



BMO/BHO Amendments, CF no. 14-0656

1 message

Charles Brown <cat1brown@att.net>

Fri, May 13, 2016 at 10:48 AM

Reply-To: Charles Brown <cat1brown@att.net>

To: "david.ryu@lacity.org" <david.ryu@lacity.org>, "paul.koretz@lqacity.org" <paul.koretz@lqacity.org>, "councilmember.wesson@lacity.org" <councilmember.wesson@lacity.org>, "tom.rothman@lacity.org" <tom.rothman@lacity.org>, "ken.bernstein@lacity.org" <ken.bernstein@lacity.org>, "craig.weber@lacity.org" <craig.weber@lacity.org>, "nicholas.maricich@lacity.org" <nicholas.maricich@lacity.org>, "phyllis.nathanson@lacity.org" <phyllis.nathanson@lacity.org>, "niall.huffman@lacity.org" <niall.huffman@lacity.org>, "councilmember.huizar@lacity.org" <councilmember.huizar@lacity.org>, "councilmember.harris-dawson@lacity.org" <councilmember.harris-dawson@lacity.org>, "councilmember.englander@lacity.org" <councilmember.englander@lacity.org>, "councilmember.cedillo@lacity.org" <councilmember.cedillo@lacity.org>, "councilmember.fuentes@lacity.org" <councilmember.fuentes@lacity.org>, "sharon.dickinson@lacity.org" <sharon.dickinson@lacity.org>

Sirs -

As a long-time resident in the LaBrea-Hancock neighborhood I am directly experiencing the impact of mansionization, with four oversized houses on my block alone and more on the blocks immediately south and north. These homes are changing the character of the neighborhood in ways that are not compatible with the existing neighborhood and that are not compatible with the long-term health of the city.

The proximity of the neighborhood to the future LaBrea-Wilshire subway station should play some role in planning for the neighborhood and what type of building should be allowed. MY experience is that these oversized houses are being built for couples - families are not moving in and, despite what one of the council members said at one of the hearings I went, none of the incompatible buildings have anything to do with expanding an existing dwelling for large, multigenerational families. That is not what is occurring.

The homes that are being built are lowering the population density of the neighborhood when, if anything, approaches that would increase the density would be more appropriate. If we are to maintain the neighborhood as single family I am entirely in agreement with the text below and believe that the final ordinances must tightly restrict and limit oversized home development. However, at risk of being labelled a heretic, I also believe that the long-term plans for the neighborhood must be part of a longer-term vision for the city that considers reshaping neighborhoods for new technologies, alternative transportation modes, smart growth, walkable neighborhoods, etc. Allowing this sort scattered new development gets in the way of implementing more sensible long term plans by creating new structures that are a contradiction to desirable, healthy urban transition.

The first draft of amendments to the mansionization ordinances made a good start. The Planning Department collected more than 600 responses -- by almost 4-to-1, people asked for tighter limits on home size.

But the latest draft takes a wrong turn.

- ***We asked for meaningful reform. Instead, the latest draft preserves loopholes that undermined the ordinance in the first place. These include the exemption for attached garage space (even in "the flats") and excessive allowances for grading and hauling, to name just two.***
- ***The Council Motion provided the blueprint for a simple, effective fix. Instead, the latest draft borrows elements from Re:Code LA that make the ordinance harder to understand and harder to enforce. These include "encroachment planes" and***

“side wall articulation.”

While the process falls further and further behind, mansionization is spoiling neighborhoods all over Los Angeles.

People who feel that developers are calling the shots at City Hall – and there are a lot of them – see this as further proof.

The Planning Department needs to stop mansionization in the simplest, most effective, and timeliest way. That’s what residents and homeowners demand and what the Council Motion calls for.

It’s time for Los Angeles to put stable communities and neighborhood character ahead of real estate speculation.

Charles Brown



Sharon Dickinson <sharon.dickinson@lacity.org>

BMO/BHO Amendments, CF no. 14-0656

1 message

Craig Rich <craig.rich@alumni.stanford.edu>

Fri, May 13, 2016 at 8:58 AM

Reply-To: Craig Rich <craig.rich@alumni.stanford.edu>

To: paul.koretz@lacity.org, councilmember.wesson@lacity.org, vince.bertoni@lacity.org, tom.rothmann@lacity.org, ken.bernstein@lacity.org, craig.weber@lacity.org, nicholas.maricich@lacity.org, phyllis.nathanson@lacity.org, niall.huffman@lacity.org, councilmember.huizar@lacity.org, councilmember.harris-dawson@lacity.org, councilmember.englander@lacity.org, councilmember.cedillo@lacity.org, councilmember.fuentes@lacity.org, sharon.dickinson@lacity.org

Cc: Craig Rich <craig.rich@stanfordalumni.org>

Planning Department,

I am writing to express support for legislation to strictly limit the size of home construction and remodeling across Los Angeles via Baseline Mansionization and Baseline Hillside Ordinances (BMO/BHO).

The first draft of amendments to the mansionization ordinances made a good start in placing limits on home size that relate allowable home size to lot size. However, the current drafts of the BMO and HMO preserve loopholes that undermined the ordinances in the first place. These include the exemption for attached garage space (even in "the flats") and excessive allowances for grading and hauling, to name just two.

More specifically, attached/exempt garages add 400 square feet of bloat. The exemption of up to 400 square feet of attached garage space creates an artificial incentive for this style of construction which is often contrary to the character of a neighborhood. Attached garages also result in the loss of driveways that put air between homes.

