
Crime Concern High After Home Invasion Robbery

Security has always been high on our list of priorities, but several recent crimes committed in the Brentwood area and within our own community have brought heightened concern and renewed attention to the issue. By now, most Brentwood Hills residents have probably heard of the home invasion robbery which occurred in April at a residence on Bayliss Road. To address the immediate concerns of nearby neighbors, we invited representatives of both the LAPD and ADT to our May meeting, which was by far our best attended meeting in recent history. Some important crime prevention recommendations mentioned at the meeting are listed on page four. For those that were either unaware of the meeting or were unable to attend, we are currently investigating sponsoring a larger event to discuss crime, security, and related issues - we will send a flyer well in advance of any event, so please watch for it.

Many have expressed interest in developments at the end of Westridge road. We are very excited to present the conceptual plan for the trailhead which was created by Stephanie Landregan, MRCA's Chief Landscape Architect. The project is still in the early stages, but we are very pleased at the progress and direction that it is heading.

Finally, if you've not yet paid your dues for 2003, please fill out the form on page seven and return it to us with your check for \$35. As always, thanks for your support of BHHA.

LAPD Meets With Concerned Brentwood Hills Residents

Our guests at the May meeting from the West LA bureau of the LAPD were Senior Lead Officer (SLO) Chris Ragsdale and Detective Alan Behnke. Officer Ragsdale, the SLO for Pacific Palisades, came in place of Brentwood SLO Dennis Hinman, who was unable to attend.

Officer Ragsdale compiled a list of the number and types of crimes in our area (including Brentwood Hills and Upper and Lower Mandeville) for the period of May 3, 2002 through May 3, 2003. During that time there were twenty-one crimes, as follows: eleven burglaries, six car burglaries, two aggravated assaults, one vehicle theft, and one robbery (the recent home invasion robbery). According to Detective Behnke, home invasion robberies are quite rare. They are traumatic to victims and frightening to neighbors. The typical home invasion is a follow-home robbery, and occurs during the evening. New vehicles are often targeted and followed.

In addition to the home invasion robbery here in April, there were several others in the West Los Angeles area, including two in Brentwood in

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ADT Patrol Manager Mike Ball Listens To Frustrated Clients

With the heightened concern about crime and safety in our neighborhood, many residents are voicing concern about the adequacy of the dominant security company, ADT. There is a general sense that with repeated mergers in the industry (including the purchase of Bel Air Patrol by ADT in December 2002) that there is no longer enough competition to force ADT to address all of the concerns that customers bring to them. Representing ADT at our May meeting was Mike Ball, the Patrol Manager for our area. Mr. Ball began with Westec Security more than seventeen years ago and seems well acquainted with the area and local concerns.

Currently, ADT provides services in two separate ways: monitoring and patrol. While Mr. Ball did not have statistics encompassing ADT monitoring (since he is the patrol manager), he said that as of the beginning of May there were 211 patrol customers in Mandeville Canyon and Brentwood Hills. This generates less than \$6,500 per month, which is approximately \$4,000 shy of the cost of the 16-hour dedicated patrol car which serves Brentwood Hills and Mandeville Canyon from

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March. According to the crime alerts for these incidents, all of the victims appear to have been selected at random. The crime alerts and Detective Behnke and Officer Ragsdale made numerous recommendations to help prevent burglaries and robberies which are listed on page four.

It is very unlikely that it will happen, but if you ever are the victim of a home invasion robbery, Detective Behnke suggests that you cooperate and don't try to be a hero, and pay attention to specific details that would help to identify the suspects to police. A community member suggested that everyone victimized create an independent contemporaneous record of the event for future reference.

Following their presentation Officer Ragsdale and Detective Behnke answered numerous questions. We learned that LAPD does not believe that any of the recent home invasions are related, and that it is not likely that specific homes have been targeted in advance. The LAPD does not recommend gun ownership, nor do they recommend keeping cash or other valuables on hand to placate assailants.

While recent events are obviously disturbing to all of us, it is good to keep in mind that we still have among the lowest rate of serious crime of any part of Los Angeles. With a review of security, and a renewed sense of partnership with one another and the LAPD, we should have no problem maintaining the safety and security of our community.

Neighborhood Watch - Other Recent Incidents

About one week after the home invasion robbery occurred, a group of animal rights activists staged a loud evening protest in front of a residence on Pesquera Drive. As they were dispersed by police some escaped by running through neighboring back yards. It is unlikely that the protesters were aware that a serious crime had recently occurred nearby, but when a police helicopter circled the area with search light blazing, many already scared residents were severely frightened. Most were quite relieved to discover that it was an ill-timed act of civil disobedience.

