



## **Planning, Land Use and Mobility Committee**

### **Case Report**

### **Lot Split and Flag Lot**

PLUM Meetings: October 5, 2023

Case Numbers: AA-2023-2925-PMLA  
ZA-2023-2926-ZAA  
ENV-2023-2927-CE

Site Location: 23139 Collins Street, 91367, second lot east of Woodlake Avenue on the north side of Collins Street

Project: The applicant is proposing to subdivide an RA-1 zoned lot into 2 lots creating a flag lot on the rear of the property. Applicant is also requesting a Zoning Administrator adjustment regarding under width access stem at the midpoint of the rear lot.

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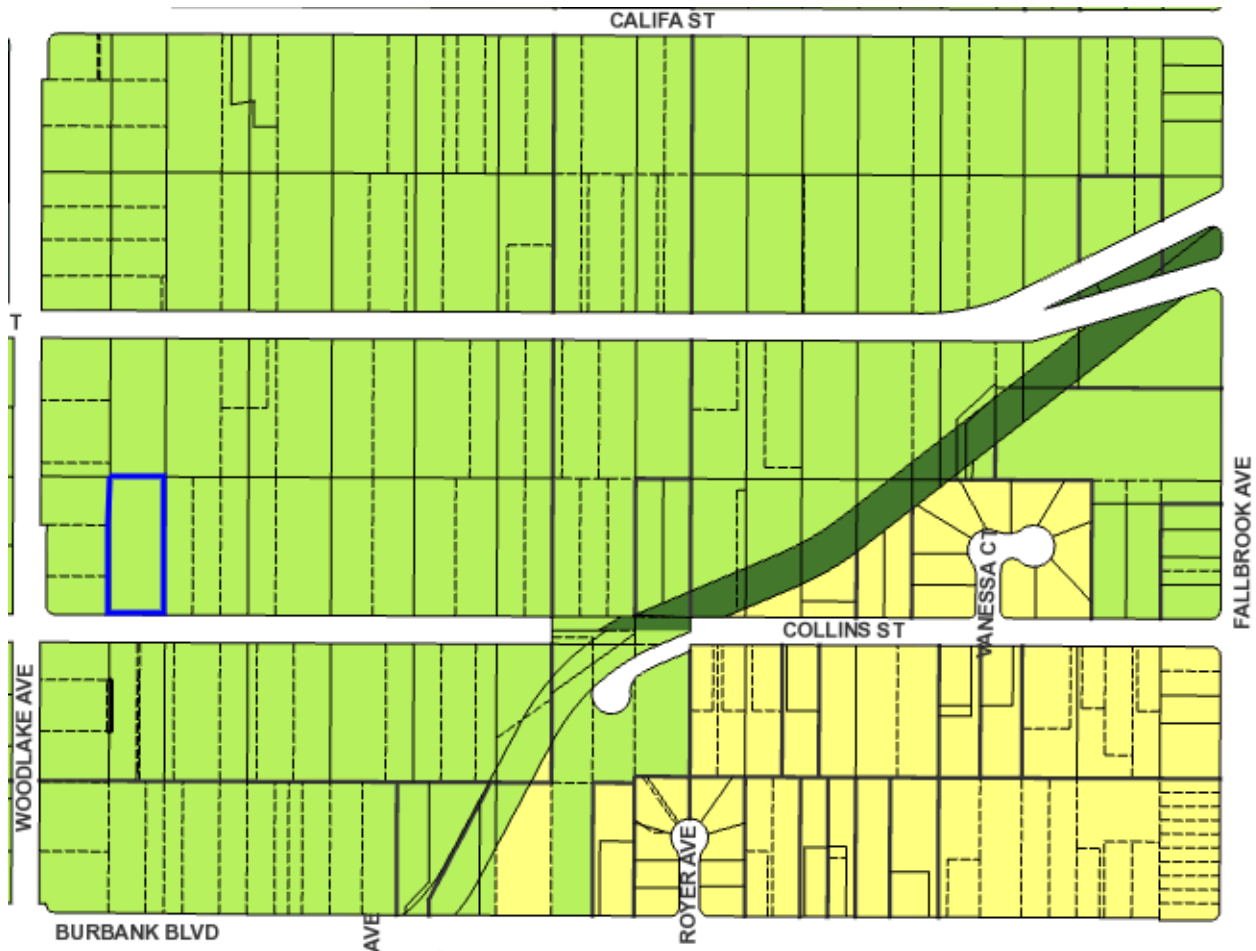
Applicant's Representative: Aaron Belliston  
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Submitted By: Henry Rice, WHWCNC PLUM Case Leader

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The project is located on the north side of Collins Street east of Woodlake Avenue in a very low density community of large RA-1 zoned lots locally known as Walnut Acres. The map below shows five properties adjoining the project and other surrounding properties.



