

Council Enacts Building Limits on High-Rises in Valley Village

By RICHARD SIMON,
Times Staff Writer

A measure restricting building of high-rise apartments in the Valley Village area of North Hollywood was approved Tuesday by the Los Angeles City Council, although the council exempted about two dozen properties on busy streets.

The 12-0 vote sent the measure to Mayor Tom Bradley for his approval.

The measure would restrict development to the lowest density allowed under existing zoning for the predominantly single-family residential community. New buildings would be limited to two stories, and the square footage of commercial structures would be held to 1½ times the size of the lot.

Temporary Construction Ban

The measure also temporarily prohibits the construction of apartments and condominiums on property zoned for commercial uses.

There is now no limit on building height in some areas of Valley Village, and commercial structures up to three times the lot size were permitted there until the recent passage of Proposition U, which limited commercial development to 1½ times the lot size in most parts of the city.

Supporters of the ordinance approved Tuesday said it is intended to give city planners time to draft a new, more restrictive development plan for the three-square-mile area, which is south of Burbank Boulevard, west of the Hollywood Freeway, east of the Tujunga Wash next to Coldwater Canyon Boulevard and north of the Ventura Freeway.

Exempt from the restrictions are about two dozen properties in areas where there already has been intense development. Most of those properties are on the south side of Riverside Drive between Colfax Avenue and Laurel Canyon Boulevard.

Homeowners Complain to Wachs

Councilman Joel Wachs proposed the building restrictions last March in response to complaints from homeowners about blocked views, parking problems and traffic congestion because of the development of five-story apartment buildings next to their single-family homes.

Wachs, who represents part of the area, sought to apply the building restrictions to all properties in Valley Village, and the council on Sept. 12 tentatively approved such a measure by a 10-2 vote.

But, on Oct. 15, council members balked at giving final approval to the measure after being lobbied by former Councilman Arthur K. Snyder, who was hired by a developer seeking to build apartments on Riverside Drive near the Hollywood Freeway. The property owned by Snyder's client was among those exempted.

The rest of the properties exempted, according to Wachs, are owned by people "who came to complain."

Wachs said he agreed to the exemptions as the only way to win council approval.

"If you can't get 100%, you take 90%," he said after Tuesday's vote.

Tom Paterson, president of the North Hollywood Homeowners Assn., said he also was pleased by the council action.

Wachs said he still can limit development on the exempted properties on another front if the property owners come before the council for zone changes to construct apartments. Most of the properties are not now zoned for apartments, he said.