

THEODORA TO ORINGHER
COUNSELORS AT LAW

1 Jeffrey H. Reeves, Esq. (State Bar No. 156648)
jreeves@tocounsel.com

2 Eric J. Fromme, Esq. (State Bar No. 193517)
efromme@tocounsel.com

3 Cheryl Priest Ainsworth , Esq. (State Bar No. 255824)
cainsworth@tocounsel.com

4 Rachael T. Schiffman, Esq. (State Bar No. 292005)
rschiffman@tocounsel.com

5 Christopher J. Harney, Esq. (State Bar No. 322306)
charney@tocounsel.com

6 THEODORA ORINGHER PC
535 Anton Boulevard, Ninth Floor
7 Costa Mesa, California 92626-7109
Telephone: (714) 549-6200
8 Facsimile: (714) 549-6201

9 Christopher L. Pitet (State Bar No. 196861)
cpitet@apjuris.com

10 ADKISSON PITET LLP
100 Bayview Cir., Ste. 210
11 Newport Beach, CA 92660
Telephone: (949) 502-7760
12 Facsimile: (949) 502-7762

13 Raymond John Bekeris (State Bar No. 325522)
bekeris1@msn.com
14 11975 Texas Avenue, Apt 303
Los Angeles, CA 90025-7705
15 Telephone: (310) 271-0101

16 Attorneys for Defendant/Cross-Complainant
MOHAMED HADID and AM FAMILY
17 FUND, LLC

18 **SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**
19 **COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, WEST DISTRICT**

20	GIVE BACK, LLC,
21	Plaintiff,
22	vs.
23	MOHAMED HADID,
	Defendant.
24	MOHAMED HADID and AM FAMILY
25	FUND, LLC,
	Cross-Complainants,
26	vs.
27	GIVE BACK, LLC,
28	Cross-Defendant.

Case No. 20SMCV01315
(Assigned for All Purposes to Hon. Elaine Mandel, Department P)

**DECLARATION OF JUSTIN COZART IN
SUPPORT OF MOTION FOR
TEMPORARY RESTRAINING ORDER
AND PRELIMINARY INJUNCTION**

Hearing Date: April 23, 2021
Hearing Time: 9:00 am
Hearing Location: Department P

Action Filed: September 17, 2020
Trial Date: None Set

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SUPPLEMENTAL DECLARATION OF JUSTIN COZART

I, Justin Cozart, declare:

I have personal knowledge of the following facts, and if called upon to testify I could and would so competently and truthfully testify to these facts:

1. I am the principal of Pacific Growth Investments LLC an investment and consulting firm, and I personally helped broker the underlying loan with Romspen that I understand to be at issue in this litigation. My firm and I have acted as a financial advisor in various capacities to Mohamed Hadid for the last five years.

2. I have spoken with counsel for Mr. Hadid in this matter, Jeffrey H. Reeves, and submit this Declaration in support of Mr. Hadid's accompanying motion for a temporary restraining order, specifically to address any concerns suggested by the Plaintiff in this case as to Mr. Hadid's financial wherewithal, and to provide some other relevant background concerning Mr. Hadid and the guaranty that Plaintiff is suing to enforce in this case.

3. Coldwater Development, LLC and Lyda Ludd LLC each entered into a borrowing contractual relationship with Romspen Capital ("Romspen") pursuant to a Loan agreement executed on or around March of 2017. Coldwater Development LLC is owned 100% by Mr. Hadid. Lydda Ludd, LLC is owned 100% by AM Family Fund, LLC, which, in turn, is owned 100% by Mr. Hadid.

4. Mr. Hadid, hired my firm to represent him and his LLCs in their efforts to raise capital for a development project known as the "Royalton Project" that Mr. Hadid has been pursuing on the real property owned by Coldwater LLC and Lydda Lud, LLC in the Beverly Hills area for upwards of 15 years now. We were successful in completing the funding by facilitating Romspen based out of Ontario, Canada to provide the required funding that I understand to be at the center of this litigation (the "Note").

