

WHY WE OPPOSE THE MUSEUM OF TOLERANCE (“MOT”) EXPANSION

May 1, 2008

PreserveTheLegacy.org

- **THE TRUTH** about what they propose to do and to build - - on land that is zoned R1-1 (for single-family homes) and is located immediately adjacent to a quiet residential community of small single-family homes:
 - The Simon Wiesenthal Center (“SWC”) is seeking: rezoning of three R1-1 (single-family residential) lots as C4-2-0 (commercial); a General Plan Amendment from Low Density to Neighborhood Commercial; and a variance in the height ordinance to allow a building height of 60 feet instead of 33 feet.
 - Expanded facility to have between **110,179 – 110,839 sq. ft. of floor area**, including a **4,000 sq. ft. rooftop garden** - - a *monstrous* building (much larger than the building that the SWC tried to build and was *prohibited* from building in 1986);
 - Parties and events to be held outdoors on the rooftop garden, which is designed to hold **500** people (the interior can accommodate an additional 500 people, and the auditorium 300 people). [Note: under the *current* conditions that the SWC is trying to revoke, the MOT is *prohibited* from holding any parties or any events that are not for museum-related purposes, and from renting out the building to anyone; only 4 events per year may now be held in the current Memorial Garden, and only during daylight hours, with no food or beverage service];
 - Events at the proposed “Cultural Center”, including events on the outdoor rooftop garden, can go on until midnight, 6 nights a week (museum *currently* must close at 5 PM daily);
 - The current 100 ft. setback / garden area (which the MOT was required to maintain “as a well-landscaped **buffer** separating the museum building from residential areas to the south” in the 1986 Conditional Use Permit (“CUP”), as the express consideration for allowing the MOT to exceed the 45 ft. height limit) would be reduced to only 20 feet (from the single-family residence next door) – in violation of the agreement that Zev Yaroslavsky negotiated between the SWC and neighborhood homeowners in 1986;
 - Entirely NEW use as a “cultural center” and commercial banquet hall with full on-site catering facilities, serving alcoholic beverages (within 20 feet of a residential neighborhood and next door to a high school);
 - No increase in on-site parking (198 spaces), despite the totally new *commercial use* as an event/banquet facility for *huge* events, and despite the fact that *existing* on-site parking is far less than is required by the L.A.M.C. for the *current* 80,000 sq. foot building; and
 - Facility to include a restaurant with an **outdoor dining patio** on the 2nd story, immediately *next* to and overlooking a single family home and *directly* across the street from two other single-family homes.
- The vast majority of the homeowners opposing the expansion are Jewish - - several are Holocaust survivors themselves - - but they strongly believe that **it is disgraceful to hold weddings, bar mitzvahs, and other parties in the Beit HaShoah (House of the Holocaust), in a space that was designated as a memorial to the victims of the Holocaust.**
- **The SWC seeks to revoke ALL of the conditions of the current CUP which were designed to protect the immediately adjacent residential community.**
- Approximately 90% of the homeowners in the neighborhood strongly oppose the expansion. Although they support the *mission* of the MOT, **the expansion has no relation to the mission of the MOT** – it is an enormous, grotesquely out-of-scale, and primarily commercial venture, with completely inadequate on-site parking and no viable options for sufficient additional parking, and no controls on the noisy parties on the rooftop - - and being imposed on a quiet residential street, which will forever alter the residential character of the neighborhood to its substantial detriment, in violation of the West L.A. Community Plan.
- The MOT is a terrorist target; it has received bomb threats in the past, and homeowners legitimately fear that the proposed expansion will pose a much greater security risk in the neighborhood.
- SUMMARY of major concerns: proposed **changes in zoning and height ordinance**; contrary to the **West L.A. Community Plan**; **noise** (500 people on a rooftop garden, only feet away from peoples’ homes, at events going on until midnight); **traffic** (especially late at night when people leave these events, on otherwise very quiet streets); lack of **parking**; **security issues/danger to neighborhood residents of terrorist activities**; school and tour **bus traffic** on narrow residential streets (and proven health risk from diesel exhaust); no place for buses to load and unload passengers (especially in light of proposed Olympic/Pico Traffic Initiative); failure to take into consideration the **cumulative impacts** of the massive construction project planned by the Yeshiva next door to the MOT; the long history of violations by the SWC and adjacent Yeshiva of the conditions of their respective current CUP’s.

For Current Information and to learn how you can help:

Visit us at: PreserveTheLegacy.org

Or e-mail us at: PreserveTheLegacy@sbcglobal.net