

**Comments Before City Council,
Planning Commission, and Cultural Heritage Commission
October 2015**

Ladies/Gentlemen:

My name is Glenda Gabel. I live across the street from the Immanuel Church Housing Project at 3rd and Obispo. This group and other City decision makers approved the Immanuel project to recycle the church as low-income senior housing AND to remove the house at 304 Obispo to provide space for a parking lot. I am here with a neighborhood report.

I appeared before this panel during the late planning stages, **when** we had notice. I support the housing project. I opposed the removal of a viable, functioning, attractive house to put a parking lot in an old, established, historic district neighborhood. It was a mistake to do so.

You, and your successors, along with the residents, must be especially alert. There will be other developers with plans, some with great merit. They will use what was done here as a precedent. To what extent do we want to decimate our residential neighborhoods, many with great charm, to provide parking lots?

In life, change is certain. I admit that, in this matter, it is hard for me to be a gracious loser.

I invite you to come out and observe what is happening. Spend time experiencing the often troublesome aspects of having a massive project in a residential area. You will observe the workers, whose labor is changing the neighborhood. Come, sit on my front porch with me. Hear the constant drone and ding-ding-ding of the heavy equipment and trucks as they maneuver in compact spaces. Be amazed at what man and their machines can do.

You missed the Wake for the 304 Obispo house the night it was moved. Built in 1920, it was the original church parsonage. Neighbors gathered for an interesting, colorful, and sad event as we watched part of the street's history leave. Now we have a dirty vacant lot being used as the staging area for equipment, lumber, debris, dumpsters, etc.

Residents and visitors and workers share a daily struggle - searching for parking. It was a BIG problem before this project; it will be a BIGGER with the addition of 24 new residential units.

Decision-makers often function from a distance. They see what they call the BIG picture. When deliberating about projects such as this one, I urge you to remember that the BIG picture for the residents starts with their homes and the street where they live. It is the

peace and quiet they seek and work for; enjoying the people next door; listening to the voices of children at play; walking in the evening; and so on. It's their refuge after a day of working to make a living. They live, work, vote, and, yes, they pay the taxes that enable you to function.

Once completed, we will have a parking lot in our midst. The neighbors have been assured that it will be tastefully designed and landscaped. We want a lot that will win awards. Yes, parking lots have won design awards!

In a decade, the Immanuel Housing project will be an accepted member of the community; the Immanuel residents will have melded into the fabric of our neighborhood. I may not be here to remember what was **or** to remind you and other decision makers of their obligation to our City's neighborhoods. Long Beach's decision makers, planners, workers, residents and tax payers will be remembered for what we did or didn't do for the City and its people.

Believing that you should be aware of the impact that such a project has on a neighborhood, I will be here with occasional up-dates. I sincerely hope that in a year or two, I can appear and say that I am pleased with the result. **Done right, the Immanuel Housing project, including the parking lot, could be a neighborhood gem.**

Thank you.

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