



NANDC
North Area Neighborhood Development Council
www.NANDC.org



March 7, 2021

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Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety

Ken Bernstein, Department of City Planning, OHR
201 and 221 N. Figueroa Street / Los Angeles Calif. 90012

Via e mail

Dear Sir/Madam:

Building and Safety staff is aware of the very recent policy review in response to the community's concerns about the Neighborhood Stabilization Ordinance's (NSO) application in historic neighborhoods. The heart of the NSO problems revolved around parking issues in the historic University District surrounding the University of Southern California's campus (USC). Issues were raised about inappropriate past sign-off policies that approved plans and exempted some developments from compliance with the NSO. Fortunately, City Building and Safety (B&S) and Planning staff corrected this non-conformance, and we are very appreciative.

It is this successful prior collaboration that leads NANDC to seek your additional assistance with the latest issue that has arisen: the sign-off procedures for the approvals of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs.) Community wide concerns are growing as many past Planning Department ADU approvals are finally made public. To date, most of the critical concern has been about Planning Department's design compatibility approvals for the new ADUs in our historic neighborhoods.

The NANDC Policy met on February 23, 2021 and recommended that the full NANDC Board support writing to both B&S and City Planning requesting that they join NANDC in reviewing specific case studies to understand what state and local law requires in implementation of ADU approvals. The full Board unanimously adopted this recommendation at its March 4, 2021 Board meeting.

NANDC has historically supported "Granny flats" (as ADUs were often called) as increased opportunities for housing. Recently state law and the City's own Ordinance has made such project approvals ministerial. With that new definition comes added responsibility on the part of those signing off to ensure that the rules for such development are adhered to. There are required standards, among them the requirement to implement standards that prevent adverse impacts to properties listed on the California Register of Historic Places (which includes the National Register) and design standards such as not building an ADU in the front yard and setback requirements.

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It appears from a few cases that the requirements of both the state and local laws are not being followed and we ask that B&S review several case studies that have given rise to our concerns. This will provide additional guidance for both those that sign off on permits and interested community members and developers in the design and review of ADUs and prevent harm as the state law requires.

While we are supportive of ADUs in their creation of housing, the details are particularly important. We understand that state law intended to make the ADU development process easier, but it also called for objective, quantifiable and clear standards including design guidelines. Thank you for listening to our questions about ADUs and assisting with our understanding.

Please join us in reviewing specific case studies as we understand what state and local law requires and what B&S can implement.

Sincerely,

Thryeris Mason, President

Cc: Councilmember Marqueece Harris-Dawson CD8
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