

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

South Coast Area Office
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Filed: 10/23/2002
 Approved: 3/4/2003
 Staff: CP-LB
 Staff Report: 4/17/2003
 Hearing Date: May 6, 2003
 Commission Action:

**Tu15a**

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STAFF REPORT: REVISED FINDINGS**APPLICATION NUMBER:** 5-02-353**APPLICANT:** Roger Lowenstein**AGENT:** Christopher V. Ward, AIA**PROJECT LOCATION:** 21 Reef Street, Venice, City of Los Angeles.**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** Demolition of a one-story single family residence, and construction of a four-level, 38.5-foot high, 3,669 square foot single family residence with a four-car garage in the basement.

Lot Area	3,099 square feet
Building Coverage	1,924 square feet
Pavement Coverage	615 square feet
Landscape Coverage	560 square feet
Parking Spaces	4
Zoning	R3-1
Plan Designation	Multi-family Residential/Low Medium II
Ht above final grade	38.5 feet

LOCAL APPROVAL: City of Los Angeles Specific Plan Exception and Specific Plan Project Permit, City Council File No. 02-1781, 9/25/02.**COMMISSIONERS ON PREVAILING SIDE:** Luna, McClain-Hill, Orr, Allgood, Desser and Reilly.**SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff is recommending that the Commission, after public hearing, adopt the following revised findings in support of the Commission's March 4, 2003 approval with conditions of Coastal Development Permit 5-02-353. The revised findings reflect the Commission's approval of the proposed 38.5-foot high structure in the Marina Peninsula area of Venice, where the certified Venice LUP calls for a 28-to-35-foot height limit. A vote by the majority of the Commissioners on the prevailing side is necessary to adopt the revised findings.

See **Page Two** for the motion and resolution to adopt the revised findings.

SUBSTANTIVE FILE DOCUMENTS:

1. Certified Land Use Plan for Venice, City of Los Angeles, 6/14/01.
2. Venice Specific Plan, City of Los Angeles Ordinance No. 172897.
3. Coastal Development Permit Application 5-01-162 (Denied).
4. Coastal Development Permit A5-VEN-01-392/5-01-3491 (King).
5. Coastal Development Permit 5-01-131 (Smith).

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

The staff recommends that the Commission adopt the following resolution to **ADOPT THE REVISED FINDINGS** in support of the Commission's action to approve the coastal development permit application with special conditions. Staff recommends a **YES** vote on the following motion:

MOTION: *"I move that the Commission adopt the following revised findings in support of the Commission's action on March 4, 2003 approving Coastal Development Permit 5-02-353 with conditions."*

Passage of this motion will result in the adoption of revised findings as set forth in this staff report. The motion requires a majority vote of the members from the prevailing side present at the March 4, 2003 hearing, with at least three of the prevailing members voting. Only those Commissioners on the prevailing side of the Commission's action are eligible to vote on the revised findings. The six Commissioners on the prevailing side are: **Luna, McClain-Hill, Orr, Allgood, Desser and Reilly.**

I. Resolution to Adopt Revised Findings

The Commission hereby adopts the findings set forth below for the approval of Coastal Development Permit 5-02-353 on the ground that the findings support the Commission's decision made on March 4, 2003 and accurately reflect the reasons for it.

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. **Interpretation.** Any questions of intent or interpretation of any condition will be resolved by the Executive Director or the Commission.

4. 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.
5. 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. Permit Compliance

All development must occur in strict compliance with the proposal as set forth in the application, including the preservation of the mature trees in the front yard setback. Any deviation from the approved plans, no matter how minor, must be submitted for review by the Executive Director to determine whether an amendment to this coastal development permit is required.

2. Residential Density

The permitted use of the structure is a single family residence. Any proposed change in the number of units or change in use shall be submitted to the Executive Director to determine whether an amendment to this permit is necessary pursuant to the requirements of the Coastal Act and the California Code of Regulations.

IV. FINDINGS AND DECLARATIONS

The Commission hereby finds and declares:

A. Project Description & Area History

The applicant proposes to demolish an existing one-story single family residence and construct a new 38.5-foot high single family residence on a 3,099 square foot lot that fronts Reef Street in the Marina Peninsula area of Venice (Exhibit #2). The project site is located one block inland of the beach (Exhibit #3). Reef Street is a forty-foot wide City right-of-way designated as a walk street by the certified Land Use Plan (LUP) for Venice. The surrounding neighborhood is comprised of a variety of older and new single family residences and multi-family residential structures that vary in height up from a single story to a maximum of about forty feet.

The structure to be demolished is a fourteen-foot high single family residence. The proposed new residence is a four-level, 38.5-foot high, 3,669 square foot single family residence (Exhibit #6). A four-car garage, accessed from the rear alley, is proposed in the basement of the proposed house. The front porch of the proposed house would be set back sixteen feet from the Reef Street right-of-way in order to preserve the mature trees that exist in the front yard area of the lot (Exhibit #4). The second story of the proposed house would be set back 22.67 feet from the right-of-way, and the third story would be set back forty feet, creating a stepped back design (Exhibit #5).

The Commission has recognized in both prior permit and appeal decisions that the Marina Peninsula area of Venice, where the proposed project is located, is a unique coastal community [e.g. Coastal Development Permit 5-00-477 (Yoon)]. In 1980, the Commission adopted the Regional Interpretive Guidelines for Los Angeles County which included specific building standards for the various Venice neighborhoods, including the Marina Peninsula neighborhood. These building standards, which apply primarily to density, building height and parking, reflect conditions imposed in a series of permits heard prior to 1980. The Commission has consistently applied these density, height and parking standards to development in the Venice coastal zone in order to protect public access to the beach and to preserve community character. The Regional Interpretive Guidelines for Los Angeles County contain a 35-foot height limit for development in the Marina Peninsula area of Venice. The Interpretive Guidelines also state that the Venice walk streets shall be preserved as walk streets.

On October 29, 1999, the Los Angeles City Council adopted a proposed Land Use Plan (LUP) for Venice and submitted it for Commission certification as part of the City's effort to develop a certified Local Coastal Program (LCP) for Venice. On November 14, 2000, the Commission approved the City's proposed LUP for Venice with suggested modifications. On March 28, 2001, the Los Angeles City Council accepted the Commission's suggested modifications and adopted the Venice LUP as the Commission on November 14, 2000 approved it. The Commission officially certified the Venice LUP on June 14, 2001.

The policies and building standards contained in the certified Venice LUP reflect the Commission's prior actions in the area, the Commission's 1980 Interpretive Guidelines, and the existing character of each Venice neighborhood. The Commission-certified LUP for Venice, however, also contains some updated and revised building standards for the various Venice neighborhoods, including the Marina Peninsula neighborhood where the proposed project is situated. One change proposed by the City and adopted as part of the certified Venice LUP was the lowering of the height limit to 28 feet for all new residential development situated along the Venice walk streets (for visual quality and fire safety reasons). Formerly, the height limit for development on the walk streets was the same as the general height limit for each Venice neighborhood. In the Marina Peninsula area, the general height limit before the adoption of the certified LUP was 35 feet. The certified LUP height limit for the Marina Peninsula area is currently 35 feet, except for buildings along walk streets which are limited to a maximum height of 28 feet.

The Commission-certified LUP for Venice provides specific guidance for the Commission's interpretation of the relevant Chapter 3 policies. In this case, the standard of review for the proposed development is the Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act, and not the certified LUP.

B. Community Character

As stated above, the project site abuts Reef Street, a forty-foot wide City right-of-way designated as a walk street by the certified Land Use Plan (LUP) for Venice (Exhibit #3). The walk streets in North Venice, Marina Peninsula and Milwood neighborhoods of Venice are among the most pleasant pedestrian amenities in Los Angeles and provide excellent vertical access to the beach. The certified Venice LUP identifies the Marina Peninsula walk streets as protected coastal accessways for pedestrians. Vehicular access on walk streets is restricted

to emergency vehicles. The Reef Street walk street connects the sandy beach with Pacific Avenue, where curbside public parking is available (Exhibit #3).