1 5. I am aware that Romspen transferred the Note to Give Back LLC sometime in
2 2020. The principal of Romspen, Wes Roitman, advised me of that occurrence after the
3 transaction was consummated. At the time of the transaction I had heard rumors that Alex Von
4 Furstenberg, who sits on the Board of Directors of Fashion house Diane Von Furstenberg, was
5 telling people in the Los Angeles area and beyond that he had purchased the Note from Romspen.
6 This was later confirmed through direct texts from Alex Von Furstenberg to Mohamed Hadid. In
7 those same texts Alex Von Furstenberg told Mr. Hadid that he had hired Ron Richards as his
8 counsel to facilitate the transaction.

10 6. Alex Von Furstenberg had stated that he lived adjacent to the Royalton property
11 and would often walk on the land in long hikes with his kids, mother Diane Von Furstenberg, and
12 step father Barry Diller. This was disclosed at a meeting at EATALY in Century City, CA that I
13 attended with Mohamed Hadid on the date of February 6, 2020. Present at that meeting was Alex
14 Von Furstenberg. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss Alex Von Furstenberg's stated desire
15 of purchasing, for upwards of \$20 million, a portion of the land known as Royalton owned by the
16 Coldwater and Lydda Lud, LLCs.

18 7. Following the meeting of February 6, 2020 Alex Von Furstenberg told me in an e-
19 mail that he was going to postpone the \$20 million acquisition due to changes in the marketplace
20 brought on by the COVID pandemic.

22 8. Upon Give Back's acquisition of the note, Coldwater and I were immediately
23 informed of a "rough amount that was now due" to Give Back LLC after their purchase of the
24 Note. The amount communicated verbally was significantly higher than what I believed was
25 owed, and had to have conflicted with the usury laws in the state of California, as I understand
26 them, as well as the non-usury clause Section XII, section 12.17 issued in the loan agreement. A
27 true and correct copy of my copy of the loan agreement is attached hereto as **Exhibit A**.

28

1 Coldwater was informed that “the exact number” would be given at a later date, but as I write this
2 declaration on the date signed below that number has not been disclosed to Coldwater by Ron
3 Richards, Give Back LLC’s representative, or anyone else for that matter.

4 9. Despite the concerns of the payoff number “verbally quoted” being incorrect, and
5 significantly higher than the payoff that Romspen was expecting, Give Back LLC still persisted in
6 pushing their claims of the higher amounts (approximately \$30 million) being owed.

7 10. If and when a final amount owed on the Note is agreed to by Give Back and Mr.
8 Hadid, or that amount is decided by some court, Mr. Hadid has the resources at his disposal to pay
9 that debt. I am intimately familiar with Mr. Hadid and his property interests, having advised him
10 regarding financial matters for the past several years.

11 11. Regarding a possible payment to retire the Note, Mr. Hadid and I have been able to
12 secure funding from a private source and acquaintance of Mr. Hadid’s, Mishel “Michael”
13 Munayyer, who has stated that he is willing to invest upwards of \$26 million for Mr. Hadid’s use
14 in paying the Note. A true and correct copy of that January 10, 2021 letter is attached hereto as
15 **Exhibit B**. Naturally, Mr. Munayyer has certain conditions that must be met in order for that
16 funding to happen, as can be seen from his letter. One of the major conditions of that commitment
17 was a payoff number from Give Back LLC. As I write this declaration a “final payoff” number, or
18 letter with per diem stating the amount that is owed, has still not been provided to Mr. Hadid or
19 any of his LLCs or representatives, to my knowledge. This puts Coldwater in a scenario in which
20 we cannot close the transaction with the investor that we have secured.

