

May 1, 2023

City Council Planning and Land Use Management Committee members

Below is a statement written for an earlier project proposed for this site. The statement contains material about the historic Red Car trolley line whose tracks determined the footprint of the buildings on this site. It is one of the very last remaining vestiges of the early days of Hollywood's development.

This material is also contained in the letter from Hollywood Heritage, submitted by appellant Cheryl Holland, also in this case file. We believe this site is a historic resource for the Hollywood community, and its proposed demolition should make the categorical exemption granted for this site inappropriate. Please consider our request to further evaluate this site by granting our appeal.

Thank you,

Julia Mason, Cheryl Holland, Michael Konik, Lincoln Williamson

October 24, 2017

Department of City Planning
Figueroa Plaza
201 North Figueroa Street,
4th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Appeal to Area Planning Commission
Gelson's Market Project at 7445 West Sunset Boulevard (including
7447, 7449 West Sunset Boulevard and 1502, 1504 North Gardner
Street)
Case No. ENV-2016-0951-MND; ZA-2016-0950(CU)(CUB)(SPR)

I am a long-time neighbor, living within 500 feet of this proposed project. I have attended every neighborhood meeting and submitted comment letters to the Planning Commission throughout the process.

This project will have negative impacts on the environment that have not been considered in the Zoning Administrator's Letter of Determination and have not been studied or mitigated. CEQA requires that:

15070. Decision to Prepare a Negative or Mitigated Negative Declaration

A public agency shall prepare or have prepared a proposed negative declaration or mitigated negative declaration for a project subject to CEQA when:

(a) The initial study shows that there is no substantial evidence, in light of the whole record before the agency, that the project may have a significant effect on the environment[.]

In adopting the MND and approving the requests for variances and the site plan review, the City Planning Commission has erred. The historic nature of the existing buildings on site requires a full CEQA review and an EIR should have been required; adopting the project's MND, which does not address the destruction of these buildings, is incomplete and should not have been adopted.

The Zoning Administrator has also erred by not considering the impacts on the neighborhood of granting variances for 33 tandem parking spaces on commercial corner zoning, and by not considering the requirements of a D condition.

Historic Significance:

The EIR for the 1988 Hollywood Community Plan states on Page FEIR – 16 addresses the importance of historic preservation: Response No. 15 - In order to address the preservation of historic and cultural resources within the Hollywood Community Plan area, the DEIR recognizes the following points:

- The overall downzoning and matching of existing development levels with planned levels will improve the prospects for historic preservation by reducing the probability of redevelopment to higher densities.

The 1988 EIR also acknowledges on Page 81: Preservation of Historically and Architecturally Significant Buildings and Neighborhoods. While the Plan discourages destruction of existing neighborhoods, especially those with unique architectural styles, through downzoning to current densities, it does not identify significant neighborhoods or establish standards for their preservation. Therefore, important cultural resources could be destroyed through the replacement of and additions to significant buildings and infill housing that is not compatible with them...

Hollywood is an old, architecturally rich community. Many of today's residential and commercial buildings and the neighborhoods they comprise were built in the period from 1910 to 1940 in response to the rapid growth of the motion picture industry. Residential Neighborhoods. Many residential neighborhoods were built to house industry employees and have unique "period revival" or California architectural styles. Because of their distinguishable architectural styles, neighborhoods that have not experienced wholesale redevelopment in the last 25 years are well-defined. ..The original commercial districts in the Plan Revision area were characterized by one to three story buildings, which had storefronts along the street, with office or residential space above and limited parking behind. In recent years, these have been replaced by "mini-malls" with parking along the street. Mini-malls were made possible in large part because of the city's minimal parking requirement for commercial development

The MND for this project fails to take into account the historic nature of the existing buildings.

From CEQA guidelines: "When carrying out their responsibility under CEQA, lead agencies are required to consider buildings with official historic-designations (local, state, and national) as significant

during the CEQA process, but Lead Agencies are not precluded from treating any resource as historic during the environmental review process... [L]ead agencies should not restrict their ability to treat a resource as locally significant and consider potential impacts.”

