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Planning and Land Use Management Committee
200 N. Spring St., Rm. 365
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Committee:

I am appealing DIR-2021-2250-TOC-HCA and ENV-2021-2251-CE, Project Addresses 505, 507, 509, 511, and 517 N. Hoover St., Los Angeles CA 90004.

The approved project allegedly consists of:

- Demolition of one (1) office building.
- Demolition of two (2) single-family dwellings.
- Demolition of two (2) detached garages.
- Construction of one (1) six (6) story apartment building containing forty (40) dwellings.

Appeal Item 1: Number of Dwelling Units

Los Angeles Municipal Code Section 12.21.A.1(b), says: “Whenever a layout within any dwelling unit or guest room is designed with multiple hallway entrances, multiple toilet and bath facilities or bar sink installations, so that it can be easily divided into or used for separate apartments or guestrooms, the lot area requirements and the automobile parking requirements shall be based upon the highest number of dwelling units or guest rooms obtainable from any such arrangement.”

Finding of Fact: The approved project contains one-hundred and ninety-five (195) dwellings, not the forty (40) dwellings approved by the city, as defined in Los Angeles Municipal Code Section 12.21.A.1(b).

The 40 dwellings claimed by the developer and approved by the city are most likely to become 195 “furnished singles”, most with full bathrooms and common living space, door locks, and maid service.

Appeal Item 2: Unjustified Incentives

Definition of incentive: something that incites action.

Only four dwellings are dedicated as affordable in exchange for:

1. An incentive consisting of 22 feet of additional building height.
2. An incentive consisting of a reduced number of required parking stalls from 195 dedicated stalls to 51 unbundled stalls, half of which are tandem. The Recommendation Report says: “iii. Unbundling. Required parking may be sold or rented separately from the units, with the exception of all Restricted Affordable Units which shall include any required parking in the base rent or sales price, as verified by the Los Angeles Housing Department.”
3. An incentive consisting of unbundling reduces the parking to zero for all but the four affordable dwellings.
 - a. “Los Angeles Municipal Code §12.21. General Provisions.
 - A. Use. a violation of
 - b. (b) For Guest Rooms. Automobile parking spaces shall be provided in the following ratio for the guest rooms included within any building:
 - (1) One parking space for each individual guest room or suite of rooms for the first 30;
 - (2) One additional parking space for each two guest rooms or suites of rooms in excess of 30 but not exceeding 60; and

One additional parking space for each three guest rooms or suites of rooms in excess of 60.”

4. An incentive consisting of a 30 percent reduction in the required rear yard and side yard setbacks:
 - a. Reduction from a 15-foot side yard setback to a 6-foot side yard.
 - b. Reduction from a 15-foot rear yard setback to a 10 ½ foot rear yard.
5. An incentive consisting of a 25 percent reduction in required open space.

Appeal Item 3: Apartment Hotel or Not

Definition of apartment hotel: a hotel containing apartments as well as accommodations for transients.

The Recommendation Report says: “The project was not determined to be an ‘Apartment Hotel’ as it does not propose any guest rooms, nor would it provide short-term residency for prospective residents. In addition, the project does not propose any ‘Flexible Units’ which offer unusual layouts that are comprised of informal spaces and partitions. . .”

But Los Angeles Municipal Code §12.21.A.1(b) does not solely require multiple hallway entrances to determine that a project has flexible units. Multiple toilet and bath facilities and other factors also establish whether the project “can be easily divided into or used for separate apartments or guestrooms.”

The project site plan shows that the 40 dwellings consist of eight 3-bedroom dwellings and twenty-six 5-bedroom dwellings. The dwellings have a “study room” and a common kitchen. The bedrooms have en suite bathrooms. The arrangement allows for division into studio apartments or bedsitters (one-room apartments serving as both bedroom and sitting room) or guestrooms, reminiscent of depression-era flophouses: cheap rooming houses or hotels.

Finding of Fact: The applicant is known to offer for rent “furnished singles” consisting of bedrooms with en suite bathrooms.

Common Melrose. The applicant leases his co-living project, called Common Melrose, by the bedroom as “furnished singles;”

Common Fountain. The applicant leases his co-living project, called Common Fountain by the bedroom as “private bedrooms.”

The layout of the Common Fountain building is no different than the layout of the 511 Hoover building.

The facts speak for themselves: The 40 dwellings claimed by the developer and approved by the city are destined to become 195 “furnished singles”, most with full bathrooms and common living space, door locks, and maid service.

Respectfully,

David Wheatley, for The North Commonwealth, United Neighborhood Association