21 12. Further complicating our ability to raise funds to pay the Note has been a smear
22 article, written with what I know to be complete falsehoods by the New York Times and
23 propagated by Ron Richards, managing director and/or principal of Give Back LLC. A true and
24 correct copy of the article is attached hereto as **Exhibit C**.

1 13. The author of the article sets the tone of negativity and judgment within the first
2 paragraph when he states (referring to Mr. Hadid), and I quote “He’s long battled the building
3 code, neighbors, and common sense as he’s barged through red tape in the loftiest heights across
4 Los Angeles and nearby Bel Air. But this time he may be over reaching”

5
6 14. There are many untruths written throughout the article, but I will only mention the
7 untruths here that I see as specifically relevant to this case.

8 15. Contrary to the statements and suggestions in the article, the Royalton Project is a
9 “permitted project”, approve by the city of Los Angeles. In other words, if the project was not
10 able to be built, then Coldwater would not have been able to get a permit.

11 16. The author of the article goes on, and I quote “After defaulting on his loans-leaving
12 contractors, law firms, and tax collectors hanging in the balance-Mr. Hadid’s holding companies
13 claimed bankruptcy in January; five days before the property was due to be foreclosed by Ronald
14 Richards, a bullish Beverly Hills lawyer who led a handful of debt purchasers last year, drives an
15 electric car and swears he’ll return these hills to their natural state if he wins.” The statements
16 about Mr. Hadid and how he has treated others I know to be false and misleading.

17
18 17. Mr. Richards uses the article to paint himself out as the principal of Give Back
19 LLC, when in fact he is acting as a front for Alex Von Furstenberg. He uses the article to prop
20 himself up as a “benevolent environmentalist”, while disparaging Mr. Hadid publicly and trying to
21 damage his character and destroy his reputation to the public and the lending community.

22
23 18. Mr. Richards goes on further with his diatribe about Mr. Hadid by stating, and I
24 quote “There’s such few green spaces in L.A. One of my last acts as a lawyer will be to protect
25 that Hillside. If he doesn’t pay, we own it, and we’ll have the right to do whatever we want. And
26 that’s to let the grass grow. I didn’t go to law school just to represent the rich.”

1 19. In fact, Mr. Richards is representing the rich. Despite his contrary comments in the
2 article, Alex Von Furstenberg comes from a very wealthy family. Mr. Diller (Alex Von
3 Furstenberg's step father) and his mother Dian Von Furstenberg have a net worth of over \$4
4 Billion.

5 20. The article mentions the court case of the Hastain Trail. That court case, which was
6 a long costly battle in an effort to take land from Mohamed Hadid, was decided on appeal and
7 Mohamed Hadid won that case (Supreme Court #BC469573). In 2015, while the matter was still
8 pending on appeal, Alex Von Furstenberg disclosed to Mohamed Hadid that it was he, Alex, who
9 had financially backed the plaintiffs in that case against Mr. Hadid. I have seen the texts myself,
10 and I believe they are being submitted along with Mr. Hadid's accompanying declaration. This
11 admission from Alex Von Furstenberg is important because it shows that Alex Von Furstenberg
12 has been pursuing ownership of this land, despite Mohamed Hadid's ownership and control of the
13 land, for more than seven years now. Since Alex Von Furstenberg and the plaintiffs he backed
14 were not able to win the Hastain Trail litigation, he has now apparently turned to backing Give
15 Back LLC in yet another run at finding a way to wrest control of the property from Mr. Hadid.

16 21. Alex Von Furstenberg also stated to Mohamed Hadid in a prior conversation in
17 connection with the meeting described in paragraph 6 above that he was buying the land for tax
18 purposes, not for benevolence.

19 22. In fact, when Give Back LLC was negotiating with Romspen to buy the Note, they
20 insisted that Romspen require Mr. Hadid to submit building permits, even though Mr. Hadid had
21 no interest in doing so at that time. According to Romspen, what I now understand to have been
22 Give Back LLC was insisting that Mr. Hadid submit permits to develop the Royalton Project as a
23 condition of the sale of the Note to Give Back LLC. Mr. Hadid complied and submitted the
24 building permit applications to facilitate the sale.

