

**Problem Properties
in the
Empowerment Congress North Area
Neighborhood Development Council
Area**

**Photographic Supplement for
City Council District 8**

June 2008

Prevote Final Report

**For review by the Governing Board
at its July 10, 2008, meeting.**

Prepared from stakeholder complaints

**Empowerment Congress North Area
Neighborhood Development Council
Public Safety Committee
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1921 W. 23rd Street.

Neighbors and police complain that people at this apparent duplex carry on an illegal car repair business. Put on our list in November 2006. Photo as of October 2, 2007. Unusually deep front yard, all dirt, used to park vehicles. Numerous vehicles were impounded in the spring of 2007. Housing Inspector Keith Gordon during an inspection in July 2007 ordered the owners to clean up the dirt yard and to limit parking to the right side that would be the driveway between the apron at the curb and the gate to the back but is not currently marked. In observation of July 5, 2008, two cars were parked on the “lawn” dirt.



1660-1674-1/2 W. Adams Blvd., strip mall

Put on our list in May 2006 because of loitering and drug dealing on the sidewalks on the Adams and Kenwood sides of this strip mall. There is currently a persistent problem of loiterers who hang out in the parking lot on the Normandie Avenue side. The lot is shared with a Head Start children's campus. There is also another group of loiterers who often gather on the Adams Blvd. sidewalk side of the strip mall. The Public Safety Committee discussed the situation at its November meeting and felt that the owner needs to hire a full-time security guard. Senior Lead Officer Brian Hun has met with the owner several times beginning on November 30 and raised this proposal. A June 11 meeting was held with the owners attended by LAPD Senior Lead Officer Brian Hun, Deputy City Attorney Jan De Andrade and Leslie Evans for the ECNANDC Public Safety Committee. One of the owners said he had personally received a death threat from one of the loiterers. The two owners agreed to look for a security guard.



1883 W Adams Blvd at LaSalle, recycling center

This corner has been a major crime and nuisance problem for the neighborhood, with strong complaints from residents, the local block clubs, and several small business owners. The owners in 2005 demolished the original building and constructed a small market at the south end of the property. Building and Safety revoked the recycling center conditional use permit January 13, 2006, because the building had been demolished and the recycling business moved to the north

of the property, too close to the adjacent apartment house on La Salle. The owners appealed but lost the two permissible levels of appeal, to Zoning and Planning and to the South Los Angeles Planning Commission, in 2006. Building and Safety in January 2007 issued orders to stop using this property as a recycling center. The owners appealed this order to the Building and Safety Board of Commissioners. At a June 5, 2007, hearing the Board voted 4-0 to reject the appeal. There Building and Safety justified the revocation also on the grounds that the owners had submitted a false site plan which specified a required six parking places for the new market, landscaping setbacks, and recycling limited to a small corner. Instead the recycling business has effectively taken over the whole parking lot, and lock up the lot when they are closed, leaving the market without even the pretense of having its required parking. Criminal charges were filed against the owners on the grounds of not providing the required market parking. The civil case on the Building and Safety permit revocation and the criminal one on the market parking are still in the courts. In observation of July 5, 2008 (see photos) the two parking spots at the north end were blocked by plastic trash cans. Three of the four spots next to the market were taken up by vehicles unloading recycling materials.



Homeless encampments/trash and shopping cart accumulation in alleys between La Salle and Hobart south of Adams Blvd.

Part of the general complex of homeless and drug problems near La Salle and Adams involving the recycling center at 1883 W Adams are a complex of alleys with regular encampments of drug addicted and mentally ill homeless people. One alley runs south from Adams to 27th Street between La Salle and Harvard. In the next block to the west an alley runs east-west from Harvard to Hobart behind the commercial buildings that face Adams Blvd. and has a T connection that runs south to 27th Street. There is an effort by the local block club with support from Councilmember Parks and LAPD to gate the Harvard-Hobart alley but it has been making no progress over the last year. There were five or more transients camped in the LaSalle-Harvard alley on March 31, two on April 16, but none since then with the most recent observation June 18.



