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Santa Monica City Council

1685 Main Street, Room 209

Santa Monica, CA 90401

Re: February 27,2024

Compass Rose - Support to Uphold the Landmark Commissions Decision

Dear Councilmembers:

I am writing to support the Landmark Commission’s Designation of the Compass Rose as a Santa Monica Landmark.

In the early 20th century, the aviation industry played a significant role in the growth and development of Santa Monica.  Early aviators were drawn to the Santa Monica Airport after the Douglas Aircraft Company moved to the Santa Monica Airport in 1929.  Among those legendary aviators were women flyers including Amelia Earhart, Pancho Barnes, Bobbi Trout, Blanche Noyes and Phoebe Omlie.  These brave women are some of the most underrecognized aviators in history. The Santa Monica Airport is where the first Women’s Air Derby started in 1929, an event which had an indisputable impact on the future of women in aviation.

The Compass Rose is emblematic of over 90 years of the history of women in aviation, with roots grounded in Santa Monica.  The Landmark Commission’s role is to protect our cultural, social and political history and promote the use of landmarks and structures for the education and pleasure of the residents, workers and visitors of Santa Monica, in such a way as to show the full range of its heritage.

It does not get more historic or historically important than preserving where Amelia Earhart’s greatest contribution to aviation was born – the formation of the Ninety Nines International Association of Women Pilots - an organization that continues to support and encourage women pilots throughout the world 90 years following the Air Derby. The Compass Rose, the trademark logo of the Ninety-Nines, was designed by Los Angeles Chapter member Wilma Fritschey in 1939 and continues to symbolize the history and traditions of the organization today.

[*add your own personal sentiment – if you are a pilot, comment on the reassurance you feel when you spot a compass rose on the field or of how it reminds you of our traditions and sense of community. If you are an aviation enthusiast, a history buff, a visitor or potential visitor of Santa Monica, discuss how having the Compass Rose at the airfield makes you feel, affects you or memories it reminds you of or those you look forward to forming*]

Since there is no other site of its kind in Santa Monica, we have a once in a lifetime opportunity to save a cultural and historic Landmark identified with historic personages and embodies the use of a unique design in a unique location.

I am therefore honored to join the LA99s and groups and individuals who support the designation of the Compass Rose as a Santa Monica Landmark.

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Name