The Venice walk streets are generally typical of a number of southern California beach communities that were originally developed with weekend beach cottages early in the twentieth century. Streetcars served these communities. Walk streets generally have narrow, pedestrian friendly walkways down the middle of the right-of-way, with landscaped "front yards" that encroach up to the open public walkway in the middle of the right-of-way. This walk street (Reef Street), on the north side, includes the typical landscaped "front yards" that encroach into the street right of way. Along the south side of the right-of-way, however, the residents have converted half of the walk street to a private parking area.

The general height limit for development in the project area, as stated in the certified LUP, is 35 feet (Exhibit #2). Along Reef Street, a designated walk street, the height limit in the certified LUP is lower at 28 feet. The proposed project is 38.5 feet in height. The Los Angeles City Council granted the applicant an exception to the City's 28-foot height limit for walk streets [City of Los Angeles Specific Plan Exception and Specific Plan Project Permit, City Council File No. 02-1781, 9/25/02]. The City's Specific Plan Exception is based on the finding that the two adjacent residential buildings are 43 and 40 feet high, and that the proposed project's thoughtful architectural design is consistent with other area homes (Page 2, Council PLUM Report File No. 02-1781). The City's findings also state that the 43 and 40-foot high buildings on either side of the project site were built prior to the City's adoption of the 28-foot height limit for the Venice walk streets.

The applicant has listed several reasons why he feels that he should be permitted to exceed the height limit in the certified LUP:

1. The heights of the two neighboring buildings are 40 and 43 feet.
2. Reef Street is not a walk street and is being used for parking by vehicles (Exhibit #8).
3. The applicant is proposing only one residential unit when the LUP allows two units per lot.
4. The design of the proposed house is set back more than required from the walk street, thus reducing the mass of the structure from what is allowed by City zoning.
5. The 38.5-foot high portion of the proposed structure is set back almost 23 feet from the Reef Street right-of-way, while the front portion of the proposed house is only 28 feet high (Exhibit #6).
6. The Fire Department has approved the proposed design (Exhibit #8, p.3).

The Commission can approve development that exceeds the LUP height limit and approve the proposed project only if it finds that it is consistent with the Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act. In this case, the Commission finds that the proposed project, because of the reasons listed below, is consistent with the Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act. The proposed project

would not negatively affect the character and scenic and visual qualities of the community, even though the proposed structure exceeds the certified LUP height limit. In fact, the proposed project would enhance the visual quality of the block and promote the restoration of the character of the community.

Section 30251 of the Coastal Act states:

The scenic and visual qualities of coastal areas shall be considered and protected as a resource of public importance. Permitted development shall be sited and designed to protect views to and along the ocean and scenic coastal areas, to minimize the alteration of natural land forms, to be visually compatible with the character of surrounding areas....

Section 30253(5) of the Coastal Act states:

New development shall: (5) Where appropriate, protect special communities and neighborhoods which, because of their unique characteristics, are popular visitor destination points for recreational uses.

Sections 30251 and 30253 of the Coastal Act require that the Venice walk streets be protected from development that would negatively affect pedestrian access and the unique scenic qualities of the walk streets. On June 14, 2001, the Commission certified the Venice LUP which includes the following policies to protect the Venice walk streets and the character of the Marina Peninsula community. The following LUP policies carry out requirements of Coastal Act Sections 30251 and 30253 to protect the scenic and visual qualities of the Marina Peninsula coastal area, a popular visitor destination.

- **Policy II. C. 7. Walk Streets.** *Designated walk streets shall be preserved and maintained at their present widths for public pedestrian access to the shoreline and other areas of interest and to preserve views along and from the public right-of-way. Vehicular access on walk streets shall be restricted to emergency vehicles. The minimum width of the pedestrian path shall be 10-12 feet in the North Venice and Peninsula areas and 4½ feet in the Milwood area. The remaining public right-of-way shall be limited to grade level uses including landscaping, patios, gardens and decks.*

(Staff note: The following list, which includes Reef Street, is only part of the list of walk streets contained in LUP Policy II.C.7).

The following streets are designated as walk streets (as shown on LUP Exhibit 19):

West of Pacific Avenue and east of Ocean Front Walk:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| a. <i>Twenty-fourth Avenue</i> | j. <i>Galleon Street</i> |
| b. <i>Twenty-sixth Avenue</i> | k. <i>Mast Street</i> |
| c. <i>Twenty-seventh Avenue</i> | l. <i>Outrigger Street</i> |
| d. <i>Twenty-eighth Avenue</i> | m. <i>Privateer Street</i> |
| e. <i>Thirtieth Avenue</i> | n. <i>Reef Street</i> |
| f. <i>Anchorage Avenue</i> | o. <i>Spinnaker Street</i> |

g. *Buccaneer Street*
 h. *Catamaran Street*
 i. *Sunset Avenue*

p. *Union Jack Street*
 q. *Westwind Street*
 r. *Yawl Street*
 s. *Via Marina*

• **Policy II. C. 10. Walk Streets -- Residential Development Standards.** *New residential development along walk streets shall enhance both public access and neighborhood character. Building materials, colors, massing and scale of new structures shall complement those of existing structures in the neighborhood. Building facades shall be varied and articulated to provide visual interest to pedestrians. Primary ground floor residential building entrances and frequent windows shall face the walk streets. Front porches, bays, and balconies shall be encouraged. In case of duplexes and low density multiple-family buildings, entries shall be located in the exterior building facade for each residential unit, shall face walk streets, and be well-defined and separate.*

• **Policy II. C. 11. Encroachments into Walk Street Right-of-Way.** *Encroachments into City right-of-way shall be limited to grade level uses including gardens, patios, landscaping, ground level decks and fences. The gardens/patios in the right-of-way, between the fences and the buildings, shall be permitted to provide a transitional zone between the public path ways and private dwellings. To create a defensible space, the planting along the walk streets shall not impede the view of walkways by the residents and the view of the gardens by the pedestrian. Creative use and arrangement of permeable paving materials shall be encouraged. Any fence, wall or hedge erected in the public right-of-way shall not exceed 42 inches in height as measured from the existing grade of the public right-of-way. The use of decorative fence patterns such as split rail, picket and rustic is encouraged. New fences shall be located in line with existing fences on the same side of the street.*

Policy II.C.10 requires that new residential development along walk streets enhance both public access and neighborhood character. The proposed project is consistent with the above-stated policies of the certified LUP and will enhance neighborhood character and public access. The Commission finds that the proposed project's building materials, massing and scale complement those of existing structures in the neighborhood. The proposed building's façade, with its porch, primary ground floor residential building entrance, balcony and frequent windows facing the walk street, will provide visual interest to pedestrians as required by LUP Policy II.C.10 (Exhibit #6).

Although the City and Commission have designated Reef Street as a walk street, part of the forty-foot wide right-of-way is regularly being driven on and used by private vehicles. The northern side of the Reef Street right-of-way is landscaped and being used as part of the front yards for the buildings along the north side of the street, consistent with LUP Policy II.C.11 (15 Reef Street, 21 Reef Street, 33 Reef Street & 35 Reef Street). Pedestrian access to the beach is provided down the middle of the right-of-way, as it is on all the walk streets. The southern side of Reef Street, however, has been paved and is accessible to vehicles (only from Speedway Alley – not from Pacific Avenue). Private "Resident Only Parking – Tow Away Zone" signs are posted along the entire southern side of the Reef Street right-of-way where locals have usurped the public right-of-way for private vehicular uses. The vehicular uses are

not permitted and conflict entirely with the certified LUP policies regarding the use of the Venice walk streets. The use of the walk street for private parking is not a reason for granting an exception to the height limit.

