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February 3, 2020

To: PLUM Committee
Re: DIR-2019-3828-COA-1A
ENV-2019-3829-CE
Council File No. 20-0062
Property at 6500 Olympic Place, Los Angeles, CA 90035

#10
Date 2/4/20
Submitted in PLUM Committee
Council File No. 20-0062
Item No. 10
Deputy Comm. from Public

I am the Chairperson of the Board serving the Carthay Circle, South Carthay and Carthay Square Historic Preservation Overlay Zones (the "Board"). My wife and I have been residents of the South Carthay neighborhood for over 35 years.

The following is my response to the attempt to reverse the decisions of the Central Area Planning Commission and the Planning Director that rejected the proposed second story addition to the referenced property (the "Property") owned by Jennifer Quinn Govey and Eric Govey ("Appellants").

For many years, throughout this country, there has been a recognition by people of all political beliefs that we have been watching a significant loss of faith in our basic institutions, including local, state and federal government. The marriage of money and politics and political cronyism has been a major cause of that loss. These very proceedings are a good example of why people more frequently feel that they no longer have control of their neighborhoods and communities. This Committee has been asked to ignore and set aside (i) the unanimous action of an HPOZ board made up of members of the local neighborhood, that (ii) was based on specific language of the 2010 South Carthay Preservation Plan (to wit: second story additions "are not appropriate") that was adopted by a democratic vote of the residents of South Carthay, that (iii) was joined in by the staff of the City's Planning Department and adopted by the City's Planning Director, and which determination (iv) was unanimously upheld by the Central Area Planning Commission. Following those events, one would reasonably assume that the applicable guidelines, rules and procedures adopted by the neighborhood and the City had been applied fairly and lawfully and had led to a just result that all stakeholders in the community would accept. But no, Councilmember Koretz decided to intervene on behalf of a single resident of the South Carthay neighborhood, and against the broader interests of the community, to have this neighborhood issue resolved by this PLUM Committee. Whereas I would have earlier imagined that Mr. Koretz would have been a vocal supporter for historic preservation and local control, his recent action on behalf of Appellants and his earlier support of their project was a surprise. Then I discovered by searching the City's database of campaign contributions and other online resources that Mr. Koretz has received campaign contributions in excess of \$4,000 from the Applicants' attorney (Robert Glushon) and Mr. Glushon's family, and that Mr. Glushon has been a prominent political supporter of the Councilmember. Since Mr. Koretz has never before

opposed any previous action of the Carthay HPOZ Board to my knowledge, one can only imagine what has motivated this particular intervention.

Councilmember Koretz seems to believe that his judgment ought to substitute for that of the Board, the expertise of the Planning Department staff and the Planning Director, and the thoughtful and judicious consideration of the Area Planning Commission. He also seems to believe that his interpretation of the 2010 South Carthay Preservation Plan (the "Plan") should trump that of those who were appointed to carry out its provisions. In that regard, the Committee should consider the following:

1. The August 15, 2019 meeting of the Board, at which the Board unanimously refused to recommend approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness, was the fourth appearance of Appellants before the Board (and the predecessor board which handled the South Carthay HPOZ before being merged into a board handling the three Carthay neighborhoods). Each of those earlier appearances was for a consultation, and at each of those hearings the boards made it clear to Appellants that the Plan clearly stated that second story additions "are not appropriate". [While Appellants and even Councilmember Koretz have referred to Appellants' project as "a one-half (1/2 story addition", that characterization is wholly disingenuous. Appellants are currently living in a one-story house with a high roof line in one location. Although they are looking to add a second story which for all purposes will function as a second story, they maintain that they are adding only a half story because it will project only a half story above the highest part of their roof.]

2. The South Carthay HPOZ has one street (Whitworth Drive) which has a single block that was developed in the 1930s with 2-story homes, and several blocks which form the east and west boundaries of the neighborhood that were developed at that time primarily with duplexes. The remainder of the HPOZ, with a few exceptions, has only one-story single family homes. Although there are a few two-story homes not located on Whitworth, each of those was built or remodeled prior to the adoption of the Plan in 2010. Allowing Appellants to construct a second story addition would not only adversely affect their immediate neighbors, but would create a terrible precedent under the Plan that would end up destroying the character of this neighborhood which has prevailed for nearly 90 years.

3. Appellants have misstated the evidence that was presented at the hearing on August 15, 2019. There was no evidence that the Plan was not intended to prohibit second-story additions. The plain language of the Plan makes clear that second-story additions would not be permitted. Also, although the Plan must prevail over the individual views of residents, it remains that there was not overwhelming support of the neighborhood for the project. Some neighbors spoke in favor of the project; others spoke against it. The vast majority of the residents of South Carthay were not present. In my view, one of the most persuasive arguments made by a neighbor and former chairperson of the South Carthay HPOZ was in the form of a letter from Michael Olecki which was first presented at one of the consultations in 2016 and again introduced at the August 15, 2019 hearing. The letter from Mr. Olecki, since deceased, is attached hereto as Exhibit A.