1 23. After that, and after Give Back LLC bought the Note, signs and posters began
2 turning up at the project containing hateful and inaccurate statements about Mr. Hadid,
3 complaining specifically about the fact that Mr. Hadid had pulled permits for the development.
4 These messages, which I assume originated with Give Back LLC or its backers, not only unfairly
5 smeared Mr. Hadid, but also cast a cloud over the value of the real estate, and therefore depressed
6 the value of the LLC membership units that owned the real property. This fact has hampered me
7 in my ability to try to locate funding to refinance the Note for Give Back LLC and Mr. Hadid.
8

9 24. My understanding of these facts is that it is clear that Give Back and its backers,
10 including Alex Von Furstenberg, were scheming even before buying the Note to attack Mr. Hadid
11 and the Royalton Project in an effort to foreclose and take the project for themselves.
12

13 25. Mr. Richards said in the NY Times article I quoted above that if he acquires the
14 project he will dedicate it back to the public and “let the grass grow.” That strikes me as false
15 because Give Back LLC was the very entity insisting that Mr. Hadid pull development permits for
16 the project. There would be no need for permitting if Give Back LLC planned to simply “let the
17 grass grow.”
18

19 26. Mr. Richards also blatantly attempts to devalue the Royalton property, which
20 further complicates Coldwater’s ability to restructure the debt underlying the Note, when he says
21 in the NY Times article, and I quote “If it was worth that,” Mr. Richards said “someone would
22 have given him the \$27.7 million to pay off the lender”.

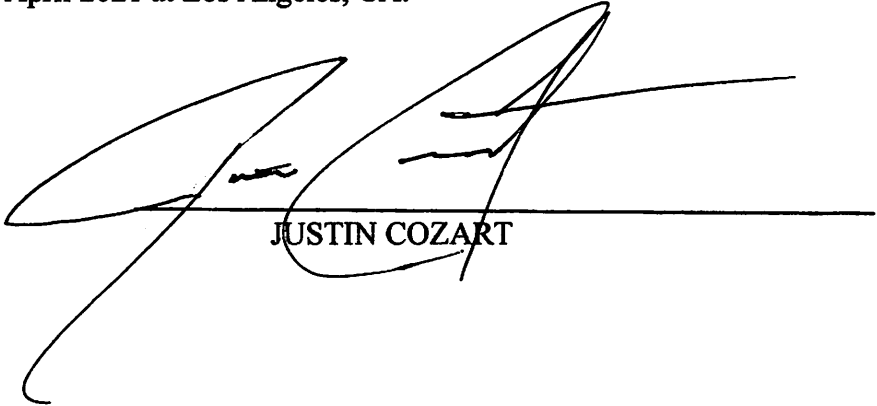
23 27. I referenced earlier this information was a propagated by Ron Richards in an
24 attempt to discredit Mr. Hadid to the financial advantage of his client Give Back LLC. Relatedly,
25 the step-father of Alex Von Furstenberg, Barry Diller, made a cameo appearance at the end of the
26 article “where one might glimpse.....Barry Diller leading their dogs around the lake”.
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Ironically, of all the people to mention in the article the author decided to prop up Barry Diller while vilifying Mohamed Hadid to the financial advantage of Give Back LLC.

I declare under penalty of perjury and under the laws of California that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed this 21st day of April 2021 at Los Angeles, CA.