The Commission finds that the proposed project is consistent with Sections 30251 and 30253 of the Coastal Act because its stepped-back craftsman-style design will have a positive effect on the scenic and visual qualities of the area and will improve neighborhood character. The stepped-back design will reduce the structure's visibility from the walk street and make the structure appear shorter than it actually is. In addition, the proposed project will not obstruct any public views or block public access along the walk street. The fire safety issues have been addressed to the satisfaction of the City Fire Department. Finally, the approval of the proposed project in excess of the LUP's height limits will not set a negative precedent because of the unique circumstances evident at this site and on this block, none of which, on its own, would necessarily have sufficed to make the proposed structure approvable. Among those unique circumstances are the facts that the proposed project will be shorter than the structures located on either side of it (which are 40 and 43 feet respectively), that its stepped-back design will make it appear shorter than it actually is, and that given the overall state of the block, the new project would improve the visual quality and character of the block. Therefore, the proposed project is approved.

In order to ensure that the proposed single family residence is constructed consistent with the plan and design that is presented and approved by the Commission, special conditions are imposed that require strict compliance with the proposal as set forth in the application, including the preservation of the mature trees in the front yard setback. Any deviation from the approved plans, no matter how minor, must be submitted for review by the Executive Director to determine whether an amendment to this coastal development permit is required. As conditioned, the proposed project is found to be consistent with Sections 30251 and 30253 of the Coastal Act.

C. Public Access and Recreation

The Coastal Act and the policies of the certified Venice LUP protect public access along the historic Venice walk streets. The following policy of the certified Venice LUP protects the Venice walk streets for public pedestrian access:

- **Policy II. C. 7. Walk Streets.** *Designated walk streets shall be preserved and maintained at their present widths for public pedestrian access to the shoreline and other areas of interest and to preserve views along and from the public right-of-way. Vehicular access on walk streets shall be restricted to emergency vehicles. The minimum width of the pedestrian path shall be 10-12 feet in the North Venice and Peninsula areas and 4½ feet in the Milwood area. The remaining public right-of-way shall be limited to grade level uses including landscaping, patios, gardens and decks.*

Section 30210 of the Coastal Act states:

In carrying out the requirement of Section 4 of Article X of the California Constitution, maximum access, which shall be conspicuously posted, and recreational opportunities shall be provided for all the people consistent with public

safety needs and the need to protect public rights, rights of private property owners, and natural resource areas from overuse.

Shoreline recreation resources in the Venice area include: Venice Beach, Ballona Lagoon, the Venice Canals, walk streets, and the Marina del Rey north jetty which lies partly in the jurisdiction of the City of Los Angeles. Venice Beach is a publicly owned sandy beach, which provides direct access to the entire oceanfront shoreline and is readily accessible to pedestrians and bicyclists. The walk streets in the Marina Peninsula neighborhood provide excellent pedestrian access to the beach. It is a goal of the Coastal Commission and the City to protect these public resources.

The proposed project will not obstruct any public views or block public access along the walk street. The proposed development also does not interfere with public recreational use of coastal resources. As conditioned, the proposed development will not have any new adverse impact on public access to the coast or to nearby recreational facilities. Thus, as conditioned, the proposed development conforms with Sections 30210 through 30214, Sections 30220 through 30224, and 30252 of the Coastal Act.

D. Marine Resources and Water Quality

The proposed project incorporates best management practices (BMPs) to improve water quality in the watershed, including the minimization of impervious surfaces on the project site (a 560 square foot landscaped front yard will be maintained on the 3,099 square foot lot). The Commission finds that the development conforms with Sections 30230 and 32031 of the Coastal Act.

E. Development

The development is located within an existing developed area and, as conditioned, will be compatible with the character and scale of the surrounding area, has been designed to assure structural integrity, and will avoid cumulative adverse impacts on public access. Therefore, the Commission finds that the development, as conditioned, conforms with Sections 30250, 30251, 30252, 30253 and the public access provisions of the Coastal Act.

F. Environmentally Sensitive habitat Areas (ESHA)

As conditioned, the development will not result in significant degradation of any adjacent habitat, recreation areas, or parks and is compatible with the continuance of any such habitat, recreation, or park areas that may exist. Therefore, the Commission finds that the project, as conditioned, conforms with Section 30240(b) of the Coastal Act.

G. Local Coastal Program

Coastal Act section 30604(a) states that, prior to certification of a local coastal program ("LCP"), a coastal development permit can only be issued upon a finding that the proposed development is in conformity with Chapter 3 of the Act and that the permitted development will not prejudice the ability of the local government to prepare an LCP that is in conformity with Chapter 3. The City of Los Angeles Land Use Plan (LUP) for Venice was effectively certified on June 14, 2001. As conditioned, the proposed development is consistent with Chapter 3 of

the Coastal Act. Approval of the project, as conditioned, will not prejudice the ability of the local government to prepare an LCP that is in conformity with the provisions of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act.

H. California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

As conditioned, there are no feasible alternatives or feasible mitigation measures available which would substantially lessen any significant adverse effect which the activity may have on the environment. 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

VENICE, CA



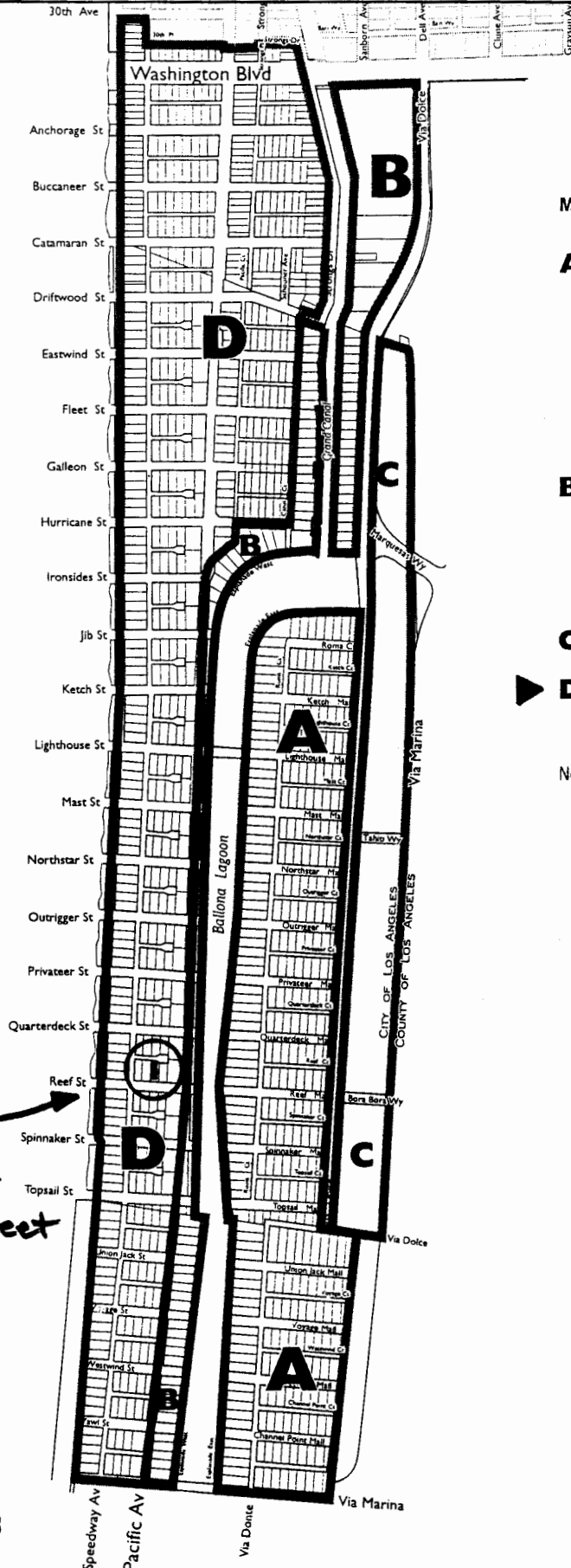
Site:
21 Reet St.



