CITY OF GARDENA
PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMISSION
TUESDAY, AUGUST 16, 2016, MEETING

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Called to order by Chairman Kaskanian at 7:00 P.M.

ROLL CALL

Present:	Brenda Jackson, Philip Johnson, Steve Sherman, Harout Kaskanian, Nolan Jamora
Also in Attendance:	Mitchell G. Lansdell, City Manager Lisa Kranitz, Assistant City Attorney Raymond Barragan, Community Development Manager William Kavadas, Planning Assistant Lawson Chew, Planning Assistant

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Led by Commissioner Jackson

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Commissioner Johnson and seconded by Commissioner Sherman to approve the minutes of the May 17, 2016, meeting. The minutes were approved 5-0.

Ayes:	Johnson, Sherman, Jamora, Jackson, Kaskanian
Noes:	None

PUBLIC HEARING

Agenda Item #5
Site Plan Review #10-15
Approval of a site plan review to allow the demolition of an existing 5,230 square foot commercial building, construction of a new 4,300 square foot drive-thru restaurant, and a complete façade renovation of the existing 4.12-acre commercial shopping center located in the Commercial (C-2) zone.
Project location: 15501 South Normandie Avenue (APN: 6105-008-013)
Applicant: Rich Development

Planning Assistant Lawson Chew presented the Staff Report and recommended that the Planning and Environmental Quality Commission adopt Resolution No. PC 5-16 approving Site Plan Review #10-15 to allow the demolition of an existing 5,230 square foot commercial building, construction of a new 4,300 square foot drive-thru restaurant, and a complete façade renovation of the existing 4.12-acre commercial shopping center located in the Commercial (C-2) zone and direct Staff to file a notice of exemption.

Vice-Chairman Jamora expressed concerns about the length of the drive-thru lane and asked if the Gardena Municipal Code has a minimum length requirement.

Mr. Chew replied that the Gardena Municipal Code does not specify a minimum length requirement.

Commissioner Jackson asked if the project will include sidewalk improvement.

Mr. Chew replied that Public Works has provided comments to require specific sidewalk improvements. These comments have been incorporated into the conditions of approval.

Commissioner Johnson expressed concerns that the shopping center does not have sufficient parking.

Mr. Chew replied that proposed project is intended to provide additional parking through reduction of total gross building area, and reconfiguring the parking layout from 45 degree angled to 90 degree angled parking. Mr. Chew explained that a substantial reduction in gross floor area would be required in order for the shopping center to comply with current parking requirements.

Commissioner Jackson commented that the shopping center's parking situation is due to the condition of the striping of the parking lot and believes that proposed improvements will resolve the issues.

Commissioner Sherman agreed that the reconfiguration of the parking spaces would benefit the center by providing clearly indicated parking spaces.

Chairman Kaskanian wanted additional clarification regarding the number of owners of the shopping center.

Mr. Chew explained that the shopping center previously had multiple owners but is currently owned by one property owner with the exception of the northeast corner property. Mr. Chew explained that both properties share an access agreement but any agreement for shared parking is unofficial.

Chairman Kaskanian expressed concerns about the lack of parking within the commercial center.

Chairman Kaskanian opened the public hearing.

Tab Johnson, the Applicant's representative, provided a brief description of the proposed project. Mr. Johnson commented that they have prepared new marketing materials that show the proposed improvements which have created interest. Mr. Johnson continued to comment that without the proposed improvements they have experienced difficulty filling the vacant tenant spaces. Mr. Johnson commented that he is available for any questions that the Commission may have.

Commissioner Sherman expressed concerns of possible vehicle congestion near the proposed drive-thru and the access point with the adjacent commercial building.

Mr. Johnson explained that the design includes a wider two-way driveway width to accommodate extra vehicles queuing for the drive-thru and allow vehicles to continue to travel.

Commissioner Johnson asked if they have a tenant for the proposed drive-thru restaurant.

Mr. Johnson replied that they are currently negotiating with three national credit type tenants and would be unable to disclose specific names of the tenants.

Mina Semenza, resident, commented that her questions have been answered by the Applicant and is hopeful for a quality national tenant.

Chairman Kaskanian closed the public hearing.

MOTION: It was moved by Vice-Chairman Jamora and seconded by Commissioner Jackson to adopt Resolution No. PC 5-16 approving Site Plan Review #10-15 subject to attached conditions of approval (Exhibit A) and directing Staff to file a Notice of Exemption.

The motion passed by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Jamora, Jackson, Johnson, Sherman, Kaskanian
Noes: None

Agenda Item #6
Site Plan Review #3-15 Variance #1-16
Site Plan Review approval to demolish an existing industrial building and develop a new 41,142 square foot, 35 foot tall industrial building for future manufacturing and warehousing use in the General Industrial (M-2) zone; and

Variance approval for three-foot-tall block wall with five-foot-tall metal fence, where an eight-foot-tall masonry wall would be required.

