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CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

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Filed: 2/26/99
49th Day: 4/16/99
180th Day: 8/25/99
Staff: CP-LB
Staff Report: 4/13/99
Hearing Date: May 11-14, 1999
Commission Action:

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RECORD PACKET COPY

STAFF REPORT: REGULAR CALENDAR

APPLICATION NUMBER: 5-99-085

APPLICANT: Telis Menas

AGENT: Toby Watson, Architect

PROJECT LOCATION: 225 Carroll Canal, Venice, City of Los Angeles,
Los Angeles County.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Addition of 337 square feet to one unit of an existing one-story, 880 square foot detached duplex with three on-site parking spaces.

Lot Area	2,850 square feet
Building Coverage	1,335 square feet (approx.)
Pavement Coverage	240 square feet (approx.)
Landscape Coverage	1,275 square feet (approx.)
Parking Spaces	3
Zoning	RW-1
Plan Designation	Single Family - Waterway
Ht above final grade	21 feet

LOCAL APPROVAL: City of Los Angeles Approval in Concept #98-108, 12/7/98.

SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff is recommending that the Commission grant a Coastal Development Permit for the proposed development with special conditions relating to pervious yard areas, water quality, parking, height, and drainage. The applicant agrees with the recommendation.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

The staff recommends that the Commission adopt the following resolution:

I. Approval with Conditions

The Commission hereby grants, subject to the conditions below, a permit for the proposed development on the grounds that the development, as conditioned, will be in conformity with the provisions of Chapter 3 of the California Coastal Act of 1976, will not prejudice the ability of the local government having jurisdiction over the area to prepare a Local Coastal Program conforming to the provisions of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act, is located between the sea and first public road nearest the shoreline and is in conformance with the public access and public recreation policies of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act, and will not have any significant adverse impacts on the environment within the meaning of the California Environmental Quality Act.

II. Standard Conditions

1. Notice of Receipt and Acknowledgment. The permit is not valid and development shall not commence until a copy of the permit, signed by the permittee or authorized agent, acknowledging receipt of the permit and acceptance of the terms and conditions, is returned to the Commission office.
2. Expiration. If development has not commenced, the permit will expire two years from the date this permit is reported to the Commission. Development shall be pursued in a diligent manner and completed in a reasonable period of time. Application for extension of the permit must be made prior to the expiration date.
3. Compliance. All development must occur in strict compliance with the proposal as set forth in the application for permit, subject to any special conditions set forth below. Any deviation from the approved plans must be reviewed and approved by the staff and may require Commission approval.
4. Interpretation. Any questions of intent or interpretation of any condition will be resolved by the Executive Director or the Commission.
5. Inspections. The Commission staff shall be allowed to inspect the site and the project during its development, subject to 24-hour advance notice.
6. Assignment. The permit may be assigned to any qualified person, provided assignee files with the Commission an affidavit accepting all terms and conditions of the permit.
7. Terms and Conditions Run with the Land. These terms and conditions shall be perpetual, and it is the intention of the Commission and the permittee to bind all future owners and possessors of the subject property to the terms and conditions.

III. Special Conditions

1. Pervious Yard Area

In order to provide a setback for access, visual quality, and to protect the water quality and biological productivity of the canals, an uncovered and pervious yard area totaling no less than 450 square feet shall be maintained in the front and rear yard areas. No fill or building extensions shall be placed in or over the 450 square foot pervious yard area with the exception of fences or permeable decks at grade. Fences in front yard areas shall not exceed 42 inches in height.

2. Deed Restriction

Prior to issuance of the Coastal Development Permit, the applicant shall submit a deed restriction for recording, subject to the review and approval of the Executive Director, which shall provide for the maintenance of not less than 450 square feet of uncovered and pervious yard area in the front and rear yard areas in order to preserve water quality and protect the biological productivity of the canals. Uncovered means that no fill nor building extensions shall be placed in or over the pervious yard area with the exception of fences or permeable decks at grade. Fences in front yard area shall not exceed 42 inches in height. The deed restriction shall run with the land, binding all successors and assigns, and shall be recorded free of prior liens that the Executive Director determines may affect the enforceability of the restriction. This deed restriction shall not be removed or changed without a Coastal Commission approved amendment to this Coastal Development Permit unless the Executive Director determines that no amendment is required.

