

South Brentwood Residents Association
149 South Barrington Ave. #194
Los Angeles, California 90049

May 10, 2012

City of Los Angeles Planning Department
West Los Angeles Planning Administrator
1645 Corinth Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90025

Re: Comments on Green Hollow Square Project, Case #ENV-2009-1065-EIR

Dear Zoning Administrator,

I am writing on behalf of the South Brentwood Residents Association (SBRA). SBRA represents over 5,000 homeowners and renters who reside in the area south of San Vicente Blvd., north of Wilshire Blvd., east of Centinela Ave. and west of the VA. Additionally, SBRA represents the interests of all residents living in multi-family dwellings throughout the Brentwood community.

Most South Brentwood Residents live within walking distance of the proposed project, and many of us live in the area specifically so that we can walk to restaurants, retail establishments, and other services on San Vicente and Wilshire Boulevards instead of having to drive everywhere. Therefore, South Brentwood residents are well-positioned to take advantage of this project's amenities.

Because of the importance of this project, SBRA sent out a survey to the 300+ people on its email list. We received nearly 55 responses, an even higher ratio than the similar survey conducted by the Brentwood Homeowners Association. We believe that our mailing list is representative of residents of South Brentwood, and if anything that it may under-represent young residents who are likely to go out more than older residents and who might be less nostalgic for the site's historical uses.

The SBRA membership came out solidly in favor of the Green Hollow Square project:

- 1) Do you like the idea of having new restaurants and specialty retail space at this location?

Yes- 67%

Maybe/unsure- 11%

No- 22%

Sample comments:

"Yes, I do like the idea of having new restaurants and shops at this location. There are very few shops and restaurants at this end of San Vicente Blvd."

"While I appreciate the architectural significance of the original Barry Building, I believe that the land and community would be better served with the proposed redevelopment that Mr. Munger has been working on."

"Yes, love it. I want every opportunity to walk instead of drive in Brentwood. I would drive less if GHS was a reality. I'd also hope there would be a small post office in the structure, as driving up Barrington anytime after 2 pm is a nightmare!"

"I'm not sure I care either way (I'm not a shopper), though the thought of increased traffic is appalling. However, the majority of the traffic generated by this development is unlikely to occur during the peak hours when people are using San Vicente to get to or from work."

"Absolutely not!! There's enough traffic and parking challenges in the area already, we don't need any more!!!"

- 2) Do you think that the existing "Barry Building" (the old Dutton's Bookstore) should be preserved instead of building a new building at that location?

Yes, keep the Barry Building- 22%

Keep elements of the Barry Building and integrate them into the new building- 7%

Unsure/not answered- 5%

No, get rid of it- 65%

Sample comments:

"The historical significance of the Barry Building would be better served as a discourse in a college course in architectural history rather than an eyesore to our beautiful Brentwood streets. This post-WWII modernism style was used for more cost-saving measures than architectural beauty in my opinion."

"The Barry Building is simply a tired example of what can be done with cheap materials and minimal design."

"The property should be utilized to its fullest extent and not just by having an old building preserved."

"I'm a big supporter of preserving our history but I feel the new building and what it will offer economically to Brentwood is needed on San Vicente."

"It doesn't need to be preserved; it's served its purpose and is outdated. It looked like an abandoned building in 1988 when I moved to Brentwood, and it looks like an abandoned building today."

"This building is aged and needs to be brought up to standard/code, especially in line with the ADA. This will cost millions and take many years, depriving Brentwood of a new destination. I have had to be carried/helped up the stairs many times."

"I think parts of it such as the staircases, the louvre type front pieces and the courtyard should be preserved in some way. I don't think the rest of it is worth saving."

"Yes, preserve it. And how about a small independent bookstore in the mix, such as the Palisades (now no more) Village Books."

- 3) Although not part of the GHS project plan, if it were possible to reduce congestion on San Vicente by creating a cut in the median to enable left turns and U-turns in front of the project (i.e., instead of requiring cars to drive to Montana or Saltair), should this option be studied further in the future?

Yes, study- 71%

Unsure/not answered- 9%

No- 20%

Sample comments:

"I believe that there should, at a minimum, be pedestrian crossings installed."

"Yes, definitely!!!!!!"

"Yes a cut is ok if it helps traffic flow."

"The left turn on Montana and San Vicente is horrendous, so I suppose anything that could help make that turn better would be ideal."

