

Cheviot Hills Homeowners Sue to Limit Activities at Renovated Racquet Club

By KENNETH J. FANUCCHI, *Times Staff Writer*

The Cheviot Hills Homeowners Assn. has filed a Superior Court suit to compel the city of Los Angeles to restrict activities at the Westside Racquet Club in connection with the private club's planned building renovation.

Carlyle W. Hall Jr., attorney for the association, said the association wants strict controls on the club's hours of operation, parking and noise.

He said the Board of Zoning Administration, in approving a building permit for the club last month, erred in refusing to impose new operating conditions on the club.

Knight Development Corp., a Hawaii-based company, bought the 60-year-old club at 3084 Motor Ave. two years ago and has begun construction, landscaping and other improvements.

Hall said homeowners on three sides of the club want conditions of operation to be imposed before the

money is invested, rather than waiting until problems develop before restricting the club's activities, a course of action suggested by the zoning administration.

"Once the new building is up and the money is spent," Hall said, "it is too late to attempt to restrict activities at the facility. From our standpoint, a court order will have more impact on the developer before he invests a large sum of money."

Claudia McGee Henry, assistant city attorney, said her office is prepared to defend the city against the suit. "The action by the Board of Zoning Administration was within its discretion, legally appropriate and legally defensible," she said.

The homeowner group conceded that the club needed renovation. The lone building on the site is old and decrepit, and, among other problems, has a leaky roof.

But the group is most concerned

about an intensification of the use of the facility, which was founded in 1926 and once served as a haunt for the motion picture industry figures, including actors Humphrey Bogart and Errol Flynn.

Knight Development Corp. officials have announced plans to turn the club into a first-class recreational and dining facility catering to the rich and famous. Its board of directors includes, among others, oil moguls Armand Hammer and Fred Hartley, actors Tom Selleck and Jim Nabors and educators Charles E. Young and Norman Cousins.

Hall said neighbors of the facility in the past have had to live with parking problems, loud parties and other distractions to the peace of the neighborhood.

"But the city refuses to take the occasion of construction of this new facility as the basis for imposing stricter conditions of operation and the like on the facility," Hall said.