

Communication from Public

Name: clark brown
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Comments for Public Posting: Written Response of John Clark Brown, Jr. to Appeal of Archdiocese of LA/se Education and Welfare Corporation—Case No. CPC-2019-6069-CU-DB-CPD-CDO-SPP-MEL-WDI-PHP re the June 3, 2020 Planning Commission Determinations for Lincoln Apartments 2471 Lincoln Blvd. Venice, Ca 90291



JOHN CLARK BROWN, JR.

July 31, 2020

Honorable Members
City Council
City of Los Angeles
200 No. Spring Street
Los Angeles, Ca 90012

Re: Response to Appeal of Archdiocese of LA/Archdioces Education and Welfare Corporation—Case No. CPC-2019-6069-CU-DB-CPD-CDO-SPP-MEL-WDI-PHP re the June 3, 2020 Planning Commission Determinations for Lincoln Apartments 2471Lincoln Blvd. Venice, Ca 90291

Dear Council Members:

I submit this response on my behalf to the above appeal and the related CEQA appeal filed by the Los Angeles Archdiocese of the Catholic Church (“Appellant”) from the June 3, 2020 Letter of Determination (“Determination”) of the Planning Commission (“the Commission”) regarding the Lincoln Apartments (“the Project”).

Since 1976 I have owned and lived in my property at the address below, which is a half mile from the Project. I support the Project.

For reasons set forth below, the Commission properly found in its 41 page Determination the Project was: (1) necessary to address the homeless problem in Venice and the rest of the City and to comply with the objectives of State and City housing laws;(2) the Project complies with applicable laws, including the State’s housing laws, the City’s zoning law, the Coastal Act and CEQA, and (3) the Project is necessary to fulfill the objectives of those laws. The Commission unanimously approved its Determination 9-0. (Page 2)

The appeals are without merit because Appellant: (1) misstates the facts regarding the proximity of the Project to St Mark School and the Coeur d’ Alene Elementary School; (2) assumes without supporting evidence the Project will exacerbate safety issues and (3) sets forth no facts to support its conclusions the Project does not comply with applicable laws. Accordingly, the Council should dismiss the appeals.

It is undisputed Los Angeles has an urgent need for homeless housing. NPR.Org reports that as of June 5, 2020 LA's annual homeless count, shows that 66,433 people now live on the streets, in shelters and in vehicles within the county. This is a 12.7% increase from 2019. Within LA city limits, the number of people experiencing homelessness is 41,290, a 14.2% increase over last year. Venice alone has 1,100 homeless.

The Project will provide 39 units of housing for low income people and 1 manager's unit. The Project developer, Venice Community Housing Corporation ("VCHC"), has the land and the funds to build the Project. VCHC has significant experience in developing and managing properties like the Project. VCHC now has 216 units of affordable housing in 15 buildings in Venice, Mar Vista, and Del Rey. Seventy-five percent (75%) of its units are households with incomes less than 50% of the median income. VCHC also provides an eight-family crisis housing shelter for homeless families, and housing plus services for individuals having experienced chronic homelessness and disabilities, substance abuse, and/or mental health issues through the Permanent Supportive Housing program.

The Project location is appropriate. Lincoln Boulevard is part of State Route 1 and a busy commercial street. All the uses in the Project's vicinity are commercial and mostly old. There are no residential uses on Lincoln near the Project. The Commission found "the Project will provide affordable housing in close proximity to transit stations including Metro Local Line 33, Metro Rapid Line 733, Culver City Lines 1 and 2 and Big Blue Bus Route 3. Therefore the...Project is consistent with the affordable housing Element of the General Plan." (P. 14 of Determination.) No one has suggested a better site.

Appellant's objections to the Project are without merit.

Appellant claims: construction of the Project will be "barely inches from the [St. Mark elementary] school walls." (P. 3 of Appeal.); "The proposed project's operations will not be compatible with the abutting St. Mark's Elementary School (P. 4). And, "the proposed project will not be compatible with the abutting elementary school." (P. 7; emphasis added.)

In fact, the Project does not abut the school and is not near it. Rather, on its west side the Project abuts the parking lot behind the Rectory for the Church of St. Mark. The Church is to the west of the Rectory and the parking lot. The playground for the St. Mark Elementary School is to the West of the Church. The St. Mark elementary school is to the west of the playground. Three multifamily houses are to the west of the St. Mark Elementary School. Coeur d' Alene Elementary School is to the west of the 3 multifamily houses, approximately a quarter mile west of the Project.

I took the attached photo from McDonalds, which is next to the north side of the Project. It shows the parking lot (which is not the playground) immediately west of the Project,

the Rectory on the West end of the parking lot, and the St. Mark Church to the west of the Rectory. Finally, it shows a massive, spiked gate and fence which extends from the rear of the Church to an opposite property line wall. The gate and fence separate the parking lot from the St. Mark Elementary School playground.

In sum, there are no schools “inches from” or “abutting” the Project.

Appellant claims throughout its appeal that the Project is not consistent with the City’s General and Specific Plans, the Coastal Act and CEQA, but sets forth no facts to support its conclusions. These claims ignore the specific finding at P. 8 of the Determination that “The project is in substantial compliance with the purposes, intent and provisions of General Plan, Community Plan and Specific Plan.”(P. 8). Appellant presents no facts which impeach this determination.