JUSTIN COZART

EXHIBIT B

MTS LYDDA TRUST

668 North Coast Hwy
pmb 267
Laguna Beach, CA 92651
949-494-3632

January 10, 2021

Mohamed Hadid, Beverly Hills, CA

RE: \$26,000,000 Beverly Hills 6 Residential Lot Refinance

Dear Mr. Hadid,

This letter shall serve as a conditional Commitment from me to fund the above referenced loan. The proposed loan proceeds will pay off the existing notes on the following APNs :

4387-020-001, 4387-020-002, 4387-021-018, 4387-021-019, 3287-022-001,
4387-022-022

located in the city of Beverly Hills, in the County of Los Angeles, CA. Below you will find the conditions that need to be satisfied prior to your loan funding. This approval is contingent upon my satisfaction, in my sole and absolute discretion, with respect to each of the items below and any other matters (not listed herein) related to the approval of the loan, and only after I have completed my due diligence. Note that this list of conditions is subject to change as each item on the list is provided and reviewed by our risk analysis team.

Clear title

Appraisal

Final note payoff letter

Acknowledgement of Attorney's Letter RE: Supreme Court Decision Case
#BC469573

This may or may not be the complete list of all required items that must be reviewed prior to loan approval. I reserve the right to request and or require additional

documentation and set further conditions that it makes determined to be necessary at my sole discretion.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Munayyer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and a long, sweeping tail.

Michael Munayyer, Trustee

MTS LYDDA TRUST

EXHIBIT C

The Fight for Franklin Canyon

Mohamed Hadid (father of Bella and Gigi) has been trying to build an enormous compound on one of the most popular hiking spots in the Los Angeles area. What could possibly go wrong?

By Adam Popescu

Published Feb. 26, 2021 Updated March 1, 2021

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. — Even if he isn't the most famous member of his clan, the real estate developer Mohamed Anwar Hadid, father of five including the models Bella and Gigi, is no lightweight. He's long battled the building code, neighbors and common sense as he's barged through red tape in the loftiest heights across Los Angeles and nearby Bel Air.

But this time he may be overreaching.

Mr. Hadid has spent a decade trying to build a hotel-size compound that bisects a heavily trafficked trail in Franklin Canyon, a 600-acre park wedged between the cities of Beverly Hills and Los Angeles.

Brazen development is common to the sprawling area, but this plan is singular: a mega-mansion gated community, hundreds of thousands of square feet, on a crest so steep that equipment must be brought by helicopter. The vision, according to documents seen by The New York Times, included 11 lavish estates (with one home totaling 100,000 square feet), a horse stable, helipad and three guard towers with 24-hour living spaces, bathrooms and kitchens.

But despite a decade of work and a \$25 million loan, the Icarus-like dream remains a scarred hillside whose fate rests in court.

After defaulting on his loans — leaving contractors, law firms and tax collectors hanging in the balance — Mr. Hadid's holding companies claimed bankruptcy in January: five days before the property was due to be foreclosed by Ronald Richards, a bullish Beverly Hills lawyer who led a handful of debt purchasers last year, drives an electric car and swears he'll return these hills to their natural state if he wins.



Mohamed Hadid with Gigi (left) and Bella at a Victoria's Secret party in Paris in 2016. Dimitrios Kambouris/Getty Images

“He can pay or lose his property,” said Mr. Richards, 53, whose firm has closed over \$250 million in secured debt transactions. Not only must Mr. Hadid cover his debt, “he needs another \$30 million on top of that to develop the land. I don't see how he can do it.”

If he doesn't, will this fast-talking lawyer really spend so much on land just to give it back? “It is a lot of money,” Mr. Richards said, “but it's preserving land for hundreds of families' well-being. What's that worth?”

He added: “There's such few green spaces in L.A. One of my last acts as a lawyer will be to protect that hillside. If he doesn't pay, we own it, and we'll have the right to do whatever we want. And that's to let the grass grow. I didn't go to law school just to represent the rich.”

Detractors say Mr. Hadid, who declined to speak for this article, is finally getting his comeuppance after years of skirting the rules with other development projects. In 2017 he was convicted of violating building codes on a Bel Air home that at 30,000 square feet was bigger and taller than city rules allowed, sentenced to community service and fined.