The existing buildings on the site are over 100 years old, have been in continuous use and adaptive re-use, and remain from the earliest days of historic Hollywood real estate development and the electric Red Car trolley. The parcel of buildings at the site of the proposed project The buildings were an early Hollywood real estate office and the Red Car trolley ticket office. The existing buildings on the site retain the unusual triangular footprint from the days when the parcel was part of the Gardner Junction switching station. In 1914, the 7445 Sunset building was used by the Railway Realty and Investment Company, at Gardner Junction. The parcel is historically valuable as it retains a record of the earliest days of the Hollywood neighborhoods.

Across the street, on the south side of Sunset at Gardner, is the Electric Owl restaurant, whose name is slang for a railroad’s “night operator.” This property is also part of a parcel sharing the historic triangular footprint of the red car trolley switching station tracks. Its historic background is considered an asset to the restaurant. From the menu: “Electric Owl is a neighborhood restaurant and bar located in Hollywood, California. Situated on a plot of land that was once part of a train station, Electric Owl’s décor is modeled after the look and feel of a bygone era, evoking train travel culture and dining car luxury.”



Photo caption: Present-day example of adaptive re-use: Electric Owl restaurant at Sunset and Gardner, capitalizing on the glamour of the historic railroad era.

The Los Angeles Evening Herald announced that on May 16, 1914, the Railway Realty Investment Co. moved its main offices from 509 Hibernian building to 7445 Sunset Blvd at Gardner Junction, the Pacific Electric Red Car Trolley line. These remaining original structures, as they stand today, built in 1914-1920s are one of the last, if not the last, remaining intact historical references to the railway trolley that Hollywood and much of the City of Los Angeles was built around.

The applicant said notes that the current project site is under-parked by 61 spaces. Of course it is, this is and was Gardner Junction! The original site use was small offices on either side of the Pacific Electric red car line, with little need for parking. The area and infrastructure, including street design, was not built or laid out to accommodate the heavy vehicle and truck traffic we experience today. This proposed project is taking this location from 40 to 5000 average daily trips!

The surrounding area was built with small single-family homes (now Spaulding Square and Sunset Square HPOZs), small duplexes and garden apartments with Gardner Street Elementary School and small local neighborhood serving mom & pop businesses. The infrastructure is still much the same as it was then over 100 years ago: narrow residential streets, above-ground utilities, a single engine fire station, Fire Station 41, operating out of what was a single family home.

The site housed small, local businesses at a time, with maybe 10-15 employees altogether over the whole location. The neighborhoods around this west part of Sunset Blvd was very diverse, with workers from the studios, trolley line workers, movie businesses folks, local merchants, and families. There were local tailors, dressmaker, bike repair shop, hardware store, laundry services, music shops, a small local theater, banks, small fresh fruit and butcher shops, stationary shop, etc. The shops closed early. They didn't use terms like "liven up the street" because this is a neighborhood. and people want to sleep at night. Neighbors and shopkeepers knew each other. Children attended Gardner Street Elementary School, accessed via the "Tot Tunnel" under the intersection of Sunset Blvd and Gardner Street. Tot Tunnels were created in many locations where the Pacific Electric lines ran. One of the neighbors who spoke at the hearing about the negative impacts the project would impose on the neighborhood actually used the Tot Tunnel when she was a student during the 1960's at Gardner Elementary. Today, the sidewalk extension for the Tot Tunnel still remains and provides much-needed sidewalk space as a "curb extension" for pedestrian safety and walking.

For the past 62 years, since the last Pacific Electric Red Car trolley rolled out of Gardner Junction in 1955, the site has demonstrated a wonderful example of adaptive reuse, housing approximately 11-12 small businesses such as small offices, tailors, dry cleaners, shoe repair, acting classes, small Pilates studio, Ju-Jitsu studio, and a fine dining restaurant.

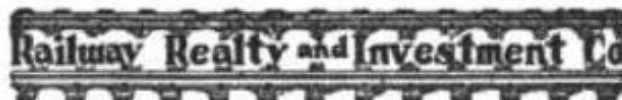
The neighbors and neighborhood is proud to have, and be a part of this historic record. Sunset Blvd. along this western part of the Hollywood Plan area still retains a remarkably high volume of original one and two story historic structures, creating a "rich in history" Hollywood, family oriented neighborhood. Single-family homes still remain on Sunset Blvd, with no alley or other buffer separating the commercial use and the immediately adjacent school and residential neighborhoods and streets. We are mindful of potential conflicts between commercial and residential uses.

