 2016

Mickey Muennig: Dreams and Realizations for a Living Architecture, "The Architecture of Mickey Muennig," Layton UT: Gibbs Smith Publisher 2014

Southern California Eats Vol II, by Adriene Biondo and John Eng, "Foreword," Schiffer Publishing, Ltd., 2010

Common Tread: Traversing the American Landscape, "The Road of a Thousand Wonders," Fullerton: California State University, 2012

Colors, Harvard Graduate School of Design, Gareth Doherty, ed.

The Car and the City, "Styling the Strip," Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991

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"Irvine, CA." **PlacesJournal**, Sept. 2014

"Erasing Pereira." **Orange Coast Magazine**, July 2014

"Big Man on Campus: Alan Hess on Modernist Maverick, a new exhibition at the Nevada Museum of Art exploring the architecture of William Pereira," **Architect's Newspaper**, Sept. 26, 2013

"Connecting the Dots: Alan Hess on Pacific Standard Time Presents: Modern Architecture in L.A.," **Architect's Newspaper**, Sept. 6, 2013

"Everyday Modernisms: Diversity, Creativity, and Ideas in L.A. Architecture, 1940-1990"

Los Angeles Conservancy, "Curating the City" website, June 2013

"The Beauty of Authenticity: Dana Point Harbor," **Orange Coast Magazine**, Aug., 2013

"Wide Angle Lens: Alan Hess on the Getty's new exhibition, Overdrive: LA Constructs the Future 1940-1990," **Architect's Newspaper**, June 21, 2013

"Schindler Goes Hollywood," **Los Angeles Review of Books**, May 26, 2012

"New Apple Campus," **San Jose Mercury News**, Sept. 2011

"John Lautner and Los Angeles," **Los Angeles Times**, July 23, 2011

"Coming to Terms with the Sixties," **National Trust Forum Journal**, Summer 2010, vol 24 no 4

"Colorful Landmarks: how color shaped public space in 1950s suburbia,"
New Geographies,

Harvard Graduate School of Design, Oct 2010

"The Suburbs and the Ranch House," **California College of the Arts
Architecture Studio Series,** 2005

"The Place of Histories," **Architecture California,** 04:1, 2003

"Eine kurze Geschichte von Las Vegas," **Stadt Bauwelt** 143, Sept. 1999

"Steven Ehrlich house, Pacific Palisades," **Metropolitan Home,** Dec. 2005

"Montalvo Artists' Village," **Architectural Digest,** June 2005

"Cliff May's Romantic Mandalay," **Architectural Digest,** May 2005

"Meeting the Horizon in California, Roscoe House by Helena Arahuete,"
Architectural Digest, Jan. 2005

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"The Place of Histories," **Architecture California,** 04:1, 2003

"San Jose: A Downtown in the Making," **Places,** vol. 15, no. 2

"High Art Parking Lot," **Rearview Mirror: Automobile Images and
American Identities,** University of California, Riverside 2000

"City Center to Regional Mall," **Journal of Preservation Technology,** vol
XXVII, no 4, 1997

"New York, New York," **Architectural Record,** March 1997

"John Lautner" **Progressive Architecture,** December 1994

"The Origins of McDonald's Golden Arches," **Journal of the
Society of Architectural Historians,** XLV: 60-67, March 1986

"Technology Exposed," **Landscape Architecture,** May 1992, pp 38-48

"Burle Marx: A Shaky Legacy," **Landscape Architecture,** April 1992 p 38

"Back to Brasilia," **Progressive Architecture,** October 1991 pp 96-97

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31

"Of Cities and Their Halls," **San Francisco Examiner,** Aug. 7, 1991

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1989

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"Monsanto House of the Future," **Fine Homebuilding,** August/September
1986, No. 34

"The Eichler Homes," **Arts + Architecture,** Vol. 3, No. 3, 1984

BROADCAST MEDIA AND FILM INTERVIEWS:

"**Albert Frey: The Architectural Interpreter**" DesignOnScreen 2020

"**Albert Frey: Architectural Envoy**" DesignOnScreen 2018

"**Claremont Modern: The Convergence of Art + Architecture at
Midcentury,**" Paul Bockhorst Productions 2016

"**Neon**" Lawrence Johnston 2015

"**Desert Maverick: The Singular Architecture of William F. Cody,**" Leo
Zahn director, 2016

"**The Nature of Modernism: E. Stewart Williams, Architect,**"
DesignOnScreen 2014

"**Quiet Elegance: The Architecture of Hugh M. Kaptur**" This 'n That
Films LLC 2014

"Modernist Maverick: The Architecture of William L. Pereira" KNPB,
 Reno 2013
"William Krisel, Architect," DesignOnScreen Foundation, 2010
"The Spirit in Architecture: John Lautner," Bette Jane Cohen director
 1991/2016
"Julius Shulman: Desert Modern," Michael Stern director 2008
"Modesto Modernism," Bob Barzan producer 2013
"The Neon Struggle," This'n That Films 2016
"A Kick in the Head—The Lure of Las Vegas," BBC-TV January 2010
"Journeyman Architect: The Architecture of Donald Wexler,"
 DesignOnScreen 2009
"Desert Utopia: Midcentury Architecture in Palm Springs"
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Which Way LA, KCRW-FM, July 7, 2008
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The Late Show, BBC-TV January 16, 1995
CBS Sunday Morning News with Charles Kuralt, January 23, 1994
Good Morning America, August 3, 1993
CBS Morning News, Jan. 17, 1990
Videolog, KCET, Los Angeles, June 1985
Patrick Monroe Show, CBC Radio, February 1987
Morning Edition, NPR, May 2, 1986
Smithsonian World, "Speaking Without Words," PBS, March 1984
"Glowing in the Dark: Vancouver Neon"

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Thomas Hines, **Architecture of the Sun**, 2010
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 "Would Las Vegas Landmark Be an Oxymoron?" **New York Times**, Oct. 7,
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 December 1987
 "Googie -- History Closing the Menu on a 1950s style," **Los Angeles
 Times**, June 9, 1986
 "Now let's hear it for Googie style," **Vancouver Sun**, February 5, 1987
 "Architecture and Design reviews," **Philadelphia Inquirer**, November 30,
 1986
 "Architecture To Go," David Dillon, **Dallas News**, June 22, 1986

"Google: Fifties Coffee Shop Architecture," **Art and Design**, London, June 1986

SELECTED TALKS

LECTURES:

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Harvard Graduate School of Design; Amsterdam Academy of Architecture; Getty Research Institute; Commonwealth Club of San Francisco; Columbia University School of Architecture; Walker Art Museum; Chicago Humanities Festival; Cooper-Hewitt Museum of Design; Yale University School of Architecture; Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts; Greenwich (England) National Maritime Museum; Vancouver (B.C.) Alcan Lecture Series; Monterey Design Conference; University of British Columbia; Hammer Museum; San Francisco AIA; California Preservation Foundation; Schusev State Museum of Architecture, Moscow.

6/6/20