Two years later he was ordered to knock the home down but hasn't, saying he lacks the money to do so. That bankruptcy strategy is the same script being used in Franklin Canyon, Mr. Richards said.

But while the sum owed is considerable — now nearing \$30 million after interest and fees — Mr. Hadid, 72, who has a significant social media following and a large complement of female companions and vintage cars, has shown a knack for negotiating jams.

Here is a man of influence in a culture that worships it, an immigrant success, born in Nazareth, who came to America to study engineering as Michael and conquered real estate as Mohamed.

One can imagine the appeal of so many undeveloped acres above Franklin Canyon, each potential parcel of land with 360-degree views. It was a setting fit for the dozen gods of Olympus, with a little extra wiggle room.

Daniel Dorsa for The New York Times

'Like a Fortress'

Mr. Hadid, who claims royal lineage and looks straight out of a Ralph Lauren ad, has asserted in court filings that his Franklin properties — 9650 Cedarbrook Drive and 9650 Royalton Drive — are worth \$131 million, an appraisal based on the land and value of building on six lots.

"If it was worth that," Mr. Richards said, "someone would have given him the \$27.7 million to pay off the lender."

In the filings Mr. Hadid seemed to contradict his own appraisal by saying he always planned three homes, which Mr. Richards said "buys him time to present a plan under bankruptcy code. If the court believes it, he could qualify for a residential exception."

Will it, though? The city's building department said it has only approved a single-family dwelling, but Russell Linch, Mr. Hadid's longtime partner, said in an interview that he submitted piecemeal plans starting in 2011 to avoid scrutiny and pending laws that could derail construction.

"If it's the same owner for more than four lots, you have to do a tract map and an environmental impact review and hold public hearings," he said. "If you have five lots next to each other, the city says, 'whoa, whoa, it's one master project.'"

With a 2012 hillside ordinance looming, Mr. Linch, 34, the founder of RAL Design and Management, and Mr. Hadid's former construction manager and right-hand man on dozens of projects in the U.S. and abroad, said that plans were hurried and submitted to the city, using L.L.C.s, which obscure ownership and explain the discrepancies in how much land Mr. Hadid claims he owns in court filings, less than half what Mr. Linch outlines. "It's next to impossible to know it's him on a property," he said of Mr. Hadid, "until he posts on Instagram and his ego gets in the way." Mr. Linch said Mr. Hadid owes him hundreds of thousands of dollars that he won't pay, and though the men are no longer close, they occasionally communicate by text.

Mr. Hadid's strategy could help stave off legal trouble and paying off his debts — at least temporarily.

At the Bel Air location, on a street called Strada Vecchia, Mr. Hadid had employed a layering of shell companies to avoid liability after committing more than 90 zoning violations, as The New York Times reported in 2015. He leveled a hillside, excavated in an earthquake zone and built an IMAX theater.

In a hearing on Mr. Hadid's prior unapproved construction in Bel Air, the building department's former chief of inspections Larry Galstian listed a history of ignoring codes, even hiding construction workers. "We have no trust," he told the court.

The city's charges against Mr. Hadid included illegal use of land, building without a permit and failure to obey building department orders. Evidence that a building inspector received "items of value" was turned over to the F.B.I.

"A lot of people were covering for each other," Mr. Linch said, adding that he was interviewed repeatedly by the F.B.I. regarding his dealings with Mr. Hadid. "They knew there was corruption among a lot of council members."

(A City Hall investigation led to arrests of a councilman and former building department staff for bribery and fraud.)

The murky ownership of the Franklin properties meant securing loans was tough, but fast approval for single-family homes meant "we wouldn't be hurt with grading quantities and we'd work on designs and flush out details," Mr. Linch said — like driveways as future private roads, looping Cedarbrook and Royalton with Coldwater Canyon. To pad square footage and level the ridge, according to document plans, contractors filled depressions with a million cubic yards of soil.

