

Appeal of CEQA Categorical Granted  
for the dispensing and sale of a full line of alcoholic beverages

7441-7449 West Sunset Boulevard  
1506-1516 North Gardner Street

Appeal filed by Julia Mason, Cheryl Holland, Michael Konik, Lincoln Williamson



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

Please deny the CEQA categorical exemption for this project. The site was developed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century as part of the Red Car streetcar line at Gardner Junction.



**Pacific Electric Red Car traveling west on Hawthorn adjacent to the project site.**

# Hollywood History

The buildings at the project site are designed around the trolley tracks. They are one of the last remaining traces of the beloved Red Car line and the earliest days of Hollywood's history. In fact, this neighborhood is designated on early census tracts as Streetcar Suburban.

This parcel is a historic resource, as confirmed by the letter from blue-chip preservation society Hollywood Heritage, and the letter from appellant Cheryl Holland.





## Gardner Street Elementary School

is a Title 1 school, defined as one where students live with a high concentration of poverty. Approximately 400 students attend. Most students and their families live in the immediate neighborhood and use the sidewalks to walk to school. Families residing south of Sunset use the crosswalk at Gardner, which is controlled by a traffic light.

Students coming from the south or the east pass directly by the project site.

All impacts from construction noise and disturbance, particulate pollution, the eventual project's noise and exhaust will directly abut the school playground with no separation. [Seen here: school playground behind fencing; concrete building is part of project site.]

We know children are particularly sensitive to pollution of all types.

**By granting a categorical exemption so early in the process, the city has closed our opportunities to study and request mitigations.**



# A sensitive site affected by hazardous impacts.

The proposed project directly abuts our school playground with no alley or other insulation.

We believe the school playground and learning garden — virtually the only play space for children in this park-poor neighborhood, and heavily used throughout the day into the evening — is a sensitive area that must be protected to the fullest extent of local and state environmental regulations.

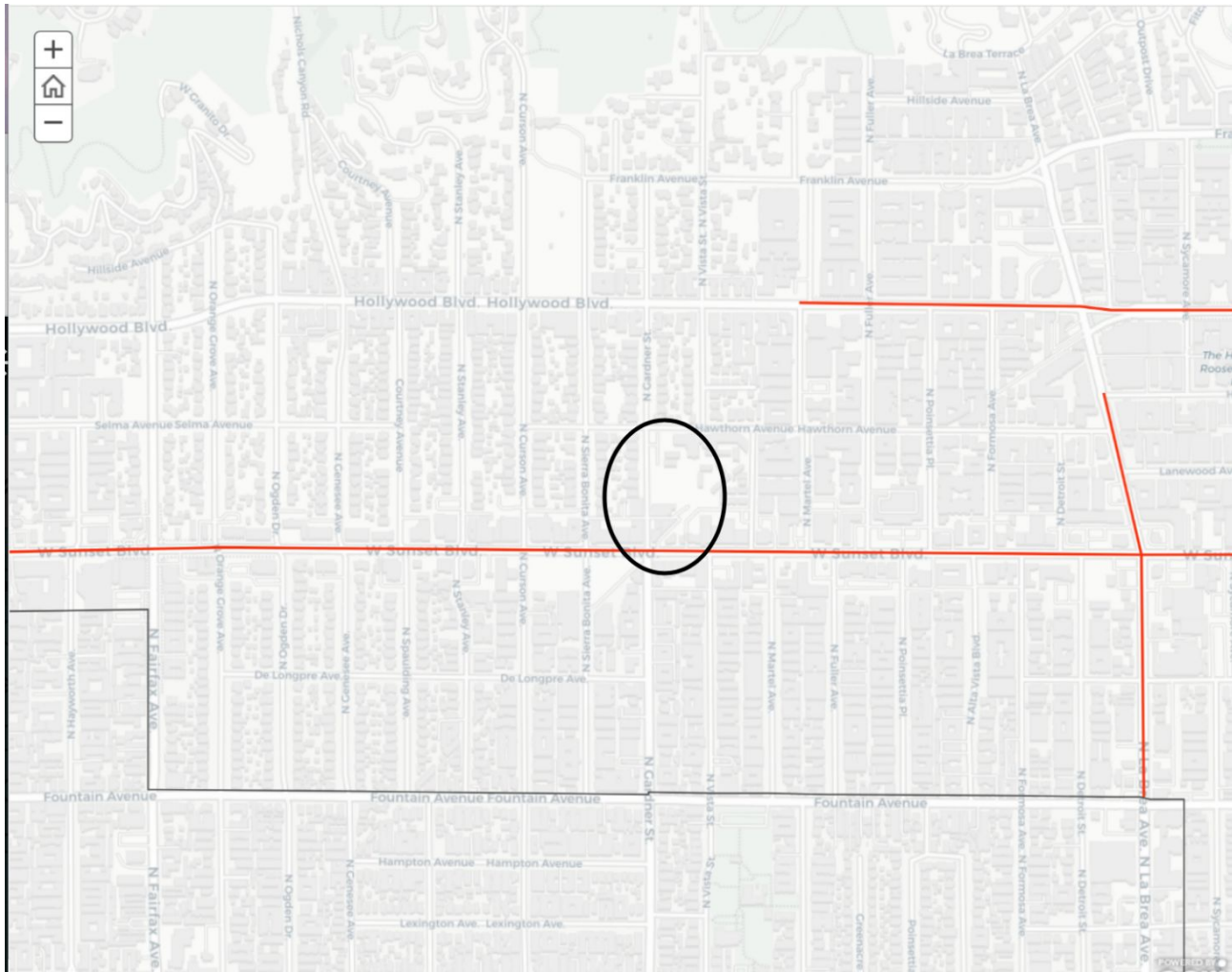
This project would cause considerable disruption and hazardous impacts during demolition, construction, and use.