1476 W 29th Street

enants at this house (listed as a duplex, so was a Housing Dept jurisdiction) continually store large amounts of objects in the yard and on the front and back porches to hold many yard sales. By city code only 5 two-day yard sales are permitted per year. This location was on our list all spring 2007, when yard sales were held repeatedly. Housing issued orders to desist on May 11, 2007. The sales and extensive outdoor storage began again in September 2007. Put back on our list in November 2007. Complaint submitted to Housing: 12/4/07: "The tenant regularly stores large amounts of material for yard sales on porch and in yard. Have observed 21 yard sales on nonconsecutive days this year." This continued in January with observed sales on 1/12, 1/16, 2/2, and 2/16 2008. Housing responded by handing the case back to Building and Safety, where it was assigned to inspector William Jimenez, (323) 789-1488. Spoke to Inspector Jimenez February 19. He said he had spoken to the tenant and told them more than five yard sales a year are not legal in Los Angeles. We suggested as a compromise to focus on the storage issue. If the yard and porches are kept clear we would not raise further complaints about the yard sales. He said this seemed reasonable. Housing reportedly still has an interest in this case. Spoke to Inspector Jimenez again March 17. He says he has contacted the owner and spoken to the tenant asking them to remove the storage currently on the front and back porches. There was still excessive storage on the front and back porches on June 18 and July 5, 2008. A reinspection of the property has been ordered and if it is not found to be in compliance a city attorney hearing will be scheduled.



1783 W. 35th Street

Apparent extensive damage to roof and general deterioration. Put on our list in August 2005. Photo as of 8-26-05. Various LADBS inspectors have had the case. Most recently Inspector Michael Tuck (213-252-3936). He issued orders with compliance date of 8/17/2007, specifying: “Water heater venting. Plumbing not installed per code. Insufficient size of flooring or floor supports. Hazardous or unclean premises. Hazardous wiring in the dwelling. Lack of adequate heating. General dilapidation or improper maintenance as required by Section 91.8104. The interior floors, walls, and ceilings, or portion thereof are in need of general maintenance and repair. Deteriorated or ineffective weather protection including crumbling or loose plaster, waterproofing of exterior walls, roofs, floors, foundations, broken windows or doors, broken, rotted, split or buckled exterior wall or roof coverings. Deteriorated or ineffective weather protection including crumbling or loose plaster, waterproofing of exterior walls, roofs, floors, foundations, broken windows or doors, broken, rotted, split or buckled exterior wall or roof coverings. Lack of minimum amounts of required natural light and ventilation.”

Probate has not so far succeeded in locating a definite heir to this apparently uninhabitable building. The case is being handled by Citywide Nuisance Abatement attorney Felton Newell, 310-575-8500. Photo dated October 17, 2007. According to Attorney Newell an earlier probate in the 1990s assigned the property to four heirs, all of whom have since died. Newell is working with the LA County Public Administration who say they will try to reopen probate. If this drags out it may be necessary to have the city fence this property to secure it. State Assemblyman Mike Davis is sponsoring a bill to order absentee owners of properties to bring their buildings into code compliance. We have written to his staff asking of they can do anything about this case where there is no known owner.



3607 S. Vermont Avenue, Smart and Final

On August 30, 2006, a Zoning hearing was held where this Smart and Final applied to upgrade their conditional use permit for wine and beer to allow a full line of alcoholic beverages. The upgrade was denied. Smart and Final appealed to the South Los Angeles Planning Commission, which heard the case, # ZA 2006 4385-CUB-1A, on February 20, 2007. The commission issued its report on March 23, 2007, upholding the denial. Supporting the upgrade request were Smart and Final’s representatives and the representative for City Council District 8. Opposing it were the Community Coalition, our neighborhood council, and St. Mark’s Lutheran Church, which abuts the property to the south. The proposed hard liquor sales were denied in part because the property is “surrounded by sensitive uses,” namely USC across the street, the church to the south, and nearby Weems Elementary School. Our ongoing concern here is that when this market was built after the Los Angeles civil unrest of 1992 it agreed not to sell alcohol. In March 2000 it applied for and was granted a conditional use permit for wine and beer. One condition was that within 9 to 11 months Smart and Final would file a Plan Approval triggering a public hearing on how well they had met all conditions. They have never done so. The Planning Commission in its current report states: “The applicant’s failure to file a Plan Approval that was required by the previous conditional use approval leads the Zoning Administrator to question the applicant’s reliability and credibility and the ability of the applicant to comply with any other conditions.” We share that view and wish to see the market undertake the required public review of its effectiveness in applying the conditions of 2000.