Arguments in favor of increased home sizes are seem clearly motivated by businesses (e.g. construction, realtors, "house flippers") who have financial interests in direct correlation to home square footage. And the shameless scare tactics employed in my neighborhood of West Los Angeles, whereby realtors are passing out flyers to home owners with clear, personal revenue motivated advice to motivate these same homeowners to undermine their neighbors and their community, is outrageous.

Strong, vibrant communities are typically comprised of long term residents, who invest and live in a home for many years (decades even). These residents do not benefit from grossly overbuilt homes. To the contrary, their quality of life is diminished by out of scale home sizes, legal or illegal increases in density via short term rentals, community recovery clinics, and/or long term rentals (with their impact on resources and local schools). And the argument that allowing for oversized home construction benefits residents when they retire and wish to move on is thin at best. A neighborhood with homes built in the 1920s to 1940s when craftsmanship and character were valued over square footage and re-sale value, are highly desirable. Just look at the Craftsman neighborhoods in Pasadena and Long Beach for examples. Replacing such homes with the equivalent of modern era track housing only diminishes the inherent value of older homes, the residents living nearby, and neighborhoods as a whole.

Sincerely,

Craig Rich



Sharon Dickinson <sharon.dickinson@lacity.org>

Subj: BMO/BHO Amendments, CF no. 14-0656

James Hanes <jameshanes@sbcglobal.net>

Sun, May 15, 2016 at 5:47 PM

Reply-To: James Hanes <jameshanes@sbcglobal.net>

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Dear PRESIDENT WESSON, City Council Members, and Planning Staff,

The above-referenced amendments to the Interim Construction Ordinance (ICO) seeks to strengthen restrictions put in place to combat runaway "Mansionization" in fifteen Los Angeles neighborhoods.

The above-referenced amendments to the Interim Construction Ordinance (ICO) seeks to strengthen restrictions put in place to combat runaway "Mansionization" in 15 Los Angeles neighborhoods. **We request an immediate council initiative to add the neighborhood of CRESTVIEW to the ICO.**

We are dismayed that our neighborhood, Crestview, never made it on to that list, particularly as Crestview is one of the neighborhoods hardest hit by rampant tearing down of properties characteristic of the neighborhood and its historic Southern California lifestyle, and the replacing of those properties with light- and sky-hogging cell blocks that show a complete disregard of neighbors' right to privacy, to sunlight, and to our neighborhood's unifying aesthetic that outside profiteers know little about and care even less for, given that they have no intention of living in the neighborhood they are exploiting, and no intention of living with the results of their defacement of Crestview.

Simply put, we, the undersigned, urge you, Councilman Wesson and Councilman Koretz, to include the neighborhood of Crestview in the list of neighborhoods that will be subject to the ICO and its proposed amendments. In doing so, you will be able to demonstrate that you care about the rights of your most important constituents, the homeowners of your districts.

Thank you, James Hanes, Crestview resident



Subj: BMO/BHO > Amendments, CF no. 14-0656

Steve Tietsort <stietsort@att.net>

Sun, May 15, 2016 at 6:27 PM

Reply-To: Steve Tietsort <stietsort@att.net>

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Dear PRESIDENT

> WESSON, City Council Members, and Planning
> Staff,

I am writing you as a
> longtime neighbor in Crestview who voted for you and as
> someone who will continue to live and work and pay taxes in
> our beloved neighborhood. I supported many of you in
> your election. I am alarmed at the recent tearing down
> of history in our neighborhood of Crestview.
> Homes on Sherbourne were torn down last month (April, 2016). A
> giant multi-story 4,000 square foot house will replace a
> 1200 square foot home, with what we believe to be a double
> garage in front and as part of the house surrounded by much
> smaller original charming Spanish
> bungalows.
>

The first draft of amendments to the BMO/BHO made a good
> start. By almost 4 to 1, residents'
> responses supported the meaningful BMO reform outlined
> in Councilmember Koretz's original motion. But the latest draft
> takes a wrong turn by
a) preserving loopholes (exemptions
> and bonuses) that undermined the ordinance in the first
> place, and
b) borrowing elements from re:Code LA that make
> the ordinance more difficult to understand and enforce. Your
> loopholes weaken our street, our lives, our neighborhood and
> quality of life.

While the process gets off track and falls behind, mansionization is spoiling
> neighborhoods all over LA including our BELOVED CRESTVIEW
> filled with historic and valuable Steinkemps, stained glass
> windows, and stunning interior details that are now being
> demolished as we speak. One house on our 1800 block of
> Sherbourne Drive for example, was until last month a spanish
> gem. It's gone now. See enclosed photos.
>
> Another house's second story
> looms over the backyard at 1823 S. Sherbourne. Why must we move
> to make room for more room? Other cities have important and
> strict regulations. Why don't you put an end to the
> loopholes?

- > Why are
 - > developers calling the shots at City Hall?
 - > Councilmember
 - > Koretz's motion (and the first draft of proposed
 - > amendments) provided the blueprint for a simple, effective,
 - > and reasonable fix that would allow
 - > renovations, expansions and new construction, while
 - > protecting our treasured neighborhoods from being ravaged by
 - > reckless development.
 - > Additionally, Crestview was left out of the
 - > original ICO. WE ARE HOPING THAT BELOVED CRESTVIEW WILL BE
 - > ADDED TO THE ICO AND ARE IN THE PROCESS OF REQUESTION.
 - > Please, support and champion the intent of Councilmember Koretz's
 - > original motion. Ensure the ordinance does not retain (or
 - > create new) harmful loopholes – or get so filled with
 - > technobabble that it becomes impossible to understand or
 - > enforce.
- LISTEN to WE stakeholders across the city. Show that you care for
- > homeowners who have spent much of their lives making our
 - > neighborhoods AND schools better!

Sincerely,
Steve Tietsort

>