

Stevenson, Garrett

Subject: FW: Public Comment - November 6 - Item 8

From: Simon Ybarra <>

Sent: Saturday, November 4, 2023 10:25 PM

To: PublicComment-AutoResponse <publiccomment@cityofpasadena.net>

Subject: Public Comment - November 6 - Item 8

Pasadena City Council
100 North Garfield Avenue,
Pasadena, CA 91101

Re: Letter of Concern for 1259 North La Pintoresca Drive, Pasadena CA 91103

Dear Pasadena City Council,

As a resident of Pasadena, I am concerned about the intent of the developer with regards to the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable tenants on the property. I have confidence that you want to see no harm come to our fellow residents, and I believe that you will take appropriate action to ensure this development does not create any.

I am asking that the Council require that, in exchange for exceeding the allowed density of the zone, the developer consent to an obligation to provide a right to return and a right to relocation assistance for any tenants displaced by this development activity. The Pasadena Rental Housing Board has issued a schedule of relocation assistance amounts appropriate to Pasadena and will issue a procedure for the right to return. Your assistance would allow tenants otherwise ineligible for these protections to avoid the great risk of homelessness that comes with every eviction. I respect the Council's efforts to expand the availability of affordable housing in Pasadena, and it is necessary that we avoid exacerbating the very issue we are addressing with any proposed solution.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Simon Ybarra
Tenant, District Three

11/06/2023
Item: 8

Pasadena City Council
100 North Garfield Avenue,
Pasadena, CA 91101

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Re: Letter of Concern for 1259 North La Pintoresca Drive, Pasadena CA 91103

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Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



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November 3, 2023

Pasadena City Council
City of Pasadena
100 North Garfield Avenue
Pasadena, California 91101

Re: Predevelopment Plan Review – La Pintesca Apartments Expansion

Dear Mayor Gordo and Members of the City Council,

Pasadena Heritage has viewed the proposed plans to redevelop a portion of La Pintesca Apartments. The initial scheme has some positive aspects. It would update and aging affordable housing facility, add much-needed senior housing, and better engage the street than the current facility. However, there are also some glaring issues. The project does not conform to zoning even with an 80% density bonus and the architectural style is dated and problematic.

Pasadena's Redevelopment era wiped away large swaths of North Pasadena. Tight-knit homes, apartments, and businesses were cleared for large projects: affordable housing developments, industrial parks, tract home developments. A large portion of the community was displaced.

While we believe that development must address the needs of current times, we ask that we not repeat the mistakes of the past. One of these mistakes is top-down planning without adequately addressing the needs of the immediate community. On the following pages, we have compiled some historic images that demonstrate how La Pintesca Apartments were initially constructed and raise some concerns with this process.

Please see additional resources on the following pages:

