

January 24, 2021

Erin Doherty, Landmarks Board Coordinator
Landmarks Preservation Board
Historic Preservation Program
Department of Neighborhoods

Dear Erin and Seattle Landmarks Preservation Board members,

I am writing in support of the designation of the La Quinta apartment building on Capitol Hill. I am appreciative of your role in safeguarding Seattle's built heritage, as I served as historian on the Seattle Landmarks Preservation Board from 1995 through 2003 and vice-chair during some of that time. My affiliation with the Seattle landmarks preservation program began in 1977, when I was hired by the City's Office of Urban Conservation in the Department of Community Development (which was the original umbrella for the Historic Preservation Program) as research assistant while attending the graduate architecture program at the University of Washington. I was mentored by the City's Historic Preservation Officer, Earl Layman, and subsequently was one of a team who conducted a city-wide survey of historic properties and was responsible for generating city landmark nominations for over 25 downtown buildings.

I am in a unique position to comment on the significance of the La Quinta, having spent many days in 1977 and early 1978 interviewing the designer/builder, Fred Anhalt, at his Windemere home. I also interviewed Bjarne Moe, who also worked in R.C. Reamer's firm on the design of the 5th Avenue Theater, and the son of Anhalt's lead draftsman, Edwin E. Dofsen. I accompanied Mr. Anhalt on drives around the city, where he talked about each of the commercial and residential projects he initiated and introduced me to owners and tenants who welcomed me into their homes to further my research.

The La Quinta is one of the buildings showcased in Fred Anhalt's 1929 promotional brochure for the Anhalt Company, produced to encourage interest in the largest project he hoped to undertake on Capitol Hill, which he was unable to finance. He kindly provided 500 covers he had saved from that brochure production, and these bound the limited-edition publication, *Apartments by Anhalt*, for the City of Seattle in 1978, which sold out quickly. I subsequently republished it in 1982 with financial support from Kenneth Van Dyke, then owner of La Quinta, and Barbara Bailey of Bailey/Coy Books. After the publication, I began to conduct popular walking tours of the Capitol Hill buildings, and was able to take groups into courtyards and to explore apartment interiors due to friendships developed with colleagues who lived and took great pleasure in their charming units at the La Quinta, Twin Gables, 1005 E. Roy Street., and 730 and 750 Belmont.

As Fred Anhalt's earliest courtyard apartment complex, La Quinta is pivotal to understanding the evolution and increasing sophistication of his "apartment-home" concepts. As I wrote in my book, Anhalt strove "to create a number of unique apartment homes that would provide the

convenience of maintenance-free apartment living with the feeling of a substantial and comfortable private dwelling.” Its individual entries, two-story plans, and tranquil courtyard access, made dense city-living palatable for an expanding middle class and they were an immediate success.

In his Spanish Revival, English Tudor, and French Norman “castles” we find wonderful expressions of a self-taught builder’s rapture with European vernacular architecture. In looking for prototypes of apartment living that we should be emulating to accommodate future housing needs, La Quinta and its companions on Capitol and Queen Anne hills offer a great learning opportunity in the ways in which they created private, semi-private, and public space and engendered a sense of community within the larger neighborhood.

It is a credit to the solid construction, high quality materials, and efficiencies that he developed to run his growing company that nearly all of his extant buildings retain most of their original features and, when repairs or replacements were required, owners opted to replace as closely in-kind as they could. From my conversations with Ken Van Dyke over several years, I know that he was devoted to preserving the building’s character-defining features as best he could. While architectural historicism fell out of vogue in the post-world war period, and the density of Capitol Hill and Queen Anne increased vastly, buildings like the La Quinta continued to be sanctuaries of calm reflecting a commendable value system for multi-family living.

The La Quinta certainly qualifies as an excellent example of Fred Anhalt’s early foray into multi-family housing and a progressive approach to housing development that we should be learning from today. There is no question in my mind that the La Quinta is worthy of landmark designation under several criteria.

Sincerely yours,

Lawrence Kreisman
Kreisman31@gmail.com
(206) 523-8441