Greenberg Glusker

Sheri L. Bonstelle

Partner

sbonstelle@ggfirm.com

Phone – 310.201.7546

Sheri L. Bonstelle is a Partner in the firm's Real Estate Department and is Chair of the Land Use & Development Practice. She specializes in land use, zoning, environmental, litigation and construction law.

Sheri works on large complex development projects from purchase of the property through entitlement, construction, and litigation. She manages all aspects of the entitlement process, including representing clients before local and state agencies, commissions and councils. She has entitled and successfully defended a range of cases from a million square foot mixed-use hotel, residential and retail development in Downtown Los Angeles, to a boutique hotel in a historic structure in Hollywood. She also represents agricultural owners in complying with the Williamson Act and farm housing laws, and industrial users in preserving trucking uses in response to recent State and local laws.

Sheri represents homeowners and retail and office owners in rebuilding efforts after the Palisades and Eaton fires, including obtaining sufficient property and building documentation, evaluating various rebuilding options, and planning cleanup, architectural design and permitting approvals.

Sheri also works with her clients to create solutions to address the housing crisis in California, from implementing Density Bonus or Transit Oriented Communities (TOC) provisions in the code to creating communal living and pod sharing developments. She also entitles eldercare facilities and student housing projects. She also defends housing development projects in State Court under the Housing Accountability Act, including prevailing in a case that found the City of LA acted in bad faith, where the Judge ordered the City to approve the project.

As an architect with extensive experience in historic preservation projects, she brings a

Services

- Real Estate
- Land Use & Development
- Project Development
- Environment
- California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)
- Cannabis
- Climate Change & Sustainability
- Real Estate Litigation
- Environmental Litigation

thoughtful approach to the entitlement and renovation of historic structures, presenting before Cultural Heritage Commissions and in determining whether buildings meet the National, California and local standards to qualify for historic designation or compliance with the Secretary of the Interior Standards.

She represents property owners in developing single family homes in the hillside areas of Los Angeles and Beverly Hills, including obtaining City entitlements and building permits, and negotiating architect, contractor and construction management agreements. She also acts as Special Land Use Counsel in bankruptcy court to preserve the vested rights of housing and commercial projects to ensure that property value is maintained prior to sale.

She coordinates environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and defends the cases in State court. She also obtains permits and approvals necessary under the Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, Endangered Species Act, and California Coastal Act, and represents projects before the California Coastal Commission. She also assists in drafting local and State legislation related to housing, CEQA, and permit streamlining issues.

Sheri is a licensed architect in the State of New York, where she practiced architecture for several years prior to entering the legal profession. She was a project architect on many public projects, including the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail Line.

She often teaches courses on planning, real estate development, and related topics, and her experience includes serving as a Lecturer at California State University, Northridge for Planning Law (URBS 460) and at the USC Master of Real Estate Development program for Project Management and Construction Technology (RED 547). She also served as an Instructor for the Sierra Club's Wilderness Travel Course and as a long-standing panelist for CEB's *Key Developments in Real Property*. In addition, she frequently lectures and participates on panels for leading professional and academic organizations, including the Los Angeles County and Beverly Hills Bar Associations, Loyola Law School, USC, the Urban Land Institute, the California Preservation Foundation, AEP's CEQA Advanced Workshop, and ProVisors LA Real Estate and Construction groups.

Professional Affiliations

- Member, Jefferson Society (architect/lawyer)
- Member, California Preservation Foundation
- Member, Los Angeles County Bar Association, Real Estate Section

Community and Charitable Organizations

- Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, Executive Committee Board Member and Secretary
- Westside Family Health Center, Advisory Group and Pro Bono Counsel

Awards

- Named as a "Top Real Estate & Development Lawyer," *Daily Journal*, 2025
- Named as Southern California Super Lawyer "Rising Star" 2008, 2009, 2010
- Named Health Center Champion, 2021, by WFHC

Bar Admissions

- California

Education

- Fordham University School of Law (J.D., 2001)
- Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation (M. Arch., 1993)
  - ETH Zurich program
- Columbia College, Columbia University (B.A., 1990)
  - Architecture

Representative Matters

Mixed-Use and Housing Development

- Represented developer in acquiring the property, processing entitlements including an EIR, obtaining TFAR, negotiating agreements, and filing for building permits for a one million square foot mixed-use project, including a 300 room W hotel, 435 residential condominiums and 60,000 square feet of commercial uses, across from the Crypto Arena. Successfully defended developer in dismissal of CEQA litigation case against the project.
- Represented owner in the entitlements for Long Beach's first micro-unit residential development, which included preservation of the historic Dolly Varden hotel sign in the new project, and obtained approval of the planning commission to overturn the historic determination, and defeat CEQA claims by a construction trade union.
- Represented developer in approval of a 294 unit, 24-story housing development project on a1.5 acre site in Glendale, CA, including preservation of a historic bank building, and drafting and approval of a Development Agreement with the City, and ensuring compliance with the Housing Accountability Act.
- Represented Essex Property Trust in processing entitlements for a mixed use building including 200 apartment units with affordable housing, a 5,000 square foot ground level commercial space, and façade renovation of the adjacent Earl Carroll Theater, a historic resource, in Hollywood.
- Represented developer in obtaining approval of an Eldercare Facility Unified Permit for a 137 unit eldercare facility, including Alzheimer's and assisted living care with ground level medical office use and Korean restaurant to serve the larger Koreatown community.
- Represented owner in obtaining approvals for a mixed use project with residential units and two ground level restaurants, and successfully defended litigation related to the restaurant uses. Represented developer in subsequent hearings related to