At the May meeting, a homeowner on Westridge Road near Jeffersonia reported that his home had been recently burglarized while he was away. He returned home from a short trip to discover that the person who was house sitting had forgotten to activate the alarm. The alarm system still may have had a deterrent effect, because it appeared to be a rushed job. The criminal(s) made off with jewelry, heirloom candlesticks, and a computer. Fortunately there is a suspect in the case already, because a fingerprint was recovered (amazingly, from a surgical glove which had been left at the scene by the suspect).

At our June meeting, a homeowner reported the theft of several items from the front of his home (children's toys and sports equipment) by suspects driving a small white pickup truck. The incident occurred at approximately 2am early one morning, and was witnessed by a neighbor.

Unfortunately, neither the police or ADT were notified at the time, and the witness was not able to provide the license plate number of the vehicle. Subsequently Senior Lead Officer Hinman was contacted to at least provide a vehicle and suspect description. The homeowner has filed a complaint with ADT, because there was no response when he requested a patrol dispatch. The complaint is currently being looked into by ADT.

Received in our membership renewals was the notification from a member that at least two vehicles were vandalized on Westridge Road one evening in March. Similar acts of vandalism had been reported around the same time in several other Brentwood neighborhoods, but there have been no reports since then.

And while it may not have the same emotional impact as a home invasion robbery, burglary, or act of vandalism, residents should still be aware of the illegal curb painter(s) that from time to time collect "donations" from people and in return repaint numbers on their curbs. According to Cindy Miscikowski's May e-news monthly, one Brentwood property owner discovered that the curb painter had even painted the wrong number. If you should come across an illegal curb painter, you should contact West LAPD at (310) 575-8423 and Street Use Inspector Karen Bowie at (310) 575-8479.

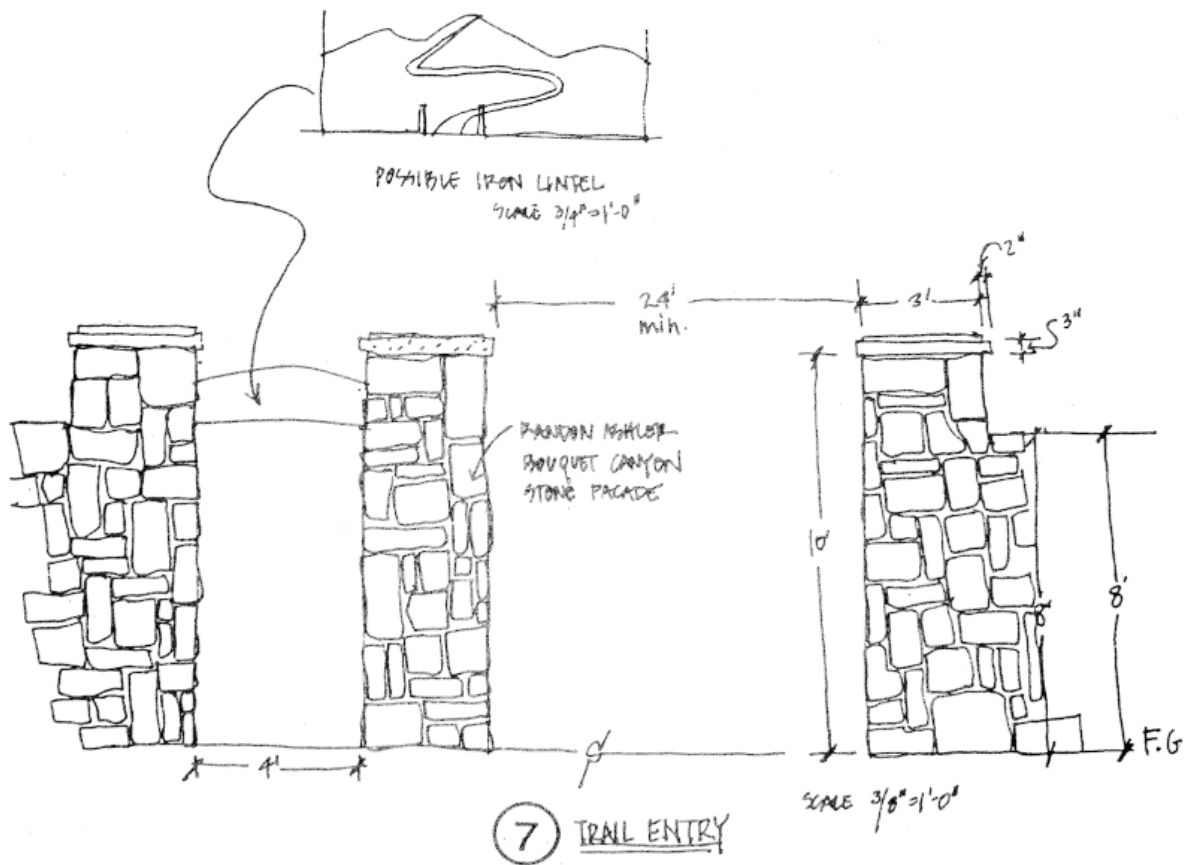
Please communicate your Neighborhood Watch items to us, so that we can all stay alert to what is happening in our community.