11/06/2023
Item: 8

PRESERVATION | ADVOCACY | EDUCATION



Aerial Photo of the Project Site - May 1, 1960

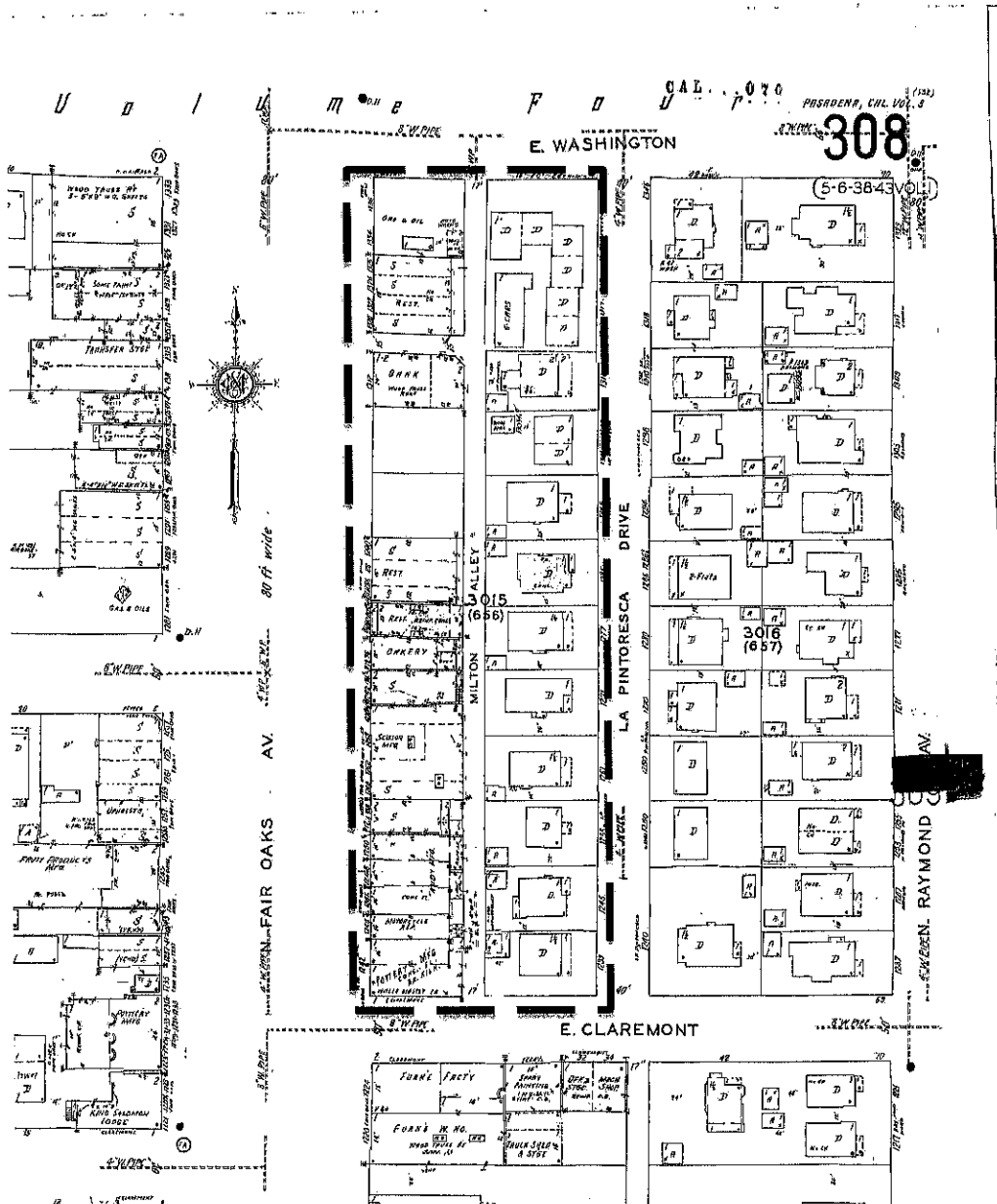
Photo shows a mix of commercial buildings stretching from Washington St. to Claremont St. To the immediate east are a mix of homes and multifamily properties flanking a tree-lined La Pintoresca Dr. A similar pattern of development also continues south of Claremont St. and on the western side of Fair Oaks Ave. This was likely a diverse, mixed-use and walkable neighborhood. It was razed to build La Pintoresca Apartments.





