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Property Owners Association, Inc.

May 20, 2015

Office of the Zoning Administrator  
Los Angeles City Department of City Planning  
Los Angeles City Hall  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Subject: 18840 Ventura Boulevard, Tarzana, CA 91356 Parking Variance  
Case ZA 2013-1789(ZV)(SPP)

The Tarzana Property Owners Association opposes the granting of a parking variance at 18840 Ventura Boulevard. The variance would be required in conjunction with a change of use of 6000 square feet of the second floor of the building from retail to medical office space. The proposed change of use would require 10 spaces in addition to the current 69 spaces. The applicant proposes to include 8 bicycle spaces, reducing the required spaces to 77. TPOA members are fully familiar with the building and the community and believe that the change of use and resultant increased parking for the building is too intense for the location, will severely impact parking in the surrounding neighborhood, and is not justified by any of the reasons cited by the applicant.

The strict application of the zoning code and the Ventura-Cahuenga Boulevard Corridor Specific Plana will not result in practical difficulties or unnecessary hardship for the project. The building can continue in its present general office use of the second floor or a lesser amount of space can be converted to medical offices. Alternatively, additional parking could be reasonably accomplished by:

1. Tandem parking, particularly of employee vehicles. The claim that employee parking would be at the nearby Church of the Latter Day Saints seems unlikely. No statement to support that claim was submitted by the church; in addition, there is a history of unsuccessful attempts to arrange for even temporary parking of several hours at that site in conjunction with community events.
2. Use of an automotive lift to individually raise the additional vehicles above the existing surface parking. Such lifts are used multiple places in Los Angeles.
3. Construction of a ramp to provide access to a small above ground parking structure for the additional vehicles.

There are no special size, topography, location, or surroundings that do not apply to other similarly zoned properties in the project vicinity. The property is on flat land in a regular retail/general office location, surrounded by similar retail, medical, and general office use properties that adhere to the zoning regulations.

The variance is not required for the preservation of substantial property rights or use possessed by other properties in the same zone or vicinity. Other medical use properties in the vicinity, including recent changes of use from retail to medical, adhere to the zoning regulations.

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Post Office Box 571448, Tarzana, California 91357-1448

The granting of the variance **would be detrimental** to the public welfare. As noted above, the proposed variance would severely impact the surrounding neighborhood and adversely affect an already critical parking problem in the vicinity.

Granting the variance **would be against** the General Plan. It would not add to the purpose or efficiency of use of the already vibrant commercial area. In addition, it would set an extremely negative precedence. Note that all other recent changes of use from retail or general office to medical use in the area have adhered to the pertinent regulations.

Referral to the proposed floor plan and a physical inspection of the second floor of the building indicates that there is no existing physical separation of the current floor space on the second floor. Limiting the change of use to approximately 4000 square feet or keeping the second floor as general office space would eliminate the need for the additional parking spaces. There also does not appear to be a physical separation on the first floor of the approved 9000 square feet for medical offices from the rest of the floor space. It should be noted that the building had 24, 667 square feet of retail space before the current first floor change of use was approved and the renovation initiated (still in the early stages). It should be feasible to more effectively house the three surgeons than by using the propose 9000 square feet on the first floor and 6000 square feet on the second floor.

We are particularly concerned with the claim that the 15,000 square feet of medical office space (9000 square feet previously approved plus the current 6000 square foot application) would be exclusively used for medical offices of three vascular surgeons. The need of an average of 5000 square feet for each surgeon seems far in excess of any medical requirements. TPOA is concerned that, in fact, much of the 15,000 square feet would be provided to other medical users, undermining the representative's claim at the Zoning Administrator's hearing on May 8, 2015 that since the three doctors spend much of their time at other venues (such as hospitals), there would be limited need for patient parking. Of equal concern is the possibility of a future sale or lease of the building to other medical uses that traditionally require extensive patient and staff parking.

As a final note, claims of the acute need for more medical office space in the Tarzana area are without foundation. The very large medical facility at 18131-18133 Ventura Boulevard is well underway, there is a large vacancy sign at the medical building at 5620 Wilbur Avenue, and the medical office building approved at the southwest corner of Etiwanda A venue and Clark Street is apparently on hold; the anchor tenants apparently plan to move into the building under construction at 18131-18133 Ventura Boulevard and, therefore, there do not seem to be sufficient potential tenants to fill the building.

In summary, there is no foundation for any claim of hardship imposed by the change of use parking requirements; provision of additional parking is certainly feasible; granting of the variance would impose a hardship on the community; and there appears to be at least a sufficiency of medical office space in the area for the foreseeable future.

**We therefore strongly request that the parking variance be denied.**

David Garfinkle  
President, Tarzana Property Owners Association