Approval of these items requires adoption of a mitigated negative declaration and mitigation monitoring plan.
Project location: 12901 South Western Avenue (APN: 4061-013-009)
Applicant: Overton Moore Properties

Planning Assistant William Kavadas presented the Staff Report and recommended that the Planning and Environmental Quality Commission adopt Resolution No. PC 10-16 approving Site Plan Review #3-15 and Variance #1-16 to adopt a mitigated negative declaration and mitigation monitoring program for – and approving the site plan review for demolition of an existing industrial building and construction of a new 41,142 square foot, 35 foot tall industrial building for manufacturing and warehousing use, and approving a variance for a three foot fall block wall with five foot tall metal fence where an eight foot tall masonry wall is required.

Vice-Chairman Jamora questioned if a logistics company would be the tenant at this location.

Mr. Kavadas responded that the final user had not yet been determined but the final user would be required to meet the requirements of the Gardena Municipal Code.

Vice-Chairman Jamora questioned the sound study and the effects that large trucks would have on adjoining residences due to the change in fence material. Commissioner Jamora suggested the use of Plexiglas material to block sound.

Mr. Kavadas stated that the noise study was provided by the applicant and vetted by the environmental consultant. The consultant determined that the project as proposed would not have any adverse noise impacts.

Chairman Kaskanian opened the public hearing and asked the applicant to come forward to speak.

Timur Tecimer, Overton Moore Properties, 19300 South Hamilton Avenue, Gardena, came forward and said that he thought the project would bring jobs to the City. Mr. Tecimer also stated their past success in similar projects across Southern California shows that this building will attract an entrepreneur who wants to work close to home. Mr. Tecimer expected a corporate office type use with some light assembly. Mr. Tecimer also addressed public comment mailed to the Planning Division regarding air quality. Mr. Tecimer stated that best management practices as set by the South Coast Air Quality Management District would be enforced during construction and eventual operation. Mr. Tecimer also stated the soil cleanup would also be a factor of development for this project. Mr. Tecimer stated that the aesthetics of the building would be improved by removing the dilapidated building and replacing it with a new building.

Commissioner Jackson questioned landscaping along the western frontage.

Mr. Tecimer stated that landscaping would be provided along the western frontage to shield the adjoining residences from any adverse aesthetic impacts.

Commissioner Sherman questioned the prior manufacturing use and the hazardous materials that were used as part of their processes. Mr. Sherman also asked about ground water quality issues.

Mr. Tecimer stated that Overton Moore Properties assumed all future clean-up liability for the site. Mr. Tecimer stated that Overton Moore Properties required the previous users to close all Los Angeles County environmental hazards permits that were issued to the site. Mr. Tecimer also stated that ground water typically begins around 60 feet deep. As soil samples produced at 20 feet found insignificant amounts of contaminated soils, there is little concern for ground water contamination.

Chairman Kaskanian questioned what kind of user would occupy the building and what their hours may be.

Mr. Tecimer stated that he expects the user to have some value-add component and be a displaced company relocating from Hawthorne or El Segundo. Mr. Tecimer stated as the building is speculative, it has been designed with use flexibility in mind.

Chairman Kaskanian is concerned that a 24-hour business will occupy the space and cause adverse noise impacts in the late night or early morning hours.

Mr. Tecimer stated he sees 24 hour uses as a logistics use which he does not believe would be the targeted tenant for this type of building.

Commissioner Sherman questioned the discrepancy between plans showing an area set aside for manufacturing and plans showing the entire building as a warehouse use.

Mr. Tecimer stated that, as a final user is not known, the exact layout of building is not definite but more parking could be added if needed by removing dock doors not needed by the tenant.

Commissioner Sherman questioned the use of the rollup door on the buildings western frontage.

Mr. Tecimer stated that the rollup door is meant to allow at grade access into the building for small fork lifts or trucks.

Chairman Kaskanian opened the public hearing.

Ronald Jeffries, 12924 South Manhattan Place, stated that the sound study was invalid because the building had been vacant for the past year. Mr. Jeffries also stated that the location of the residential area in a cul-de-sac at the bottom of a hill created a greater noise effect due to everyday occurrences such as ambulances or airplanes. Mr. Jeffries stated that the removal of the existing wall and the placement of the new three-foot-tall wall with metal fence would increase noise impacts and would reduce privacy. Mr. Jeffries also stated that there are adverse runoff issues due to the placement of a transformer on the neighboring properties (12901 and 13007 Western). Mr. Jeffries stated that he would like a continuance on the project because he is opposed to the proposed fence due to noise impacts and the vines attracting rodents.