Mr. Hadid's 2011 master plan — three-story estates with gardens, pools, libraries, juice bars, butler quarters and stables — seems at odds with his new legal strategy. The developer always envisioned a landmark rivaling the Beverly Park community, Mr. Linch said, but he would have "guard houses on the sides where residents could hike or take their horses down but outside hikers couldn't come in. Like a fortress. Mohamed was working with the fire department to dedicate a helipad," so displaced soil was shifted to make it work.

The chance to say you have a private helipad in Los Angeles, Mr. Linch said, would make the asking price "skyrocket."

At Cedarbrook, he said, Mr. Hadid falsified surveys, illegally uprooted oak and walnut trees, and after years of working together, withheld \$427,000 owed to him.

In a 2019 court declaration, Mr. Linch said he contacted the building department and that the reply from an employee was: "I don't want to know about it." Mr. Linch said he drove an employee to the ridge, "and I showed him all the issues there. He did nothing. They let the project go through. The only reason it stopped is because Mohamed couldn't keep up with the loan."

Jeff Napier, the chief inspector at the building department, said the employee Mr. Linch cited "has not been to that site," adding that while "9650 Royalton has not been issued a building permit," the Cedarbrook property is "in compliance with zoning, building and residential codes" for a single-family dwelling.

That's thanks to photocopying the same plan, Mr. Linch said. He believes Mr. Hadid can still cover the debt and push ahead. Here's how: "We would put together investment properties with no money down. He'd get someone to invest \$20 million even though he was buying it for 17. He's a genius when it comes to that — his rich friends trust him blindly. They'd wire money that day without checking the parcel number and he'd make \$3 million, calling it the 'easiest money I've ever made.' And I would think: He could be so much more successful if he played by the rules."

Mr. Linch quit again and again "when things got too hairy," but every time the boss begged and he returned, "he'd do the same stuff over:"

Daniel Dorsa for The New York Times

'An Absolute Eyesore'

While Mr. Hadid planned on a perch next to A-listers (Harry and Meghan Markle were among those to pass through), he seemingly ignored that the area is also prime real estate for wildfires, landslides and the threatened species in these Santa Monica Mountains.

"When I first saw the new temporary road that he built leading up there and all that equipment on the ridge, I thought, 'This will turn out bad,'" said Paul Edelman, the director of natural resources and planning at the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA), which oversees Franklin Canyon with the National Park Service.

Across Coldwater Canyon as the crow flies, Jeff Hyland, the doyen of the real estate firm Hilton & Hyland, whose property overlooks the demolished hillside, calls it "an absolute eyesore."

Aesthetics aside, construction traffic and trucks barreling down tight streets in the area have caused multiple car accidents in recent years.

"He had 18 cement trucks lined up at one point on that little street," Mr. Edelman said. "It's a matter of time before a big accident makes the city rethink this."

In 2011, portions of the Hastain Trail were closed as loaders and drills began leveling the ridge, prompting hikers to drape John Muir quotes and "Selfish Few Block the View" signs over bulldozers. When that failed, lawsuits started, including one joined by the MRCA. Construction was halted until an appeals court overturned the ruling and chain link went up and security booted hikers again.

"It was bizarre," Mr. Edelman said. "One judge really stuck his neck out in favor of Hadid and came up with some cockamamie rule about fire road law, the middle judge dissented, and the third went along and we lost."

But no environmental review was done, according to Mr. Edelman, and where are the required hydrants every 500 hundred feet on the fire road? And all that displaced soil?

"How he gets the permits, how the city hasn't closed him down is beyond me," Mr. Hyland said. "Every project he's ever done has been a problem."

Mr. Edelman cited "a total failure of the city. Putting up a 65,000-square-foot house on a ridgeline above one of the most significant open space areas in the city, without an environmental review — that's really wrong. It's also mountain lion habitat. That was never reviewed."

