



June 13, 2005

Mr. Howard Drake  
Casa de Cadillac  
14401 Ventura Boulevard  
Sherman Oaks, CA 91423

Dear Mr. Drake:

I am writing to express the concern of the Los Angeles Conservancy regarding possible alterations to the Casa de Cadillac showroom and offices in Sherman Oaks. I have reviewed your letter of April 22 to Councilman Jack Weiss' office. In it, you suggest that if your dealership accepts General Motors' incentives to remodel your showroom, you might be "walking into a firestorm." While we generally avoid precipitating any kind of storm, the Conservancy joins the many area residents and local preservationists who believe Casa de Cadillac is one of the most unique and irreplaceable architectural treasures in the San Fernando Valley. We hope that you will work to preserve, rather than destroy, the historic character and "brand identity" that Los Angeles residents have valued since the day your showroom opened for business in 1949.

The Conservancy is the largest non-profit local preservation group in the nation, with almost 9,000 members supporting our mission of advocacy and education on behalf of preserving Los Angeles County's rich architectural and cultural heritage. Our Modern Committee, which focuses on historic resources built after World War II, has brought a tremendous amount of attention to Casa de Cadillac over the years. This was especially evident during our ground-breaking "How Modern Was My Valley" tour in 2004, when the dealership was prominently featured in the *Los Angeles Times* and other print and television media outlets. Almost 1000 people passed through your building during this event.

Casa de Cadillac is not just a major architectural icon. For generations, it has had a place deep within the community, establishing a "sense of place" at its intersection that cannot be found along other stretches of an increasingly homogenized Ventura Boulevard. Its crisp lines and sense of openness have aged remarkably well, still capturing the elegance and classicism that are integral to the Cadillac brand. The key features that establish its commanding presence and architectural grace include:

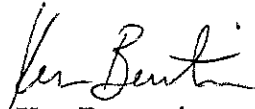
- Historic signage
- Exterior walls and windows
- Showroom interior, including the terrazzo floor
- "Lanai" area

Each of these features is intact and in good condition, indicating the commendable level of care and respect they have been treated with over the years.

It is ironic that GM is offering dealers such strong incentives to replace historic showrooms with cookie-cutter spaces when the company has made a multi-million dollar commitment to restoring its own remarkable post-war architectural achievement, the Technical Center in Warren, Michigan. If major work is required at Casa, I would be happy to discuss with you how the Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit, which GM is using in Warren, might apply to a historically sensitive project at your dealership.

Whether or not they are architecture buffs, patrons at Casa de Cadillac enjoy a unique car-buying experience that will be lost if you choose to accept GM's remodeling incentives. The broader community will lose a landmark in the truest sense – your building is not just a place of business, but also a geographical indicator, a repository of memory, and an architectural masterpiece. The Conservancy will fight to preserve Casa de Cadillac if we must, but would rather put our energy into working with you to ensure that any necessary interior renovations are performed in a historically-sensitive manner that will serve all our collective needs. Do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions about our position or if there is any way the Conservancy can be of assistance.

Sincerely,



Ken Bernstein

Director of Preservation Issues