### **Location of Site and Surrounding Properties**

A 1,948 square foot 3 bedroom, 3 bath single story residence with an attached two car garage is currently located on the front portion of the property. The applicant plans to demolish the existing house and replace it with an irregular shaped two story house with a detached ADU, and a detached rec. room. In addition a swimming pool and SPA will be added to the property. There are 14 trees on the property including a protected species oak tree.

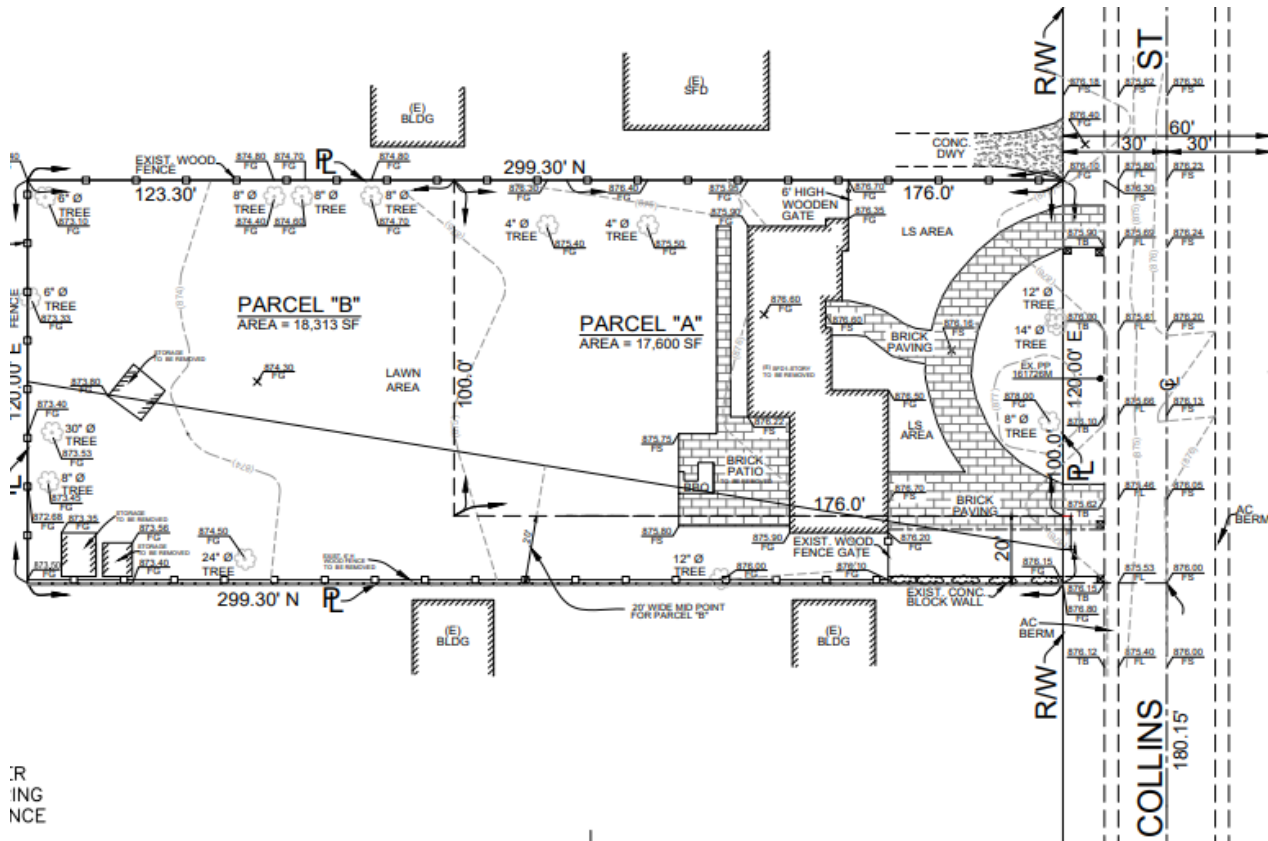


### **Front View of Property at 23139 Collins Street**

The applicant proposes to subdivide the approximately 35,913 sqft. RA-1 zoned lot into 2 lots creating a flag lot in the rear. The preliminary parcel map provided by the applicant shows the area of the front lot to be 17,600 square feet, and the area of the rear flag lot to be 18,313 sqft. when the subdivision is completed.