REALTY CONCERN REMOVAL

The Railway Realty and Investment company has moved its main offices from 509 Hibernian building to 7445 Sunset boulevard. A branch will be maintained at the Hibernian building. The general sales force of the company is now located near the company's holdings at Gardner Junction, Hollywood.

\$16.50

each month until paid for, and a small payment down, starts you in business for yourself. This buys a rich, fertile ten-acre farm at Delano, midway between Los Angeles and San Francisco. You can raise fruit, produce, poultry, live stock, alfalfa, wheat, barley and other products. Get illustrated FREE LITERATURE.



Owners of Farms, City Homes and Lots

7443 SUNSET BOULEVARD, HOLLYWOOD, LOS ANGELES

**HOLLYWOOD—FOR SALE, EXCHANGE
OR RENT**

**A Cozy 6-Room Bungalow
Home in West Hollywood**

On the latest style and type, oak floors in living and dining room. Pretty mantel and grate, swell buffet and instantaneous water heater, with cement walks and porches, lawn, trees and flowers. Lot 50x135, one block from car line, near grammar and high school. See us at once and save agents' commissions. Take red Hollywood car line at 4th and Hill, get off at Gardner Junction and inquire 7443 Sunset blvd. It will pay you to see this home before purchasing elsewhere. Terms are easy. Just like paying rent.

**Railway Realty and Inv. Co.
7443 SUNSET BLVD.
Hollywood 531-579578.**

Photo Captions: Newspaper documentation of the Railway Realty and Investment Company, moving to 7443 Sunset in 1914.

Hollywood in general, and this neighborhood in particular, were built around the Pacific Electric red car trolley line. Many Hollywood starlets and studio workers made this area their home. Gardner Junction and the Pacific Electric Trolley line was a major influence on the development of Hollywood. Over a century later, we are fortunate to have this historically significant parcel.



Photo Caption: Sunset at Gardner, looking west from the project site. These original brick buildings remain.



Photo caption: Red Car Trolley at Sunset and Gardner. The buildings in this photograph remain.



Photo caption: Red Car Trolley near site, at Hollywood and Sycamore.

Oldest Hollywood Conductor Featured in Citizen-News

**Motorman Lee Titus, on Hollywood Line 28 Years,
Portrayed as Helpful Servant of the Public**

First of a projected series of articles on Pacific Electric by Austin Conover in the Hollywood Citizen-News was a fine story in the March 26 issue on Motorman Lee E. Titus, the oldest Trainman, in point of seniority, on the Hollywood Boulevard Line. Mr. Conover, author of the column "Roaming Around," has gladly consented to let this and other articles be reprinted in the PACIFIC ELECTRIC MAGAZINE.

Let the story speak for itself:

HOLLYWOOD MOTORMAN

"Trolley cars have been running on Hollywood Blvd. for the past 46 years. For more than half that time—28 years, to be exact—Lee E. Titus has been a motorman on that run.

"In all those 28 years, he has operated from Gardner Junction, down Hollywood Blvd., to Sunset, to Hill, to Genesee and Olympic and back. The run totals 30 miles and takes three hours to complete, including a 13-minute stop-over on the other side of town.

"On the basis of length of service, Titus has served longer than any other man on the Hollywood line of the Pacific Electric Co. He has transported more people than there are in

New York City. He has covered more miles than there are from here to the moon.

"But what attracted me to this blond, sprightly, 57-year-old motorman was his friendly spirit of helpfulness that never wavers no matter how monotonous or jarring his routine.

"Many of us along the Boulevard have seen him jump from his car to push an auto off the track, to free a couple of locked bumpers or to help an old lady alight.

"Today, Gardner Junction is just a name. But 28 years ago and for almost a decade thereafter, it was a junction in fact. A line used to run from there to Hollywood Blvd. and Laurel Canyon.

"Reminiscing the other day, Titus told me: 'Twenty-eight years ago there were so few autos on the road that here at Gardner Junction I could look down Sunset during the busiest part of the day and not see a single car.'

