

Flower Drive Tenants Association  
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South Central Local, LA Tenants Union  
south-central@latenantsunion.org



Case #: DIR-2022-14-CLQ-HCA  
Address: 3900 South Figueroa St 90037  
Final date for appeal: 8/29/2022

**We, the Tenants Association of Flower Drive, with tenant supporters from the community, have come together to write this appeal of case DIR-2022-14-CLQ-HCA at 3900 South Figueroa St 90037. We are the directly impacted residents of the neighborhood, and we demand our voices be heard.**

The reason for our appeal is simple, and fundamental: This Project has changed its guise numerous times since it was first proposed, but every version would mean the displacement of the longtime, working class tenants from Flower Drive and the broader area. We refuse to have our lives, our homes, and neighborhoods destroyed so that yet another luxury housing project can go up. The original decision-makers abused their discretion, rubber-stamping a Project that would devastate their own constituency. **We call on the City Council to deny the entitlement, and initiate a conversation with our Tenant Association**, which represents tenants from the 3800 block Flower Drive, as well as tenants displaced from the 3900 block and from the surrounding neighborhood. Staff members from our own councilmember Curren Price's office have consistently made a show of wanting to hear from the tenants of Flower Drive, while accepting campaign contributions from Ventus Group CEO Scott Gale and taking every opportunity to facilitate the process of approving this development against the explicit wishes of the tenants of Flower Drive and the surrounding community.

The Project, originally known as The Fig, was first proposed before the pandemic, an event which definitively proved that housing is crucial to the health and safety of our communities. Yet during the pandemic, Ventus Group continued to harass, intimidate, and pressure us to leave our homes. If the tenants didn't leave, there was no Project; Displacing the tenants of the 3900 block of Flower Drive - our neighbors, our community members, who have been here and have built this community with us - is the precondition for "development."

Three years later, and the 3900 block has been emptied out. On the 3800 block, us tenants fought back, after having supported our neighbors in their prior fight. We organized to inform one another of our rights and refuse cash for keys, to demand dignity, and to care for our block as the city abandoned us. We are still here.

Curren Price's staff members have repeatedly assured us that there is no development planned for the 3800 block. And yet Ventus group has hired "relocation experts" to pressure us to leave our homes. This is because the Ventus group's project does not end south of 39th St; their goal is the wholesale

displacement and replacement of the working class people who live here, and have made Flower Drive home for decades and generations.

For developers, the lives of tenants are the first items on the chopping block when it comes to their projects, which confirms that these projects are not for us and have never been for us. You treat our homes - the places where we raise our children, build communities, and live our lives - as interchangeable units of real estate. This is a dehumanizing lie, that values a home only as a thing to be bought and sold by the rich, not as the essential basis for safe and dignified lives. Our organizing has brought this into focus, and affirmed a deeper truth: that our homes are not just buildings, but sites for building power and fighting back.

We will fight back on this project, in part, by telling the truth of how an earlier version of the Project got approved, and the devastating events it set in motion. When the Project was still pending initial approval, an appeal was made and callously ignored. When a hearing was held, the city preferred to listen to the fake tenants brought in by developers, who paid for their “testimony,” over us actual residents speaking up in opposition. From the get go, the city was afraid of the truth, and even more afraid of tenants who speak truth to power.

We are not afraid, we are angry. Angry that you treat the homes and neighborhoods of working class tenants as sacrifice zones for real estate developers and their henchmen to erase our culture, displace our families, and destroy our communities. Angry that to pave the way for development, you spend years ahead of time abandoning our neighborhoods. Angry that after we build up our neighborhood, your idea of its future is a sundown town where by day we come to serve wealthy USC students, and then are expected to run away by night. Angry that after all that, you lecture to us like colonial subjects.

The city’s EIR blithely reports that displacing long-time tenants from eight buildings constitutes a, “less than significant” impact, and that, “no mitigation measures would be required” [Population and Housing; Displace Existing Housing or Persons, F-33, 34]. Does the city really think that replacing one rent-stabilized unit with one “affordable” unit built years later somehow means no one is **displaced**? Are our lives really that disposable to the rich developers and the city planners who do their bidding?

