

September 29, 2014

Members of the Board of Directors
Emma S. Barrientos - Mexican American Cultural Center
601 River Street
Austin, Texas 78701

Reference: 64 Rainey Street Property

Dear Members of the Board,

The purpose of this letter is to express my recommendation for the future use of the property designated as 64 Rainey.

As the architect-of-record for the master planning and design of the first phase of the Mexican American Cultural Center (MACC) I worked closely with its designer, the renowned Teodoro Gonzalez de Leon.

The original master plan contemplated a grand entry into the site. In fact during the design of the 1st phase, our firm had to work out several agreements with the City of Austin for the planting and maintenance of trees along the Right-of-Way into the site, to enhance the connection of the MACC facility with the surrounding neighborhood.

64 Rainey was not part of the original master plan, but because it was a single parcel of land, and owned by the City of Austin (more specifically the Public Works Department), it was always hoped, or even assumed, that it would one day become part of the MACC complex.

In 2009, CasaBella Architects was hired by the City to study parking in the Rainey Street District and the MACC site. The findings showed that any future expansion of the MACC would require a parking structure. The report also recommended that the entry into the MACC be enlarged during subsequent expansions, to ease the flow of traffic exiting the site. Failure to do this would create a bottleneck effect, similar to those experienced after a UT football game when exiting a State parking garage.

There are now discussions about the potential sale of the site to the private sector for the possible construction of a high rise structure on this and adjoining properties. Were the City to do this, two major problems would follow: the potential to expand the entry into the MACC would be lost forever, and the extraordinary view of this important community landmark, as one enters the MACC off of River Street, would be severely compromised.



The master plan for the MACC was completed in the year 2000. I believe it is time that the master plan be revisited and updated. As part of this process I believe that 64 Rainey St. should be reserved as part of the MACC site, to be used in part as the expanded entry into the site, and the balance as a "sculpture garden", which would contribute to the City's goal of making art an important component of our urban fabric, creating a stronger link between the community at large and the MACC.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jaime Beaman". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping loop on the left side.

Jaime Beaman, AIA
Architect-of-Record for the MACC