3. Parking

A minimum of three parking spaces shall be provided and maintained on the site.

4. Height

The maximum height of the structure shall not exceed 14 feet above the elevation of the centerline of the canal walkway with the exception of one 86 square foot roof access structure that does not exceed 21 feet in elevation above the canal walkway.

5. Drainage

Prior to issuance of the Coastal Development Permit, the applicant shall submit for the review and approval of the Executive Director a plan for a one hundred cubic foot french drain on the project site. The applicant shall construct and maintain the one hundred cubic foot french drain as shown on the final approved plans.

IV. Findings and Declarations

The Commission hereby finds and declares:

A. Area History and Project Description

The applicant proposes to add onto the front unit of an existing one-story detached duplex in the Venice Canals residential area (Exhibit #3). The proposed two-story addition will connect the two existing residential units to form one structure on the lot (Exhibit #5). The proposed project will add 251 square feet to the front residential unit, plus a 21 foot high, 86 square foot roof access structure for a total added floor area of 337 square feet (Exhibit #6). The rear residential unit will not be altered. The proposed project will result in a 14-foot high, 1,131 square foot duplex with a 21-foot high, 86 square foot roof access structure. Three parking spaces will be maintained on the rear of the lot next to the alley (Exhibit #3).

The project site is a 2,400 square foot lot on the north bank of Carroll Canal in the Venice Canals residential area (Exhibit #2). The neighborhood is comprised of both old and new one, two and three-story single family residences, and a few non-conforming duplexes. The existing duplex does not conform to the current single family residential zoning.

The Commission has recognized in both prior permit and appeal decisions that the canals area of Venice is a coastal neighborhood of unique character. In 1975, the Commission developed a set of building standards for the Venice Canals area through hearing and voting on various permits. These standards reflect conditions imposed in a series of permits heard prior to that time. Since then, a set of special conditions, which are periodically updated, have been routinely applied to Coastal Development Permits in the Venice Canals area to address the Coastal Act issues of public access, habitat protection, preservation of community character, and scale of development. The conditions imposed on the Coastal Development Permits ensure that the projects are consistent with the Coastal Act. In order to mitigate the identified impacts, the appropriate special conditions have also been applied to this permit.

B. Habitat Protection

The Commission has found that Ballona Lagoon and the Venice Canals are sensitive habitat areas that must be protected from negative impacts associated with development.

Section 30240 of the Coastal Act states:

- (a) Environmentally sensitive habitat areas shall be protected against any significant disruption of habitat values, and only uses dependent on such resources shall be allowed within such areas.

- (b) Development in areas adjacent to environmentally sensitive habitat areas and parks and recreation areas shall be sited and designed to prevent impacts which would significantly degrade such areas, and shall be compatible with the continuance of such habitat areas.

The Venice Canals are located up stream from Ballona Lagoon, within the Ballona Wetlands system. The introduction of urban runoff, including pesticides, garden fertilizers, and runoff from impervious surfaces, can reduce the water quality of the canals which directly impacts the biological productivity of the system. The Ballona Wetlands system is habitat for many species of marine biota, including the state and federally listed endangered least tern.

In order to protect the biological productivity of the Venice Canals and Ballona Lagoon, the Commission has consistently conditioned projects along the waterways to provide and maintain front yard setbacks, pervious yard areas, and drainage devices to absorb and filter rainwater and site drainage before it enters the canals. The Commission's requirements are consistent with the recommendations of the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Project Action Plan to reduce non-point source pollutants.

The Commission has consistently conditioned projects in the Venice Canals to provide and maintain a large pervious front yard as a setback from the canal to enhance public access, to provide an area for percolation to protect the water quality and biological productivity of the canals, and to protect community character by maintaining a comparable scale between buildings in the area. No fill nor building extensions may be placed in or over the required pervious front yard area with the exception of fences or permeable decks at grade.

The amount of the Commission's required pervious front yard area for the subject site is 450 square feet. The figure of 450 square feet is based on an average setback of fifteen feet across the thirty-foot width of the lot. The Commission's front yard setback requirement is defined in square footage rather than an absolute lineal measurement to allow for changes in plane which can add architectural interest. A minimum ten-foot front yard setback, with a required fifteen-foot setback average, can provide the required 450 square foot pervious front yard area and a front yard setback which is consistent with the other residences in the area.