"I love the coral trees, but if it would help traffic and the community wanted it, I would be ok with it."

"If a cut would reduce traffic congestion, a loss of one or two trees would be ok."

"I am against cutting through the median at all costs. According to the traffic report, the majority of the 4.2% increase in traffic will not be at peak hour. I think creating a left turn/U-turn in the median will simply create traffic back up at that particular area of San Vicente."

4) What is your overall opinion of the Green Hollow Square project? Please share your thoughts.

"I like the concept. However, I feel the "name" leaves something to be desired."

"It would save the decaying business climate on San Vicente from entering a stage of urban blight."

"I think it is needed on San Vicente. There are few small neighborhood shops nearby (except at Brentwood Gardens or in Brentwood Village). We need clothing and jewelry shops, hair salons, and most of all, a few more restaurants of various kinds. I would like to see GHS become part of Brentwood's shopping and dining experience."

"Executed properly, it could be a terrific value to the neighborhood."

"I support the project because I believe that Mr. Munger has tried to work with our neighborhood to develop a viable and tasteful project. If he does not proceed with this project, someone else might obtain the property and move forward with plans that do not take the concerns of neighbors and the neighborhood into consideration."

"It's a good plan that considers the well-being of the neighborhood. It offers needed services: post office, shops, restaurants, parking, offices. Its modest design incorporates the proportions of the neighborhood with its outdoor seating and landscaping, building heights, shop sizes and circulation through the space. The design takes into account both foot and automobile traffic."

"As long as you have a ton of parking, I am OK with it."

"I love that it will create a gathering place and that it will clean up a large portion of San Vicente, which in my opinion is blighted. Like the pedestrian orientation of the project, and that the scale of the project fits the neighborhood."

"I think it would be a nice addition to Brentwood. I would love to have extra value added to our condo with the development. As a place that has many young families it would be nice to have a spot to walk to with the kids where they can play."

"I feel it is inevitable; the property will be developed. But I don't think we really need it. Having said that, appreciate the developer's willingness to work with the community."

"I think the design could have been more creative but the developer has worked hard to listen to the community's demands so we've ended up with a somewhat bland design. More resources for Brentwood residents is a good thing. I live at Montana and SV and like the idea of walking to restaurants/shops/cafes—this is why I chose to live in the middle of Brentwood—I want these resources on my doorstep."

"Good grief! It's still way too big! They'll never rent out all of the space and we'll kick ourselves for allowing it to happen."

"I'm against any development that will increase congestion. I don't see that there's any need for more shops or restaurants on the west side any where."

"A 4.2% increase in traffic will probably mean a 10% increase in traffic in an already congested area."

Based on the feedback from residents, the SBRA Board supports this project. We particularly like:

- It will create a pedestrian destination that South Brentwood residents can access.
- The project has extra parking, including parking for employees onsite instead of in our neighborhoods.
- It will include local shops and restaurants, and with the same leasing agent as the Brentwood Country Mart we are looking forward to getting more independently owned restaurants (other than more Italian) and retail on San Vicente.
- The developer has worked with the community for the past several years to design a two story project that is well below the allowable density, and that incorporates community input, including significant downsizing from the original proposal, and a change in purpose away from residential. We strongly prefer this to an office building that would generate more traffic during peak hours.
- It will "activate" the Western end of San Vicente, which currently lacks many restaurants and retail, and which is more run down than the Eastern end of the street.
- It will replace a building that is considered by many to be an eyesore and several decades past its prime.
- ADA-compliant facilities that are accessible to all area residents.
- It will generate local jobs and tax revenue.

Elements that we would like to see in the final project:

- A community room or similar facility.
- Change of name, perhaps through a contest open to the community.
- Pedestrian safety such as a crosswalk to allow legal crossing mid-block between Montana and Saltair. Otherwise the project is likely to generate a lot of jay walking from South Brentwood across San Vicente.

We understand that there are some Brentwood residents who are very loud and vocal in their opposition to this project. We ask that you ignore the noise and go with what the majority of residents are requesting, particularly those of us who can take full advantage of the pedestrian-friendly nature of this development.

Thank you for your consideration.



Lauren Cole
SBRA Board Member and Transportation and Traffic Chair

Cc: Councilmember Bill Rosendahl
Nancy Freedman, Chair of Brentwood Community Council
SBRA Board