



February 19, 2019

Submitted by e-mail

Assembly Member Ken Cooley, Chairman, Joint Committee on Rules
Members of the Historic State Capitol Commission
c/o Koren R. Benoit, Executive Director of the Historic State Capitol Commission
1020 N Street, Room 255
Sacramento, CA 95814
E-mail: Koren.Benoit@sen.ca.gov

Re: California State Capitol Proposed East Annex Project Considerations

Dear Chairman Cooley and Members of the Historic State Capitol Commission,

I send this letter noting important information and sharing concerns about the proposed East Annex project and regarding the East Annex itself. Due to the scheduling of the special February 20, 2019 meeting of the Historic State Capitol Commission, neither I nor other members of the Board of Directors of Sacramento Modern (SacMod), are able to attend; hence, this letter.

Sacramento Modern (SacMod) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization founded in 2010; we are dedicated to preserving modern art, architecture, and design in the Sacramento region. We do this by conducting historical and architectural research and evaluation, home tours, bike tours, walking tours, film screenings, preservation campaigns, publications, and educating the public about modernism.

East Annex Architectural Significance:

The existing East Annex is architecturally significant, both as an example of mid-20th century modern (MCM) architectural design, and for its design as an addition to the State Capitol's West Wing. It is also significant as the work of a Master: State Architect Alfred Eichler, who is known for designing the Tower Bridge in Sacramento and numerous public buildings throughout California, and whose work has recently been

A 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to promoting, preserving and protecting modern art, architecture and design in the Sacramento region.

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highlighted by the California State Archives in an online exhibit: "The Alfred Eichler Collection," <https://www.sos.ca.gov/archives/alfred-eichler-collection/>

The East Annex exhibits significant features and characteristics representative of the MCM style, including its exterior and many elements found in its public hallways and spaces. A wonderful account extolling and documenting these features, including current-day and historic images, can be found in a commemorative brochure from October 2015 — "Public Art Tribute: California State Capitol Annex, A self-guided tour," which was compiled by the Office of the Assembly Chief Clerk in Consultation with Assembly and Senate Committees on Rules, and published by the Joint Committee on Rules, California State Legislature (see attachment to this letter).

State Architect Alfred Eichler designed the East Annex addition to the State Capitol in an appropriate, respectful, and understated manner. Work began on the East Annex in 1949 and was completed in 1952. While Eichler's design aesthetic was clearly of its era, he understood the need to let the State Capitol's West Wing's design dominate, in terms of massing, setting, and exterior detail.

Proposed East Annex Project:

While SacMod's understanding of the Legislature's and Executive's desire and need to modernize, upgrade, and provide a better functioning East Annex, we stress the need to ensure that all of the options included in the legislation for the project are thoroughly and appropriately evaluated.

Please provide assurances that:

1. The evaluation of *all* the options will utilize the California Historical Building Code (CHBC). The Committee Joint Rules' consultant apparently did not consider this in its recent report. The CHBC provides for structural, accessibility, egress and other code compliance approaches related to historic buildings such as the East Annex; and,
2. the rehabilitation option will utilize the Secretary of the Interior's Standards — the Rehabilitation Standards for Historic Buildings, which provide consideration for significant features and characteristics, while allowing for the elimination or alternation of non-significant features, and which also provide standards for the design of additions to historical buildings; and,
3. in addition to the consideration of the East Annex building itself *and* its historical setting — both of which retain a high degree of integrity, including the significant cultural landscape and potentially significant archaeological sites of Capitol Park — are respected. This includes the historic plantings and design of the park, and its historic and pre-historic features.

Before the Historic State Capitol Commission provides its recommendations to the Joint Committee on Rules for the project, all parties should be assured that all the options for the East Annex Project are appropriately evaluated, and that the Joint Committee on Rules has the full and comprehensive evaluations before it, in advance of its decision on the project.

Thank you for your consideration of these concerns,



Gretchen Steinberg, President, SacMod

Attachment:

Public Art Tribute: California State Capitol Annex, A self-guided tour

cc:

National Trust for Historic Preservation
The Cultural Landscape Foundation
California Preservation Foundation
Docomomo Northern California Chapter
Preservation Sacramento
Trees for Sacramento