

West Hills Neighborhood Council

RE: Case ZA 2017-2535 (ZV)  
CEQA: ENV-2017-2535-CE  
Site: 23130 Sherman Way  
"Lederer Wine Tasting Room" project

I would like to address the issue of the two driveways used to access the site from Sherman Way. We have heard several concerns and recommendations to reduce the potential traffic hazards. The resolution is simple. The driveways should be abandoned, and vehicle access to the site moved Woodlake Avenue.

Within the area bounded by Fallbrook (east), Vanowen (south), Platt (west) and Sherman Way (north) there are no other driveways that access these streets from the residential areas. The city traffic plan for this area requires residential traffic to enter these major streets from controlled intersections with cross streets. When this portion of the Lederer Estate was subdivided, each parcel included a boundary abutting the Woodlake Avenue alignment to comply with the city traffic plan.

The only reason the driveways on Sherman Way exist today is that Woodlake Avenue has not existed between Sherman Way and Bell Creek. Now that it is being built as part of the new housing, shifting the access to Woodlake will bring the parcel into compliance with the city's traffic plan. It will also would eliminate the uncontrolled addition of vehicles from the site into the stream fast moving, eastbound traffic on Sherman Way and the southbound traffic on Woodlake which must turn right or left onto Sherman Way.

With elimination of the driveways, conflicts with pedestrians walking along Sherman Way will also be eliminated and missing section of the sidewalk along Sherman Way can be completed. This sidewalk will be the only route for children from the new housing development to access Enadia Way Elementary Way.

Elimination of the circular driveway in the current parking lot can also reduce the presence of vehicles in front of the historic building. This is not just a Historic Cultural Monument, it is the iconic structure that represents the community of West Hills to the public. Currently the building is only a backdrop to a barren, gravel parking lot. Entrance from Woodlake would bring vehicles into western end of the site past an area proposed to be used for secondary parking. That should be the primary location for parking, with vehicle access to the building limited to service vehicles, handicapped parking and a turnaround for passenger drop-off. This change would facilitate conversion of the area in front of the historic building into a more appropriate setting for this significant community resource. Potential alternatives could include landscaping with native trees and flowering shrubs, landscape and hardscape elements that reference the historic significance of the building and the community service of Francis Lederer, or a cluster shade structures for informal picnicking.

Although the proposed project includes a route for two-way vehicle traffic to the western boundary, it relies on the Sherman Way driveways for vehicle circulation and parking. Therefore, request for a variance allowing continued use of the existing parking should be denied and the applicant directed to revise the traffic circulation and parking to factor in the entrance from Woodlake Avenue.

I feel that this recommendation resolves entrance traffic safety concerns by bringing the site into compliance with the city traffic plan. Re-routing the vehicles to parking in the the western end of the site also provides an opportunity to create a setting for the historic building that will not only enhance the setting for this iconic community building but will improve the experience for people patronizing the wine bar.

A M Allen