



September 5, 2023

Mayor Karen Bass
City of Los Angeles

Dear Mayor Bass,

On August 23, 2023, the Bel Air-Beverly Crest Neighborhood Council voted unanimously to seek your intervention in a land use matter critical to our stakeholders and the public. The land use matter concerns a 78,000 square foot mega-mansion currently being built by developer Mohamed Hadid at 9650 Cedarbrook atop the eastern ridgeline of Franklin Canyon Park (“Cedarbrook”).

This matter needs your immediate attention because as of August 28, 2023, the permits for this perverse development expired pursuant to Los Angeles Municipal Code § 98.0602(a). **These permits, which were issued more than five years ago, are expired as per code and should not be allowed reactivation.**

Los Angeles law is clear; permits issued by LADBS are not meant to be valid indefinitely. If a developer does not commence work within 180 days, the permit lapses per § 98.0602(a) and is no longer in effect.

There are sound policy reasons for this rule of law. Among other things, the continuing evolution of land use law in favor of stricter regulation is a key reason why permits should not linger and instead, should expire as per code. In this case, Los Angeles law has evolved significantly since 2018, including the recently passed Coldwater/Franklin Canyon expansion of the Hillside Construction Regulation (Ordinance No. 187747 [LAMC § 12.04] signed by your office on February 6, 2023 (“HCR”). This law was intended to protect and preserve these precise hillsides and open spaces. Other important land use regulations are on the horizon, including the Wildlife District Ordinance (Council File14-0518).

Here’s some background information:

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Vice President – Leg. Affairs
Ellen Evans
Secretary
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Treasurer
Vadim Levotman

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Vadim Levotman
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STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

Bel Air Association
Bel-Air Crest Master Association
Bel Air Hills Association
Bel Air Ridge Association
Benedict Canyon Association
Casiano Estates Association
Doheny-Sunset Plaza Neighborhood Assn.
Holmby Hills Homeowners Association
Laurel Canyon Association
Residents of Beverly Glen

RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS

Bel Air District
Bel Air Glen District
Franklin-Coldwater District
North of Sunset District

NON-RESIDENTIAL REPRESENTATION

At-Large Members
Commercial or Office Enterprise Districts
Custodians of Open Space
Faith-Based Institutions
Public Schools & Private Schools

- The permit for this dwelling was issued in March of 2018. Work did not commence by November 2018, so the permit expired.
- The permit was reactivated in May 2019 and work commenced. This work included extensive grading that resulted in a loss of a large area of wildlife habitat.
- Permit expirations were paused during the pandemic from March 2020 to February 2023.
- Work at the site stopped some time in 2020 and has not commenced since then.
- Developers had six months after February 2023 to begin work on their projects. No work was begun on the Cedarbrook residence, so the permits expired.

At our Board meeting on August 23, 2023, we heard evidence that Hadid’s representatives are seeking to “reactivate” the expired 2018 permits and that LADBS intends to allow it. This would give Hadid “grandfathered” rights to outdated Los Angeles land use law that existed in 2018 and gift this developer privileges that no other Los Angeles citizen has. We are requesting your help to stop this from happening.

The size and scope of the Cedarbrook project is against core principles of the Bel Air-Beverly Crest Community Plan and is counter to existing laws, and to the pending Wildlife Ordinance.

Any new development proposed at Cedarbrook should have to comply with existing *new* regulations, including the HCR.

Abiding by the rule of law is critical to ensuring that citizens have faith in their government. Although Hadid is currently in bankruptcy (and may claim financial woes hindered his ability to timely proceed), one man’s financial mess should not earn him a pass on regulations that the rest of us must follow, particularly when the development in question has no benefit to the public good and permanently damages the hillsides and wildlife habitats.

In closing, we ask your assistance in ensuring that all permits for Cedarbrook remain expired (as per applicable law) and that all future permit applications to LADBS concerning Cedarbrook be strictly construed and conform to all existing Los Angeles land use regulation.

We thank you for your consideration and will be reaching out to schedule a meeting with your staff to discuss this matter.

Sincerely,

Travis Longcore, Ph.D.
President

Ellen Evans
Vice President – Legislative Affairs