COASTAL COMMISSION
5-02-353

EXHIBIT # 1

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Maximum Building Height

- A** 30' within 60 horizontal feet of the mean high tide line of Ballona Lagoon or inland side of the Esplanade (City right-of-way), whichever is furthest from the water. Beyond 60 horizontal feet, one foot in additional height is permitted for each two additional horizontal feet to a maximum height of 45'. 45-foot limit for structures or portions of structures located further than 60 horizontal feet of the mean high tide line of Ballona Lagoon and the inland side of the Esplanade.
- B** 30' within 60 horizontal feet of the mean high tide line of Ballona Lagoon, Grand Canal or the inland side of the Esplanade (City right-of-way), whichever is furthest from the water. Beyond 60 horizontal feet, one foot in additional height is permitted for each two additional horizontal feet to a maximum height of 38 feet.
- C** 45'
- D** 35'; 28' along Walk Streets.

Notes:

*All building heights shall be measured from the elevation of the fronting right-of-way, except on lagoon lots where all building heights shall be measured from the average existing natural grade.

*No portion of any structure (including roof access structures, roof deck railings and architectural features) shall exceed the 30' height limit within 60 horizontal feet of the mean high tide line of Ballona Lagoon, Grand Canal or the inland side of the Esplanade (City right-of-way).

*Notwithstanding other policies of this LUP, chimneys, exhaust ducts, ventilation shafts and other similar devices essential for building function may exceed the specified height limit in a residential zone by five feet.

*See Policy I.A.1 for policy limiting roof access structures.

*See Policy I.B.7 for commercial and mixed-use development standards.

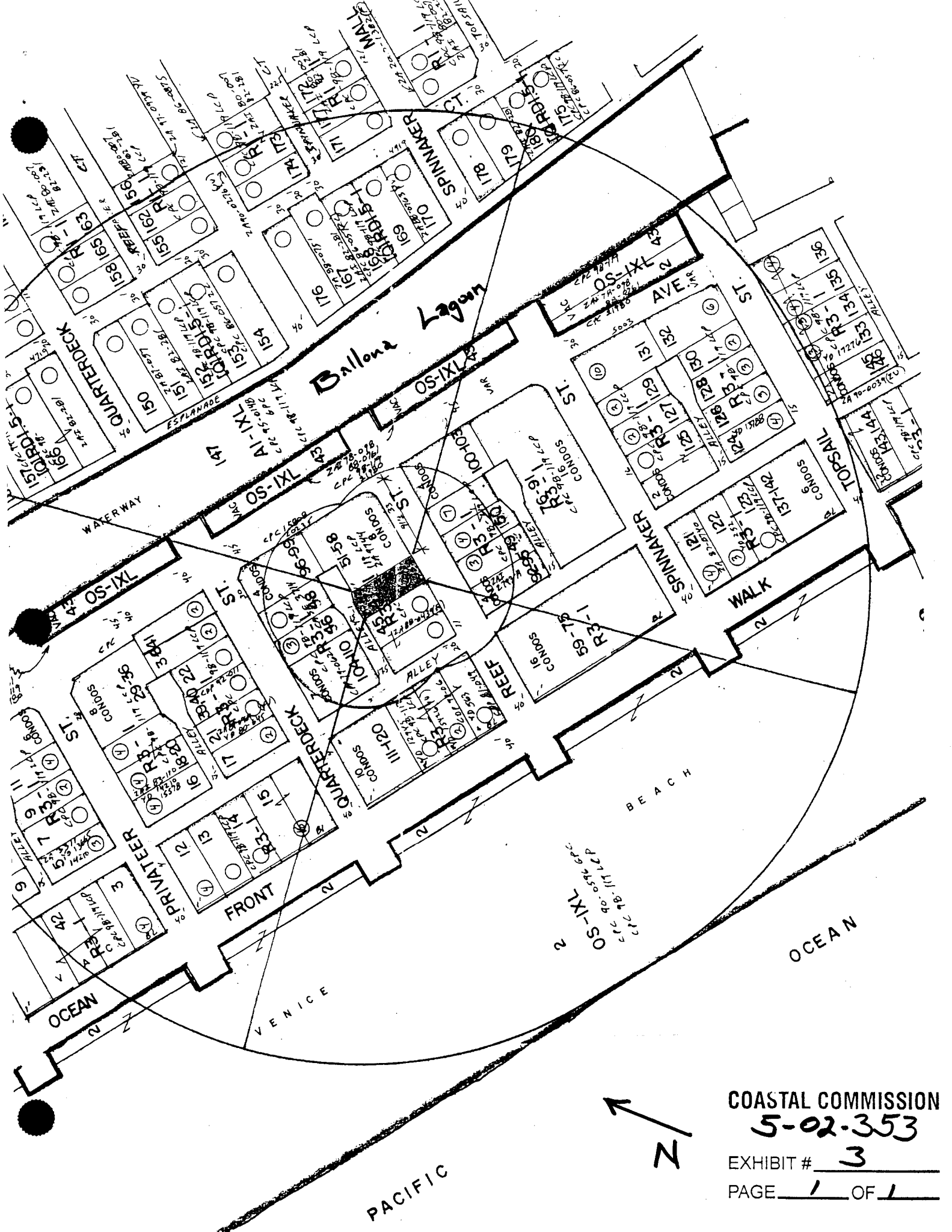
Site
21 Reef
Street

5-02-353

LUP
Exhibit 13
Height

Subarea: Marina Peninsula • Silver Strand •
Ballona Lagoon West • Ballona Lagoon (Grand Canal) East