Mr. Tecimer stated that he is aware of the drainage issues on the site and is working with the City to fix the drainage impacts on the property. The transformer located on the neighboring property is causing the drainage culvert to fail which is causing the adverse water runoff issues to the neighboring properties. Mr. Tecimer stated that Overton Moore Properties had the previous building owner remove illegal construction in the rear of the property that was constructed over the drainage culvert. Mr. Tecimer stated that as part of the proposed project, on-site drainage would be corrected to reduce stormwater runoff issues to the residential properties by keeping water runoff directed towards South Western Avenue.

Mr. Jeffries stated that the transformer is located at 13007 South Western Avenue. Mr. Jeffries stated that the transformer has not jammed the drainage culvert but created a crack in the wall that is causing the runoff issues. Mr. Jeffries called for the project to be continued to submit more evidence regarding the drainage issue.

Commissioner Jackson questioned the wall height of the other businesses along South Western Avenue that abut the residential properties on South Manhattan Place.

Mr. Jeffries stated that walls are approximately 6.5 to 8 feet and mostly brick walls with a small portion of chain-link fence along the rear of the subject property.

Assistant City Attorney, Lisa Kranitz, stated that under the City Municipal Code any warehousing use would need to move forward for Conditional Use Permit which would bring forward any proposed use to scrutiny by the Planning and Environmental Quality Commission.

Chairman Kaskanian closed the public hearing.

Vice-Chairman Jamora questioned why an eight-foot tall block wall would not be possible.

Mr. Kavadas responded that the construction of an eight-foot tall block wall on such a slope would cause the neighboring property owners hardship due to the amount of earth-moving required to engineer the block wall.

Vice-Chairman Jamora questioned building an eight-foot tall block wall setback from the property line on more level ground.

Mr. Kavadas responded that building such a wall in such a location would reduce the capacity to which the property owner could utilize their site in-line with the provisions of the Municipal Code for M-1 zoned parcels.

Vice-Chairman Jamora questioned why the wall could not be pushed back if the building as a whole has been pushed back 48 feet.

Mr. Kavadas responded that pushing the wall back would also encroach into the fire-lane area required by the Los Angeles County Fire Department.

Vice-Chairman Jamora stated that his big issue with this project is the wall proposal because he wants to plan ahead for whatever use may occupy the site and whatever noise impacts that may cause.

Commissioner Jackson questioned building a five-foot tall block wall with Plexiglas on top.

Mr. Kavadas stated that the idea was something that could be considered.

Commissioner Johnson stated that he too was concerned with not having a more robust block wall in the rear of the property for both sound and runoff purposes.

Commissioner Jackson questioned making an amendment to the resolution.

Chairman Kaskanian stated that making an amendment to the resolution would be possible. Chairman Kaskanian stated he too was concerned about noise and wanted to plan ahead for any use that may occupy the space. Chairman Kaskanian stated he was also concerned about stormwater runoff.

Community Development Manager, Raymond Barragan, stated that the environmental consultant was available to answer any technical questions regarding the project.

Chairman Kaskanian reopened the public hearing and invited the environmental consultant to speak.

Environmental consultant Marc Blodgett, 16388 East Colima Road, Hacienda Heights, stated that beyond the provided noise study, the consulting firm, Blodgett Baylosis Environmental Planning, also did their own work to study noise. Mr. Blodgett stated that a logistics use with heavy truck traffic is not expected at this location. Mr. Blodgett stated that this location would be more likely to attract light industrial uses which will have much quieter operations. Mr. Blodgett also stated that the traffic generated by the proposed building will be less than the existing building due to the overall reduction in building size. Mr. Blodgett stated that noise produced by the use would be subject to various noise regulations as stated in the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration document. Mr. Blodgett went on to explain that if one cannot see the noise source directly, one cannot hear the noise, and building the proposed wall would be the best way to mitigate any noise impacts. Mr. Blodgett stated that low impact development standards would apply to the project per state law and all stormwater runoff would need to stay on-site. Mr. Blodgett stated that the soil contamination would be addressed by the applicant and comply with all applicable state laws. Mr. Blodgett stated that air quality issues would be minor due to mandatory compliance with South Coast Air Quality Management District guidelines.

Commissioner Sherman wanted to ensure that stormwater runoff would be addressed.

Mr. Blodgett stated that it was mandatory for the applicant to meet low impact development standards.

Commissioner Jackson questioned if there was any risk of toxic chemicals leaking into neighboring properties.

Mr. Blodgett stated there would be no risk of chemical leakage once the property soil was cleaned and that all best management practices would be utilized so that there would be no air quality impacts as a result of loose soils.