The Commission always requires the provision of at least 450 square feet of pervious yard area in the front yard setback areas of new single family homes that are permitted in the Venice Canals neighborhood. For small additions to existing non-conforming structures, however, the Commission has allowed applicants to maintain non-conforming front yard setbacks if the required amount of pervious yard area is provided elsewhere on the site. For example, many of the older cottages in the neighborhood provide 450 square feet of pervious yard area in the rear or side yard areas because the front yards are less than one hundred square feet in area.

In this case, the proposed project involves an addition to an existing residential unit that has a non-conforming front yard setback of only 1'3". The proposed addition is located away from the canal frontage on the rear of the front residence (near the middle of the lot). Therefore,

the proposed project does not affect the existing non-conforming 1'3" front yard setback (Exhibit #3). Because the project is a small addition that does not affect the existing front yard setback area, the applicant may maintain the non-conforming front yard setback between the house and the canal property line. The applicant must, however, provide the required 450 square feet of pervious yard area elsewhere on the lot in order to protect the water quality and biological productivity of the canals. Therefore, a total of 450 square feet of pervious yard area shall be maintained in the 1'3" front yard setback and in the rear yard area. No fill or building extensions shall be placed in or over the 450 square foot pervious yard area with the exception of fences or permeable decks at grade. The existing 1'3" front yard setback shall not be reduced.

The Commission has consistently required that applicants record the pervious yard area requirement on the property deeds to ensure continuous and ongoing protection of coastal resources and compliance with the requirement. Therefore, the Commission finds that prior to issuance of the permit, the applicant shall record a deed restriction which provides for the maintenance of not less than 450 square feet of uncovered and pervious yard area in the front and rear yard areas in order to preserve water quality and protect the biological productivity of the canals. Uncovered means that no fill nor building extensions shall be placed in or over the pervious yard area with the exception of fences or permeable decks at grade. The existing 1'3" front yard setback shall not be reduced. Fences in front yard area shall not exceed 42 inches in height. The deed restriction shall run with the land, binding all successors and assigns, and shall be recorded free of prior liens that the Executive Director determines may affect the enforceability of the restriction. This deed restriction shall not be removed or changed without a Coastal Commission approved amendment to this Coastal Development Permit unless the Executive Director determines that no amendment is required.

In order to mitigate the impacts on the habitat caused by surface drainage and drainage from residential areas, the Commission has consistently required the provision of a one hundred cubic foot french drain in order to filter urban runoff before it enters the canals. A condition is routinely placed on permits for development in the canals area which requires that plans be submitted which depict the location and design of the required french drain. In this case, the applicant is required to submit a plan depicting the location and design of the required french drain. The applicant is also required to provide the french drain as shown on the final approved plans.

The Commission finds that, only as conditioned to provide a french drain and 450 square feet of pervious yard area to mitigate impacts on biological productivity caused by surface runoff into the canals, is the proposed project consistent with the Section 30240 of the Coastal Act.

C. Public Access/Parking

The Commission has consistently found that a direct relationship exists between residential density, the provision of adequate parking, and the availability of public access to the coast

Section 30252 requires that new development should maintain and enhance public access to the coast by providing adequate parking facilities.

Section 30252 of the Coastal Act states, in part:

The location and amount of new development should maintain and enhance public access to the coast by... (4) providing adequate parking facilities....

Many of the older developments in the Venice Canals area do not provide adequate on-site parking. As a result, there is a parking shortage in the area and public access has been negatively impacted. The small amount of parking area that may be available for the general public on the surrounding streets is being used by guests and residents of the area.

The proposed development involves a small addition to a non-conforming duplex that currently has a non-conforming parking supply. In Venice, the Commission requires the provision of two on-site parking spaces for each residential unit, plus provisions for guest parking. The existing non-conforming duplex has three on-site parking spaces¹ (Exhibit #3). The only area available for additional parking is the rear yard area. A fourth parking space could be provided in a tandem arrangement in the rear yard. The rear yard area, however, is where the applicant proposes to provide 414 square feet of the Commission's required 450 square feet of uncovered and pervious yard area. As stated in the previous section, the provision of at least 450 square feet of open space and pervious yard area is a basic requirement that must be met on every lot in the Venice Canals neighborhood.

Another alternative is to deny the proposed addition in order to preserve the open space in the middle of the lot where the addition is proposed. A denial, however, will not result in the provision of additional parking.