1930 Sanborn Map Series, Updated in 1951

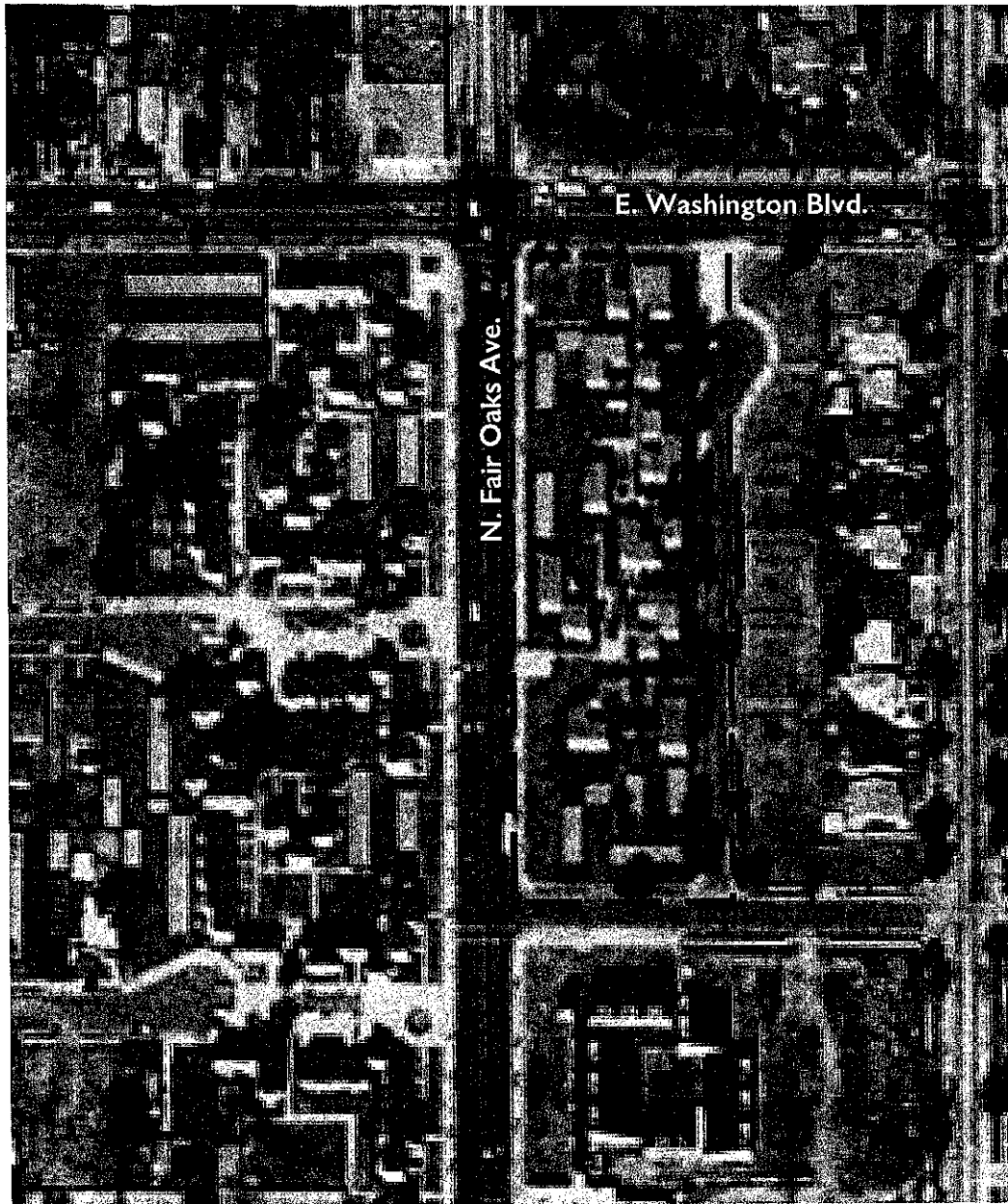
A 1951 Sanborn Map displays some of the uses of the commercial properties on Fair Oaks Ave. Though these individual businesses likely changed by the time La Pintoresca Apartments were built. This type of mix has proven economically resilient and sustainable. Residents who live nearby can walk to a café, business, or bank. This kind of land-use is a stated goal of contemporary urban planning.





Aerial Photo of the Project Site - January 1, 1973

A later aerial of the site shows how an entire community was wiped out by redevelopment. Fine-grained commercial buildings and homes were replaced by more residences built in a more "modern" ideal, with surface parking lots. To the east of the project site, an entire row of homes were cleared for larger 70s style homes. The neighborhood is also much more auto-centric -- there are no local businesses to walk to.





Excerpt from 1964 Report on the Pepper Redevelopment Project

The photo below was included by the Pasadena Redevelopment Agency as part of the project now known as Kings Village. Shown is the intersection of Pepper St. and N. Fair Oaks Ave., immediately across the street from La Pintoresca Apartments. We can assume the eastern side of Fair Oaks Ave looked similar. The Redevelopment Agency notes that the area is "showing economic stagnation," but there is a mix of businesses and a line of cars parked curbside, which would indicate that the businesses were successful in attracting customers.



Mixture of residential and commercial uses showing economic stagnation. There are many vacant store fronts in this area along Fair Oaks.



While Pasadena Heritage supports the creation of more senior affordable housing, we ask the City Council to direct the applicant to work with the Planning Staff and Planning Commission to reach a more reasonable outcome. The Fair Oaks-Orange Grove Specific Plan is in the midst of an update. If more housing is needed at this location, then it should be reflected in that planning document. This should also be an opportunity to help restitch a community that was wiped out by redevelopment. Just as important as housing are small businesses that can offer goods and services to the surrounding community. We are concerned that this project consider its larger context including adjacent single-family homes and La Pintesca Library and Park, striving to become part of its neighborhood.

This site also calls for the same excellence in design and architecture that is required citywide. Repeating the bleak style that was used by the Pasadena Redevelopment Agency is not acceptable. Over the past few decades affordable housing developers such as Heritage Housing Partners, Bridge Housing and Abode Communities have found ways to add affordable housing along Fair Oaks Ave. and Orange Grove Blvd. These projects are well-designed and complement their surrounding communities. We should ask the same for this project.

The Planning Commission has taken an active role in Specific Plan review. That is the appropriate venue for discussing what the appropriate uses, heights and densities for this parcel should be. We believe this project can be accommodated but it should be part of a larger planning process that looks holistically at the neighborhood.

Sincerely,

Susan N. Mossman
Executive Director

Andrew Salimian
Preservation Director