Century Liquor, 3894 S. Western Avenue

A central focus of transients and alcoholics who hang out or live in the nearby Martin Luther King Park. Put on our list in January 2008. The new building for the Exposition Park Regional Library, formerly at 36th Place and Vermont Ave., is slated for completion this summer on Western Avenue right across the street from Century Liquor, where the problems with alcoholic street people promise to create large problems. A Zoning hearing was held January 28 where the Community Coalition Against Substance Abuse, the Empowerment Congress North, and community members testified on the negative impact of this business on the area.. Zoning Administrator Patricia Brown issued her report April 29, which determined that Century Liquor “is a public nuisance.” She imposed 25 conditions on the business, including that they remove all graffiti within 24 hours, that hours be limited to 8 am to 11 pm, that they install video surveillance of the exterior of the property with the tapes retained for at least 30 days and available to the police department, that they hire a state licensed security guard to be on duty from 3 pm to closing every day, that all signs advertising alcohol be removed from windows and the door, that no individual cups or servings of ice be provided to customers. The conditions are to stay with the property and be binding on any future owner. The report required that the owners file a Plan Approval application within nine months leading to a hearing that would review the conditions and have the power if indicated to order discontinuance of the uses of the property. LAPD Senior Lead Officer Brian Hun reports that the situation has improved since the conditions were imposed.



Alley between 39th St and 38th Place just east of Western Ave.

Part of the blight in the area around Century Liquor, there is repeated extensive dumping in the alley and it is regularly used by transients to drink alcoholic beverages purchased at Century Liquor. Put back on our list in February 2008. Reported online to Street Services February 19. It was cleaned in observation of March 4. However, it is clear a longer-term correction is needed. We have a special concern because this alley faces across 39th Street the new Exposition Park Regional Library due to open this summer. The plentiful hiding places in foliage growing through the mostly dirt alley provide cover for potentially dangerous people next to what will be a major gathering place for children. Deputy City Attorney Jan De Andrade and LAPD Senior Lead Officer Pierre Olega have requested help from CD8 City Councilmember Bernard Parks to have the alley paved to discourage the transients. At this time the alley is partly covered with asphalt and partly just dirt. We support that request.



Lucky Liquor, 2109 W. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

Located at MLK and Arlington, this store generates heavy sidewalk traffic of alcoholics and transients. Put on our list in January 2008 in response to a January 29 Zoning Administration hearing to consider imposing conditions to mitigate the problems. This business is of special concern to the Community Coalition against Substance Abuse and the Southwest LAPD Community Police Advisory Board. We made progress on this case in March, with a March 26 report by Associate Zoning Administrator Anik Charron, who imposed 21 conditions on the liquor store. Charron rules that the store “constitutes a public nuisance . . . [that] has resulted in repeated nuisance activities including but not limited to disturbances of the peace, illegal drug activity, harassment of passersby, prostitution, theft, assaults, batteries, loitering, police detentions and arrests.” The main conditions are: All graffiti to be painted out within 24 hours, to match color of building. Hours of operation limited to 7 am to midnight. Bright outdoor lighting. Video cameras inside and out, tapes to be kept for at least a week and made available to police on request. State-licensed security guard from dusk to closing time every day, from a registered security company, not a relative of the owner. All windows free of signs “which inhibit views into the facility by patrolling City police.” Property to be kept free of trash and debris at all times and swept daily. We will keep this property on our list for a while to monitor compliance with the conditions.