Now, two driveways between the buildings and flanked by open parking spaces provide visibility and direct traffic away from the school. If this project is built, all trucks and vehicles will instead enter and exit through the single driveway, with visibility drastically restricted from the building, directly across the narrow sidewalk and onto the 50-foot wide Gardner Street and into the neighborhood.

The building would tower over the school.

**The neighborhood council unanimously opposed this permit application. None of our concerns have been resolved.**

**Currently 8 venues serve alcohol within one block of the project site to the east and west. There is no urgent need for more.**



## Network

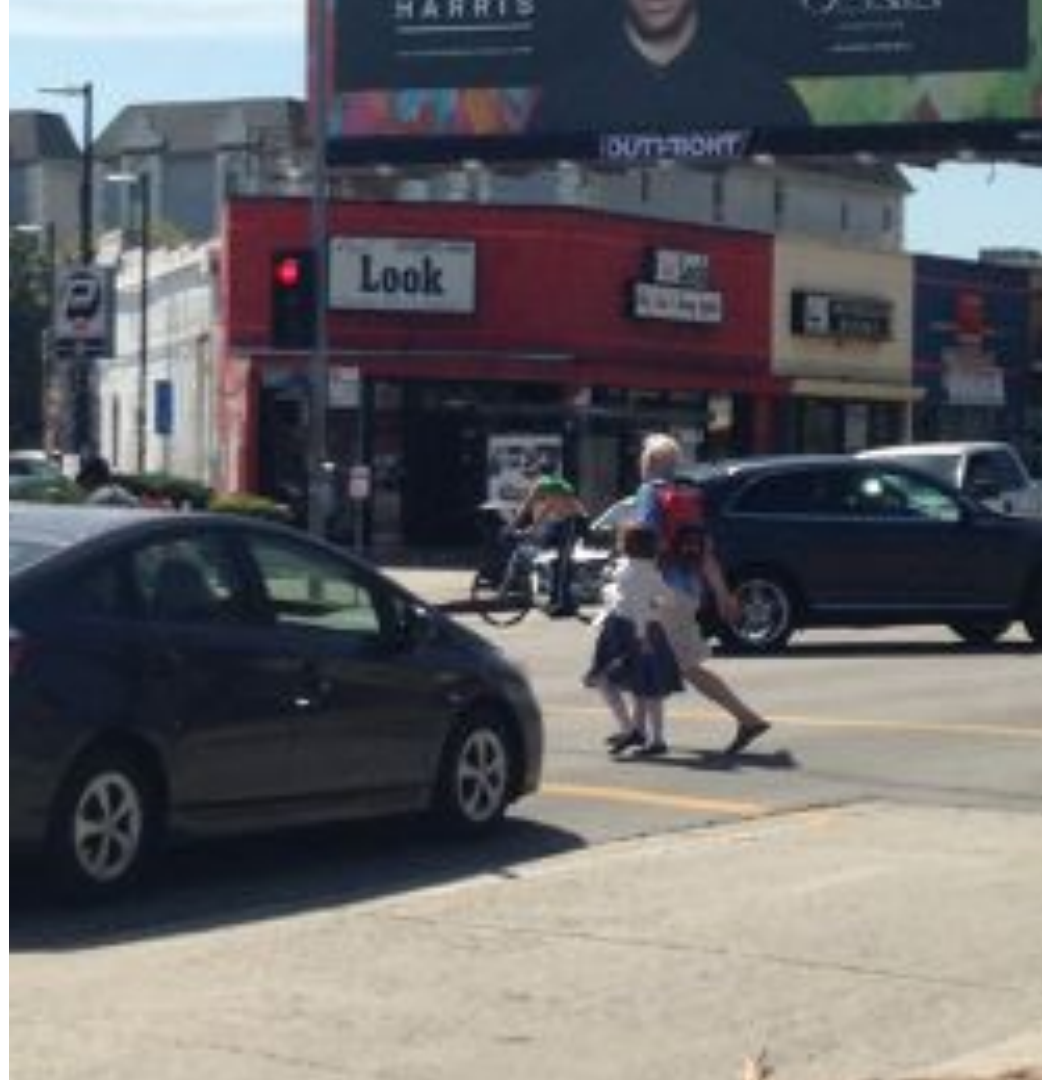
The City of Los Angeles High Injury Network (HIN) spotlights streets with a high concentration of traffic collisions that result in severe injuries and deaths, with an emphasis on those involving people walking and bicycling.

