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Ms. Maya Zaitzevsky
Office of the Zoning Administrator
Department of City Planning
200 N. Spring Street, Room 763
Los Angeles, CA 90012

February 16, 2013

Re: 1500 Gilcrest Drive; ZA-2007-5365-ZAD-ZAA-PA1

Beachwood Canyon Neighborhood
Bel Air Knolls Property Owners
Bel Air Skycrest Property Owners
Bel Air Ridge Association
Benedict Canyon Association
Brentwood Hills Homeowners
Brentwood Residents Coalition
Cahuenga Pass Property Owners
Canyon Back Alliance
Crests Neighborhood Assn.
Franklin Ave./Hollywood Bl. West
Franklin Hills Residents Assn.
Highlands Owners Assn.
Hollywood Dell Civic Assn.
Hollywood Heights Assn.
Hollywoodland Homeowners
Holmby Hills Homeowners Assn.
Kagel Canyon Civic Assn.
Lake Hollywood HOA
Laurel Canyon Assn.
Lookout Mountain Alliance
Los Feliz Improvement Assn.
Mt. Olympus Property Owners
Mt. Washington Homeowners All.
Nichols Canyon Assn.
N. Beverly Dr./Franklin Canyon
Oak Forest Canyon Assn.
Oaks Homeowners Assn.
Outpost Estates Homeowners
Pacific Palisades Residents Assn.
Residents of Beverly Glen
Roscomare Valley Assn.
Shadow Hills Property Owners
Sherman Oaks HO Assn.
Studio City Residents Assn.
Sunset Hills Homeowners Assn.
Tarzana Property Owners Assn.
Torreyson Flynn Assn.
Upper Mandeville Canyon
Whitley Heights Civic Assn.

Dear Ms. Zaitzevsky:

The Federation of Hillside and Canyons Associations, Inc., representing forty resident and homeowner associations spanning the Santa Monica Mountains, joins with the Crests Neighborhood Association, and other community members and groups, in expressing our grave concerns regarding Plan Approval Case No. ZA 2007-5365 (ZAD)(ZAA)(PA1), and urging that this request be denied in its entirety.

The request for Plan Approval is an after-the-fact attempt on the part of the applicant/developer to be rewarded after being caught by the Department of Building and Safety for construction activities grossly in excess of that which was permitted under Case No. ZA-2007-5365 (ZAD)(ZAA).

Case No. ZA-2007-5365 (ZAD)(ZAA) resulted in the granting of approval for a single-family dwelling and detached garage that were not permitted by right on the property in question. The determination was crafted with a grant clause and conditions of approval that reflected the results of substantive negotiations between the owner at that time (who sold to the present developer) and a number of stakeholders impacted by the project.

The current applicant knew of these conditions of approval, even committing to various community members that he would not alter the plans except in very minor ways. The plans however were altered significantly without following the clear and concise procedures provided in the LAMC for revising previously approved zoning actions. The developer's actions have resulted in significant impacts to the immediate neighbors, the neighborhood, and the community at large. This type of intentional action on the part of a sophisticated and experienced hillside developer cannot be condoned and rewarded by the Los Angeles Department of City Planning.

The adopted Bel Air-Beverly Crest Community Plan calls for:

- Preservation and enhancement of the varied and distinctive residential character of the community.
- Need to minimize grading, limit land use intensity and preserve natural topography in hillside areas.

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- Need to protect environmentally sensitive areas and scenic views.
- Need to preserve open space and the natural character of mountainous areas.
- The open and natural character of single-family development of the Bel Air-Beverly Crest Community is desirable and deserving of public protection.
- Changes in this area should be fully justified as being in the public interest before the City grants a different or more intensive land use which would alter this character.
- All areas within Bel Air-Beverly Crest should be subject to improved design standards to ensure compatibility of new development with the scenic character of the Community.

Consistent with the spirit and intent of the Community Plan, the grant and the conditions of approval related to Case No. ZA-2007-5365 (ZAD)(ZAA) took into consideration the scenic views of neighbors, the privacy of neighbors, the preservation of mature trees, and the preservation of the existing ridgeline located at the rear of the property in question, which was a significant and beautiful natural feature of this hillside community. The plans approved with this case also reflected these important considerations.

By contrast, the plans currently proposed, and the construction and grading that have already been done, are completely contrary to the Community Plan, as well as the items mentioned in the preceding paragraph, which are in essence the manifestation of the Community Plan's purpose and goals. These departures from that which was approved under Case No. ZA-2007-5365 (ZAD)(ZAA) are extremely significant, so much so that the Department of Building and Safety issued a Stop Work Order and a Letter of Intent to Revoke the related building permits.

With total disregard for the approval granted under Case No. ZA-2007-5365 (ZAD)(ZAA), the applicant flattened a significant ridgeline, removed mature trees and landscaping, increased the size of the structure well beyond that which was permitted, and installed balconies and windows where none were to be. We appreciate that the City recognized these significant departures from what was approved, and has stopped the applicant for the time being. Now, it is up to the City to ensure that such behavior is not rewarded by the subsequent approval of these blatant violations.

The granting of any of the deviations requested by this applicant would set a dangerous precedent, inviting, without due process, other out-of-scale projects that are not in conformance with the Community Plan, and are grossly out of character and scale with the surrounding sensitive hillside area.

Therefore, the Hillside Federation respectfully requests that the Associate Zoning Administrator deny the applicant's request for Plan Approval in total.

Sincerely,

Marian Dodge

Marian Dodge

cc: Planning Director Michael LoGrande
Councilmember Tom LaBonge
Crests Neighborhood Assn.
Bel Air/Beverly Crest Neighborhood Council