In this case, the applicant has a grandfathered right to maintain the non-conforming duplex and the project will not alter the existing parking supply. In addition, the proposed project will not significantly intensify the use of the property (the proposed addition amounts to less than three hundred feet of living space in one residential unit). Therefore, the Commission finds that the proposed addition may be approved with the continuing non-conforming parking arrangement.

The permit is conditioned to require that three parking spaces be maintained on the site. The Commission can require the provision of additional parking if the applicant applies for any future improvements to the property. The Commission finds that, only as conditioned to maintain the existing three on-site parking spaces, is the proposed project consistent with the public access policies of the Coastal Act.

¹ The applicant states, however, that four cars can be parked across the 30-foot wide lot if necessary.

D. Scale of Development

The Commission has also consistently conditioned projects in the Venice Canals area to protect the community character. The area is comprised of both old and new one, two and three-story single family residences and a few remaining duplexes. The majority of the structures in the area do not exceed thirty feet in height. In order to protect the existing scale and character of the neighborhood, and in order to protect the visual corridor along the canal's public walkways, the Commission has consistently limited new development in the canal area to a height of thirty feet, which is consistent with the general height of the area. The City of Los Angeles Venice Interim Control Ordinance (ICO) also limits building heights in the area to thirty feet. The Commission has, however, allowed portions of some structures to exceed the thirty-foot height limit by up to ten feet if the scenic and visual qualities of the area are not negatively impacted.

In this case, the maximum height of the proposed project is 21 feet (Exhibit #5). No portion of the proposed structure exceeds the thirty-foot height limit. In addition, no portion of the proposed addition encroaches within fifteen feet of the canal property line.

In order to ensure that the proposed project is constructed as proposed by the applicant and approved by the Commission, the approval is conditioned to limit the maximum height of the structure to 14 feet above the elevation of the centerline of the canal walkway, with the exception of one 86 square foot roof access structure that does not exceed 21 feet in elevation above the canal walkway. This condition will ensure that the non-conforming duplex will not be significantly enlarged. Only as conditioned is the proposed project consistent with the Coastal Act's visual resource policies.

E. Local Coastal Program

Section 30604(a) of the Coastal Act provides that the Commission shall issue a Coastal Permit only if the project will not prejudice the ability of the local government having jurisdiction to prepare a Local Coastal Program which conforms with Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act:

- (a) Prior to certification of the Local Coastal Program, a Coastal Development Permit shall be issued if the issuing agency, or the commission on appeal, finds that the proposed development is in conformity with the provisions of Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 30200) of this division and that the permitted development will not prejudice the ability of the local government to prepare a Local Coastal Program that is in conformity with the provisions of Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 30200). A denial of a Coastal Development Permit on grounds it would prejudice the ability of the local government to prepare a Local Coastal Program that is in conformity with the provisions of Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 30200) shall be accompanied by a specific finding which sets forth the basis for such conclusion.

