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March 2, 2012

County Board of Supervisors  
105 East Anapamu Street  
Santa Barbara, CA 983101

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COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA  
CLERK OF THE  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Dear County Supervisors,

This is written in support of Julia and Lee Carr's efforts to have their beach cabana at 4353 Marina Drive declared a County Historic Landmark. My opinions in this matter are informed by many years of involvement in historic preservation and by first-hand knowledge of this particular building.

First, I have been an architect in Santa Barbara for a very long time, specializing in the preservation of historic houses, mostly from the 1920's, by such luminary architects as George Washington Smith, Bertram Goodhue, Carleton Winslow, Joseph Plunkett and Mary Craig. And I have come to respect, as well, the work of lesser-known designers from more recent decades. I have concluded, along with the City and the County of Santa Barbara and the United States Secretary of Interior, that almost any building that was constructed over 25 years ago should be looked at very closely to determine its historic merit. When you apply their guidelines to this lovely little cabana in Hope Ranch, there is no doubt in my mind whatsoever that every criteria for historic designation is met, number one, of course, being its association with a great many important people and events. But beyond all that, it is beautifully designed and deserves to be left as it is.

Second, I am also the owner of a Santa Barbara Historic Landmark, the last complete remaining piece of the Flying A Studio, at the corner of Mission and Chapala. Since 1998, this important part of Santa Barbara's history has been both my home and my architectural office. I am very familiar with the heavy responsibility and costs that come with owning and trying to properly maintain such a distinguished yet fragile building and can do nothing but applaud anyone who volunteers to do the same. I have discovered that the severe restrictions on developing such a property are not too hard to live with, for it takes all my money just to keep it up. And I love the fact the Irene Rich, who was such a big star at the Flying A and had the leading role in the last film made here, was so intimately involved in the Carr's property. She is a major part of my building's landmark status and should be at least as much for the Carr's cabana.

And third, I have lived in Santa Barbara since 1964 because, as everybody knows, it is one of the most beautiful places in the world. The reason for this, beyond its natural amenities, is that our little piece of paradise has been very carefully protected and nurtured by its citizens for as long as anyone can remember. From Pearl Chase to David Gebhard to the famously difficult design review boards of today, Santa Barbara has demonstrated an iron will to preserve what it has. The unanimous vote by the Historic Landmarks Advisory Commission to landmark this cabana speaks volumes about how our unique community values its heritage and its beauty. Like most people here, I like to get out as much as possible to enjoy the beautiful buildings and landscapes that have come

down to us from earlier generations. My favorite walks are along the beach and the best one is from Hendry's Beach toward the setting sun. I look forward to reaching the Carr's cabana because it is, for me, already a landmark: it is the halfway point on my four-mile hike and the spot where that big western vista finally opens up. And it is a lovely thing to look at, nestled among the trees on its perch halfway down the slope.

There are only a handful of these little cliff-side cabanas along this stretch of beach, and I love every one of them. They are all very small and human-scaled and full of the charm of an era long past with their simple vernacular forms, their unpretentious materials and their wonderfully winding little stairs, all in stark contrast to the usually ponderous mansions lined up along the top. And the Carr cabana has always been the best of them all, long before anyone knew anything about its hugely important past.

I urge you to allow future generations, as well as us, to enjoy this extremely special place.

Sincerely,

Peter Becker