

Dear Plum Committee Members:

I am president of Sunset Square Neighborhood Organization. <https://sunsetssquarehollywood.org/> In 2017, after many years of effort, I and other community members were successful in having our neighborhood designated an HPOZ, also named Sunset Square. <https://planning.lacity.org/preservation-design/overlays/sunset-square> Additionally, I serve as the Environment Chair on the Hollywood Hills West Neighborhood Council. HHWNC.ORG

Our community of Sunset Square, both the neighborhood and the HPOZ, surrounds the property located at 7441-7449 West Sunset Blvd [The Owner/Applicant] on the west, north, and east. Also, directly next door to this property is our local elementary school, Gardner Street Elementary. Gardner Street Elementary, a Title 1 school, is an environmentally sensitive use—HUNDREDS of children walk to and occupy this location daily. Also, recently, Gardner Street Elementary absorbed the students from the Selma Elementary Campus located in the central part of Hollywood.

Since this property was purchased in 2016 and attempts were made to redevelop it, we have had many concerns.<sup>1</sup> Because our community is bordered by Sunset Blvd on its south, we are typically very aware of, and welcoming to, the businesses that come to our commercial district along Sunset Blvd, for the 10 blocks that Sunset Square's streets intersect with Sunset Blvd.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, we have always worked closely and cooperatively with the businesses seeking to come into our community. We want businesses to thrive on our corners while serving our community needs.

The problem is, and unfortunately for the new Owner/Applicant, who is not a part of nor engaged with our local community, this corner has always been a tricky one. The former owner, Cadence Capital also found this out. For example, its entire north border directly abuts Gardner Street Elementary's play yard and the school's gardens. Plans submitted promise to overwhelm this location and tower over the play yard and gardens of Gardner Street—proposed buildings that actually put the school's gardens in shadow. There have been grave concerns from parents and from our neighborhood regarding protecting the school. Most importantly, neighbors and school families are extremely concerned about the safety of children and families who use the quiet, narrow Gardener side street sidewalk daily. The completely unvetted project plans *apparently* include a single driveway for all vehicles – customers, employees, delivery trucks, utility trucks, etc. crossing the sidewalk to reach delivery bays and rooftop parking. Ridiculous and dangerous. Furthermore, this proposed design is what defeated Cadence Capital's attempts to redevelop this site! The proposed lessee at the time, Gelson's Grocery Store, pulled out when they realized that the only way to occupy this space and utilize it based on similar plans was to try to put driveways on this narrow street and that those driveways might kill someone!

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<sup>1</sup> This property was originally purchased by Cadence Capital, a developer from Colorado, who sold it once it obtained the liquor licenses at issue herein.

<sup>2</sup> Vista Ave is our last street on the east but our HPOZ does not include the lower block, only the upper 1600 block but we consider Vista Avenue our eastern border.

**This is the very definition of a hazardous impact that a CEQA evaluation is meant to study. And while the zoning administrator has imposed many conditions on operations of the project's businesses, there are virtually no mitigations proposed to protect the safety of the children who will cross the paths of the vehicles using that single driveway all day long. Shoehorning multiple venues for selling and serving alcoholic beverages adjoining our sensitive use site with no protections for our community as it walks to and from school each day deserves study through a CEQA process. Hence this appeal.**

We love our school and the current plans are tone deaf to our concerns while mindlessly attempting to shoe horn in multiple liquor licenses and vague over-ambitious building plans.

Moreover, the current buildings existing on the Owner/Applicant's site are over 100 years old and are historically relevant because they comprise one of the last Red Car stops in Hollywood.<sup>3</sup> We have always communicated to the Owner/Applicant that we would like a more modest use of the location which could include the current buildings. We have proposed many business ideas that would work here including small shops, cafes, etc. We envision something similar to what you see on Sunset Blvd farther east at Sunset Junction in Silverlake. This way, the business plan does not overwhelm the location, does not have delivery bays or parking entrances on Gardner Avenue, and protects the school, the tiny street, and the important historic structures.

Finally, Gardner Avenue itself, north from Sunset Blvd, is a very narrow 2 lanes which serves as the primary route for our Fire Station emergency vehicles to attend call-outs above Sunset Blvd, particularly in the many in Runyon Canyon and above Hollywood Blvd in general. Any day that even a small delivery truck attempts to round the corner from Sunset Blvd onto Gardner Ave north the turn requires going into the oncoming lane just to complete the turn. Attaching a bunch of liquor licenses to this location supposedly related to some yet undefined new development is mindless. We must have a reconsideration and re-examination of these licenses.

Sunset Square and it's sister community to the south, Spaulding Square, also an HPOZ, want *good* businesses that respect the history and charm of this corner. We welcome these types of businesses and work with them through our business development committee. However, this owner seems intent on trying to shoehorn a bunch of liquor licenses into this location. They are ignoring our ideas about maintaining these old buildings. The Owner/Applicant is attaching these liquor licenses to some yet to be decided redevelopment that itself may not fit the site for all of the reasons raised above? It just seems very suspect and "cart before the horse" attempt to increase the value of the property for re-sale. It is cynical and ignores the heart and soul of community, it residents, and its beloved school.

Our concerns with Owner/Applicant have nothing to do with its attempt to bring business to this location. The concerns have always stemmed from its deafness to the community, SAFETY CONCERNS with our school and the desire to destroy a red car trolley stop/. Our community wants an adaptive re-use of this location with shops and restaurants. Please grant our appeal for CEQA oversight.

Thank you very much to your attention to this matter, sincerely Cheryl Holland

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<sup>3</sup> please see accompanying document, attached here as well, provided by Hollywood Heritage, discussing the historic significance of this location and which includes photographs of this site.