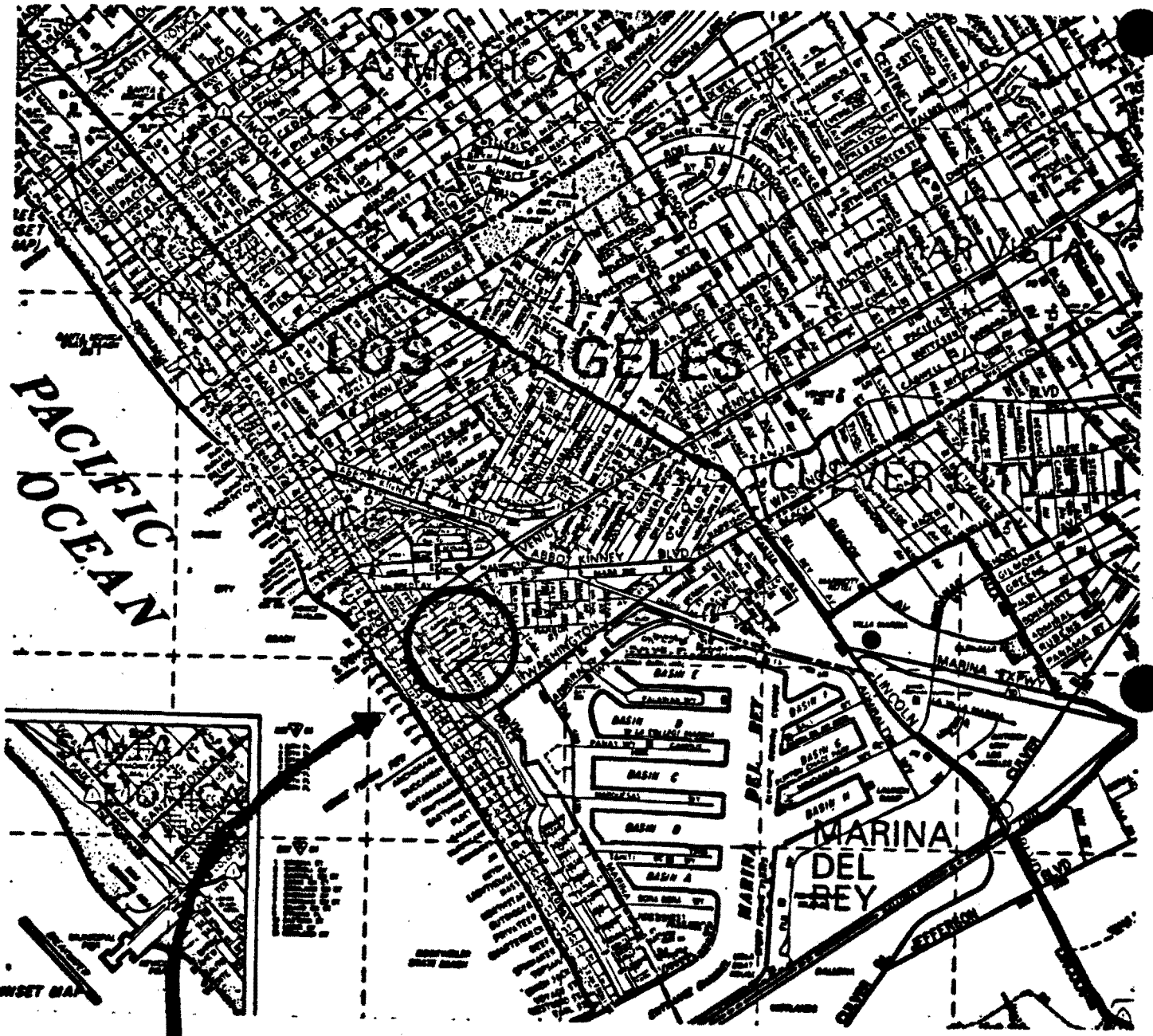
The Venice area of the City of Los Angeles does not have a certified Local Coastal Program. The proposed project, only as conditioned, is consistent with the habitat, coastal access, and recreation policies of the Coastal Act. Therefore, the Commission finds that approval of the proposed development, as conditioned, will not prejudice the City's ability to prepare a Local Coastal Program consistent with the policies of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act, as required by Section 30604(a).

F. California Environmental Quality Act

Section 13096 of the California Code of Regulations requires Commission approval of Coastal Development Permit application to be supported by a finding showing the application, as conditioned by any conditions of approval, to be consistent with any applicable requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Section 21080.5(d)(2)(A) of CEQA prohibits a proposed development from being approved if there are feasible alternatives or feasible mitigation measures available which would substantially lessen any significant adverse effect which the activity may have on the environment.

The proposed project, only as conditioned, is consistent with the habitat and coastal access policies of the Coastal Act. Therefore, the Commission finds that the proposed project, as conditioned to mitigate the identified impacts, is the least environmentally damaging feasible alternative and can be found consistent with the requirements of the Coastal Act to conform to CEQA.