Commissioner Jackson once again questioned if there was any risk of toxic chemicals leaking to neighboring residential backyards.

Mr. Blodgett stated that there is no definitive answer but that there are toxic soils on the subject property.

Commissioner Jackson questioned if the previous property owner had also studied neighboring properties for soils contamination.

Mr. Blodgett stated soils reports that have been completed have shown what areas of the site have been contaminated and that what contamination does exist is shallow and has not gone deep into the ground to contaminate groundwater. Mr. Blodgett went on to say that he does not believe the hazardous materials have affected neighboring properties but that conditions could degrade if the aforementioned clean-up work is not done in the near future.

Commissioner Jackson wanted to make sure that in the event the residents are in harm's way, they are protected.

Mr. Blodgett stated that any and all on-site contamination would need to be cleaned per appropriate adopted standards.

Chairman Kaskanian closed the public hearing.

Vice-Chairman Jamora questioned if the applicant could place Plexiglas on top of the three-foot-tall block wall to reduce noise impacts.

Ms. Kranitz asked if the Plexiglas was in-lieu of or in addition to the metal fence.

Vice-Chairman Jamora wanted the Plexiglas attached to the metal fence.

Commissioner Johnson wanted the Plexiglas to be tinted to provide privacy to residents.

Chairman Kaskanian reopened the public hearing.

Mr. Tecimer stated that he was in support of placing frosted Plexiglas and solving the drainage issue.

Chairman Kaskanian closed the public hearing.

Ms. Kranitz wanted to confirm Condition of Approval VAR2 would now read "The applicant shall construct a three-foot-tall masonry wall with five-foot-tall metal fence on top. Tinted Plexiglas shall be placed on the applicant's side of the property along the metal fence.

Chairman Kaskanian agreed with Ms. Kranitz.

MOTION: It was moved by Commissioner Jackson and seconded by Commissioner Johnson to adopt Resolution No. PC 10-16 adopting Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring Plan #3-15 and approving Site Plan Review #3-15 and Variance #1-16 subject to the attached conditions of approval with an amendment for a three-foot-tall masonry wall with five-foot-tall metal fence on the top. Tinted Plexiglas shall be placed on the applicant's side of the property along the metal fence.

The motion passed by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Jackson, Johnson, Jamora, Sherman, Kaskanian
Noes: None

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Chairman Kaskanian called for oral communications from the public. No member of the public came forward to speak.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR'S REPORT

City Manager Mitchell G. Lansdell reported that, at their August 9th Meeting, City Council agreed to continue with a four-member Council and not elect a mayor until the March 7, 2017 general election. Filing period for the March election will begin in mid-November and end in mid-December. Mr. Lansdell reported that two sign proposals for Lucky Lady

Casino came forward to the City Manager's office before the current sign proposal came forward. City Manager's office did not feel comfortable with the first two sign proposals and Larry Flynt of Lucky Lady Casino did not want to present another revision beyond the third. The third sign proposal was approved by City Council 3-1. Mr. Lansdell also reported that the City Council proposed an economic incentive agreement for the Lucky Lady Casino. The agreement would have tied the revenue of both Lucky Lady and Hustler Casino together. Mr. Lansdell reported that Larry Flynt did not support this agreement and threatened the City Council that he would close the Lucky Lady Casino if the agreement was approved. City Council approved the agreement. Mr. Lansdell reported that he received a call the following morning from Larry Flynt's representatives stating the Lucky Lady Casino would close escrow and close the business; Mr. Lansdell thanked them for providing the information and told the representatives that he would still require the Normandie fees be paid to the City as part of the escrow closing. Mr. Lansdell reported that he received a call from Larry Flynt's representatives later that week to renegotiate the economic incentive agreement. Mr. Lansdell reported that the economic incentive agreement was renegotiated and the Normandie Casino reopened as Lucky Lady Casino. Mr. Lansdell reported that Mr. Flynt is expected to spend $60 Million over the next four years on renovations which may include a hotel. Mr. Lansdell reported that interior remodel would occur in phases to allow the casino to remain partially open.

PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMISSION REPORTS

Commissioner Johnson questioned construction of the Auto Zone on Crenshaw Boulevard.

Mr. Barragan stated that permits were pulled for interior-tenant improvement for the Auto Zone building on Crenshaw Boulevard. Mr. Barragan would send an email to Commissioner Johnson describing the permits pulled and the timeline of construction.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Kaskanian adjourned the meeting at 8:50 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Mitchell G. Lansdell

MITCHELL G. LANSDELL
City Manager

NOLAN JAMORA, Vice-Chairman
Planning & Environmental Quality Commission