



Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning

Planning for the Challenges Ahead



Richard J. Bruckner
Director

May 6, 2010

TO: Wayne Rew, Chair
Pat Modugno, Vice-Chair
Esther Valadez, Commissioner
Leslie G. Bellamy, Commissioner
Harold V. Helsley, Commissioner

FROM: Mi Kim 
Principal Regional Planning Assistant
Zoning Permits I Section

**SUBJECT: May 12, 2010 RPC PUBLIC HEARING
AGENDA ITEM NO. 7
PROJECT NO. R2009-02015-(2)
(GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT NO. 200900013/ ZONE
CHANGE NO. 200900013/ CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO.
200900150/ ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT NO. 200600147)
MILLENNIUM-PLAYA DEL MAR 216-UNIT APARTMENT**

Attached are two letters. One letter is from the applicant's attorney requesting support of the project; the other, is an email from a neighboring property owner expressing opposition.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me via email at mkim@planning.lacounty.gov or at (213) 974-6443.

MC:MKK

5/6/10

ARMBRUSTER GOLDSMITH & DELVAC LLP

LAND USE ENTITLEMENTS □ MUNICIPAL ADVOCACY

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VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

May 6, 2010

Hon. Wayne Rew, Chairman
County of Los Angeles Regional Planning Commission
320 West Temple Street, 13th Floor (Hall of Records)
Los Angeles, California 90012

Re: Millennium Playa del Mar Apartments: County Project No. R2009-02015; 5550 Grosvenor Boulevard, Los Angeles

Honorable Chairman Rew and Commissioners:

We represent Din/Cal, Inc. ("Din/Cal"), the applicant of the above-referenced project located in the Del Rey community of the 2nd Supervisorial District of unincorporated Los Angeles County. Din/Cal, Inc. is a subsidiary of the Dinerstein Companies, which is a recognized national leader in residential apartment community development and operations. Established in 1955 in Houston, Texas (where the company is still headquartered), the Dinerstein Companies is a family-owned and operated residential builder/operator, which, since its beginning in 1955, has developed and constructed over 50,000 multi-family units in 26 states. Significantly, Dinerstein Companies is also a recognized leader in building environmentally-sustainable multi-family housing projects, with over \$332,000,000 worth of LEED Silver-designated and higher housing product currently under construction throughout the country.

Din/Cal is proposing development of a LEED-certified, 216-unit apartment project on an approximately 4½-acre underutilized "urban infill." The project site is currently developed with the City of Angels Church of Religious Science, surface parking and landscaping, and a single-family residence that is owned and rented out by the church. The church has chosen to cease operations at the site. The property, which is located several hundred feet northwest of the intersection of Centinela Avenue and Jefferson Boulevard in close proximity to the Playa Vista development, comprises the southern-most portion of an unincorporated County "island" that is bounded to the south, east and west by the City of Los Angeles.

Beyond providing much needed new multi-family rental housing in this area of the County, the project has been designed to blend into the neighborhood and to enhance its character. Special care has been taken in designing the project to ensure its physical compatibility with adjacent land uses, which consist of single-family residences to the north, high-density apartments to the south, commercial office and light industry to the west and a mixture of residential properties and businesses to the east. For example, the apartment building has been stepped in height from one and two stories along the northern edge of the complex (in proximity to the single-family residences located north of the site), increasing to a maximum of four stories as the building transitions from north to south across the site toward the existing (denser) apartment complexes that are located adjacent to and southerly of the subject property. Ample

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landscaping and a large building setback (undulating from a minimum of 35 feet to as much as 100 feet) have been provided along the northerly edge of the site to appropriately buffer the apartment building from the single-family residences sited to the north. On the south side of the project, the units have been oriented toward the north into private courtyards, to maintain the privacy for the existing apartment residents to the south. To appropriately buffer the project from the apartments to the south, the building has been set back a minimum of 7 feet from the alley and substantial landscaping has been provided along this edge. A "green screen" will also be incorporated onto the parking garage façade to visually buffer the garage from the apartments it will face.

We are aware that a few letters have been submitted commenting on the project and the adequacy of the project's EIR. We believe that the County has carefully prepared the EIR in full compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act. Many of these are the type of comments that the County regularly receives on projects it approves. Nonetheless, Din/Cal has taken the concerns of its neighbors very seriously. In fact, Din/Cal has performed, and is continuing to undertake, a tremendous amount of outreach regarding the project to neighbors and community groups in the project vicinity. These efforts are summarized in the "Millennium Playa del Mar Outreach" memorandum provided in your staff report package. In direct response to the input received through this outreach process, and from meetings with the Planning Director and his staff, Din/Cal has made the following project modifications:

- Reduced the overall height of the project by 4 feet. As a result, over 91% of the building is 47-foot-tall or less. The highest point calculated by the County is 54 feet, 6 inches, and this tallest portion of the building comprises less than 1% of the building height;
- Reduced the height/mass of the parking garage by approximately one-half level;
- Enlarged the east courtyard by 27% to provide greater levels of light and ventilation into the courtyard;
- Both of the project's "captured" courtyards will have light colored exterior finishes to reflect light toward the north facing units;
- The east/west interior corridor (north/east of the parking structure) has been aligned. An open stair has been positioned at the end of this corridor and the stair doors will be on a hold-open device to allow light and ventilation at the end of this corridor;
- Entry stoops have been added at the east and west ends of the building;
- The 1st floor patios have been enlarged on the east and west sides of the building and in the captured courtyards; and
- Private bike lockers have been added at the first floor adjacent to the pedestrian building entrances on the east and west ends of building.