Westwood neighborhood opposition to proposed commercial tenants for the building. Previously represented owner for approval of a one-story retail project on the property with rooftop parking and solar panels, including obtaining denial of an historic cultural monument designation of the existing Mann National Theater site.

- Represented theater lessor in the planning approvals and construction of an iPic Theater with 426 seats with alcohol service and a ground level restaurant. Successfully defeated a protest filing before an ALJ for the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control for alcohol service in the theater.
- Represented Istar Financial in obtaining entitlement approvals for a 1,135 residential units with housing types ranging from single family to apartment units on a 61-acre prior Navy base at Ponte Vista.
- Represented Istar Financial with respect to preserving and extending entitlements and agency approvals for a 1,500 home master planned community on 750 acres in Riverside County, known as Spring Mountain Ranch.
- Represented The Clarrett Group in processing entitlements and obtaining building permits for a mixed-use development of 1,042 apartment units with affordable housing and 175,000 square feet of retail and restaurant space on a 7 acre site in Hollywood known as Blvd 6200, including approval of a sign plan within the Hollywood Signage Supplemental Use District.
- Represented Istar Financial with respect to vesting entitlements and processing building permits for a residential condominium in Mammoth Lakes.
- Represent local community college in analyzing options for housing development on campus based on local and State law and State funding obligations.
- Represented farmland owners in San Mateo County in complying with new farm worker housing regulations and inspection process.

Hotel Development

- Represented hotel developer in entitling 160-room hotel project with rooftop restaurants in the Noho Arts District, including a project labor agreement with Unite Here Local 11.
- Represented hotel owner in obtaining approval for expansion of 18 additional hotel room in an oceanside hotel in Santa Monica, including approval by the Santa Monica City Council on appeal.
- Represented developer in design, entitlement and construction of a new hotel development with signage on Argyle Avenue adjacent to the 101 freeway in Hollywood.
- Represented ground lessee in obtaining entitlement approvals with the City and CRA for 299 hotel rooms and 301 residential units in the existing Cecil Hotel, a residential hotel, in the Historic Core.
- Represented developer in providing land use due diligence review and processing entitlements for adaptive reuse of the historic building and adjacent property as a 7-story boutique hotel with underground supper club, ground level restaurant and retail, rooftop bar and pool.
- Represented Beverly Hills hotel in maintaining and modifying its conditional use permit to allow bar and pool on the rooftop area.
- Provided land use due diligence and permitting analysis for the purchase of two hotels and surrounding properties in Beverly Hills for potential hotel expansion.
- Negotiate a TOT Agreement with the County of Madera for a hotel in Yosemite, CA with an estimated TOT of $38 million in 25 years.

Luxury Residence Development

- Represented property owner in the design, planning approvals, and permitting for a 26,000 square foot single family house in the Beverly Hills hillside area, including negotiating the architect and contractor agreements, and obtaining a Hillside R-1 Permit and all construction permits, and negotiations with neighbors.
- Represented property owner in obtaining vested grading permit status for the development and construction of a 17,500 square foot luxury residential development in the Beverly Crest area of Los Angeles.
- Represented property owner in obtaining entitlements for a luxury residence on a substandard street in a hillside area in Silver Lake, CA, including negotiating a settlement with adjacent neighbors.
- Represented property owner in reducing the size of an adjacent residential development, including denial of a street vacation and limits on scale and hauling, in the Beverly Hills hillside area.
- Represented property owner on the subdivision of an existing Williamson Act property in Santa Ynez with olive trees and olive oil manufacturing for estate planning and future transfer to heirs.

Industrial and Commercial Development

- Represented a developer in the approval of entitlements, including rezone and general plan amendment, and litigation by neighborhood groups, of a 145,000 square foot 12-story medical office building in mid-Wilshire with ground floor retail and restaurants, including an agreement with the construction trades.
- Provided due diligence research and land use and building permit analysis for the construction loan on a purchase of eight multifamily projects in Downtown Santa Monica.
- Represented a large office building owner on several entitlement and permitting issues for new retail, restaurant, sports facility and commercial tenants in Westwood and West LA.
- Obtained approval of entitlements for an office building in Agoura Hills on appeal to City Council based on compliance with City's objective standards.
- Obtained approval for a variance and conditional use permit, on appeal to the South Valley Area Planning Commission, to continue an auto body repair use, including spray booth, within 500 feet of residential uses in the industrial zone in Sherman Oaks, and coordinate permitting approval and completion.
- Represented trucking company in obtaining vesting CUP rights for trucking and warehouse use and opposed City of Jurupa Valley's trucking ordinance.
- Provided land use analysis and evaluated potential development options under the new DTLA 2040 Community Plan for multiple parking lots and historic structures to estimate land value for potential development or sale.