### **Arial View of Property at 23139 Collins Street**




## Preliminary Parcel Map for 23139 Collins Street

### OVERVIEW AND ANALYSIS

A review of the project was conducted along with pertinent LAMC codes, the general character of the neighborhood, and information about past and present development activity in the community was evaluated. The general character of the neighborhood is typically wide and deep lots, and semi-rural setting, which includes large backyards providing much privacy. The residential/agricultural zoning status makes the neighborhood appealing to animal keeping enthusiasts. Walnut Acres remains as a refuge of open space, open air and greenery, and a living link to the historic agrarian past of the San Fernando Valley. For the residents, protection and preservation of its character is a quality of life concern of the utmost importance.

There has been an upsurge of pressure from developers to split lots and insert large homes inconsistent with the applicable General and Specific Plans. If allowed to succeed, the increased density will dilute and ultimately destroy the character of the Walnut Acres community. The Los Angeles zoning regulations applicable to RA zoned parcels are shown below:

**GENERALIZED SUMMARY OF ZONING REGULATIONS  
CITY OF LOS ANGELES**

Zone	Use	Maximum Height		Required yards			Minimum Area		Min. Lot Width	Parking Req'd.
		Stories	Feet	Front	Side	Rear	Per Lot	Per Dwelling Unit		
<b>Agricultural</b>										
<b>A1</b>	Agricultural One-Family Dwellings, Parks, Playgrounds, Community Centers, Golf Courses, Truck Gardening, Extensive Agricultural Uses, Home Occupations	Unlimited (6)	45 or(6),(8)	20% lot depth; 25 ft. max. or (6)	10% lot width; 25 ft. max. or (6)	25% lot depth; 25 ft.max.	5 acres	2.5 acres	300 ft.	2 spaces per dwelling unit (6)
<b>A2</b>	Agricultural A1 uses						2 acres	1 acre	150 ft.	
 <b>RA</b>	Suburban Limited Agricultural Uses, One-Family Dwellings, Home Occupations,		45 or (6),(7),(8)	20% lot depth; 25 ft. max., but not less than prevailing (6)	10 ft. or 10% lot width < 70 ft. + 1 ft. for 3 stories or more (6),(7)		17,500 sq. ft. (1)	17,500 sq. ft. (1)	70 ft. (1)	2 covered spaces per dwelling unit (6)

**LAMC Lot Dimension Limits for RA-1 Parcels**

The lot split proposed by the applicant results in two lots each conforming to the LAMC minimum area requirement of 17,500 sqft. for RA-1 zoned lots. **However, the rear lot is 20 ft. wide at the midpoint and thus does not conform to the minimum lot width requirement of 70 feet at the midpoint as defined by LAMC Article 2, Section 12.07.C.4, and measured per LAMC Article 2, Section 12.03 stated below.**  
*“LOT WIDTH – The horizontal distance between the side lot lines measured at right angles to the lot depth at a point midway between the front and rear lot lines.”*

A number of negative attributes to lot splitting and flag lots have been identified. Among the most significant are:

1. They are in direct contradiction with the very low density and intended purpose of RA zoned properties and the General Plan
2. They create privacy issues and potential conflicts with adjoining residents
3. They impinge on animal keeping privileges of adjacent property owners
4. They add undesired density and degrade the semi-rural atmosphere of RA zoned communities
5. They promote development that adds extra stress to the infrastructure including streets and utilities designed for RA zoned communities
6. They establish a negative trend for future development of the neighborhood
7. The added driveways contribute to increased traffic density in the area

Walnut Acres residents have in the past, and continue to categorically opposed lot splits and have successfully challenged their introduction into the community. Their efforts have had the following results:



1. There have been no lots splits approved since 2006. Most existing flag lots in the community pre-date the current regulations, and according to City Planning may not be developable because they cannot meet current fire regulations.
2. The former District 3 Councilman opposed lot splits in the community.
3. A South Valley Area Planning Commission determination basically stated that flag lots in the community are undesirable, have a negative impact on the community, and encourage a trend of increased density inconsistent with the applicable General Plan and Specific Plans

