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February 19, 2015

Terri Hintz
Planning Department Administrative Coordinator
City of Palm Springs
3200 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way
Palm Springs, CA 92263

Re: Tahquitz Plaza by architect Hugh Kaptur, Tahquitz Canyon and Calle El Segundo

To the Planning Commission:

I am writing as an architect, historian, and author of nineteen books on Modern architecture to express my support for the preservation of the Tahquitz Plaza office complex because of its historical significance to Palm Springs and California architecture. Please share this letter with the Planning Commissioners prior to their February 25, 2015 meeting.

I have written two books on Palm Springs architecture (*Julius Shulman: Palm Springs*, Rizzoli International, 2008, and *Palm Springs Weekend*, Chronicle Books, 2001) and can say that these buildings, and the work of architect Hugh Kaptur, play an important role in what is now identified as Palm Springs Modernism.

I am also a consultant on architectural history for the current City of Palm Springs architectural survey. I have already unequivocally recommended Tahquitz Plaza as a significant building in that survey.

My resume is attached. I have written on architecture for the *Los Angeles Review of Books*, *The Architect's Newspaper*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Architectural Digest*, *the Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, and other journals. I have been the architecture critic of the *San Jose Mercury News* since 1986, received a grant from the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, and was a National Arts Journalism Fellow at Columbia University.

The research of the importance of Palm Springs Modern architecture in general is very recent. Only a decade ago, the work of now-recognized architects such as William Cody, Donald Wexler, Palmer & Krisel, and E. Stewart Williams was not well known

generally; few Modern buildings now considered iconic were identified as historic then. Since then, our understanding of these and other architects has made us aware of the full dimension of Palm Springs architectural history.

As we continue researching this history, it is clear that the work of Hugh Kaptur makes a significant contribution to the unique character of Palm Springs architecture. This opinion is not mine alone; the newly published book *The Desert Modernists: The Architects Who Envisioned Midcentury Modern Palm Springs* (Desert Publications, 2015) and the documentary film *Quiet Elegance: The Architecture of Hugh M. Kaptur* (Bert Simonis, director, 2014) indicate the clear direction of scholarly opinion on Kaptur's importance.

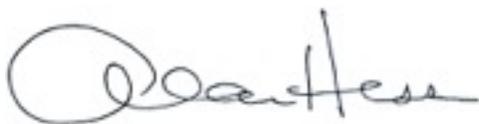
Briefly stated, Kaptur's significance is this: 1) Palm Springs midcentury Modern architecture is known for its use of Modern concepts to solve the challenges of climate, function, and new materials; 2) an extraordinary group of talented architects lived or worked in Palm Springs, and while they addressed the same problems they expressed a wide range of aesthetic solutions; 3) Hugh Kaptur's aesthetic is unique in Palm Springs, demonstrating the wide range of fertile innovation in the city.

Tahquitz Plaza is an important and well preserved example of Kaptur's unique approach. Rather than drawing on the rectilinear steel and glass geometries of, for example, Richard Neutra, he draws on organic forms and ideas from the American Southwest, and Frank Lloyd Wright. This is seen in Tahquitz Plaza's irregular roofline, the deep, sculpted, curving frames around windows, the eaves and sun shading features, and the integration of outdoor areas interspersed among the offices. This is a strong piece of design that deserves to remain in place.

In addition, its site on Tahquitz Canyon places it in the context of the city civic center, an extraordinary collection of Modern buildings serving civic purposes, and rare in the state.

I am writing this letter *pro bono* because historic architecture of this quality adds to the civic character and quality of city life. In the years before Palm Springs' heritage was fully understood, the city lost many significant structures. Unfortunately, this degradation has continued; the demolition of a major Kaptur design would be a loss to history and the city's urban quality.