"Cars were whizzing by, one almost every second, as we stood talking.

"'Along Hollywood Blvd.,' Titus continued, 'there were as many horse-drawn carriages as there were autos. Believe it or not, I push as many stalled motor cars off the track today as I did then when the automobile was new. Scarcely a day now passes that I don't get out and push a stalled auto. Ladies get excited when they hear the trolley bell and stall their motor.'

"Not only has the traffic along the road increased tremendously in 28 years; but also the number of passengers who ride the trolley.

"'On an average day in 1918,' Titus said, 'my car took in \$14 to \$28. Today the average is \$48 to \$115. The fare and length of run are practically the same, though we do operate now with a 65-passenger car compared to a 40-passenger car in those days. The old cars could do only 25 miles per hour. The present ones can travel 50 m.p.h.'

"'It used to be,' added Titus, 'that a motorman got to know his passengers pretty well, especially the business people who took the trolley to and from work.'

"'Day in and day out, I would have practically the same people on my car every morning. For 10 years

straight I had two people who rode my car every week-day morning at the same time and sat in the same seat.'

"But with the growth of Hollywood, increased passenger and road traffic have severed those contacts. 'Now a fellow has to keep his eyes on the road,' Titus said. 'He hasn't time for the friendly "Hello," "Hi, Doc," or "Good morning, Joe."'

"Motormen and conductors seldom work in the same pairs for very long. The longest that Titus has ever worked with the same conductor was two years and that was with Ernie Shimmin.

"The most humorous incident that ever happened to me,' Titus declared, 'was one day when we were about to pull out of Gardner Junction. A Jap gardener came rumbling down Sunset in his little old Model T truck.

"I waited for him to pass. But he must have been asleep for he ran right into my car. It didn't hurt my car. But he thought it did. Never in my life have I heard so many "Excuse, please" as that man said or so much bowing as he did, getting out of his car to push it off the track.'

"You know, Conover,' Titus said, as we were parting, 'a man in my shoes sees a lot of both sides of life. He sees the road hogs, the grouchy passengers and the reckless pedestrians who run in front of his trolley. There's a lot to worry one in the course of a day; but I always think of myself as a servant of the public. They're the ones who pay my bills. So I try a little harder each time to please.'

"Titus is a church-going man who has taught Sunday school for many years. His hobby is playing the violin."



OLD-TIMER Lee E. Titus of the Hollywood Boulevard Line, and Mrs. Titus. They were married last February.



AUSTIN CONOVER, columnist for the Hollywood Citizen-News.

Photo caption: Article about newspaper coverage of Pacific Electric conductor.

This site meets criteria to be considered a historic resource. From the Cultural Heritage Commission and Office of Historic Resources Guidelines:

- Has the building retained “integrity”? Does it still convey its historic significance through the retention of its original design and materials?
- Is the site or structure associated with important historic events or historic personages that shaped the growth, development, or evolution of Los Angeles or its communities?
- Is the site or structure associated with important movements or trends that shaped the social and cultural history of Los Angeles or its communities?

Before destroying these irreplaceable buildings and the footprint of the historic site, an EIR should be performed. The buildings and the footprint of the parcel at the site of the proposed project site meet these criteria.

GAZETTE



**ORANGE EMPIRE
RAILWAY MUSEUM**

OCTOBER 2015
VOL. 124 NO.4

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**GARDNER
WEST HOLLYWOOD
BEVERLY HILLS
SANTA MONICA
CONNECTION**

I REALIZED MY

BROTHER WAS

Photo caption: Actress Stephanie Powers with her brother, receiving award.





Photo Caption: Tracks for the Pacific Electricline running past Sunset Blvd. and Gardner Junction.



Photo Caption: The trolley car passes the project site.

Photo Caption: The neighborhood and historic streets and buildings adjacent to the project site.

