

# L.A. Proposes 3-Story Limit on Valley Village Apartment Buildings

By TRACEY KAPLAN, Times Staff Writer

Los Angeles city planners Thursday offered a compromise limit of three stories on new apartment buildings in a predominantly single-family North Hollywood neighborhood, following an outpouring of objections from residents against a city proposal to allow five-story buildings.

The offer of a lower height limit came as the Planning Commission met Thursday to consider a special land use plan for the Valley Village area that would restrict commercial and multifamily residential development. A final review of the plan before the commission is set for Nov. 9, after planners discuss the new recommendations with the area's citizens advisory committee.

Valley Village is a one-by-1½ mile area bounded by the Hollywood Freeway on the east, the Tujunga Wash next to Coldwater Canyon Avenue on the west, the Ventura Freeway on the south and Burbank Boulevard on the north. Homeowners in Valley Village, in Van Nuys and elsewhere in the San Fernando Valley have become concerned that the growing number of apartment houses is destroying the character of their neighborhoods.

The new height recommendation would allow developers to build one story higher than the two-story limit recommended by the citizens advisory committee, which met for nearly two years. But it is lower than the five-story limit recommended by planners in a report released earlier this month.

"We're going to fight to keep it to two stories," said Tom Paterson, president of the Valley Village Homeowners Assn., which represents about 500 households.

But Bob Sutton, the city planner in charge of neighborhood planning, called the three-story limit a compromise between the desperate need to provide housing and the need to protect single-family neighborhoods.

"If we did everything residents wanted, we wouldn't have the housing we need to support the population," Sutton said. The height limit was dropped after he realized that the five-story limit was a mistake, he said.

But Renee Weitzer, a spokeswoman for City Councilman John Ferraro, said "City Hall is like Peyton Place, and word just filtered down that the council members in the area weren't happy." Councilmen Joel Wachs and Zev Yaroslavsky also represent the area.

Arline DeSanctis, a spokeswoman for Wachs, said residents have a right to be frustrated and angry that the recommendation of the citizens advisory committee for a two-story limit was not followed.

Sutton told homeowners after the meeting that he had been wrong not to inform them of the changes in the plan before the meeting. But he said planners are responsible for drawing up plans that balance competing interests.

If the Planning Commission approves the proposal, it will be sent to the Planning and Land Use Management Committee for a public hearing. The City Council has the final say over whether its adopted.

In the meantime, building in the area is restricted by a temporary ordinance to two stories. The moratorium established by the ordinance, which was approved in November, 1986, expires later this year, but the City Council can extend it for one year.