

NEIGHBORS UNITED

P. O. Box 35103, Los Angeles, California 90035



- Faircrest Heights Community

August 4, 2016

Gabriela Juarez
Department of City Planning
200 N. Spring Street, Room 750
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Sent by email to: gabriela.juarez@lacity.org

Re: DIR-2014-4817, ENV-2014-4814-EAF 6116-6144 W. Pico Blvd

Dear Ms. Juarez:

Neighbors United is a neighborhood association representing more than 900 households in the Faircrest Heights Community. It is bordered by Pico Boulevard on the north, Fairfax Avenue on the east, Guthrie Street (or the Kaiser Permanente Hospital wall) on the south, and La Cienega Boulevard on the west. This community consists predominately of single residential homes many of which were built during the 1930's and 1940's. It also includes several small lot subdivision homes, duplexes and apartment homes.

As some of our residents live within 500 feet of this project and nearly all of us travel, shop and/or work in the affected area, we are concerned with its critical impact on our community for many reasons.

After meeting with developers for this project earlier this year and expressing numerous concerns about the size and scope of the proposed 6-story, 100-unit building, the developers returned and presented a revised proposal of a 5 story building with 84 units at the PICO Neighborhood Council meeting. However, the revision was never filed with the Planning Department for this hearing. It appears that the developers used a "bait and switch" approach with the community and we question their "Good Faith" with its proposed neighbors. We have listed our concerns are as follows:

- The project would violate existing architectural character and erode neighborhood cohesion in the adjacent longstanding, close-knit residential neighborhoods, such as South Carthay, Carthay Square, Faircrest Heights and CHAPS, some of which are existing or pending HPOZs.
- Q-conditions in the Faircrest Heights/CHAPS community call for adequate buffering between commercial and residential zones. The Wilshire Community Plan states in Section 2.1 Land Use c. Incompatible Land Uses: "The occurrence of the adjacency of two uses that are incompatible due to their scale/density or function for the purposes of this report is considered to be a **'significant' impact.**" This is zoned as a Mixed Used area adjacent to an area zoned for residential and is absolutely out of scale and density which WILL have a significant impact on quality of life.
- Residents have expressed concerns regarding decreases in their property values and quality of life due to the addition of a project of this magnitude.

- While we understand the rationale for greater density near major public transit routes (such as Metro lines) but the bus stop at Pico & La Cienega hardly qualifies. Neither Pico nor La Cienega are major public rapid transit corridors and. Residents of this project will inevitably use automobiles as their primary source of transportation, exacerbating the existing serious parking shortage, excessive traffic, and safety situations and further taxing local infrastructure.
- This project proposed a *grossly* inadequate number of parking spaces both for apartments and retail space, which would force residents and retail patrons into the residential neighborhoods, which are already parking impacted. In addition, of the 239 parking spaces proposed, 220 are tandem (i.e., only 19 are not tandem). It is difficult enough for residents to handle the logistics of tandem parking, but retail customers will never wish to endure the headache of tandem parking, and will just park in the residential neighborhoods. In addition, the lack of retail parking will make it unlikely that an attractive business (one that will benefit the community) will wish to lease the space.
- Plans for ingress/egress are inadequate and cause concerns re: safety issues. That section of Pico Blvd is already too congested to accommodate a major entrance/exit point, and the rear alley (directly abutting a residential neighborhood, onto which neighbors' garages feed) is not even wide enough for two way traffic now, and will be grossly inadequate for accommodating the proposed number of residents and retail patrons.
- In mixed use projects across the city, retail space often remains vacant, or is eventually leased to businesses that do not serve the community well. We wish to know more about how the first floor space will be laid out, so as to have a better sense of whether the space would be conducive to a larger sized business such as a grocery store. We would also assert that in order to attract such a beneficial business, the project would need *much* more retail parking.
- The City notes the critical need for low-to-moderate income housing. However, this project and others in the surrounding community requesting a density bonus provide no more than one or two such apartments.
- We question how the developers can demonstrate that the project actually needs the density bonus in order to 'pencil out.' We would like to be provided with demonstrable evidence of the need for the density bonus (as we understand is required, per SB1818).

For these reasons we urge you to deny this application

Sincerely,



Laura Anderson, President

cc: Herb Wesson –City Council President; Councilmember, 10th District
Paul Koretz – City Councilmember, 5th District
Jordan Beroukhim – Planning & Land Use Deputy, 10th Council District
Elizabeth Carlin – Deputy West, 10th Council District
Jasmine Shamolian – Field Deputy, 5th Council District
Brad S. Kane – President, PICO Neighborhood Council
Members, PICO Neighborhood Council Land Use Committee