



June 28, 2013

Submitted by email

Ms. Luciralia Ibarra
Project Coordinator, Environmental Analysis Section
Department of City Planning
200 N. Spring Street, Room 750
Los Angeles, CA 90012
Email: luciralia.ibarra@lacity.org

**RE: Academy Museum of Motion Pictures Project Notice of Preparation,
(ENV-2013-1531-EIR)**

Dear Ms. Ibarra:

On behalf of the Los Angeles Conservancy, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an environmental impact report for the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures Project.

We applaud the decision to adaptively reuse the iconic May Company building as the home of the new Academy Museum. We submit the following comments to ensure that the proposed partial demolition of the May Company building will not adversely impact its listing in the California Register, and that new construction will meet Secretary of the Interior's Standards and be compatible with the landmark structure. If significant impacts are anticipated, preservation alternatives must be evaluated and adequate mitigation measures proposed as part of the ongoing environmental review process.

Completed in 1939 and subsequently expanded in 1946, the May Company building at 6067 Wilshire Boulevard remains one of Los Angeles's most iconic structures. Designed by noted architects Albert C. Martin and Samuel Marx as the May Company's new Miracle Mile location, the building is significant for its Streamline Moderne architecture and its design that responded to the growing influence of the automobile on the retailing business. The building's corner detailing, with its gold-tiled cylinder, firmly established the May Company's presence at Wilshire and Fairfax to traveling motorists, while large showcase windows along Wilshire and Fairfax and a rear entrance adjacent to parking further catered to patrons arriving by automobile.

The building's exterior retains a high degree of integrity. The ground floor and corner detailing are clad in polished black granite, while the upper floors of the Wilshire and Fairfax facades are clad in panels of Texas shell limestone and contain ribbons of steel-frame windows. The showcase windows and streamlined canopy wrapping around the main facades are fashioned from copper. Historic fabric on the interior includes the fifth floor tea room, with its coved ceiling, mantle and sculptural wall details, elevator banks on various floors, and a clock.

The May Company Wilshire building received a Determination of Eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places in 1983 and is listed in the California Register of Historical Resources. In 1991, the original 1939 portion of the building was designated a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM #566).

As currently proposed, the project would demolish the 1946 addition at the rear of the May Company building, which contains the main entrance oriented to shoppers arriving by automobile. The Draft EIR should evaluate the architectural and historical significance of the entire structure, including the addition, and assess whether partial demolition might impact its continued eligibility for listing as an HCM and in the California and National Register.

The Draft EIR should also evaluate the aesthetic impact of the proposed new construction (consisting of the “Sphere” and “Circulation Spine” components) on the May Company building. Any additions should be designed in a manner that is both compatible and appropriate in scale and massing to protect the integrity of the May Company building in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

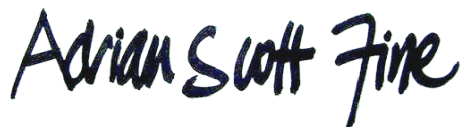
If the proposed project is found to adversely impact the May Company building and its character-defining features, the EIR must consider preservation alternatives and appropriate mitigation measures to substantially lessen or avoid such impacts.

About the Los Angeles Conservancy:

The Los Angeles Conservancy is the largest local historic preservation organization in the United States, with nearly 6,500 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 feel free to contact me at (213) 430-4203 or afine@laconservancy.org should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Adrian Scott Fine". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Adrian Scott Fine
Director of Advocacy

cc: Office of Historic Resources, City of Los Angeles
Council District 4