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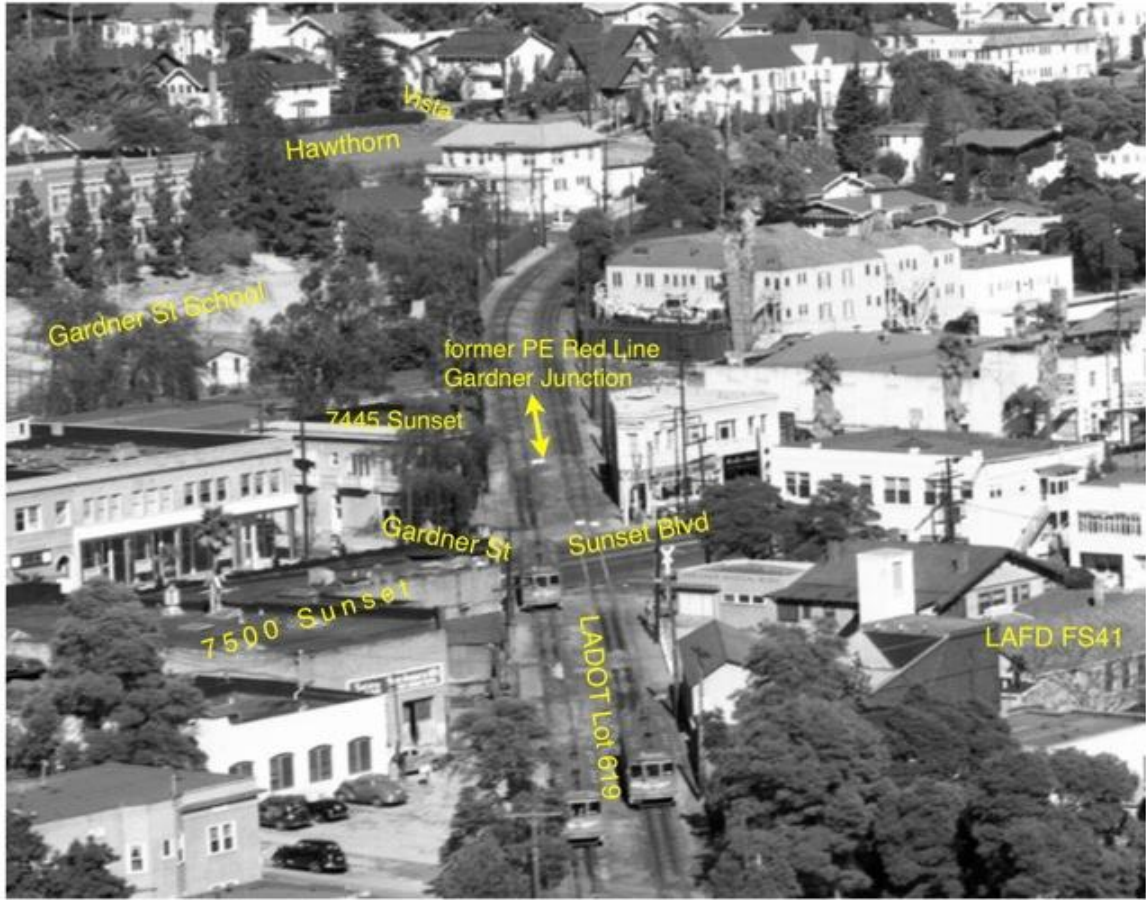




Photo caption: Red Car at the intersection of Sunset and Gardner.

Below: An article about the end of Gardner Junction's use as a switching station:

Western District

Pacific Electric "Box Motor" PCC 5005: Desperate Times Call For Desperate Measures

Posted on: May 30, 2015 by Pacific Electric [4 Comments](#)



Ralph Cantos Collection

By Ralph Cantos

On April 14, 1912, just after the RMS Titanic struck an iceberg, Captain Smith was informed by the Titanic's builder Thomas Andrews that the Titanic was doomed and was going to sink.

In October of 1953, when Jessie L. Hough purchased the passenger operations of the once-great Pacific Electric, he informed everyone involved with the PE's rail operations that all remaining rail lines (2 in the Western District, 5 in the Southern District) were "DOOMED."

And like the Titanic's brave chief engineer, whose men worked selflessly down below decks to keep the steam up, so electric lights and water pumps worked as long as possible, keeping Titanic afloat long enough to give some passengers more time — the PE crews of the Western District continued to provide top-notch service, despite their looming terminations.