Sincerely,

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

Alan Hess

RESUME OF ALAN HESS, ARCHITECT

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- WORK** 1981- Alan Hess, Architect
1986- 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, 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
- PRESERVATION** Design Guidelines, Heatherstone Community, Mountain View, CA
Honor Award 1997, National Trust for Historic Preservation
President's Award, California Preservation Foundation
Qualified for National Register of Historic Places:
Bullock's Pasadena (Wurdeman and Becket 1947), Pasadena
CA
McDonald's Drive-In (Stanley C. Meston 1953), Downey, CA
Valley Ho Hotel (Edward Varney, 1957), Scottsdale, AZ
Stuart Pharmaceutical Factory (Edward Durell Stone 1958),
Pasadena, CA
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 and 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, School of Journalism,
Columbia University, 1997-98
- GRANTS** Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts,
research on Brazilian landscape architect Roberto Burle
Marx, 1990
- LICENSE** Licensed architect, California # C 15747

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

BOOKS:

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

Oscar Niemeyer Houses, Rizzoli International, New York 2006

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

MAGAZINES, JOURNALS, NEWSPAPERS AND WEBSITES:

"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

"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

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

Los Angeles Conservancy, "Curating the City" website, June 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
- "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
- "Historic Architecture: Oscar Niemeyer," **Architectural Digest**, May 2003
- "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
- "Eine kurze Geschichte von Las Vegas," **Stadt Bauwelt** 143, Sept. 1999
- "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
- "Greenwald house," **Los Angeles Times Magazine**, October 27, 1991, p 31
- "Of Cities and Their Halls," **San Francisco Examiner**, Aug. 7, 1991
- "*American Style* and *Fifties Style*: reviews," **Design Book Review**, Winter 1989
- "Schindler and Goff: Architectures," **L.A. Style**, March 1989
- "Monsanto House of the Future," **Fine Homebuilding**, August/September 1986, No. 34
- "The Eichler Homes," **Arts + Architecture**, Vol. 3, No. 3, 1984

SELECTED TALKS

LECTURES:

Getty Research Institute; Kansas City Modern; Dallas Modern; Arizona Preservation Conference Keynote; Nevada Museum of Art Symposium; Society of Architectural Historians Tour; Commonwealth Club of San Francisco; Society for Commercial Archeology Conference Keynote; Los Angeles Conservancy Welton Becket Centennial Keynote; Columbia University School of Architecture; Houston Modern; Phoenix Modern; 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; Cliff May Lecture, Los Angeles Conservancy; Vancouver (B.C.) Alcan Lecture Series; Architecture League; International Association of Shopping Center Owners; National Real Estate Editors Association; Colby College Southworth Lecture; Monterey Design Conference; University of British Columbia; National Trust for Historic Preservation Conference; AIA 2005 National Convention, Las Vegas; Hammer Museum Symposium; San Francisco AIA; California Preservation Foundation; Schusev State Museum of Architecture, Moscow.

BROADCAST MEDIA AND FILMS:

"William Krisel, Architect," DesignOnScreen Foundation, 2010
"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," DesignOnScreen, 2008
Which Way LA, KCRW-FM, July 7, 2008
Which Way LA, KCRW-FM July 27, 2007
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

SELECTED REFERENCES TO WORK

Thomas Hines, **Architecture of the Sun,** 2010
"Las Vegas meets la-la land," **Smithsonian,** October 1995
"In Los Angeles, a '50s Flameout," **New York Times,** September 7, 1995
"Oldest McDonald's Closes," **New York Times,** March 6, 1994
"Would Las Vegas Landmark Be an Oxymoron?" **New York Times,** Oct. 7, 1993
"Restaurant Architecture," **Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians,**
XLVIII:2, June 1989
"Legacy of the Golden Arches," **TIME,** June 2, 1986
"Books: Pop Style to Free Style," **Progressive Architecture,** December 1986
"Googie: *Fifties Coffee Shop Architecture,* a review," **Architectural Record,** May
1986
"Who Says It's Not a Landmark?" **Historic Preservation,** November/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

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