



November 10, 2020

City of Pasadena Design Commission  
Attn: Michi Takeda  
Hale Building  
175 N. Garfield Ave., 2nd Floor  
Pasadena, CA 91101

**Re: 101 S Marengo Ave.**

Dear Members of the Design Commission:

Pasadena Heritage repeatedly raised objections to the removal of travertine from the historic Bank Americard building at 101 S Marengo Avenue and we urge you to support a condition that would retain and restore the travertine cladding. Travertine is a high quality material, used since Roman times, and fares well in Pasadena's Mediterranean climate. While the applicants have said the façade panels are too thin to be salvaged, the previous owners made it quite clear that the panels could be removed and reapplied successfully. There may be some breakage or some panels that are already damaged, but with much more glazing introduced, there should still be enough travertine to cover the façade.

In addition, we object to the use of GFRC used to match travertine. Using a material in this manner creates a false sense of history, and downgrades a high-design building to a value-engineered one. The renderings for this project are quite good, and the developer seems committed to creating a quality office and plaza. The Modern Movement is partly defined by its knowledge and use of materials. When simple forms were used, materials created richness. Imagine if Mies' Barcelona Pavilion were built not in marble, onyx and travertine? It would not convey the same significance. For these reasons we request that the travertine be retained. If truly impossible to reuse it, it could be replaced with new travertine if absolutely necessary.

Although the materiality of the building is our focus at this point, we are still unconvinced that the fenestration pattern is the most suitable one for this rehabilitation. There were several options in earlier studies we preferred. It is also unclear how this scheme works in terms of solar orientation. Why is there more glazing on the south façade than the north? We hope the Commissioners can comment on this or ask questions of the applicants.

We thank you for considering our comments, and we hope this modern resource can be respectfully rehabilitated.

Sincerely,

Susan N. Mossman  
Executive Director

Andrew Salimian  
Preservation Director