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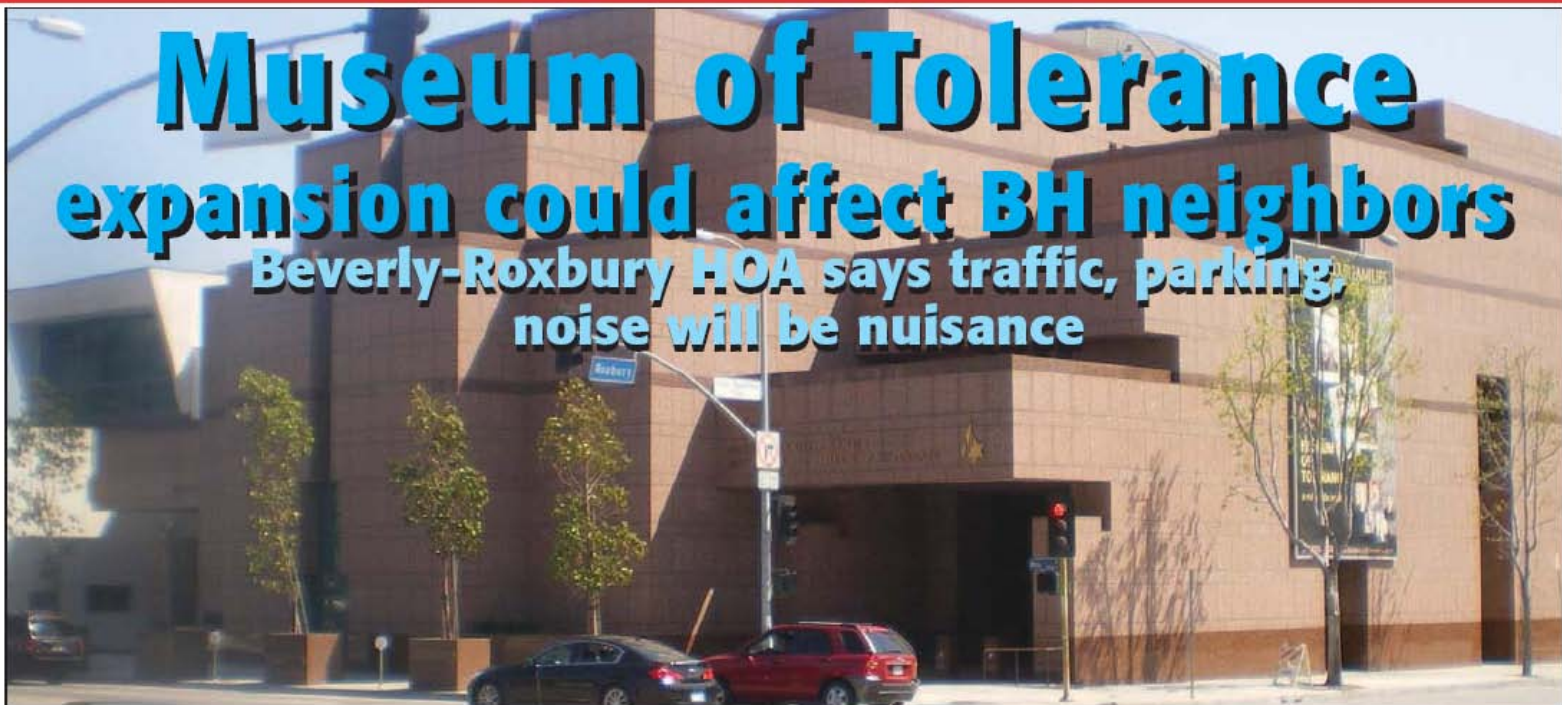
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Museum of Tolerance expansion could affect BH neighbors Beverly-Roxbury HOA says traffic, parking, noise will be nuisance



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coverstory

MUSEUM OF TOLERANCE EXPANSION COULD AFFECT BH NEIGHBORS

Beverly-Roxbury HOA says traffic, parking, noise will be nuisance

By Jacquelyn Ryan

Residents in the Beverly-Roxbury Homeowners Association say they are troubled by the possible noise pollution, traffic congestion and parking shortages that would be caused in their neighborhood if the Museum of Tolerance (MOT), a Holocaust memorial museum on Pico Boulevard at Roxbury, moves forward with its proposed 28,000 square-foot expansion to add a reception and banquet building where the Holocaust memorial garden is currently located.

