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April 16, 2015

The Honorable Council Members
City of Los Angeles
Room 395, City Hall
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Attention: City Council

Re: Ordinances: 183496 and 183497

Dear Honorable Members:

On March 25, 2015, the City Council adopted two Interim Control Ordinances (ICOs) for a period of 45 days to address the proliferation of large, out-of-scale homes in 20 neighborhoods throughout the City. The City Council must renew them prior to May 8, 2015 for them to remain in effect for up to two years. Please see the attached resolutions, which explain the need for this extension. Additionally, the attached City Council Report explains the measures taken by the Department of City Planning to alleviate the conditions which led to the adoption of the ICOs.

Sincerely,

Tom Rothmann
Senior City Planner

City Council Report

Re: Ordinances Nos. 183496 and 183497

On March 25, 2015, the Council of the City of Los Angeles, under Council File No. 14-0656, adopted Ordinance Nos. 183496 and 183497 as urgency measures pursuant to California Government Code Section 65858. Ordinance No. 183496 establishes a moratorium on the issuance of building and demolition permits for properties within the following five proposed Historic Preservation Overlay Zones (HPOZs):

1. Sunset Square – Council District 4
2. Carthay Square – Council District 5
3. Holmby – Westwood – Council District 5
4. Oxford Square – Council District 10
5. El Sereno – Berkshire Craftsman District – Council District 14

Ordinance No. 183497 prohibits the issuance of building permits for the construction of single-family dwellings on RA, RE, RS, and R1 zoned lots in the following neighborhoods where the proposed construction does not meet certain neighborhood-specific criteria:

1. Valley Village – Council District 2
2. South Hollywood – Council District 4
3. La Brea Hancock Neighborhood – Council District 4
4. The Oaks of Los Feliz – Council District 4
5. Miracle Mile – Council District 4
6. Larchmont Heights – Council District 4
7. Lower Council District 5 – Council District 5
8. Beverlywood – Council District 5
9. Inner Council District 5 – Council District 5
10. Fairfax Area – Council District 5
11. Bel Air – Council District 5
12. Faircrest Heights Neighborhood – Council District 10
13. Kentwood – Council District 11
14. Mar Vista/East Venice – Council District 11
15. Old Granada Hills – Council District 12

These ordinances were adopted to provide adequate time for the Department of City Planning to bring forward for the City Council's consideration five potential new HPOZs, to make changes to the City's Baseline Mansionization Ordinance, and to establish permanent contextual zoning for the above-listed neighborhoods. Both ordinances expire on May 9, 2015, unless extended by the City Council before then, for an additional 22 months and 15 days.

The Department of City planning has prepared this report, for the City Council's adoption, describing the measures that the Department is taking to alleviate the conditions that led to the adoption of the ordinances.

Creating HPOZs

The Department of City Planning's Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ) Unit has begun preliminary work to process five proposed new HPOZs for the communities of Sunset Square, Carthay Square, Holmby–Westwood, Oxford Square, and the El Sereno–Berkshire Craftsman District. However, more substantial work on the new HPOZs is awaiting the imminent hiring of staff that will constitute the Department's Neighborhood Conservation Unit. The Department has already secured funding authority for these new positions.

The adoption of new HPOZs is a significant undertaking requiring considerable staff time, public outreach, and formal public review processes. The additional staff will allow the HPOZ Unit to review, evaluate, and process the historic resources surveys that serve as a prerequisite for the creation of new HPOZs. Staff will also be conducting considerable public outreach in each neighborhood and, working with stakeholders in each community, will develop Preservation Plans containing detailed design guidelines tailored to the architectural styles and preservation priorities in each neighborhood. Upon completion of the Preservation Plans, staff will hold a more formal open house and public hearing for each proposed HPOZ, and then bring the proposed HPOZs for consideration by the Cultural Heritage Commission, the City Planning Commission, and the City Council.

Amending the BMO

The City's Baseline Mansionization Ordinance (BMO) (Ordinance No.179,883), effective on June 29, 2008, established regulations for single-family residential zoned lots (i.e., R1, RS, RE9, RE11, RE15, RA, RE20, and RE40) not located in a Hillside Area or the Coastal Zone, and created new size limitations based on height and Floor Area Ratio (FAR). The BMO allows for a one-time 20% FAR bonus if the applicant complies with certain architectural features or the LA Green Building Code.

Since 2008, however, the proliferation of out-of-scale development in single-family neighborhoods has demonstrated that the baseline set forth by the BMO is too generous in the context of the above-listed neighborhoods. Therefore, the Department of City Planning is preliminarily analyzing for potential revision certain of the BMO's provisions, including the base FAR, the 20% FAR bonus, and the Residential Floor Area (RFA) exemptions.

The Department's Code Studies Unit is awaiting imminent hiring of staff to conduct the necessary outreach and formal analysis to amend the BMO. The Department has already secured funding authority for these new positions. Similar to

the adoption of new HPOZs, the amendments to the BMO will require significant staff time, public outreach, and formal public review processes.

Creating Contextual Single-Family Zones

As a part of the “re:code LA” initiative, the Department of City Planning has begun preliminary work to create more contextual single-family zones. Currently, there are just eight types of single-family zones (i.e., R1, RS, RE9, RE11, RE15, RA, RE20, and RE40) throughout the entire City. This limited number is not enough to reflect accurately the unique blends of scale, massing, building setbacks, architectural styles, and landscaping of these residential neighborhoods. Therefore, the new single-family zones will consider more than height and FAR to meet the needs of each type of residential neighborhood. Additionally, the new Zoning Code will include form standards to clarify the type and extent of development that can occur on each lot. These form standards will be informed by a neighborhood-scale analysis, which includes elements such as street patterns, lot orientation, and building placement. With the assistance of the “re:code LA” consultant team, this analysis has already begun.