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ALLEY

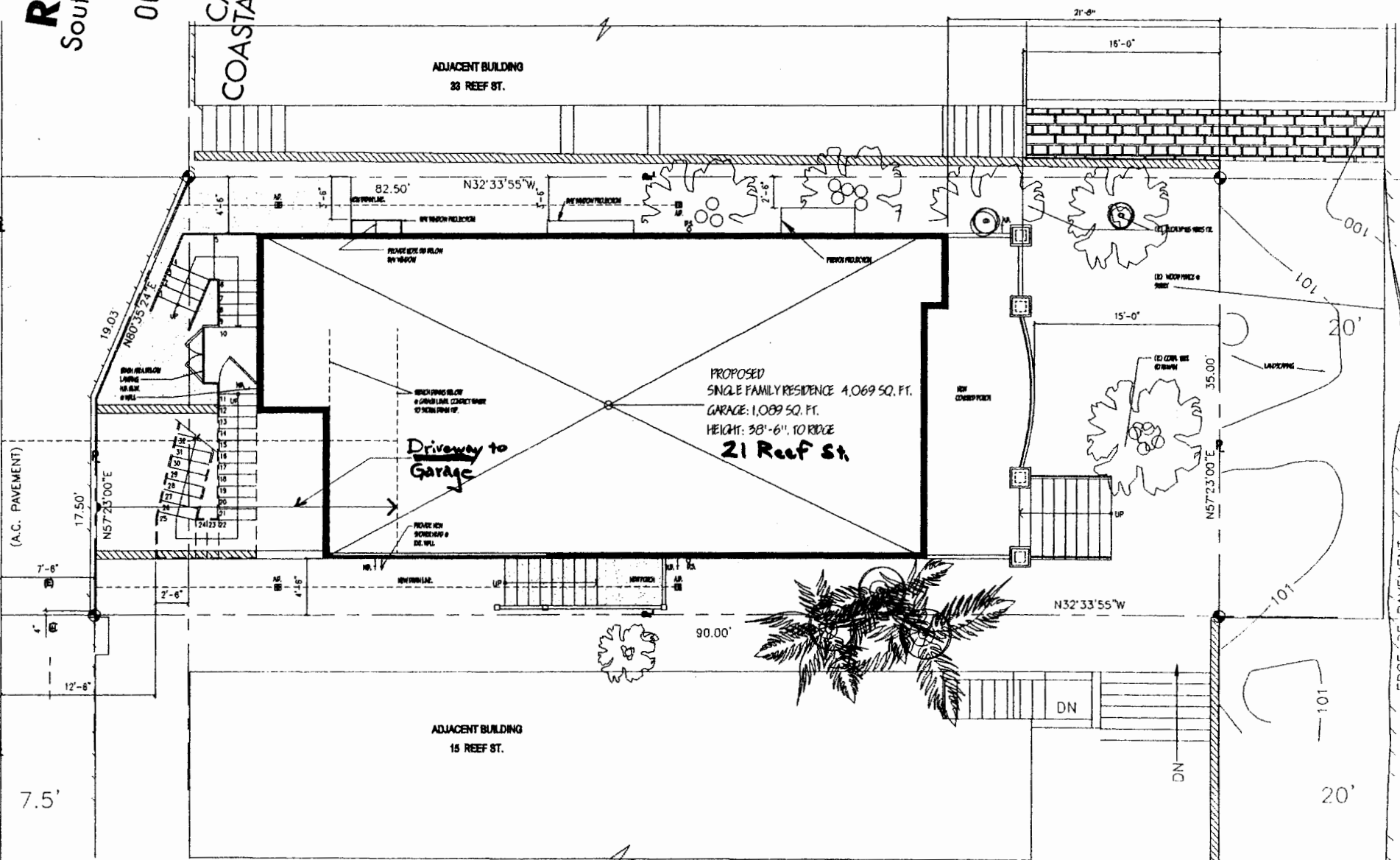
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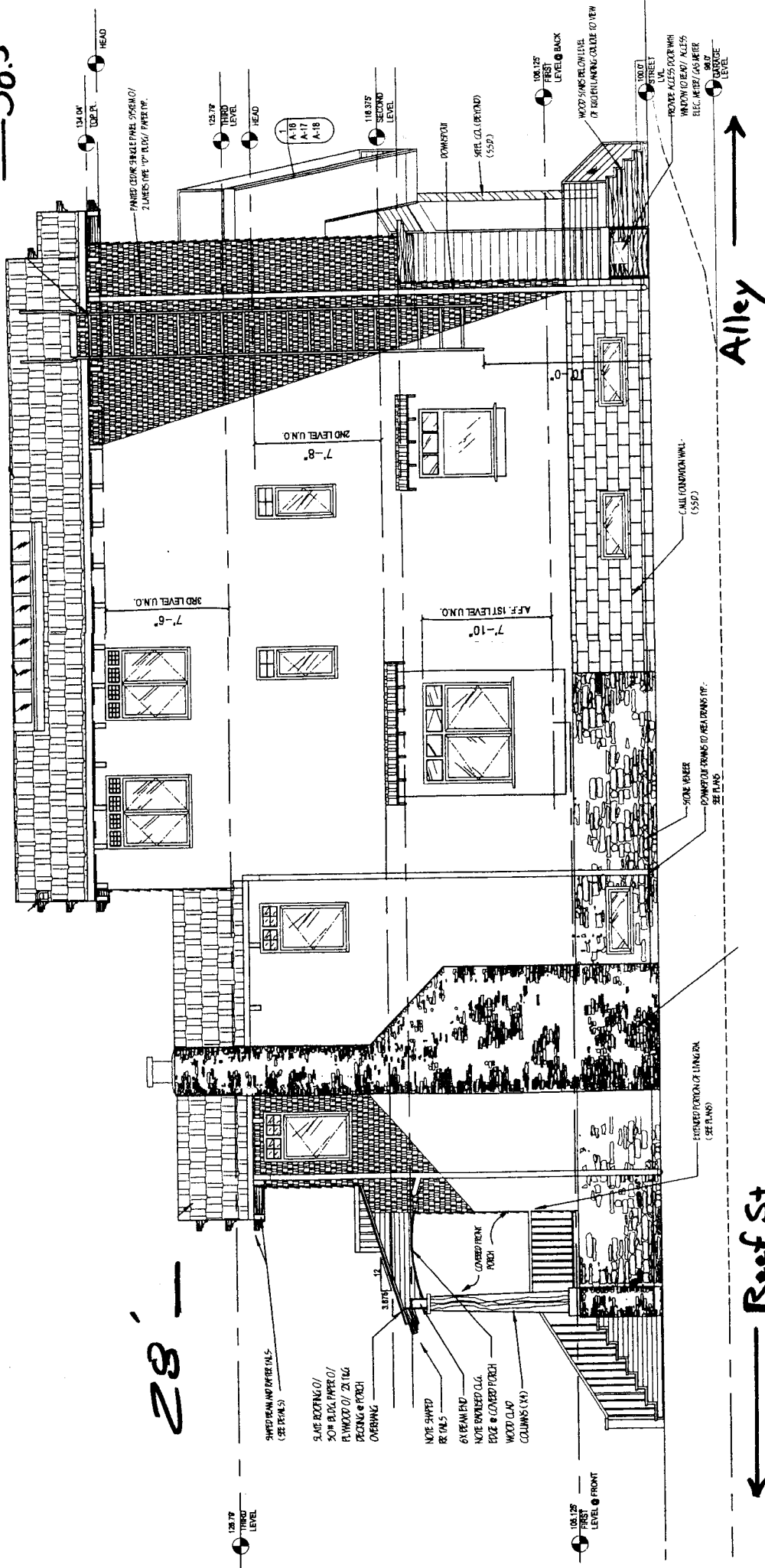


Proposed Site Plan



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38.5'



28'

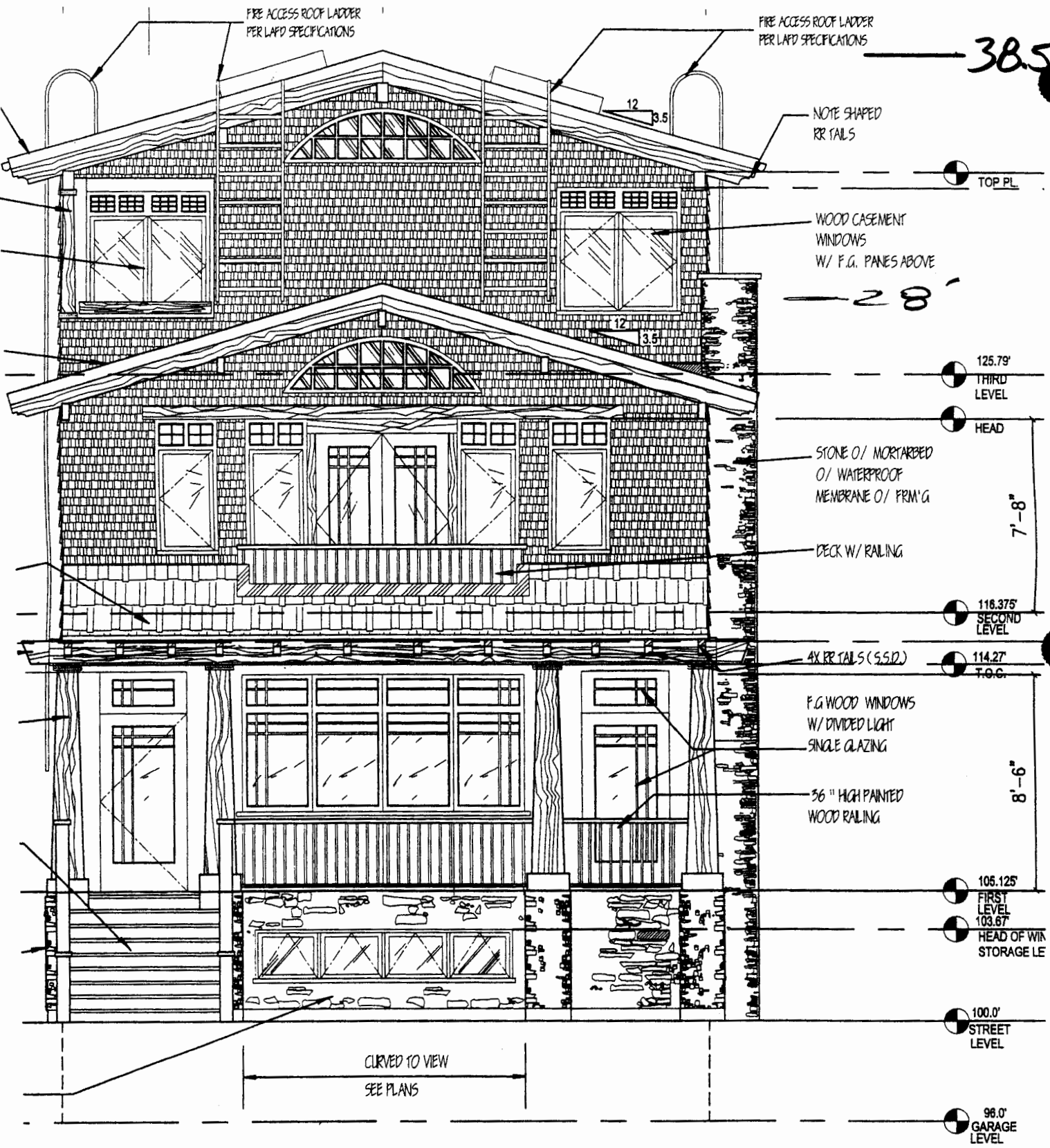
Alley

Roof St.