Home Security/Burglary Prevention Tips

- Review home security precautions on a regular basis;
- Install and use an alarm system;
- Keep all doors and windows locked;
- Install secondary locks for sliding glass doors and windows (pin locks);
- Place locks on side gates to prevent access to rear yards;
- Trim or remove shrubbery that hides doors and windows;
- Light home exteriors to prevent prowling
(Officer Ragsdale suggests motion sensor lights, which could give a criminal the sense that they have been detected and need to leave the area);
- Maintain a good relationship with neighbors;
- Participate in a program for crime prevention (neighborhood watch);
- If you witness suspicious activity, contact the police:
 - 9-1-1 – for an emergency
 - 310-451-LAPD (5273) – for non-emergency crime
 - 310-575-8404 – WLA front desk for inquiries and general information
 - 310-575-8423 – Brentwood Senior Lead Officer Dennis Hinman

Home Invasion Robbery Prevention Tips

- All of the above;
- Make sure that you close the garage door as you leave home;
- Pay attention to cars behind you as you drive;
- If you think someone is following you, make turns to see if they also turn; if you believe that you are being followed, do not drive to your home – exit to a well-lit, populated area and call 9-1-1;
- Use caution when entering and exiting your garage;
- Don't unlock and exit your vehicle until the garage door is closed and you can see that no one is in the garage.



MRCA Releases First Sketch of Conceptual Plan for Westridge Trailhead

Above and right are the first sketches from Stephanie Landregan, ASLA, of the conceptual plan for the Westridge Road trailhead. Ms. Landregan is Chief Landscape Architect for the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA). Because the City funds used to acquire the property came from Prop K bond money, a stipulation was attached by then Council Member Laura Chick that the site have off-street parking for no less than thirty cars. Initially it was thought that the appropriate place for the parking area would be at the clearing some distance up the fire road, but Ms. Landregan quickly determined that the area was not large enough for thirty vehicles, and that creating two-way traffic flow would be problematic that far up the fire road.

The current plan, still subject to revision, will create easy access to sweeping views from downtown to the ocean, even to those physically unable to access the trail itself, but because of the way the parking will be sited and landscaped, it should not appear intrusive. According to Ms. Landregan: “The Conservancy’s approach and aesthetic is to fit all design into the neighborhood, such that the entry will be elegant and massive enough for the site. We tend toward a style called National Park Rustic. This is actually a very good aesthetic to follow because it considers nature to be a neighbor and designs to blend into the surroundings with harmony and balance, instead of making architectural statements unrelated to the surroundings.”

