

From: Bob Liljestrand [mailto:bobldesign@hawaii.rr.com]

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Subject: City Council Public Hearing Testimony

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Dear Council Members:

I am writing in support of CB3. As one who is struggling to preserve one of Hawaii's important architectural works - Vladimir Ossipoff's Liljestrand House - I am very aware of the numerous challenges to preservation. For us - and for others - the greatest of those challenges is financial need. Therefore, the tax exemption is crucial.

To illustrate the significance of our struggle, let me say a little about Ossipoff's Liljestrand House... Dean Sakamoto - architect, author, and Yale University professor - has called Ossipoff the "most influential architect in Hawaii in the 20th century" and has called his Liljestrand House "his most complex work." Kenneth Frampton - author and Columbia University professor - has said to understand Ossipoff one must study his early work "culminating in the Liljestrand House." In a letter to the Liljestrand Family advising them of a preservation award the Historic Hawaii Foundation said of the Liljestrand House, "This is one of the most, if not the most, intact historic structures in the State." The house has been published in numerous books and magazines, has been included in museum shows, is illustrated in a film, and is on the Hawaii State and the United States National Registers of Historic Places. In spite of all these accolades, the preservation of the house is threatened and the property tax exemption that we receive is crucial. That exemption is important to the owners of other historic structures as well...

The historic structures of Hawaii are the individual pieces that make up the mosaic that is our architectural history and the tax exemption is crucial in preserving those structures. The problem that has led to this debate is not the exemption; the problem is that requirements for the exemption are not always followed or enforced. The challenge to the council is to weed out those who are simply benefiting financial, but are not serious about preservation, while preserving the help to those who are serious about preservation. To eliminate the exemption for all, because some are cheating, would be a disservice to the architectural history of Hawaii.

Thank you very much for considering my written testimony. I realize this testimony would be stronger were I present at the hearing, but I will be doing two tours of the Liljestrand House tomorrow, the 20th, and, therefore, I am not able to attend. I ask that the council preserve the exemption, but enforce the requirements for that exemption. To do so will help preserve important architectural structures in Hawaii and will make that preservation beneficial by opening those structures to the people of Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Bob Liljestrand, AIA Associate.

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