Side Elevation of Proposed House

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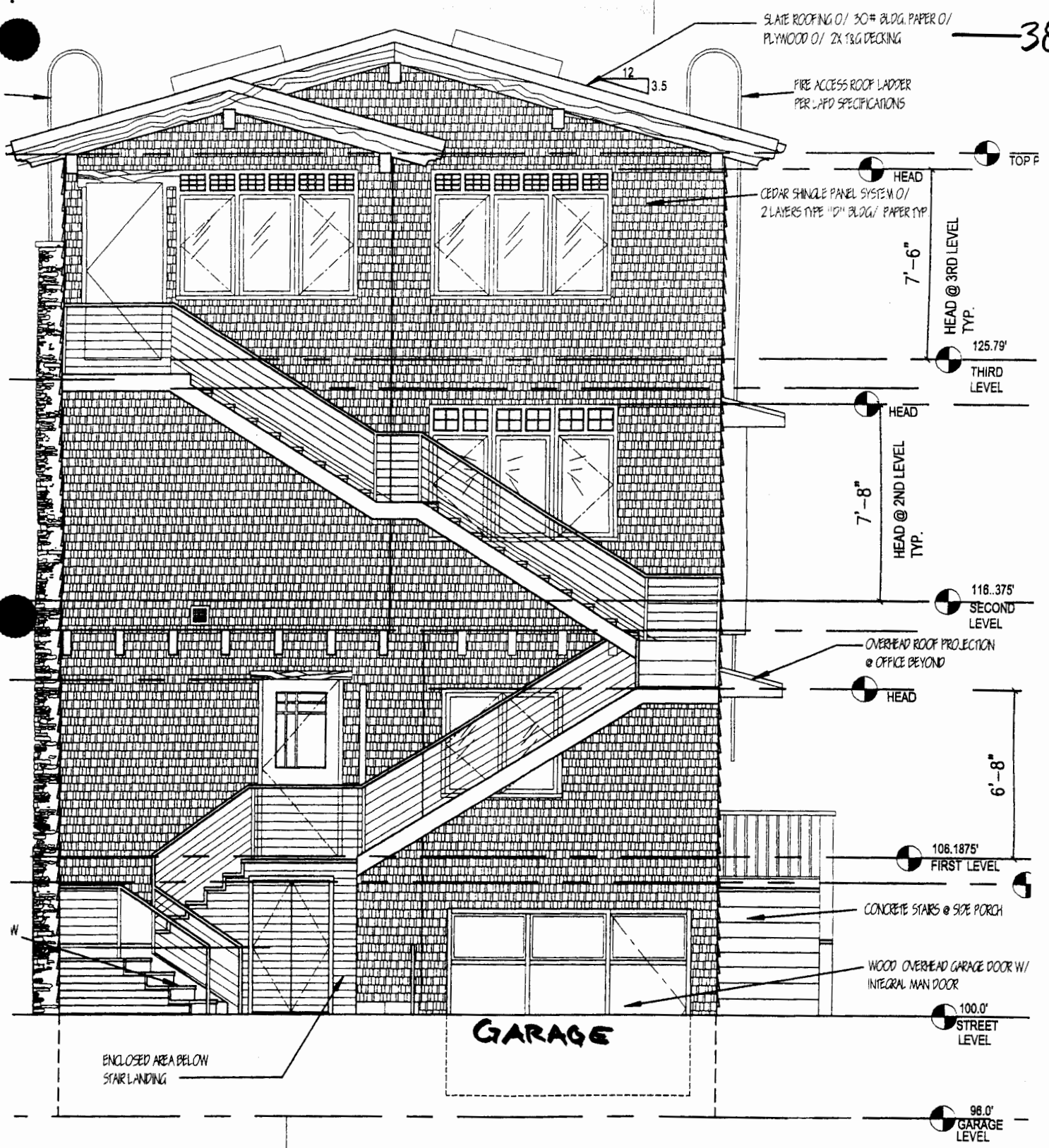
EXHIBIT # 5
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Front (Reef St.) Elevation

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EXHIBIT # 6
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Rear (Alley) Elevation

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 EXHIBIT # 7
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January 7, 2003

Mr. Charles Posner
California Coastal Commission
200 Ocean Gate Ste 1000
Long Beach, CA 90802

RECEIVED
South Coast Region

JAN 8 2003

RE: Application 5-02-353
21 Reef Street

CALIFORNIA
COASTAL COMMISSION

Dear Mr. Posner and Commissioners,

Thank you for your consideration of our project and considering the following in deciding our case. The owners of this property have directed me to prepare a design which is an appropriate response to the history and tradition of the Venice Community. In addition, the maintenance of character is a driving tenet of the Venice Specific Plan. Other factors such as the height and bulk of adjacent buildings affect this design and our response is to respect the views and rights of others while trying to enhance the property and neighborhood in a way characteristic and consistent with the Venice Community. There are several areas in the Venice Specific Plan which can be addressed in support of approval for this project. These areas include Walk Streets, Density and the Purposes of the Specific Plan. **The design of this project reinforces the character of the Venice historical context.**

Walk Streets

As you know, the Venice Specific Plan designates a number of "Walk Streets". The heights of buildings on these streets is limited by definition in the Specific Plan. The definition of a walk street denotes a path where vehicles are restricted. On Reef Street, vehicles both park and drive, even though it is designated as a "Walk Street". **Reef Street is not a Walk Street.** There are other streets in the Marina Area which are dedicated in the Plan as Walk Streets, but vehicles are not restricted and regularly travel on in order to access parking for homes, apartment buildings and condominiums. Attached are photographs of these streets, which include the subject street Reef St. (Fig. 1), Quarterdeck (Fig. 2), Outrigger (Fig. 3.) and Union Jack (Fig. 4) as well as others in the area. Vehicular paving and parking stalls line all of these streets as well as access to garages and other services. Reef Street is not representative of a typical walk street as represented by other streets in the area, because cars are allowed to both drive on Reef and park there. In the spirit of the neighborhood and in an effort to keep within the character of the old Venice, this project restricts vehicle access to the alley and retains a large portion of the lot facing the street for landscaping.

Density

Another of the tenets of the Specific Plan is the reduction of density in the area. This property at 21 Reef Street could by right be a two unit building but instead the owner has decided to build a single family dwelling in which they will live. The effective density of both the property and the area is remaining unchanged by the addition of this home. **This project reduces density.**

Building Mass

Throughout the Venice and Marina del Rey area over the past two decades, developers have maximized the amount of building mass so that maximum floor areas can be achieved. This project does not maximize floor area at all, (3600 s.f.) as the living area is set back from the front of the property 8' feet more than required and in that area is a porch open on three sides, an element which encourages use of the front yard, and adds a textural quality to the structure, giving dimension to the street and the neighborhood.