End/cp



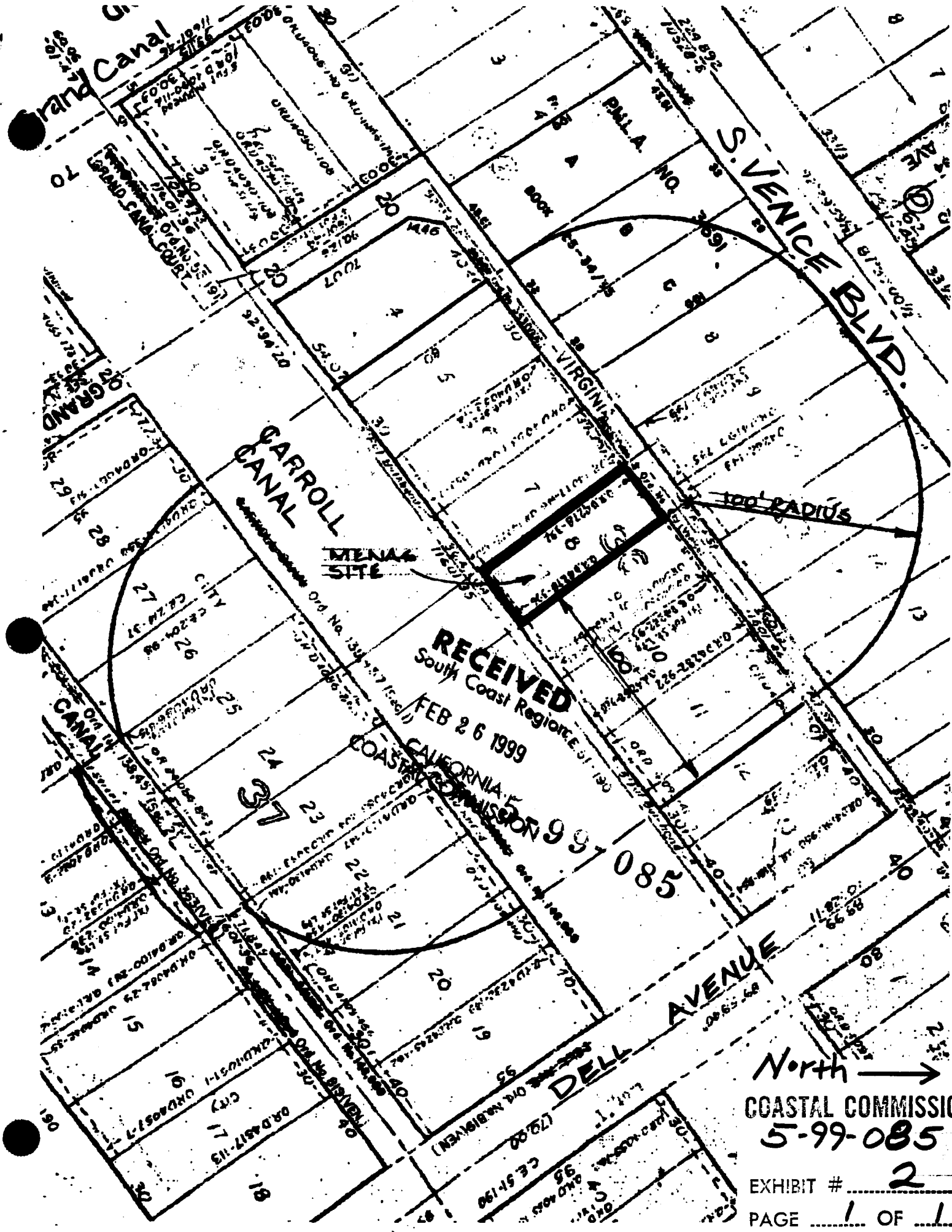
Site

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5-99-085

EXHIBIT # 1

PAGE 1 OF 1



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COASTAL CALIFORNIA
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North →

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EXHIBIT # 2

PAGE 1 OF 1

VIRGINIA CT. (ALLEY)

30.0'

EXISTING PARKING

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OPEN SPACE

EXISTING REAR HOUSE

5-99-085

80.0'

80.0'

251 SQ. FT. ADDITION TO FRONT HOUSE

ONE-STORY ADDITION W/ ROOF DECK

10'-9"

3'

3'

EXISTING FRONT HOUSE

SITE PLAN

MENAS ADDITION
225 CARROLL CANAL
VENICE, CA 90291

18'-2"

30.0'