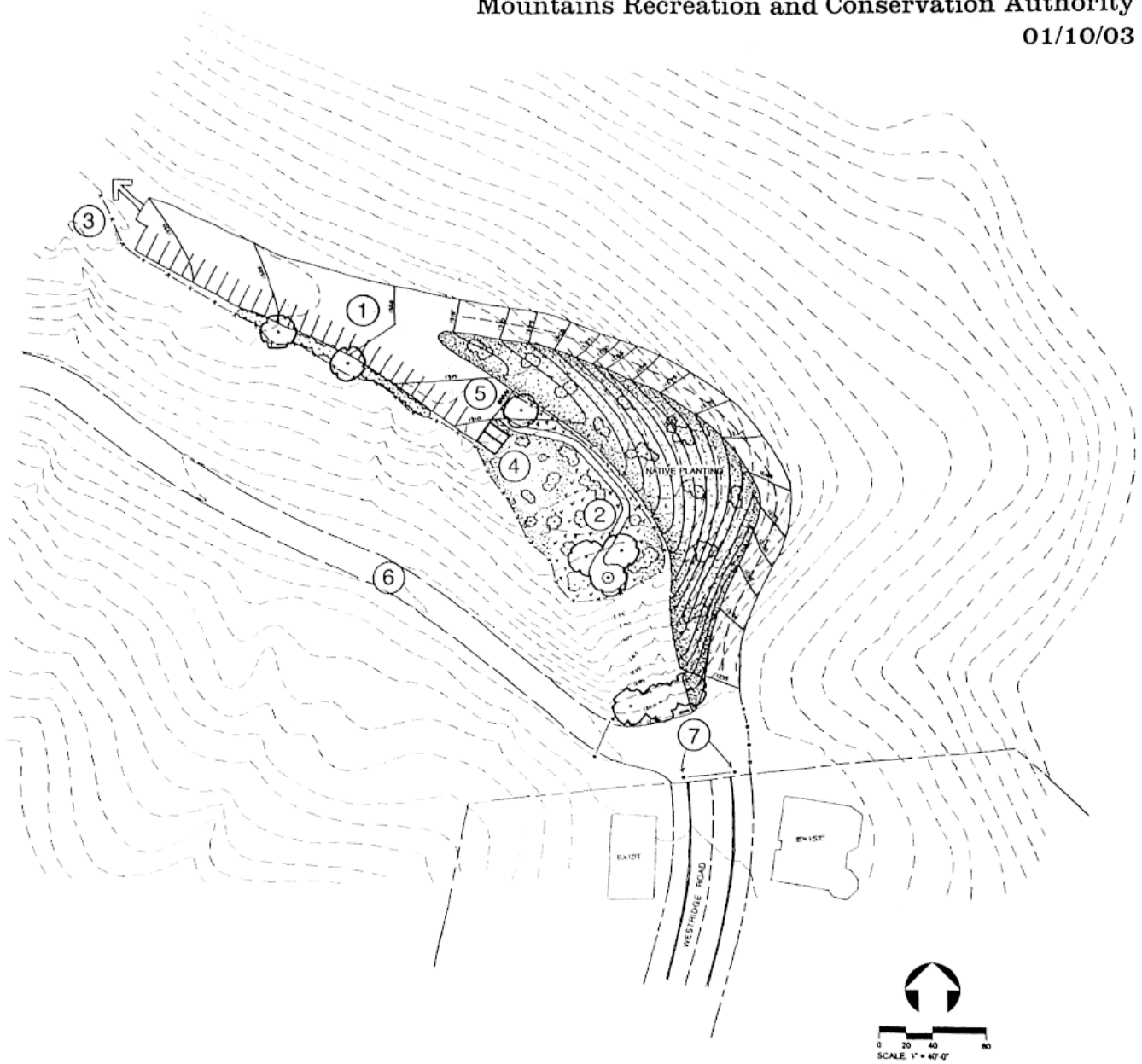
“Rustic also uses colors, materials and scale from the site, so that a design ‘grows’ out of the site or ‘wraps’ into the site. Sometimes this requires more of a road than less, so that the road works with the contours instead of fulfilling an engineering exercise in economy without concern for views, topography and viewsheds. This does not exclude engineering, it just directs the engineering into one other area to respect. National Park Service and many other public agencies are now returning to this design aesthetic, which I can say with certainty and pride that the Conservancy has always embraced and installed.”

We are very excited with the initial concept, and will continue to keep the community up to date.

SULLIVAN CANYON OVERLOOK Conceptual Plan

Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority

01/10/03



LEGEND

- | | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|---|------------------------------|
| ① | PERVIOUS CONCRETE ROAD / PARKING | ⑤ | BIKE RACKS |
| ② | 5' D.G. PATH | ⑥ | EXIST. FIRE ROAD |
| ③ | RUSTIC FENCING | ⑦ | ENTRY WITH SIGN AND PLANTING |
| ④ | RESTROOM / COMPOSTING | | |

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Sunset to the 2400 block of Mandeville Canyon Road between 6:30am and 11pm. Mr. Ball stated that we are not in immediate danger of losing our patrol car, but if ADT is not able to close the gap with additional customers that the dedicated car would be threatened. (For those wondering about a 24-hour car, that would cost \$16,000 per month.)

Responding to the criticism by patrol customers that response has been slow recently compared to previous years (and slower with ADT than with Edison or Westec), Mr. Ball pointed out that response time depends on a number of factors: the hour (if our dedicated car is not "on"), traffic, number of calls, and even weather. He stated that most calls should be answered within fifteen minutes. Some residents were concerned that when calling ADT to request patrol response that the recording suggests to hang up and call 9-1-1 in an emergency. While this may seem disconcerting to those paying the additional amount for patrol service, this is the same recommendation that previous companies have always made, and it is sound advice.