We’ll tell you what really happened. Tenants were systematically pressured into accepting cash for keys offers, draining the block of the residents who had built our neighborhood, built full lives, and were now looking for non-existent affordable housing in the midst of a global pandemic. Tenants were forced to sign non-disclosure agreements to prevent them from telling their stories; the stories of how they ended up living in hotels until their money ran out, leaving them with no option but their cars; the stories of having to leave the state in order to find somewhere they could afford; the stories of how the money promised to them simply never came, even after the day they were forced to abandon their home. Although they cannot tell these stories publicly, our former neighbors from the 3900 block call us crying. It is clear to us what they have lost in accepting coercive cash-for-keys offers. And it was not just the imperative of Ventus group; Cash-for-Keys buy-outs were the EIR’s official recommendation: “The Project Applicant shall retain a relocation consultant” [Project Design Feature C-1, F-64]. That was Gabe Becerra, who bragged, “What’s exciting about this project [at 3819 Flower] is that my team also facilitated the relocation of the tenants in order for the building to undergo an entire rehabilitation.” Gabe

neglected to mention the four units that refused to leave that building, enduring horrendous conditions during a gut renovation when he neglected to provide a tenant habitability plan. Those that did succumb to his pressure included single mothers and elders who left rent-controlled apartments and ended up homeless not long after. While Gabe and real estate shills use the euphemisms of “facilitating relocation assistance,” tenants on the ground see and experience the brutal and barbaric reality of cash-for-keys.

It was more important to the city to relocate the buildings [Mitigation Measure C-3, F-64] - yes, the recommendation was to move entire buildings from their location on Flower Drive! - than to ensure that the people living in those buildings had somewhere to go.

Now the Project has now been changed to an entirely student housing complex, similar to The Hub, the luxury student housing built on the corner of 38th and Figueroa that deluged Flower Drive with air and noise contamination for months, and now bombards us with the shouting of drunken USC parties. We can't even find how to apply for the supposedly affordable units in that building, which makes sense because none of these developers want poor tenants in their buildings at all; they just dangle the empty promise of these units as a pretext to get the city to cut them deals. The destruction and construction of The Hub, much smaller than this Project, took a serious toll on the health of the tenants at Flower Drive, and it was a constant fight to get the construction company to abide by the minimal mitigation measures in place. If this Project is approved, the demolition of the 3900 buildings will have an even greater negative impact on our health and well-being. The EIR acknowledges that, “asbestos-containing materials may be present on site,” and that, “it is also likely that lead-based paint is present on site,” yet also says that “no mitigation measures would be required,” trusting notoriously lax construction companies to comply with un-enforced regulations [Reasonably Foreseeable Upset and Accident Conditions Involving the Release of Hazardous Materials in the Environment; Construction, F-26, 27]. The truth is that when buildings go down and others go up, tenants and workers nearby suffer the consequences, as we're currently seeing with the debacle at the Ave 34 redevelopment site.

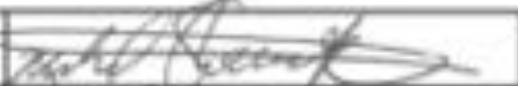


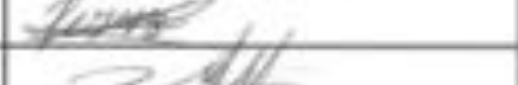



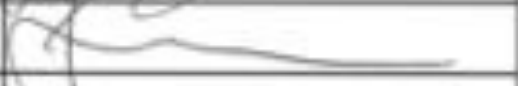

The CEQA report for the Project identified Alternatives 1 and 2 as the superior options available regarding health of the community and environmental impacts. However, the EIR goes on to ignore and override this input, stating, “Despite the unavoidable aesthetics, cultural resources, noise, and traffic impacts caused by the construction of the Project, the City approves the Project based on the following contributions of the Project to the community” [XI. Statement of Overriding Considerations, F-89]. The following list of contributions is for a “community” that does not currently exist; the existing community must be displaced to make way for this wealthier, whiter community to reap the supposed benefits of the Project.

While the city plays games with our lives, we are taking back control over our lives. As we have organized on our block, the Flower Drive Tenants Association has become known across South Central; across the Los Angeles Tenants Union. As far away as Paris and Tokyo, we have made connections with other tenants fighting against displacement. The goal of the Ventus group and this Project is to destroy the social relations that tie our community together, and erode our neighborhood unit-by-unit so that they can steamroll over our lives and pretend like we were never here.

We said it before and we'll say it again: We're still here.