And so it was during the last weeks of August 1954 that the dedicated and hard-working "Toluca Yard Shop Force" would do everything possible to keep the Glendale-Burbank Line alive and fully operational, knowing full well that the line was doomed.

The September 26, 1954, abandonment of the Hollywood Boulevard Line meant that West Hollywood Shops would be unreachable by electrified rail cars of the Glendale-Burbank Line. All

maintenance for the remaining 30 PCC and 15 Hollywood cars would be performed under primitive conditions in Toluca Yard.

This photo by the late, great Ira L. Swett was taken at Gardner Junction just a few weeks before the Hollywood Boulevard Line abandonment. It was now time for any and ALL usable parts at West Hollywood to be gathered up and moved to Toluca Yard.

And like the Titanic, the Glendale-Burbank line, PE's most modern and technically advanced rail line, was doomed. Toluca Yard's shop men would keep the cars and infrastructure in good working order until the very end, just 9 months later.

In this photo, the 5005 is deadheading to West Hollywood Shops to load up everything usable, and then return to Toluca Yard. According to Ira, several of these "box-motor" trips were made with various PCCs loaded with valuable parts to prolong the inevitable.

The Glendale-Burbank line went down with trolley poles held high. All 45 cars, track, overhead and signals were in perfect working order to the very end.

Ralph Cantos Collection



PE's vast West Hollywood Shops in about 1946. A Hollywood car and PCC can be seen in front of doors #2 and #3. The shops did "running repairs" for Western District cars for decades. With the September 1954 abandonment of

the Hollywood Boulevard Line , the shops were no longer accessible by Glendale -Burbank Line cars. By the end of 1954, the Glendale-Burbank Line was an "electrified island" in a sea of asphalt, under siege by a pro bus / anti-rail MCL management. Ralph Cantos Collection.



Rail fan and book publisher Jeff Moreau and his sister Stefanie pose for the camera in 1951 at West Hollywood Shop along with juice jack 1620 and Hollywood car 5085. Stefanie would go on to fame as actress Stefanie Powers. This photo is from the book "Growing Up With Trains" from long gone Interurban Press. Photo from the Jeff Moreau collection.



Photo caption: The buildings remain as examples of adaptive reuse.

Finding: Variance for Tandem Parking

The Zoning Administrator has approved a variance from the Neighborhood Commercial Corner Ordinance for 33 tandem parking spaces. This approval is in error and must be corrected and the request for variance denied.

I have attended every neighborhood meeting and hearing about this project. From the beginning, neighbors have been concerned about the high impact of use caused by, essentially, stacking two uses on top of each other. A grocery store is a by-right project for this site; ground floor retail or restaurant uses are also by right. Together, on the same site, they create too high an impact.

Stakeholders have asked from the beginning NOT to grant variances for tandem parking. The need for so many tandem spaces indicates a project that is too big for the site. The concentration of a grocery store WITH five to seven additional tenants – and we don't know what they are, but one is proposed as a high-turnover restaurant – is too impactful for a neighborhood commercial corner next to a sensitive receptor, Gardner Elementary.

With several vehicles per minute entering and leaving the garage, it seems likely that a valet will sometimes cause drivers to have to wait to claim or leave their vehicles. The space inside the garage is limited and will also need to accommodate loading and unloading for disabled passengers, bicycle users, and deliveries, grocery pick-up services. Ride sharing services such as Lyft or Uber, and grocery delivery services such as Instacart will become increasingly popular and the Zoning Administrator should have recognized that the project plan does not safely accommodate these uses.

Nor did the Zoning Administrator note that the plan for the ground floor parking is likely to cause queues at the entrances and back-up onto Sunset and Gardner streets. Any interruptions to the parking operations will cause hazards at the driveways, to other vehicles and to pedestrians. A variance for 33 tandem parking spaces in a neighborhood commercial corner should not have been allowed.

D-Condition

The Zoning Administrator should have honored the D conditions that should protect the site from high-impact developments. This neighborhood is not part of Hollywood's commercial core.