Appellant claims the Project is a threat to the safety of the neighborhood citing incidents which it claims are traceable to SPY. Appellant, however, cites nothing to show these incidents (even if true) would not continue if the Project was not built. Appellant argues the Project “will...very likely increase the calls for Fire and Police Services” (P. 2 of Appeal). Appellant thereby admits its argument is based on speculation. In fact, no one can know whether the Project will cause increased incidents.

VCHC tells me in an email that VCHC manages security in all its properties. The Project will have 3 full time social workers on site working on staggered schedules. There will be a resident manager on site every night. The Project will have cameras, and a sight monitor. VCHC will provide a written commitment to provide special attention to security when children enter and leave the schools and will review its security plan every six months.

Appellant also seeks to link VCHC to SPY. There is no linkage. VCHC and SPY are not affiliates. While SPY will operate some of its programs from the first floor of the Project, as a tenant, it will not own or manage the Project, which only VCHC will do.

Appellant complains the City’s Land Use Plan requires 104 parking spaces for the Project, but the Project will only have 6 parking spaces. (P. 5 of Appeal). Appellant ignores studies cited at Pp. 11-12 of the Determination which establish that “supportive housing units are not expected to have the same parking demand as market rate units.” Appellant cites nothing to contradict this statement.

Page 4

For all these reasons, the Council should reject the Appeal.

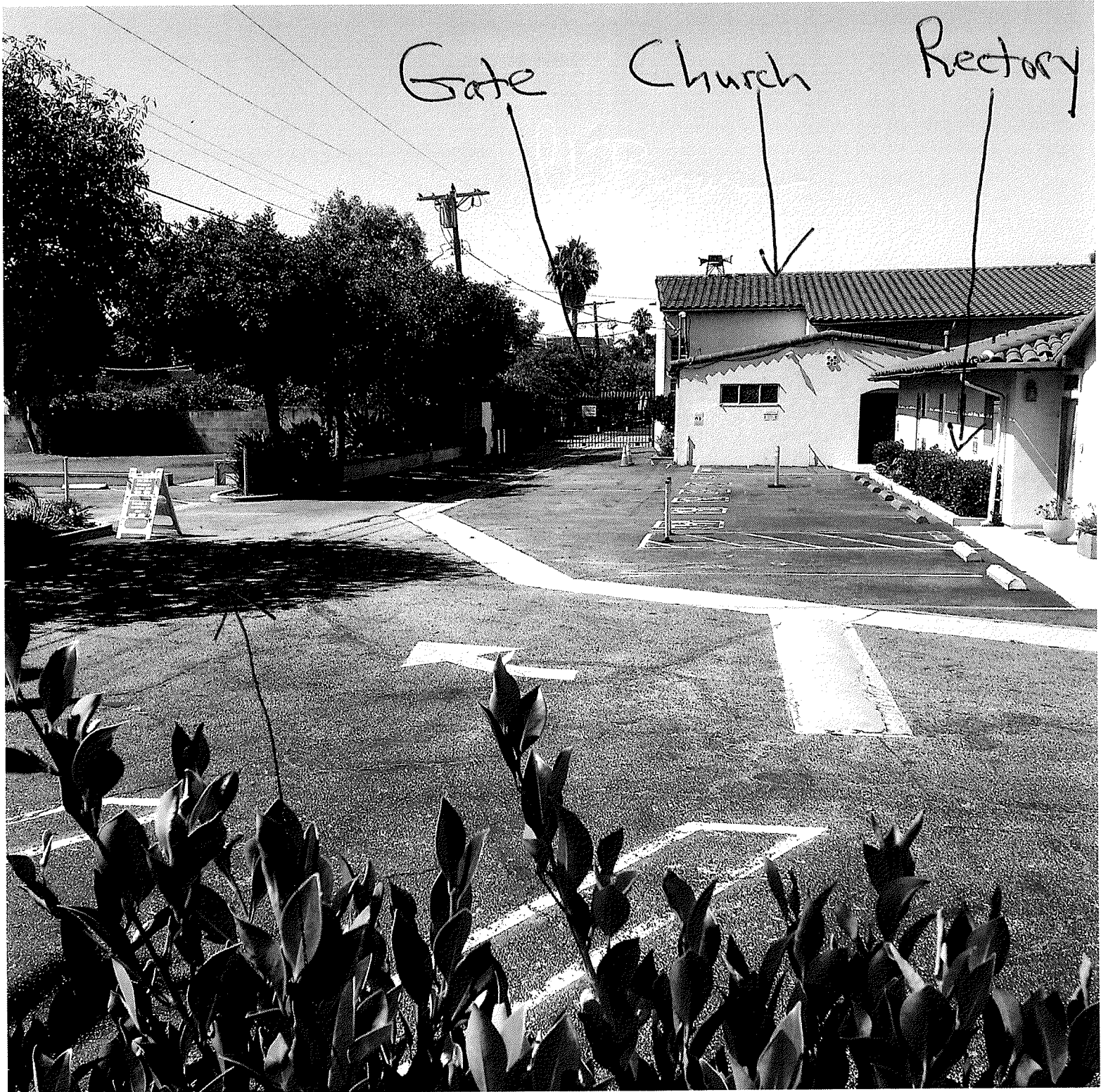
Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Clark Brown, Jr.", written in a cursive style.

John Clark Brown, Jr.

Cc: Michael Davitt for Archdiocese
Linda Lucks for Venice Community Housing Corporation
Michael Bonin, Council Member

St Mark



Gate

Church

Rectory

Parking Lot