We know what our community needs. It's time for this Project to come to a halt, and for the residents to have a say in how resources are used and decision-making happens in working class communities, by our community, for our community.

I support the demands of the South Flower Drive Tenants Association //  
Apoyo las demandas de la Asociación de inquilinos de South Flower Drive:

Full Name // Nombre y Apellido	Signature // Firma
Mikal Sherrie H	
L. Barken	
Frank M. Belaya	
Karyn F. Balillo	K. Balillo
Teresa Soto	
Barbara A. Dominguez	
Johanna Martinez	
Ines Alcazar	
Leonilda Victoria	
Jesmin V. Cobarr	

I support the demands of the South Flower Drive Tenants Association //  
Apoyó las demandas de la Asociación de inquilinos de South Flower Drive:

Full Name // Nombre y Apellido	Signature // Firma
NOE BARRIOS LÓPEZ	
Arelí Miguel	
Osbaldo García	Osbaldo García
Narely García	
Oswaldo García	
Matias García	
Teaura Lizares	
Alonso Miguel	
Carlos Miguel	
Bryan Miguel	
Jairo Miguel	
Narezi Miguel	
Anhel Jacobe	
Jose. Portocarrero	
Special Williams	

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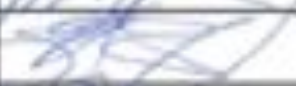


Estrella López [REDACTED]	
Ramon Espindola [REDACTED]	
Laliera Emboca [REDACTED]	

I support the demands of the South Flower Drive Tenants Association //  
Apoyo las demandas de la Asociación de inquilinos de South Flower Drive:

Full Name // Nombre y Apellido	Signature // Firma
Mando E Lima	
Teresa Soto de Lima	
Ana Karen Dias	
Biri diana Soto	
Yuridia Soto	
Samantha Soto	
JOSE FRANCISCO FLORES	
Enrique Herrera L	
Ashely Williams	



I support the demands of the South Flower Drive Tenants Association //  
Apoyo las demandas de la Asociación de inquilinos de South Flower Drive:

Full Name // Nombre y Apellido	Signature // Firma
Mara Victoria	
Lucia Victoria	Lucia Victoria
Luis Victoria	Luis Victoria
Alexandra Victoria	Alexandra Victoria
Marcelo Alegre	
Elizabeth Alegre	
Luis Alegre	
Abel Alegre	
Juana Victoria	Juana Victoria
Gloria Victoria	Gloria Victoria
Cristobal Ramos	Cristobal Ramos

I support the demands of the South Flower Drive Tenants Association //  
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Full Name // Nombre y Apellido	Signature // Firma
Esperanza Badillo	E. Badillo
Ignacio Badillo	
Carlos Badillo	
Herminio H. Hood	Herminio H. Hood
maria E. Leyva	
Abel Leyva	
Teresa Leyva	
Veronica Leyva	
Rodolfo Leyva	
Rolando Leyva	
Giovanni Leyva	
Cecilia Sosa	C. Sosa
Otilia Sosa	
Ana Miriam Sosa	
Maria Monica Diaz	
Sylvana Montoya	
Karen Garcia	

I support the demands of the South Flower Drive Tenants Association //  
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Full Name // Nombre y Apellido	Signature // Firma
Rosie Avila 239-0118	Rosie Avila
Felipe Avila	Felipe Avila
Samuel Avila	
Karla Lativo	Karla Lativo
Teresa Soto de Lima	
Manolo E Lima	
Ana Karen Diaz	
Biri diana Soto	
Yuridia Soto	
Samantha Soto	



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Full Name // Nombre y Apellido	Signature // Firma
Reefie Stewart	
Su Kim	
Katrina Albright	

Full Name // Nombre y Apellido

Signature // Firma

Rolman Argueta	Rolman
Jaime Castro	Jaime Castro
M y Ramirez	M Ramirez
SHIRLEY HERNANDEZ	
Max Carrera	Max Carrera
Wade Baker	Wade Baker
Charmaney Tatum	Charmaney Tatum
NICO PREGNI	NICO PREGNI
ERICA L. JACKSON-AMOLE	Erica L. Jackson-Amole
Teresa Soto	Teresa Soto
Hani Henry	Hani Henry
Alvaro Torres	Alvaro Torres
Cerianne Robertson	C. Robertson
JOSE A. FLORES	Jose A. Flores

NORMA MENDOZA  
CRISTINA RAMOS

Jose A. Flores