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Submitted electronically

Richard Waldow, Chair
Cultural Heritage Commission
City of Beverly Hills
Attention: William Crouch, Urban Designer
455 N. Rexford Drive
Beverly Hills, CA 90210
Email: wcrouch@beverlyhills.org

October 8, 2013

RE: W. N. Caldwell Residence, 805 N. Linden Drive, Beverly Hills

Dear Commissioner Waldow and members of the Cultural Heritage Commission:

I am writing on behalf of the Los Angeles Conservancy regarding the W. N. Caldwell Residence, an important and early commission by master architect Wallace Neff. Our understanding is this property is currently proposed for demolition. In order to pursue preservation alternatives, we support and urge the Commission to initiate an historic resource assessment for this property. The Conservancy believes the building is significant and a historic property that warrants further analysis.

I. Significance of W. N. Caldwell Residence and Wallace Neff

The W. N. Caldwell Residence was designed by noted local architect Wallace Neff and completed in 1926. The two-story, Spanish Colonial Revival house is an early example of Neff's work, designed only four years after he received his license to practice architecture. His career spanned more than five decades, from 1921 to 1975, and his work ranged from elegant residential designs for the famous and wealthy, institutional and religious structures, and pioneering forms of affordable housing. Neff's career and designs have been profiled in several publications and were the subject of a 1989 exhibit "Wallace Neff 1895-1982: The Romance of Regional Architecture" presented by the Virginia Steele Scott Gallery at The Huntington Library.

During the early part of his career, Neff was associated with the California School of architects, including Myron Hunt, Reginald Johnson, and George Washington Smith, whose Spanish Colonial Revival and Mediterranean designs advanced a regional style of architecture for California. Neff established his own manner of design, distinguished from that of other local practitioners of these styles, and worked to capture the uniqueness of California as a place by using traditional influences in innovative ways. His creative approach included an eclectic use of detailing, design elements borrowed from other styles, and embellished traditional forms to add a romanticized quality.



The W. N. Caldwell Residence features design elements associated with Neff's residential work from the 1920s and 30s, including the horizontal emphasis of the house's design, the overly low pitch of the roof, and the corbeled balcony running partway across the façade. Other notable features of the home's accomplished design include the deeply set arched entrance, the second floor loggia, and the picturesque massing of the façade through a sequence of volumes. Significant interior features include tiled flooring and California decorative art tile accents, prominent fireplaces surrounds, and a beam and truss ceiling. The W. N. Caldwell Residence remains a highly intact and representative example from Neff's early career.

Thank you and please let me know if the Conservancy can be of any assistance to the Commission in this effort.

Sincerely,

Adrian Scott Fine

Adrian Scott Fine
Director of Advocacy

