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FRIENDS OF FLOWER DRIVE

Date: 5-21-19
Submitted in PLUM Committee
Council File No: 19-0370 + 19-0370-S1
Item No: 11 + 12

Re: CF19-0370, 19-0370-S1, Agenda Items 11 and 12, May 21, 2019

Honorable Members of the City Council PLUM Committee



— *Communication from*
COUNCILMEMBER MARQUEECE HARRIS-DAWSON, CHAIR *Appellat*
COUNCILMEMBER BOB BLUMENFIELD
COUNCILMEMBER CURREN D. PRICE, JR.
COUNCILMEMBER GILBERT A. CEDILLO
COUNCILMEMBER GREIG SMITH

The City of Los Angeles is poised to approve demolition of 8 out of 18 historic buildings in the Flower Drive California Register District. The EIR ignores an alternative that would incorporate the District within a development that is higher – a “tower alternative” – that saves the 32 units of rent stabilized historic housing for future generations. The Flower Drive Historic District is NOT an island into itself but is deeply rooted in the historic development of the area.

The City should not permit its annihilation. This District was identified in the official survey by the CRA Hoover Redevelopment Project and others brought it to the State Historic Resources Commission to follow up on what the Redevelopment Agency had concluded so that any developer would be aware that the historic district was a significant resource. It is disappointing, to say the least, that all of these decades of preservation efforts by WAHA, the City, the CRA and others now is entirely dismissed by ambitious developers from Orange County who are receiving subsidies from the City.

At the November 7 and the December 5, 2018 public hearings for the project, numerous persons who reside on Flower Drive urged that this displacement of families and destruction of population, housing and historic resources be stopped. Nothing in the decision material shows the content of that testimony nor the salient facts brought forward at the public hearing. Neither the hearing officers nor CPC reacted nor comprehended the facts of the human suffering that this project imposes on families who have lived on Flower Drive for decades.

The CPC decision (as does the FEIR) largely ignores and sanitizes what is really happening here. We urge the City Council to rectify the injustice and displacement of families and the failure to include an alternative for your consideration that would both save the rent stabilized housing and preserve a significant historic resource and allow for the new development and the accompanying benefits.

: F : O : F : D : - FRIENDS OF FLOWER DRIVE - submits our brief remarks and wishes to incorporate by reference the testimony of many who have already submitted to the record and urged the City to not certify the FEIR but rather send it back for recirculation to include a tower alternative that preserves the RSO affordable historic housing and provides also for the benefits of development. Upon inclusion and recirculation of this alternative option, the City has an obligation under the law to adopt the





environmentally superior alternative; then the current proposed tract map is moot.

The FEIR fails to consider impacts to the northerly section of the Flower Drive Historic District. It contains within it a view that somehow Districts are inconsequential and malleable to the aims of a developer. This was confirmed at the NOP scoping meeting of August 10, 2016 wherein the developers' representative stated to one of our representatives "Well you at least have eleven buildings left in the District." This weighs heavily on the prejudice with which the developer has treated and misunderstood the significance of the Flower Drive Historic District and how indeed a District is significant in its relationship to all of the properties within a District.

You cannot mitigate impacts to a historic district by moving three or four historic apartments elsewhere. The decision makers fail to understand that a District relies on its context and the relationship of each of the buildings to the other. Part of the districts uniqueness is that nineteen buildings have survived for almost a hundred years relatively intact, creating a grouping of buildings and people that warrants attention, designation and preservation. So much so, that the State Historic Resources commission found the District eligible, not once, but twice, over politically connected opposition.

The FEIR also fails to understand that the Flower Drive is not an isolated island but connects to our very community's history as one of the parcels of the original Zobelein Tract, as it is relational to the Zobelein historic cultural monument (HCM), and the other historic elements which include Exposition Park. As commenter Jim Childs expressed: "When traveling west along 39th Street from the east of the I-110 freeway a viewer emerges from the viaduct at Flower Drive and is confronted with the striking view of the LA Memorial Coliseum dead ahead with its' Peristyle, the Olympic-Torch, the headless statues and the historic formal landscaped entrance of Christmas Tree Lane. To the north and to the south the two flanking block faces of the Flower Drive Historic District." The Flower Drive Historic District is NOT an island into itself but is deeply rooted in the historic development of the area. The City should not permit its annihilation.

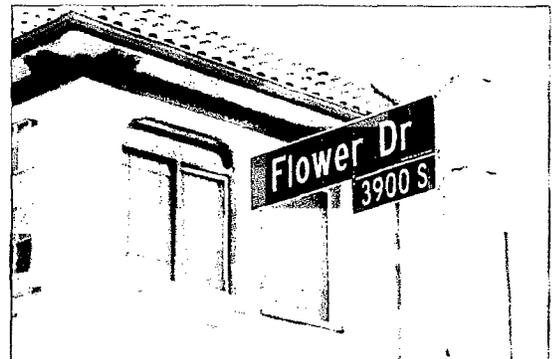


"Today, the Flower Drive District remains the last intact cluster of multi-family residences created in the once larger Zobelein Tract during the Roaring Twenties. Further, the District and its contributing elements continue to retain their original use and association as multi-family dwellings for the working and middle classes in the University District south of downtown" (Letter, ADHOC, by Jim Childs, November 27, 2017 to Milena Zasadzien, City Planning)



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is an unincorporated association of individuals and groups who have a demonstrated interest and mutual concern to save the Flower Drive Historic district and who seek to protect it from harm. Members of the association include WAHA, the Los Angeles Conservancy and numerous others who participated in the administrative process. FOFD is alarmed at the severe and irreparable harm the FIG project would bring to the impact to the Flower Drive Historic District and to the University Park neighborhood.



Submitted by hand

Ed Conery

For : : F : O : F : D : ~ FRIENDS OF FLOWER DRIVE ~

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VIA E-MAIL & HAND DELIVERY

May 21, 2019

Honorable Members of the Planning and Land Use Management Committee
Los Angeles City Council
200 N. Spring Street, Room 375
Los Angeles, Calif. 90012

clerk.plumcommittee@lacity.org

RE: The Fig Project (Council File Nos. 19-0370 and 19-0370-S1)

Dear Honorable Committee Members,

On December 17, 2018, April 5, 2019, and April 15, 2019, I filed appeals on behalf of Strategic Actions for a Just Economy (SAJE), regarding the City's approval of The Fig project. After extensive discussions between SAJE and the developer, SAJE's concerns that prompted the appeals have been fully resolved. As a result, SAJE respectfully requests that you deny its appeals in full.

Should you have any questions, please let me know.

Very truly yours,

Mitchell Tsai

cc: William F. Delvac

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~~Copy to:~~ Comments from Appellant