"Our concerns are that we are across the street from the museum and the only mitigation that covers this change is on Olympic and Beverwil. There will be significant impact on traffic in Beverwil; people will still be driving up it," said Olympic Boulevard resident Steve Dahlerbruch, president of Beverly-Roxbury Homeowners Association, which is bounded by Roxbury and Smithwood and Olympic and Pico. "People are going to park on our streets. And any development like this brings in trash and strangers to your neighborhood."

Los Angeles resident Susan Gans, who says she lives "exactly one block" from the MOT, is leading neighborhood residents in Los Angeles in the protest and petitions against the expansion plan, culminating in a Web site titled Preserve the Legacy.

"[Gans' group] just started informing us, frankly, about two weeks ago. Unfortunately, we came in too late and weren't involved during the EIR comment period," said Dahlerbruch. "We've tried to engage the city of Beverly Hills and to see if there is anything we can still do."

The Museum of Tolerance's current Environmental Impact Report (EIR) posits that the intersections of Beverwil and Olympic as well as Olympic and Roxbury will face "significant" traffic impacts and includes a proposal to widen and restripe Beverwil Drive as part of a mitigation effort.

The proposal suggests widening the western side of Beverwil Drive, north of Olympic Boulevard, and would require restriping Beverwil to accommodate an additional through street and add a dedicat-

ed right-turn lane on the southbound side.

City of Beverly Hills planning officials estimate that the project would increase traffic at the Beverwil and Olympic intersection by 2 percent during weekday evening peak hours.

There was no study performed to estimate how weekend traffic would be

cerns or the fact that people are going to be parking in our neighborhood," said Dahlerbruch.

The 1986 conditional use agreement between the museum and the city of Los Angeles, in which the city granted the entitlements for the building on the grounds, that include among other things, there

97,400 square feet. The new wing would stand 63 feet tall, with a first and second floor setback of 20 feet, a reduction to the existing 100-foot setback.

The Museum currently offers 209 parking spaces in its three-level subterranean structure. For the new plan, the museum would lease an additional off-site parking lot, with an undisclosed number of spaces, for non-business hours and special events.

Dahlerbruch and Gans both say they are upset the museum is requesting so many changes to its original contract with Los Angeles.

"The original approval was not to have events and to have sufficient parking, that's what allowed them to build in our one zone. They agreed not to have events. This is not an entertainment zone," said Dahlerbruch. "What good is an agreement if you don't stick to it?"

But The Simon Wiesenthal Center, which sponsors the museum, says that museums have changed in the 20 years since the MOT was built and that they need to catch up with times. The banquet hall will also bring in additional funds for the non-profit.

The Museum accommodates approximately 1,000 people, including students, each weekday. With a long waiting list daily, the museum says that expanding space would allow them to include more students in the programs in each day.

Some supporters of the expansion plan say that the residents concerns and complaints about the proposed development are nothing more than a Not In My Back Yard (NIMBY) campaign, in which immediate neighbors to a proposed development that could benefit the larger city say they want the project to be built elsewhere.

The Los Angeles Planning Commission hearing for the MOT is on March 26.

Representatives from the Museum of Tolerance and Simon Wiesenthal Center could not be reached by press time. Los Angeles Fifth District (which include the MOT) City Council candidates Paul Koretz and David Vahedi did not return calls by press time.

City of Beverly Hills officials did not respond by press time.



Neighbors in Los Angeles are protesting the Museum of Tolerance's proposed expansion



The Museum of Tolerance on Pico Boulevard at Roxbury as it looks today

impacted.

Beverly Hills is planning to mitigate the congestion, by eliminating northbound through traffic, at that intersection and has requested a "fair share" of \$20,000 from the MOT to cushion the costs of the \$1 million traffic-calming plan.

"That doesn't address our traffic con-

would be no private use or rental events; would not exceed 81,000 square feet; would a 100-foot setback; offer no food service; and offer one parking space for every 440 square feet of floor space.

The 20,800-square-foot expansion would bring the museum, the educational arm of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, to about