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EXHIBIT # 8

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RE: Application 5-02-353
21 Reef Street

1/7/03
page two

Preservation of Views and Scenic Enhancement

In Section 2, PURPOSES, The Purposes of the Specific Plan, Section F cites that the plan regulate *"use, height, density, setback, buffer zone and other factors in order that is be compatible in character with the existing community and provide for the consideration of aesthetics"*

The single family home proposed for 21 Reef Street is a tiered design, three stories and 38' tall for the rear portion only, lodged between a 40' tall multi unit condominium building to the east (Fig. 5B) and a 43' foot tall block designed dwelling to the west (Fig. 5A). The front of the proposed structure is 28' feet tall and responds in design and height to the home at the west end of the block, which is a shingle style craftsman home. In this regard, the proposed home is not as tall as the structures adjacent to it, but is compatible to them in height and responds in character to the original homes built in the Venice community.

Views and access to the Coastal Area are not affected by the proposed home. The structure to the east, a four story multi-unit condominium building, has views directly to the west of the three story 43' tall dwelling which will sit to the west of the proposed home. The roof decks of the condominiums are still higher than the roof of the proposed home and views to the beach and waterfront are not disturbed by the proposed new structure.

Structures across Reef and the Alley behind the proposed home are two, three and four story apartments and condominiums designed primarily for the maximum leasable, renewable or salable area (Fig. 6). The proposed home is set back from the street to preserve a mature Coral Tree which has been a part of the fabric of the neighborhood for some time. The increased setback in front, enhancing the landscape, causes a 30" encroachment into the required setback in the rear by a small portion of the open stair in the rear. No part of the building mass or structure is in the setback, the house itself is set away from the required setback reducing mass on the alley.

We feel the design of this project respects the history of the area, reduces density and does not restrict access to the Coastal Zone. Height concerns by the Los Angeles Fire Department have been mitigated by providing permanent roof access in accordance with Fire Department recommendations. The Fire Department has approved this project.

Reef Street is a street where cars drive and park on regularly. Adjacent structures are both taller and more massive than the proposed home. Density of the area is not changed or increased. Surrounding structures are more massive and neither views nor access from any surrounding buildings are restricted by this project. The architectural character of the original neighborhood is emulated in the proposed design and the home is set back from the street in order to preserve a yard and an existing mature coral tree. Thank you again for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Christopher V. Ward, AIA

COASTAL COMMISSION

5-02-353

EXHIBIT # 8

PAGE 2 OF 9

Christopher V. Ward, A.I.A.
8060 Melrose Ave., Ste. 230 Los Angeles, CA 90046

Architects
(323) 655-8890 F(323) 655-8875

January 7, 2003

Mr. Charles Posner
California Coastal Commission
200 Oceangate Ste 1000
Long Beach, CA 90802

RECEIVED
South Coast Region

JAN 8 2003

RE: Application 5-02-353
21 Reef Street

CALIFORNIA
COASTAL COMMISSION

Dear Mr. Posner,

After our meeting last month regarding the approval of this project, I did some investigation of the Fire Department concerns about the heights of buildings in this neighborhood. I met with Mr. Michael Theule, Fire Inspector II, Los Angeles Fire Department of the Bureau of Fire Prevention. Mr. Theule is the person responsible for approving projects in the Venice area and considering the fire safety of the new projects being built there.

Fire Department access is a concern in this area as well the height of buildings. As Mr. Theule explained to me, fire fighters need access to the roof to ventilate an engaged structure. We have provided permanent ladders on the side of the building to allow the fire fighters access to the high roof and this satisfies the Fire Department requirement for access to the roof. Reef street was not considered a walk street on the Fire Department maps and there is vehicular and truck access to Reef St. We are providing a fully fire sprinklered structure, since the property is over 1.9 miles from the Fire Station serving this area. All new structures in this area would be required to provide fire sprinklers.

By providing the required access to the roof and a fully sprinklered structure, this project is more compliant than any of the surrounding buildings which are over the current allowable height. We have addressed the concerns of the Fire Department and received their blessing for the construction of this residence.

Please find enclosed a copy of the Fire Department approved drawings for this project. The Fire Department approval stamp appears on Sheet A-1 and is noted their official map. Do not hesitate to call if you have any questions and thank you for your consideration of this matter.