(Source: SWITRS, LADOT. January 2009 – December 2013.)

## Data Highlights

People walking and bicycling are the most at risk of being hurt or killed while moving about the city.

Students and families travel to and from school past the project site at Sunset and at Gardner, part of the High Injury network of streets.







# 1500 block, North Gardner Street

Gardner Street is a 50-foot wide side street with a curb bump-out extension to calm traffic. The neighborhood is one mile west of Hollywood's commercial core and is a quiet residential neighborhood within the Sunset Square HPOZ and, four blocks to the west, the Spaulding Square HPOZ.

The neighborhood lacks parks and green space, and the school playground is an essential space for students to play.







Cyclone fencing next to the project site borders the school playground. Note the narrow sidewalk on a street already further narrowed during business hours by parked cars.

**These original buildings, along the Red Car's right of way, remain at the project site. Second story windows in the brick building across narrow Gardner Street are from RSO apartments. Now driveways at the project site divert vehicles away from the school. This safe flow of traffic makes the set of buildings ideal for adaptive reuse. Project plans call for these driveways to become part of the enclosed building.**



Note the visibility from and location of main driveway.



# Hazardous impacts

Although the Zoning Administrator imposed several conditions on the operations of the proposed businesses when he granted the alcoholic beverage permit, the hazardous impacts that most concern the literally hundreds of parents, families, and neighbors who have written letters, appeared at hearings, and signed our petition were not considered. Without final plans or permit applications for the project, the community cannot assess the hazardous impacts from construction noise and dust next to our playground, plus particulate pollution and exhaust from the project, as well as delivery and utility trucks and staff and customer vehicles traveling through the building to the rooftop parking, which will loom over the school playground and the apartments across Gardner to the west.

**How can we request mitigations when we do not have confirmed project plans? How can we assure our students they are safe when mitigations we did request were not provided?**

## Response of CD 4 Office (former Representative Nithya Raman)

“We recognize that the zoning administrator tried to tailor conditions to ensure that the proposed restaurant in a commercial environment, “will be developed and operated in the manner proposed, and compatibly with the surrounding community.” It is unclear if any additional entitlements will be requested or what they will be. For this reason, a conditional use to permit the continued sale and dispensing of a full line of alcoholic beverages may be a bit premature.

“We are mindful of substantive concerns raised by neighbors, including the Hollywood Hills West Neighborhood Council, the appellant, and stakeholders affiliated with Gardner Street Elementary School (an abutting neighbor) regarding traffic impacts, noise issues, hours of operation, pedestrian safety, saturation of similar uses near sensitive areas (i.e.within 1000 foot radius of a residential area and an elementary school), and multiple operations selling alcohol separately under one license among others. Further, while we understand that the physical development for this location is not part of this determination, we would also like to ensure that the most robust efforts are carried out to minimize negative impacts to the school from any future redevelopment of this site.”

# Student and family safety

Last week, in response to two separate accidents where students on their way to school were struck by cars, resulting in serious injuries and one tragic fatality, Los Angeles Unified School District Superintendent Alberto Carvalho tweeted: “We need... more enforcement around schools specific to... provide additional safety precautions and measures to ensure safe passages to schools.”

Neighbors and school families familiar with the site and proposed driveway on the small, fragile side street predict the same thing can and will happen here.



Sidewalks are narrow and cannot be expanded into the narrow street. This is the site of the proposed project's driveway.





# Sidewalk safety

Most importantly, we are beyond concerned about the safety of our neighbors and school families who use the sidewalk on Gardner, a quiet side street, to walk to and from school and home, or to visit businesses nearby.

The project building extends all the way to the sidewalk. Visibility at the driveway will be impaired. How will drivers exiting the building be sure to see whether a child or a baby stroller is about to cross the driveway before it is too late?

How will delivery trucks safely enter and exit?



Emergency vehicles stuck in traffic at Sunset and Gardner intersection; photo taken from project site looking west. Gardner Street is the main northern route for engines coming from Station 41 at 1439 N. Gardner, one half-block south of the project site. Fire engines and emergency vehicles will have to negotiate around all vehicles using the project site driveway.

Emergency response times will be negatively impacted.