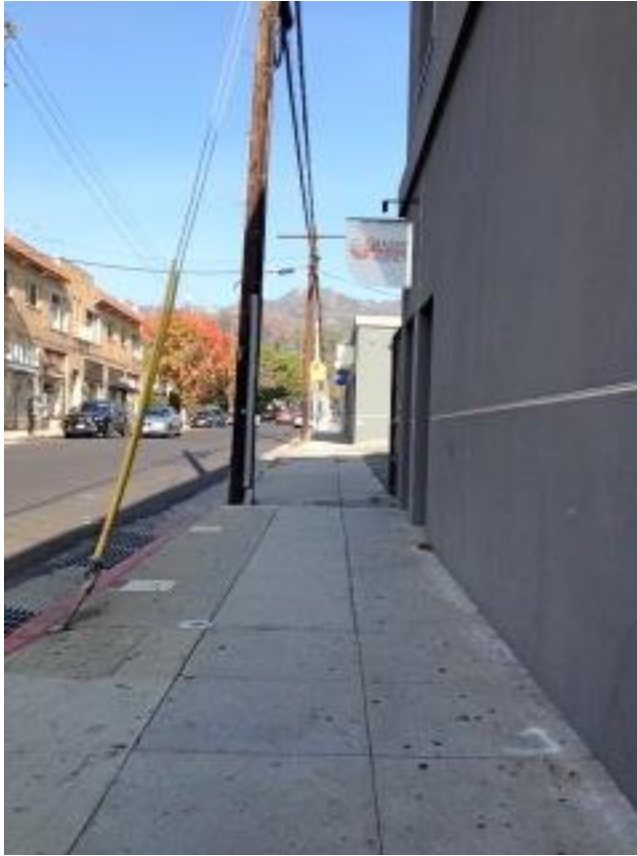
As the EIR for the 1988 Community Plan stated, the 1:1 FAR limitation is linked to **“an effort to make the transportation system and other public facilities and service systems workable.”** The 1988 EIR noted that, under the 1973 Plan, **“this level of development activity has resulted in significant burdens on the traffic circulation system within the Community Plan area, as well as other adverse impacts on public services and infrastructure. Development activity has also resulted in numerous land use conflicts and incompatibilities reflected in parking problems, aesthetic impacts, light, shade-shadow impacts of new larger buildings on existing lower density properties, the removal of architecturally or historically significant buildings, among other impacts.”**

This project will destroy historically significant buildings. It will have adverse impacts on public emergency services and traffic. A grocery store is a by-right use at this commercial corner with a D condition. Retail and restaurant uses are also by-right. Combined on the same site, they are too intense a use. The number of Average Daily Trips, the impact on sidewalks, the need for 33 tandem parking spaces, all demonstrate that this project is too intense.

At the public hearing on May 24, 2017, one of the applicants' representatives stated that the project planned outdoor dining on the public sidewalks for their additional 5-7 ground floor restaurants and retail spaces along Gardner Street and Sunset Blvd. This was the first the community had heard of this. Gardner Street sidewalk **cannot** accommodate a grocery store, high-intensity restaurants, storefront accesses, and outdoor dining on the sidewalks without substantially adding to the width of the pedestrian sidewalk right of way – which is currently five feet!! The applicant has never mentioned in the application or at any neighborhood council meetings about having outdoor dining on the public right of way.

The applicant intends to let spillover and overflow from the project onto the sidewalks. They have not set aside any footage in the project plans for sidewalk dining. While a couple of small restaurants nearby do have sidewalk dining, others include their sidewalk tables within the square footage of the restaurant itself [Electric Owl, Vintage Enoteca, Aroma Café] and do not infringe on the public right of way.

The conflicting needs at the site for interior square footage, parking, and outdoor dining that cannot be accommodated within the project indicate that the site is too intense and impactful for the site. It does not meet the D conditions or the definition of neighborhood-oriented commercial.



● **Photo Captions: Above, 5-Foot sidewalk along Gardner; below, Sunset Sidewalk with bus bench. Existing sidewalks are TOO NARROW to accommodate multiple uses as shown in the project plan.**





SUNSET BOULEVARD PERSPECTIVE

Rendering show the existing wider sidewalk-bulb-out at intersection as it is now, that is proposed to be removed.