Some hikers blame Franklin Canyon, but the MRCA spent years trying to acquire this land, said Dash Stolarz, its public affairs director, adding that visitors are up 300 percent during the pandemic. "To be able to spend a few minutes on a trail these days, it's a big deal," she said. "Regarding the project, what we're facing, the city is not a fine partner. Their objective isn't to preserve open space or provide trail access for the public and that can be frustrating."

In 2017, the Los Angeles City Council expanded zoning laws to regulate hillside construction, but because it was a pilot program, the Franklin project was exempt and permits were issued. Last year, the council passed a revision of that law yet to be implemented.

On a recent weekday morning, the trail leading to the site was open as hikers negotiated the steep in Lululemon and loud voices.

Before Instagram and pandemic boredom, Franklin Canyon was better known to production companies who used its lake and scattered redwoods as rugged stand-ins ("Twin Peaks," "American Horror Story" and a "Friday the 13th" filmed here). Minutes north of Sunset Boulevard, it was a gem close enough to squeeze a hike between meetings, with coyotes, mule deer, rattlesnakes — a place where one

might glimpse Paul McCartney or Barry Diller leading their dogs around the lake.

A century ago, the oil baron Edward Doheny built a two-story Spanish-revival here that now looks downright modest. It's fair to say each generation builds on the shoulders of the next, so much so that amid the mini-mansions and gentrification, high-rises and condos, the soul of the native Chumash, or el Pueblo de Nuestra Señora la Reina de los Ángeles de Porciúncula for that matter, is long since extinct.

What happens in Franklin Canyon won't change any of that, but in a time when respites mean so much — standing on a beloved trail, in a strand of old growth, around a duck pond with loved ones — what happens here is of consequence, not just to the very rich.

“The community is up in arms,” said Shawn Bayliss, an ex-city employee now at the Bel-Air Association. “If neighbors aren't there with torches, you can moan all you want.”

As Covid hit and construction sputtered, neighbors flocked to Nextdoor, the community message board. Steven Weinberg, a lawyer who started a group called Hillsides Against Hadid, put up signs on trails and used drones to document violations, which he shared with the courts. “I have nothing against building a reasonable dwelling but he's interfering with the environment, wildlife, public trail access,” he said. “You can't put into words what he's done to that hillside until you see it.”

Today, the plateau is a pockmarked foundation; Mr. Richards said Mr. Hadid owes millions in state and federal tax liens. He's seeking an April summary judgment, but the last few weeks have been delay after delay, he said. “Hadid's daughter had a baby, he was traveling, always some excuse,” Mr. Richards said. “He wrote me letters to delay foreclosure, and I asked for evidence of a lender. If they have a lender, it'll be easy. If not, it just delays the inevitable. He's never presented anything that makes sense.”

In court documents, Mr. Hadid said at least one lender offered to cover his debts, declining after finding Mr. Weinberg's signs, which “deterred and undermined the debtors' attempts to refinance the loan.”

What's next? Aram Ordubegian, Mr. Hadid's bankruptcy lawyer, said in an interview that it was impossible to say. “We're not at the end of the story yet.”

In 2017, Mr. Hadid said his Bel Air home “will last forever.” The bankruptcy play failed and his mega-spec is now listed as an \$8.5 million tear-down that he has said he can’t afford to destroy. So there it sits over a year later, one of many shells owing millions.

Mr. Hadid has long raged against the city’s “deep state,” claiming Muslim discrimination, but the Strada ruling is a game changer, Mr. Hyland said, because “he can’t blame it on being Palestinian or everyone being against him.” And it sets a precedent.

Mr. Hadid’s method is to “ask for forgiveness rather than permission,” said Joe Horacek, an entertainment lawyer and Bel Air neighbor who, along with his wife, spent millions of dollars and many years in countersuits. “For a guy with no money, he sure spends a lot on legal fees.”