To facilitate its planned development, Din/Cal is requesting a General Plan Amendment, a Zone Change, and a Development Program Conditional Use Permit (to aid your Commission's evaluation of the appropriateness of the proposed project design and density for the subject property, Din/Cal has submitted burden of proof statements/findings for an "Urban Infill" project, even though Din/Cal has not made application for an Urban Infill project). Please note that Din/Cal's requested General Plan Amendment, from Low-Density Residential to High-Density Residential on the site, is not as dramatic as it may first appear, because the County failed to update its General Plan designation for the site when the

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site was up-zoned from R1 to R3 in the 1980's, so there is disagreement between the site's current R3 zoning and its Low-Density General Plan land use designation. Nonetheless, we trust you will concur Din/Cal's burden of proof statements for its proposed General Plan Amendment and Zone Change (from R3-DP to R4-DP) provide ample background and justification for these requests.

We respectfully urge your approval of this outstanding project. Thank you very much for your valued consideration of these matters, which we look forward to discussing with you at your May 12, 2010 public hearing on this case.

Sincerely,



William Delvac

cc: Tom Malloy
Paul Novak, Planning Deputy to Hon. Michael D. Antonovich, Supervisor, 5th District
Josh Vasbinder, Din/Cal

Kim, Mi

From: susiestree@aol.com
Sent: Friday, April 30, 2010 3:56 PM
To: susiestree@aol.com; Child, Mark; Maxmoz@aol.com
Cc: KKatona@bos.lacounty.gov; Kim, Mi; Curzi, Anthony; drosenfeld@bos.lacounty.gov
Subject: your suggestion re: land use and noise impact for the configuration at the SH Oaks Galleria

Dear Mr. Child:

I just wanted to update you and thank you again for your interest and thoughtfulness when we met this week with Ms. Katona. I appreciated your remembering **one** place in this city that has a parking garage that faces the units of an apartment complex. I had been studying the landscape for weeks since seeing the Dinerstein plans and had not found any building configured with neighboring buildings as they have designed.

I visited the Sherman Oaks Galleria at your suggestion and specifically the Grand Apt Complex that fronts Sepulveda and faces the parking garage of the Galleria to it's rear. As I noted in my earlier e-mail, this apartment property was built **after** the building of the Galleria and at the **choice** of the builder.

The entire complex had double pane windows and central air that we, at Club Marina, do not have. Unlike our building that has all rear units with patios and all front loft units with rooftop decks that face the rear, this building at the Galleria had only a "fake facade of a patio and merely windows that open to this garage.

I must say that the noise from Sepulveda and the parking garage were all quite profound with car radios blaring as cars pulled into the garage to park, but all of this noise didn't compare to the 405 frwy and the 101 that cross at that intersection. It was all very loud and unpleasant.

The people who live in the complex must not open their windows at all and only use their AC. I was thinking that the people who chose to live in this complex, must have just moved to LA from maybe Manhattan, where noise like this is more common.

Also, the Galleria parking garage was not 20 feet taller then the Grand Apartments. They were about the same height. The proposed height of the Dinerstien project is 20 feet + higher then our building and it will absolutely take away our entire view and light. Even though the Sherman Oaks apartments were about the same height and not 20+ feet taller then the Galleria garage, it was still very dark in the roadway between the two buildings. It was late afternoon when I was there and only the very top floor of the apartment complex in the rear of the building facing west got just a little sun light peeking over the parking structure.

I walked off the drive between the garage and building and it was a little more then 30 feet from the parking structure, which is similar to our configuration according to the

Dinerstein plans.

The Grand is over 200 units, like Dinerstein wants to build, and their parking was underneath their building. Obviously the Galleria parking garage was for the Galleria, not these units.

My visit unfortunately only affirmed my resolve that the plans for this project at the City of Angels Church property are highly inadequate and the density of this project out of proportion to the neighborhood, but it was an excellent and thoughtful suggestion. It gave me a first hand visual of what to expect and what I have to expect, if this project goes forward as planned, is disastrous for my building and my tenants.

I thank you.

Most sincerely-
Susan Boyer
owner of 12435 West Jefferson
818 995 8772

-----Original Message-----

From: susiestree@aol.com
To: mchild@planning.lacounty.gov; Maxmoz@aol.com
Sent: Tue, Apr 27, 2010 12:24 pm
Subject: thank you for meeting with us

Dear Mr. Child,

Wayne, Debby and I would all like to thank you for your time and interest yesterday at our meeting arranged by Mr. Thomas's office.

I really found you to be informative and most thoughtful. I plan to visit the Sherman Oaks Galleria tomorrow and observe the configuration of their parking garage to their apartment complex. I gave it further thought last night and I would like to note that their apartment building at the Galleria was built **after** the development of the Galleria--at the choice of the developer. Our apartment complex and it's design came first to this situation we are now faced with.

Many thanks again-

Susan Boyer
818 995 8772