



July 14, 2006

Gilbert de la Rosa
Human Relations Commission
City of Los Angeles
200 N. Spring Street, Room 1625
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Mr. de la Rosa,

The Arroyo Seco Foundation (ASF) was founded in the early days of the last century around the same time as the Southwest Museum by Charles Fletcher Lummis. After a period of dormancy, ASF was revived in 1989. From the beginning almost one hundred years ago, ASF's organizational goal has been "to protect, improve and beautify the Valley of the Arroyo Seco." Always reflecting on our past to inform the present and the future, the Arroyo Seco Foundation today must protect the vision of Lummis and his creation of the very first museum in Los Angeles specifically located on a hilltop overlooking the Valley of the Arroyo Seco.

The siting of Southwest Museum was not accidental. Charles Lummis carefully selected this hilltop perch because of its relationship to the Arroyo Seco, which he loved. Here he created a museum for the Southwest in a specific place that best represented all that he stood for in his life and actions. This edifice, therefore, is more than a museum. It is a monument to the vision of Charles Lummis and to a progressive, multicultural perspective of Los Angeles and of the Southwest.

The Autry National Center cannot take the Southwest Museum out of the Arroyo Seco without betraying the legacy of Charles Lummis and the essence of the museum itself. Mr. Lummis was a visionary and a powerful advocate. He would not have been silent. He would certainly have not stood for Mrs. Autry and her Board of Directors watering down his profound vision to achieve their selfish goal of relocating the Southwest Museum to Griffith Park. We must speak for what he stood for, what he did for the Arroyo, Los Angeles, the Southwest and the Nation.

This museum is the crown gem of the Arroyo Seco, a spectacular region that includes other gems such as the Rose Bowl, the Gamble House, the Colorado Street Bridge, and Jet Propulsion Laboratory. There was great significance in the selection of the Arroyo Seco site by Mr. Lummis, who coined the term "Southwest". Mr. Lummis fought against the East Coast mentality of taking the history and culture of the people away from the place and the people it came from. He purposefully bought the land in the Arroyo Seco, against the wishes and offers to other locations, to build a vast and general museum of the history, art, science, people and



cultures of the Southwest. It wasn't just about Native Americans, it was a museum based on his early progressive beliefs in a multiculturalist society and that the Southwest Museum would reflect that. Just look at the vast collection that ranges from Maynard Dixon's art, Eva Feynes delightful watercolors of the California Missions, George Wharton James' photography collection, the early wax cylinder recordings of Spanish American songs, Native American rituals and language and the list goes on. He witnessed the early history disappearing before his very eyes and knew how critical it was to capture, document, preserve and help interpret this culture that was so rapidly being lost or changed forever.

ASF has been an organizational member of the Friends of the Southwest Museum Coalition for more than three years. We support the unwavering position of the Coalition that a museum use must continue for both historic facilities, the Southwest Museum and Casa de Adobe. We urge the City of Los Angeles to understand that this museum cannot be "relocated" to Griffith Park without severing the lineage and tie between the Southwest Museum and the Arroyo Seco. We do support a vibrant future as a museum and in a manner that makes the Southwest Museum a more viable **museum** destination for greater Los Angeles. We participated in generating additional use ideas at Coalition meetings and would be very interested in an appropriate expansion of the 12 acre campus to include more exhibition space, more parking, more opportunities for rental facilities, a restaurant or eating use. This needs to be the vision of the Autry National Center... not picking up Lummis' most enduring legacies and trying to somehow replace this authentic museum and place with a new stucco box in Griffith Park, at the expense of the park and to Los Angeles' cultural heritage.

We urge the Human Relation Commission and the City of Los Angeles to take action to preserve the essence and character of the museum at its present location.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tim Brick". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tim Brick
Managing Director

cc: Friends of the Southwest Museum Coalition