**A title search of the property revealed a recorded Grant Deed that restricts further subdivision of the property without written permission of the Grantors.**

**Based on the following statement in SB9 Fact Sheet, RA-1 zoned properties are exempt from SB9 mandates:**

**“Parcels located in multifamily residential, commercial, agricultural, mixed-use zones, etc., are not subject to SB9 mandates even if they allow single-family residential uses as a permitted use”**

## **PLUM MOTION**

As pertaining to Cases AA-2023-2925-PMLA and ZA-2023-2926-ZAA, having held 1 public PLUM in person meeting for the application to permit subdivision of the parcel at 23139 Collins St. Woodland Hills, into two lots, creating a flag lot in the rear, in an RA-1 zone, and the application for Zoning Administrator adjustment to allow 20 ft. lot width, at the midpoint of the proposed rear lot, in lieu of the required 70 ft. minimum lot width, the Planning, Land Use and Mobility Committee hereby finds that:

- 1) WHEREAS, based on the Preliminary Parcel Map, dated 4/20/23, provided by the applicant as part of the application, the proposed lot split does not involve a parcel landlocked by topography; and,
- 2) WHEREAS, the Preliminary Parcel Map, dated 4/20/23, provided by the applicant as part of the application, shows 2 lots conforming to zoning regulations for square footage. However, the rear flag lot is 20 ft. wide at the midpoint and thus does not conform to the lot width requirement of minimum 70 feet at the midpoint for RA-1 zoned parcels as defined by Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) Article 2, Sections 12.03 (lot width definition) and 12.07. C. 4, (“RA” Suburban Zone Standards minimum width requirement); and,
- 3) WHEREAS, the proposed lot split and subsequent development can impinge on the animal keeping privileges of adjoining property owners authorized by the RA-1 zoning regulations, and thus deprive owners of the value of the RA-1 zoning which they chose; and,

- 4) WHEREAS, the proposed lot split will result in a nonconforming flag lot increasing the density, in a very low density residential community as designated by the General Plan, and thus deprive Walnut Acres owners of the value of the RA-1 zoning; and,
- 5) WHEREAS, the proposed lot split and nonconforming flag lot will potentially create privacy issues and conflicts with adjoining residents, and will potentially depreciate the value of adjoining properties; and,
- 6) WHEREAS, flag lots change the character of the Walnut Acres community and have the potential to destroy the character and semi-rural atmosphere of the entire Walnut Acres RA-1 zoned community thus depriving Walnut Acres owners of the value of the RA-1 zoning; and,
- 7) WHEREAS, the CD3 Council Office and the South Valley Area Planning Commission have opposed lot splits in the neighborhood in the past, and there have been no new lot splits approved in Walnut Acres since 2006; and,
- 8) WHEREAS, most existing flag lots in the Walnut Acres community pre-date and do not comply with the current regulations, and according to City Planning may not be developable because they cannot meet current fire regulations, and thus set no precedent for these applications, and,
- 9) WHEREAS, due to the numerous negative impacts of flag lots on the Walnut Acres community, and especially on the five properties adjoining the project site, an adjustment of the width of the proposed rear lot from 70 ft. to 20 ft., at the midpoint, creating an nonconforming flag lot, is not warranted; and,
- 10) WHEREAS, a title search for the property reveals a Grant Deed that restricts further subdivision of the property without written permission of the Grantors; and,
- 11) WHEREAS, according to the SB 9 Fact Sheet, issued by California Department of Housing and Community Development, dated March 2022, parcels located in agricultural zones, thus RA-1 zoned properties, are not subject to SB 9 mandates.

THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the Planning, Land Use and Mobility Committee, for the findings and conditions stated herein above, finds that the application for subdivision of an RA-1 zoned parcel at 23139 Collins Street into two lots creating a flag lot, and the application for Zoning Administrator adjustment for midpoint lot width nonconformance **not receive** the support of the Board of the Woodland Hills-Warner Center Neighborhood Council.

AND FURTHERMORE, the Planning, Land Use and Mobility Committee recommends that the Board of the Woodland Hills-Warner Center Neighborhood Council advise the City of Los Angeles Planning Department and Council District 3 Councilmember Bob Blumenfield of its findings, and its subsequent recommendation to **not support** these applications as presented to the WHWCNC Board on Oct. 11, 2023.

Motion: Henry Rice  
Second: Marty Lipkin

Vote:	<u>Aye</u>	<u>Nay</u>	<u>Abstain</u>
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