

November 11, 2022

To: Ojai Planning Commission

Re: Concept review of The Gables (701 N. Montgomery St.) CUP revisions and subdivision

This letter is intended to register our concerns to the above project now under review. We are close neighbors and our sight line is directly in line with the new street and buildings being proposed.

1. There should be more of a transition in the density between the zoning of existing single-family homes and the zoning/ density that the applicants are proposing for the property. Since the applicants are asking for a rezone, the City could require them to do this.
2. This project is going to add a lot of daily car trips! Traffic analysis was done previously for an assisted living facility which is much different than stand-alone rental units for 55+.
3. Where is the water coming from? We have cut back our own water use by almost 70% so I assume that additional housing would adversely impact the water shortage.
4. The project should be required to have some circularity to the street so there is no weird T turnaround. As proposed, it would not allow for a fire truck to turn around in the event of a fire.
5. The design of the buildings do not fit the existing feel of the neighborhood.
6. There is not adequate parking for this project. Olive St (a public street) should not be planned for or allowed as parking for employees of the Gables. It is important to note that employees are already taking up most of the parking spaces around that busy corner and visitors to the Gables have no place to park other than on the crowded public streets. The new project does not provide enough parking for residents (often with 2 cars). Their guests, household workers, etc. will end up parking on Olive St. which will be bothersome to the neighbors. **If my memory is correct, the Gables was supposed to build a parking lot as part of the 2001 CUP but never did. I also recall that this was to be the only development of that parcel. Perhaps staff should revisit this important issue.**
7. Additionally, we are very concerned about the possible impacts on the native trees that exist on the lots that are proposed as housing. There are several medium sized Live Oak trees that are healthy and two large, significant, multi-trunked sycamores that are heritage quality. I often see raptors perched in these trees mere feet from Grand Avenue. They deserve the highest protection even at the expense of less units being approved.
8. There should be some sort of **deed restriction** to ensure it stays a senior community and another to prohibit future conversion to individually owned units (vs. rentals). I am concerned that the applicants, who have tried (unsuccessfully) to develop this property into single (non-senior) family homes on multiple occasions over the past 20 years, will wait a couple of years and then try to sell the rental units as ownership units. Putting deed restrictions now would make it difficult for them to do so in the future

and would memorialize the intent of any approval. The neighbors in this area are tired of having to fight all these projects at the Gables every few years so this would be a good and fair solution. Also, please be very aware that this is NOT something being proposed by The Gables, rather, by an out-of-town developer (despite Mark Whitman's name being shown as the applicant).

9. Finally, **there seems to be some question as to whether the applicants are even in compliance with their existing CUP.** Staff should investigate this fully and if they are not, they should immediately withdraw their project until which time they are in compliance. I do remember that the **three lots were supposed to have been merged in 2001 but I don't think they ever were.**

We hope the Planning Commission will seriously consider advising against the request as currently being proposed until some of these concerns are addressed.

Thank you,

Bill and Jill Shanbrom

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