Feeding the problem, since we live in a relatively safe neighborhood, it appears that many residents have opted for the monitoring-only option, whether with ADT or another company. The thinking may be that since ADT doesn't guarantee a response anyway that LAPD will eventually respond to an alarm event, or that since there is sometimes a dedicated car in the neighborhood that they would have emergency access if they really needed it.

Earlier this year, however, the police commission recommended that LAPD implement

a Verified Burglary Alarm Policy, calling for an alarm verification by the monitoring company to insure that there is an actual emergency before dispatching an LAPD unit. This is because the vast majority of activations are false alarms (92% according to the police commission) and are a major drain on the resources of the department. The final policy has still not been determined, but it appears that some modified version of the original proposal will eventually be implemented.

As far as non-patrol customers receiving the benefit of patrol service if they 'really need it,' this is not how it works – it is that simple.

There is no question that having a dedicated ADT patrol car serves as a deterrent to criminal activity, just as a police presence and active neighborhood watch program do. We would hate to see Brentwood Hills lose our dedicated car, and we hope that however you feel about ADT, that you will consider whether the additional expense of patrol response service is right for you as an additional way to keep the security high at your own home and throughout the neighborhood.

If you have any questions or comments for Mr. Ball, he can be reached at:

Mike Ball
Patrol Manager
Bel Air Patrol
Div. of ADT Security Services
5400 W. Rosecrans Avenue
Hawthorne, CA 90250
310-725-1306
mikeball@adt.com

Are You Missing A Jacket?

Board member Sheila Greenberg hosted our well attended May meeting, where someone inadvertently left a men's jacket behind. If you attended and are now missing a beige size 40 jacket, please call Sheila at 472-0830 to recover it. Thanks again to Sheila for hosting the meeting, which was a standing-room-only crowd.

We will have no July meeting due to the holiday and vacation schedules. Please contact us if you are interested in attending in August.

Welcoming Committee News

Thanks are also due to directors Sue Keane and Martine Anderson, our welcoming committee, who recently hosted a welcome-to-the-neighborhood gathering for new residents of Brentwood Hills. The get together was held at Sue's home, where guests were treated to refreshments and had an opportunity to meet several BHHA directors and neighbors. The event was a big success and we will be planning similar events for new neighbors on an as needed basis. Thanks again to Sue and Martine for their outstanding effort.

2003 BHHA Membership Drive

Our 2003 membership drive is still underway. The number of contributing members is down considerably compared to recent years, so please double check your records to make sure that you are up to date.

Our sole mission is to protect and enhance the quality of life in our neighborhood. We do this by:

- keeping on top of local issues at our monthly meetings
- communicating to members via newsletters, e-mails, and our web site
- maintaining a strong relationship with our city council member and staff
- participating in other important local organizations, among them:

Brentwood Community Council

Brentwood Community Federation

Citizen's Oversight Committee for Santa Monica Mountains Open Space
Preservation District Number Two

Mandeville Canyon Local Volunteer Neighborhood Oversight Committee
(what we often refer to as the trailhead committee)

Tri-association committee, with MCA & UMCA

What our all-volunteer board asks in return for our hard work is your support: please contribute your annual dues, communicate your concerns to us, and attend meetings when you can. We all benefit from a strong homeowners association.

Please fill out the form below and send it to the address below along with your check for \$35 made payable to BHHA. Feel free to use the back of the membership form or an additional sheet to communicate any questions, concerns, or comments. Thank You!

Brentwood Hills Homeowners Association

PO Box 49495

Los Angeles, CA 90049

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____ E-mail _____

I would like to:

receive newsletters by e-mail

receive other communications by e-mail

all membership information is strictly confidential

Helpful Telephone Numbers

Fire/Police Emergency: 911

Fire Department: Station #19
12229 Sunset Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90049
(non-emergency): 310-575-8519

Police Department: West LA Division
1663 Butler Avenue
Los Angeles, 90024
(non-emergency): 310-575-8401
Sr. Lead Officer Dennis Hinman: 213-509-3312
West LA Community Relations: 310-575-8431

ADT Security (Patrol Service): 310-478-0301

Animal Services West LA Center: 888-452-7381
For stray animals: 213-893-8400

MRC 24 Hr. Emergency #: 310-456-7049
Ranger Latham (Westridge Fire Rd): 310-471-9635

Parking Enforcement: 310-665-0377

City Council Representative: Council District 11
Councilwoman Cindy Miscikowski
1645 Corinth Avenue
Los Angeles, 90024
310-575-8461 (westside)
213-485-3811 (downtown)

The space below is intentionally left blank for comments to BHHA, or you may add an additional sheet with your dues.
