

SPACES

SAVING + PRESERVING ARTS + CULTURAL ENVIRONMENTS

9053 Soquel Drive, Suite 205, Aptos, CA 95003 T 831.662.2907 F 831.662.2918
www.spacesarchives.org

July 7, 2013

State Historical Resources Commissioners
c/o State Office of Historic Preservation
1725 23rd Street, Suite 100
Sacramento, CA 95816-7100

RE: Nomination of Rubel Castle Historic District for listing in the National Register of Historic Places

To Whom it May Concern,

I am delighted to express my support of the nomination of the Rubel Castle Historic District in Glendora, CA for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. If it is so honored, it will take its place among a distinguished grouping of other art environments within California whose listing in 1981 under the rubric of “Twentieth Century Folk Art Environments” helped to define the field and preserve a growing number of idiosyncratic structures for the citizens of California. SPACES – the nonprofit organization that I represent – submitted that first proposal in 1978, and we continue to support the efforts of community groups, other nonprofit organizations, and individuals to save and preserve the art environments in their neighborhoods.

The Rubel Castle deserves to be recognized, honored, and protected to the best of the ability of its local, regional, and national communities. This personal, individual space has significant and positive public ramifications on a variety of levels and, despite its edge of audacity, has much to teach us. Yet although the work of nonacademic artists such as Rubel are beginning to be included in an expanded definition of art, these kinds of works still often remain in a more tenuous and often precarious position, subject to a variety of risks. Adding Rubel’s work to the National Register will help to reduce these risks.

As the Director of SPACES, recognized internationally as the largest and most complete archives on art environments, I help to document and advocates for these sites all over the world. Art environments often challenge aesthetic and conceptual community values at the same time that they

are beset by environmental degradations; this combination can be fatal for their ongoing preservation. Because art works of this nature cannot be hermetically stored and protected, they need continued vigilance and a concerted, long-term effort from a broad base of local community members—backed up by art and preservation professionals internationally—to ensure their survival.

I urge you to choose to celebrate the distinction they bring to our communities by adding the Rubel Castle Historic District to the National Register of Historic Places; by so doing, you will not only bring positive acclaim to our community as we move towards a greater inclusivity in art historical definition, but will enable future generations to share in the insouciance and the freedom of expression these works of art extol, and the lessons and joy they impart.

Jo Farb Hernández
Director