TOBY WATSON, ARCHITECT
205 VENICE WAY
VENICE, CA 90291
(310) 306-5075

SIDEWALK

CARROLL CANAL

COASTAL COMMISSION

5-99-085

EXHIBIT # 3

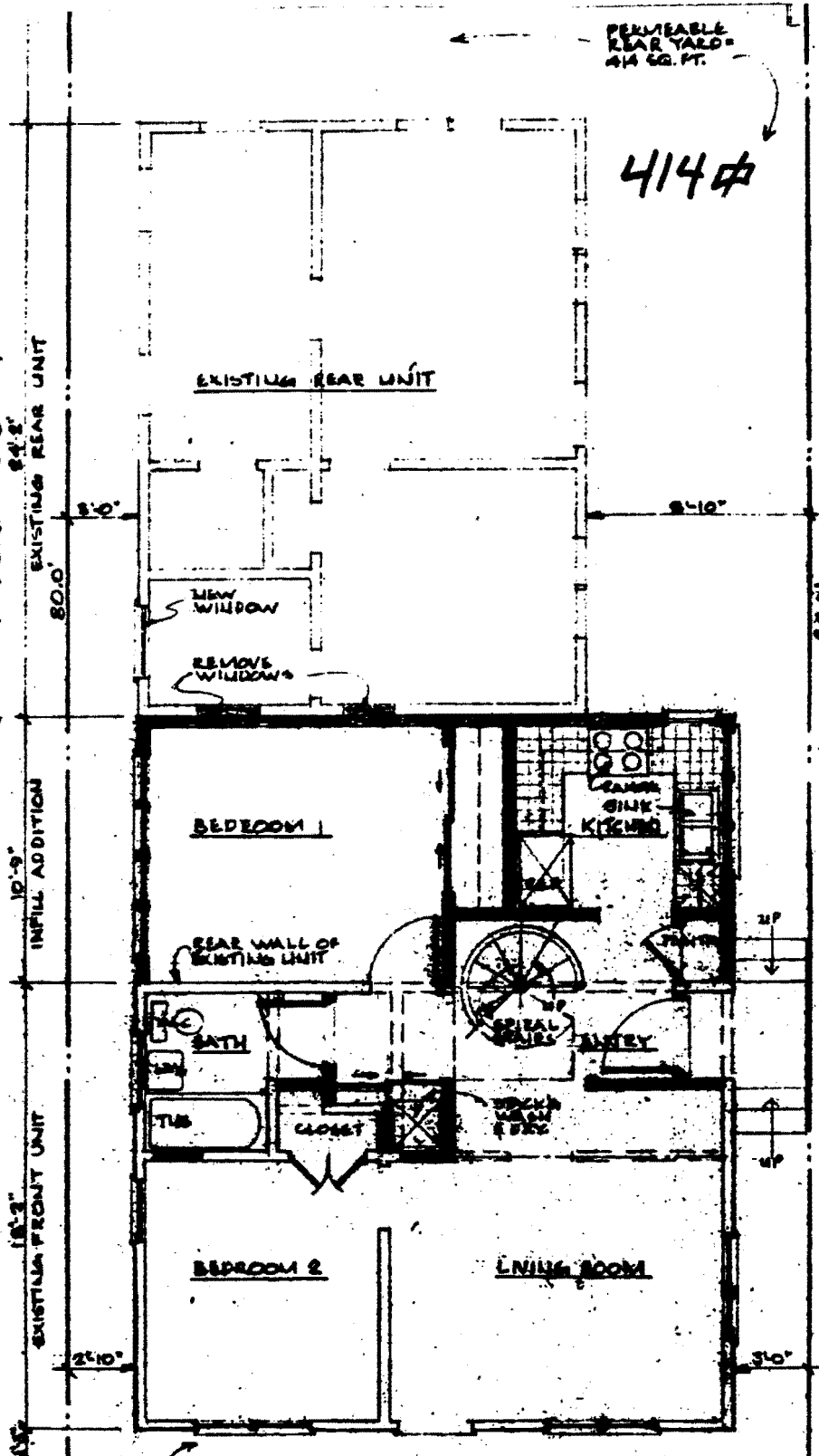
PAGE 1 OF 1

Floor Plan

Proposed Addition

Front Unit

Rear Unit



LEGAL: LEMAS, BLOCK 36, SHORTLINE BEACH VEHICLE CANAL SUBDIVISION NO. 1

ONE STORY ADDITION W/ ROOF DECK TO ONE OF TWO UNITS ON ONE LOT. THIS MEANS 225 CARROLL CANAL VENUE, CA 90501

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5-99-085

EXHIBIT # 4

PAGE 1 OF 1

LEMAS ADDITION

SITE & FLOOR PLAN
 APPROVED 5-99-085
 Permit No.