CEQA and HAA Litigation

- *Cesar Chavez 888, LLC v. City of Los Angeles et. al.* Represented developer and petitioner in the entitlement and litigation of a 50-unit mixed-use project in Boyle Heights, where the court found the City violated the Housing Accountability Act, and acted in bad faith, with an order to approve the project and pay attorney's fees.
- *Jerald Ptashkin et al. v. City of West Hollywood*. Represented developer in the entitlement approval of a 17-unit 5-story co-living housing project in West Hollywood, prevailed in CEQA and Housing Accountability Act litigation, and settled the matter on

appeal.

- *ABY Holdings, LLC and BRK Inc. v. City of Los Angeles*. Represented the developer and petitioner in the entitlement and prevailed in the litigation of multiple TOC residential projects with affordable housing, where the City attempted to rezone the property to prohibit multi-family and affordable housing development on 23 parcels within the Crenshaw Corridor Specific Plan, and the court found the City violated the Housing Accountability Act.
- *Coalition for an Equitable Westlake v. City of Los Angeles, Westlake Apartments, LLC, Real Parties (831 N. Westlake)*. Represented the developer of a 79 unit housing development project, with 12 units affordable to extremely low income households in the Westlake area, and prevailed on a Motion for Judgement on the Writ against a neighborhood group on CEQA claims.
- *Golden State Environmental Justice Alliance v. City of Los Angeles, Jia Yua USA Co. Inc., Real Parties*. Represented developer and prevailed on the Motion for Judgement on the Writ, finding the CEQA causes of action were barred by the statute of limitations, because the petitioners failed to timely bring the case following certification of the EIR and approval of the VTTM by the Advisory Agency, and the EIR was not later modified.
- *Bruce Metal and Salvage, Inc. v. City of Santa Ana*. Represented petitioner in vested rights claims against the City of Santa Ana for a 50-year old recycling facility, where the City rezoned the property for commercial and multifamily uses, which resulted in a settlement.
- *In Re Treetop; Treetop Development, LLC v. City of Los Angeles.* Represented Treetop Development, LLC as Special Land Use Council to support vested permit rights and preserve project entitlements for a large single family home and guest house in a hillside area in Los Angeles in bankruptcy court, and on appeal to the Ninth Circuit.
- *McPherson et al. v. City of Manhattan Beach, 900 Manhattan LLC, Real Parties (900 Club)*. Represented restaurant and private club owner in Manhattan Beach, as defendant, and prevailed in defeating a CEQA case brought by neighbors regarding entitlements to increase hours of operation and floor area, due to a failure to exhaust administrative remedies.
- *McPherson v. City of Manhattan Beach, MB Dining LLC, Real Parties (Stand House).* Represented restaurant owner, as defendant, in the approved entitlements for the Strand House restaurant and prevailed in a CEQA case regarding an unusual circumstances exception exemption for allowing dining on outdoor patios, and also prevailed in an ABC protest regarding the sale of alcohol at the restaurant.
- *Beverly Wilshire Homes Association v. City of Los Angeles, 650 SSV Property Owner, LLC, Real Parties*. Represented medical office developer and property owner in successfully defending and settling a CEQA claim by a neighborhood association.
- *Forest Lawn Memorial Park Association v. LNR California Investments, Inc. et al.* Represented Forest Lawn as land use co-counsel against Lennar entities related to a contract dispute for inclusion of a cemetery in the 73-acre Orange County Great Park, which included a 3 month trial in State court that ended in settlement.

Historic Preservation

- Represented the owner of Alpine Village in the historic designation with the County of Los Angeles, which was limited to the buildings of the original German Market, restaurant, and retail shops allowing the remaining 3 acres to be sold for industrial use.
- Represented the owner of the Earl Carroll Theater in Hollywood, in the development of a mixed use residential project in the former Theater parking lot, and the

preservation of the exterior of the Theater, including the neon lighting and Beryl Wallace sign.

- Represented the property owner, Leggett & Platt, and similarly situated property owners, in defeating the historic designation of property as identified in the City of Whittier's *Citywide Non-Residential Historic Resources Survey*.
- Represented the developer of a micro-unit residential project in Long Beach in preserving the historic Dolly Varden hotel sign, but convincing the planning commission, on appeal, that the building was not historic and could be redeveloped with housing.
- Represent the homeowner in a historic analysis of a West Adams property and provided potential development options, including as a boutique hotel, in compliance with the Secretary of the Interiors Standards.
- Represented a homeowner in Beverly Hills in defeating a historic designation application by neighbors.

Administrative Protests

- Represented non-profit 211 LA and prevailed in an administrative protest before the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors for an RFP for a contract renewal for information services against selected applicant Deloitte, Inc.

Pro Bono Matters

- Negotiated architect and contractor agreements, and obtained entitlements and building permits in Culver City for the Westside Family Health Center, a health clinic providing care to low income families.