



P.O. Box 3336, Vancouver, BC, V6B 3Y3 | (604) 254-9411 www.heritagevancouver.org

May 23, 2012

Mayor Gregor Robertson and Vancouver City Council
Vancouver City Hall
453 W. 12th Ave.
Vancouver, BC, V5Y 1V4

Proposed Rezoning: Casa Mia, 1920 South West Marine Drive

On behalf of Heritage Vancouver I am writing in support of the proposed rezoning of *Casa Mia*, an "A" listed heritage mansion on the City of Vancouver's Heritage Register. We believe that the proposal for the site conserves the heritage building without overpowering it. We are aware that the existing square footage is approximately half what could be built on the site should *Casa Mia* be demolished. In our opinion it is a good example of the adaptive reuse of a heritage building, with additions that extend its functional use.

Casa Mia was built in 1932 for George C. Reifel, a member of a famous Vancouver family, to designs prepared by Ross Lort, a noted Vancouver architect trained by Samuel Maclure and successor to the latter's architectural practice. The exterior is in the Spanish Colonial Revival style, unusual in Vancouver, and contains spectacular Period Revival and Art Deco interiors within its 22,000 square feet floor plan. These include a nursery decorated in 1938 by artists from Walt Disney Studios, with a Snow White motif. As part of the impressive site design, the front of the impressive mansion is visible from the street across a forecourt and circular driveway.

Casa Mia is a recognized Heritage resource of great significance and we strongly urge measures that will ensure its legal protection. While the front of the mansion would remain as it is and continue to be highly visible, the spectacular interiors could be enjoyed by a broader public. By insinuating a complex care block into the northeast corner of the site and placing much of its bulk in a natural depression, the proposal visually separates it from the mansion, respecting it, and avoiding any overpowering effect. Designation and a Heritage Revitalization Agreement with the City would be expected, firmly protecting the exterior of the building and its approach, together with selected interior features, including at least the entry hall and staircase, the living room, the dining room, the study, the ballroom, the billiard room and the nursery.

For these reasons Heritage Vancouver supports the design approach presented in this proposal. We support this rezoning, and urge consideration be given to the above-listed interior features. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Janet Leduc", written in a cursive style.

Janet Leduc
Executive Director, Heritage Vancouver Society

cc. Penny Ballem, City Manager
Marco D'Agostini, Senior Planner, Heritage Group
Vancouver Heritage Commissioners of the Heritage Commission