Appellants have other options if their desire is to add square footage to their home. They can expand toward the rear of their property, which would generally be permitted under the Plan. Alternatively, like many other growing families, they can look for a larger house in another neighborhood. There is no compelling reason to permit Appellants to permanently alter one of the beautiful historic homes in South Carthay, in violation of the Plan and which would set a precedent that would ultimately undermine the rationale and purpose of the Plan.

Finally, this Committee should appreciate the concern of the South Carthay neighborhood and the Board that their desire to preserve the historic character of South Carthay looks to be thwarted by this appeal to the City Council. Just as the City Council was justifiably concerned that SB 50 would shift zoning authority from local control to the State, and as a result voted 12-0 to oppose that measure, we also want to preserve our right to implement the Plan without being overruled by the Council. I don't think that is too much to ask.

Very truly yours,



EDWARD FRIEDMAN

cc: South Carthay Neighborhood Association
Pico Neighborhood Council
Carthay HPOZ Board
Los Angeles Planning Department
Los Angeles Times

EXHIBIT A

[see attached letter from Michael Olecki}

Michael J. Olecki
1050 South La Jolla Ave.
South Carthay

October 5, 2016

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**Re: 6500 Olympic Place
Consultation
"Second-story addition to a one-story structure on a corner lot"**

Dear Members of the South Carthay HPOZ Board:

Because I will be out of state (and therefore unable to attend Thursday's meeting), I write to provide public comment on the consultation for a "second-story addition to a one-story structure on a corner lot" (6500 Olympic Place, the "Property"). As discussed in more detail below, I request that the Board dissuade the Property's owner, the "Quinn 2012 Irrevocable Trust for the benefit of Jennifer C. Quinn," from attempting to submit an application to add a second-story addition.

My wife (Karen Bodner) and I have lived in our home directly across the street from the Property since 1991. I am the former Chair of the South Carthay HPOZ Board. We bought our home specifically because of the HPOZ protections, particularly the prohibition on second-story additions to single-story structures. Indeed, before buying our home, we had lengthy discussions with then-Chair (and co-founder of the HPOZ) Fred Naiditch. It was very important to us – and to many others who bought here in reliance on the HPOZ status – that our new neighborhood not experience the type of second-story building that was happening in the neighborhood we were attempting to flee. We had seen first-hand how second-story additions and other overbuilding harm the livability, and architectural appeal, of a charming neighborhood.

The South Carthay HPOZ Preservation Plan addresses this issue head-on, leaving no room for guesswork on the issue of second-story additions to single-story structures:

3. Additions that comprise a new floor (for instance a new second floor on a single-story house) are not appropriate.

See South Carthay HPOZ Preservation Plan, Ch. 8, at p. 57 (emphasis supplied). Because the Board's mission is to determine whether proposed additions to structures are appropriate, the Preservation Plan provides the straightforward answer here: no, a second-story addition to a single-story structure IS NOT. See also Ch. 8 of Preservation Plan (descriptions of the types of additions that *are* appropriate).

Beyond that, this is the Property owner's second (or third) attempt to seek approval for such a second-story. In 2011, the Board sent a strong message that such a second-story would be inappropriate. Although the Board members have changed, in part, since 2011, the preservation plan has not. A change in Board members should not be a means to achieve a different result. If anything, HPOZ preservation is about consistency and continuity.

6500 Olympic Place is a stellar example of the architecture that makes South Carthay special. It is also a prominent corner property at the intersection of two streets of single-story homes. It is also *already* a large structure, being several hundred square feet larger than almost all the surrounding homes. A second-story would create a remarkably *inconsistent* exclamation point in a place where it does not belong (despite the applicant's apparent contention that a second-story would provide "consistency" on corner lot properties). There may be ways for the Property's owner to achieve greater living space, but a second-story is not an appropriate one.

Finally, we understand that the applicant has gone door-to-door with a petition regarding the issue. Although there are a number of reasons why such a petition is unpersuasive, the most pertinent are that those signing the petition may not be familiar with the express prohibitions in the Preservation Plan, may simply have been trying to be friendly during a neighbor's face-to-face request, or may have signed based on hearing information that is *inconsistent* with or irrelevant to the HPOZ requirements. The HPOZ process provides for public comment if an actual application were to be submitted, and I am confident that a large number of residents – including some who actually signed the petition – will express their opposition to any second story addition at that time.

* * *

James Caccavo *et al.*
October 5, 2016
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In summary, we urge the Board to cite the Preservation Plan in encouraging the Property's owner to avoid pursuing a proposal that is *per se* inappropriate.

Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,



Michael J. Olecki

cc: Blair Smith
(By email)