Rendering does *Not* show Traffic signal lights, Power lines / poles, Bus stop, Bike parking on sidewalk...or vehicles and trucks accessing site through traffic, or the Guitar Center driveway.. etc

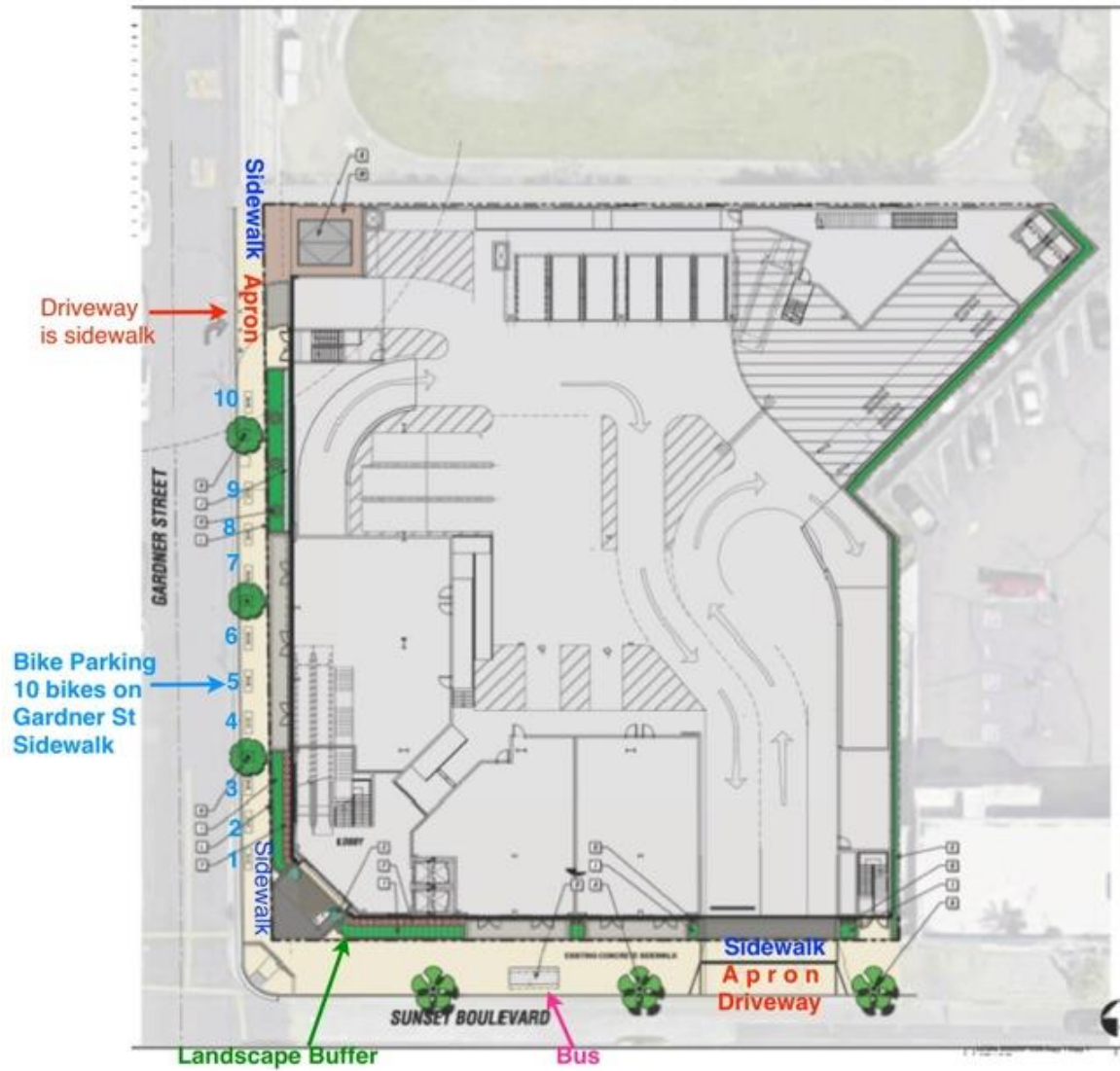


Street light and Power Lines
(that cross Sunset Blvd)

Sidewalk-Bulb-out
Ped & Child Safety HIN

Traffic Signals must be relocated

Crosswalks moved and
re-stripped



For these reasons, an EIR should be required for this project. Destroying multiple historic buildings