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March 2, 2006

City of Los Angeles
Department of City Planning
Office of Zoning Administration

Maya Zaitzevsky, City Planner

200 N. Spring St., Room 721
Los Angeles, CA 90012

CASE NUMBER: TT-64086, ENV-2005-8989-EAF

Dear Ms. Zaitzevsky,

At its regular meeting of March 1, 2006, the Governing Board of the Silver Lake Neighborhood Council adopted the attached report and recommendations regarding the above-referenced case, a proposed mixed use development at 2916-2930 Rowena Avenue in Silver Lake. Please consider the recommendations carefully and include our suggested conditions in the final disposition of the case.

Thanks you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Bougart-Sharkov
Chair, Urban Design & Preservation Advisory Committee

Jason Lyon
Chair, Governmental Affairs Committee

On behalf of the SLNC Governing Board

CC: Councilmember Tom LaBonge
Piedmont Investment Co.
Rowena Community Vision

SILVER LAKE NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS

CASE NUMBERS: TT-64086, ENV-2005-8989-EAF

CASE BACKGROUND

In January of this year, developer Paul Pagnone of the Piedmont Investment Company contacted the Silver Lake Neighborhood Council's Urban Design & Preservation Advisory Committee seeking SLNC input and support for his proposed 64-unit condominium development at 2916-2930 Rowena Avenue in Silver Lake. Per the SLNC's *Guidelines for Developers*, he was invited to address the Committee at its February meeting.

Mr. Pagnone was informed in his initial contact that the SLNC strongly supports the recommendations of the Silver Lake – Echo Park – Elysian Valley Community Plan. Therefore, the Committee would be very unlikely to support a proposal for new development along a transit corridor which does not include commercial space at the ground level. The community values the pedestrian-friendly atmosphere of our transit corridors and expects new development to encourage rather than discourage this environment.

Mr. Pagnone appeared before the Urban Design & Preservation Advisory Committee on Wednesday, February 8. Approximately 30 stakeholders attended the meeting. At the meeting, Mr. Pagnone unveiled a revised plan for the development, which included approximately 3400 square feet of restaurant space. The plan included a number of additional commercial parking spaces beyond the 34 required by code. Mr. Pagnone proposed to lease the space to the Coffee Table, an immensely popular restaurant now situated on the proposed development site (subject to mutually agreeable terms). In keeping with the SLNC *Guidelines* for large developments, the Committee voted to call a Community Meeting to better gauge community reaction to the development and take stakeholder input on suggested mitigating conditions, if necessary.

COMMUNITY INPUT

The Community Meeting was held on Wednesday, February 22 in an elementary school auditorium near the proposed development site. It was attended by over 200 stakeholders, City Councilmember Tom LaBonge and staff, and Mike Bagheri of the Los Angeles Department of Transportation. Of the 30 stakeholders who spoke or filled out comment cards, 17 (57%) opposed the development and 13 (43%) supported it. Of those in opposition, several cited specific problems which might be mitigated with conditions.

Among the comments in opposition were notes about the scale and mass of the development as compared to the immediately adjacent properties; concerns about the privacy of the residences abutting the rear of the property; concerns about the welfare of neighboring businesses during construction; and general objections to the design of the site. There was also a broadly expressed sentiment that the site will aggravate an already dangerous traffic situation along the heavily-traveled Rowena Avenue.

Among the comments in support were observations of the developers' willingness to work with the community, as evidenced by the addition of commercial space; notes that the density of development is considerably less than that allowable by the prevailing zone and Q conditions; expectations that the site will create more pedestrian activity on Rowena, generating a broader clientele for local businesses; and general support for the design of the site.

Similar comments were received before and after the meeting by members of the Urban Design Committee and SLNC Governing Boardmembers. The comments appeared to consist of a similar ratio of negative to positive. It is particularly noted that, prior to the Community Meeting, a great number of comments objected to the perceived loss of the Coffee Table as a community gathering spot.

SLNC RECOMMENDATION

Based on the comments received from stakeholders, the Silver Lake Neighborhood Council Governing Board concludes that there is not a clear community consensus on this project.

Therefore, given that :

- (a) the developer has shown, and continues to show, a willingness to work with the community on the design and implementation of the development;
- (b) the developer is requesting less than the maximum density allowed by the zone;
- (c) the developer has gone to great effort to retain the Coffee Table as a tenant;
- (d) the developer has included provisions which will actually increase available parking along the Rowena corridor;

the Silver Lake Neighborhood Council supports the proposal and recommends approval, subject to specific mitigating conditions. In addition, observing both the very particular difficulties of the site terrain and the prevailing Q conditions, the Council does not oppose a calculation of height which follows the natural slope of the terrain, rather than a calculation from street grade.

It should be noted that the Silver Lake Neighborhood Council reviews cases on an individual basis, and this recommendation should not be viewed as a precedent for other cases, which may or may not be similar.

SUGGESTED CONDITIONS

The Silver Lake Neighborhood Council further recommends that the following conditions be imposed upon the development of this site.

Traffic Mitigation

- The site plan review must include a thorough traffic study and conditions to mitigate the additional congestion likely created by the development.
- The developer has agreed to finance in full (or support those measures with an immediate nexus to his site) any traffic mitigation measures as designed and approved by LADOT. Such mitigation may include a landscaped median, “smart” crosswalk, two-way turn-lane and/or traffic light(s).

Project Design

- Per previous agreement with developer, the Silver Lake Neighborhood Council is to be consulted on all finish materials, colors and landscape elements.
- Project must include architecturally defined screens of any rooftop gardens, in order to provide for privacy of the adjacent properties.
- All possible A/C units, rooftop antennas, and other mechanical devices must be concealed from view.
- Highest quality materials to be employed in order to insulate against and mitigate cumulative decibels of A/C units and machine rooms.

Landscape Buffer

- A landscape buffer is to be required, screening the side and rear setbacks, and consisting of mature, fast-growing California native trees or other vegetation. Minimum 30 inch box trees are recommended. Neighbors on adjoining properties are to be consulted on buffer selection.
- In addition, the developer has agreed to build a barrier wall if desired by neighboring properties to the rear.

Construction

- Demolition and construction hours to be clearly defined, during reasonable weekday hours only. No weekend construction.
- All construction vehicles must be staged on site or at off-site location to be secured by developer. No on-street parking of construction vehicles.
- The developer is to construct a minimum 12-foot barrier around the construction site, of such material to minimize both noise and dust generated by construction. Any graffiti found on the barrier during construction is to be removed within 24 hours.
- The developer will provide signs indicating that any businesses visually blocked by the construction barrier remain open during construction. These businesses may include, but are not limited to Raven, Zanzabelle, Patty Faye and Truth & Beauty.
- The site will include clearly visible contact information for any comments, questions or complaints.

Property Management

- At the request of neighboring residents, we suggest that the condominium association adopt strict rules regarding times and use of the outdoor swimming pool/BBQ/deck area, in consultation with the surrounding community.