South Coast District Office
 By: _____
 Date: _____

EX. 4

-21'
-14'

Proposed
STAIRWAY
ACCESS

STAGED
GUARDRAIL

ROOF DECK LEVEL

ADDITION

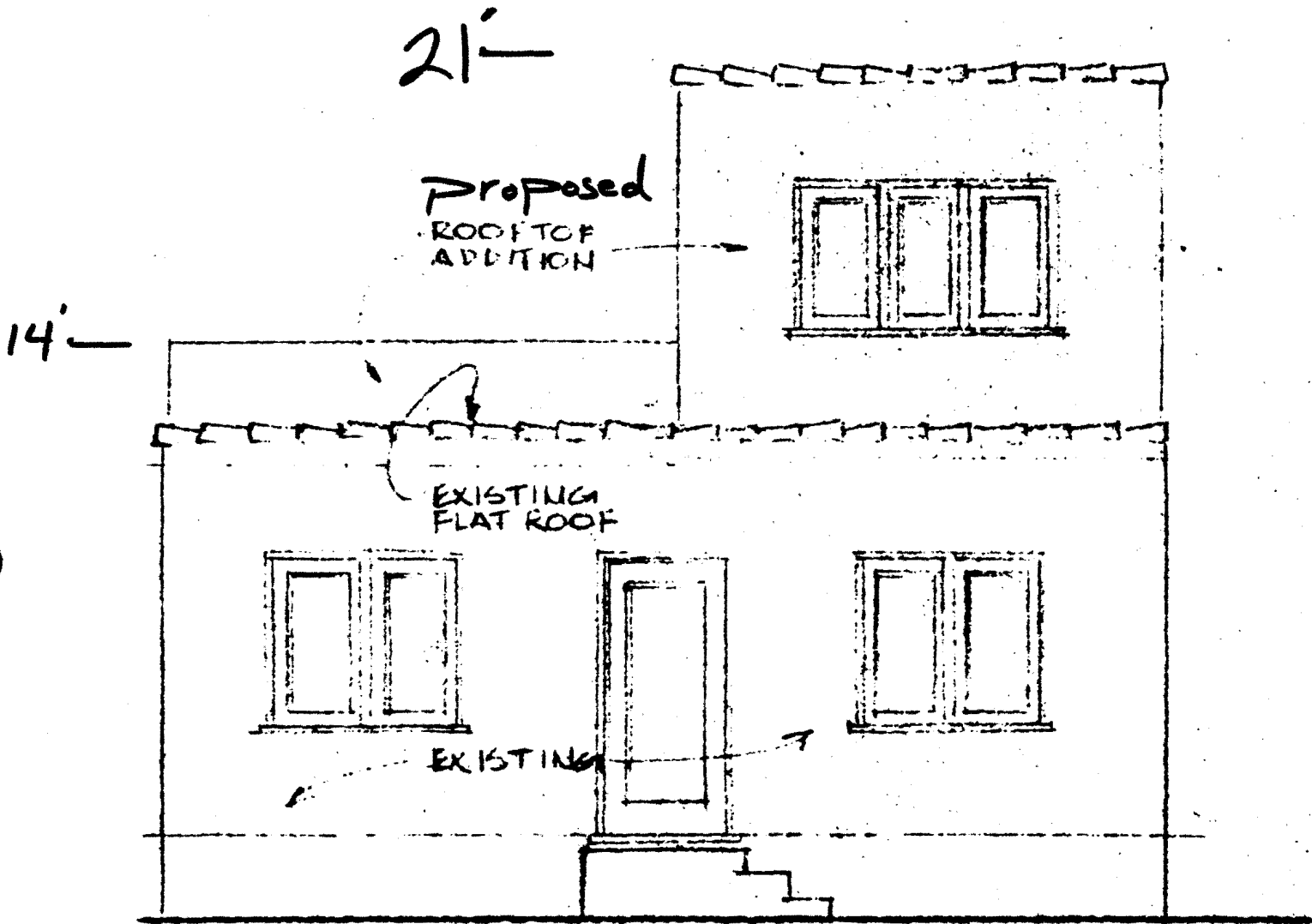
FLOOR LEVEL

WEST ELEVATION

EXISTING REAR UNIT
Rear Unit

EXISTING FRONT UNIT
Front Unit

Proposed
Addition



SOUTH ELEVATION

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EXHIBIT # 6

PAGE 1 OF 1