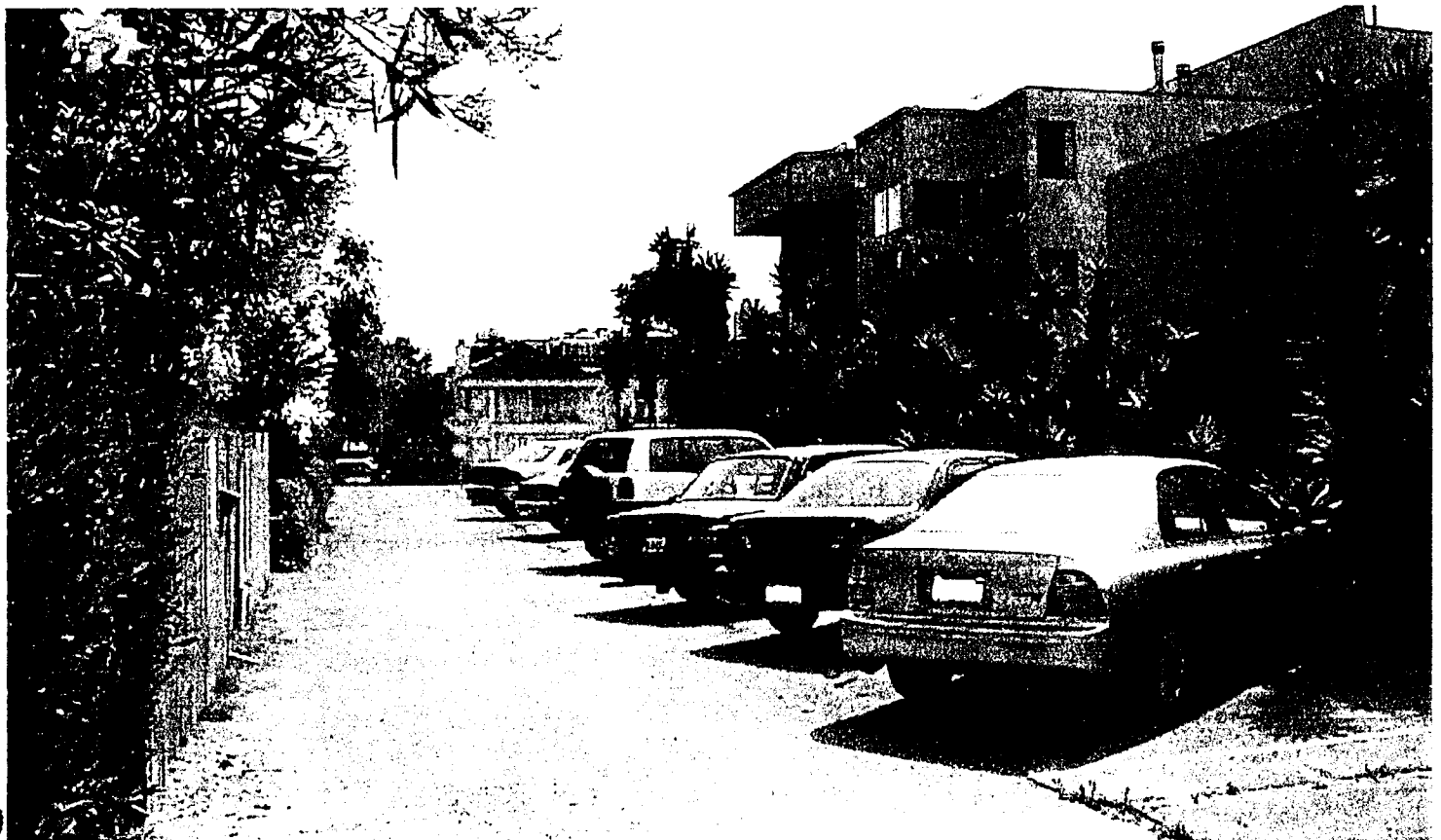
Sincerely,



Christopher V. Ward AIA

COASTAL COMMISSION
5-02-353

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PAGE 3 OF 9



REEF STREET

EXHIBIT # 8
PAGE 4 OF 9

FIG. 1



QUARTERDECK

EXHIBIT # 8
PAGE 5 OF 9

FIG. 2



OUTRIGGER

COASTAL COMMISSION

EXHIBIT # 8
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FIG. 3



UNION JACK

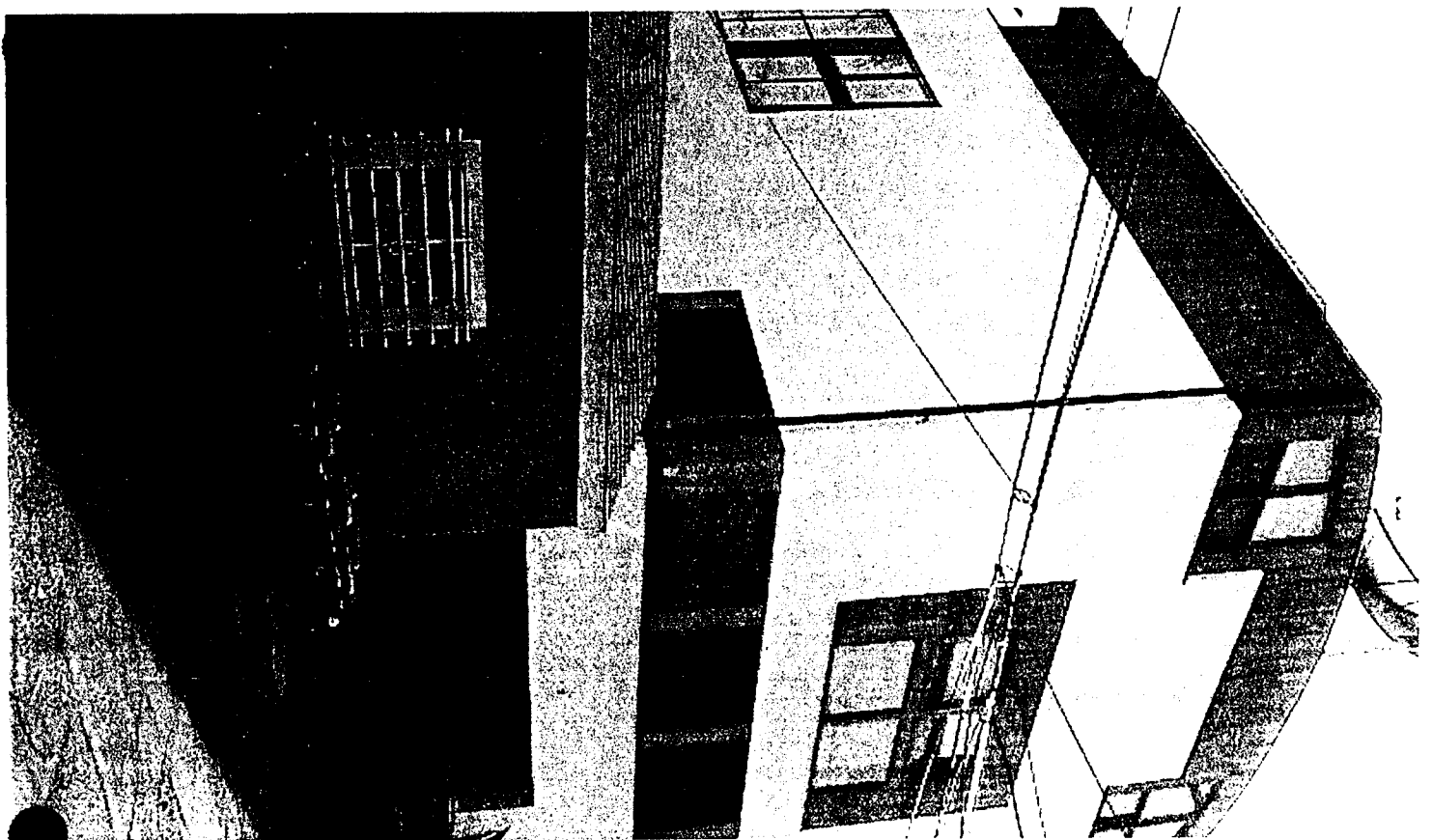
EXHIBIT # 8
PAGE 7 OF 9

FIG. 4



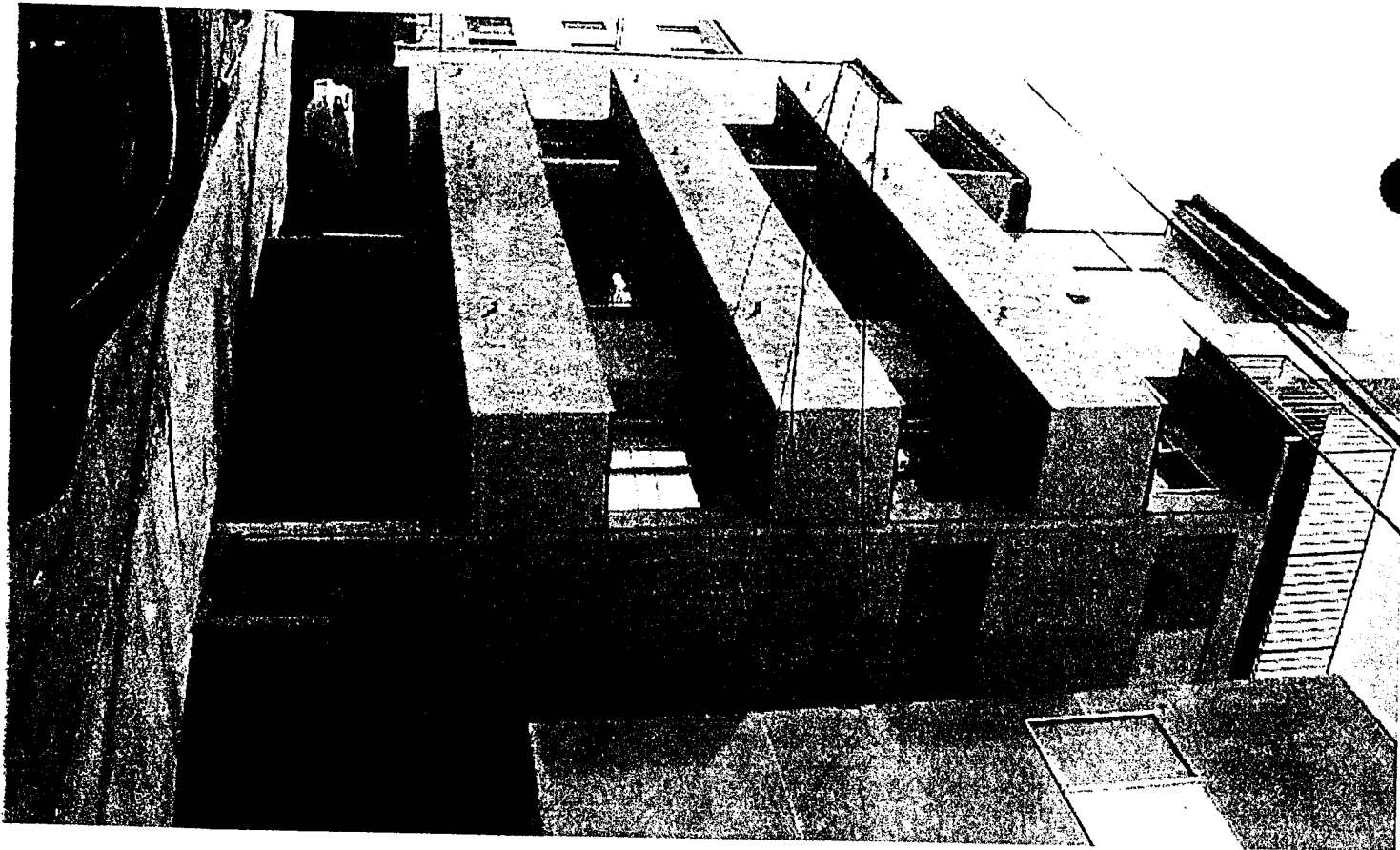
CONDOMINIUM ADJACENT TO EAST
PHOTO TAKEN FROM ALLEY

B

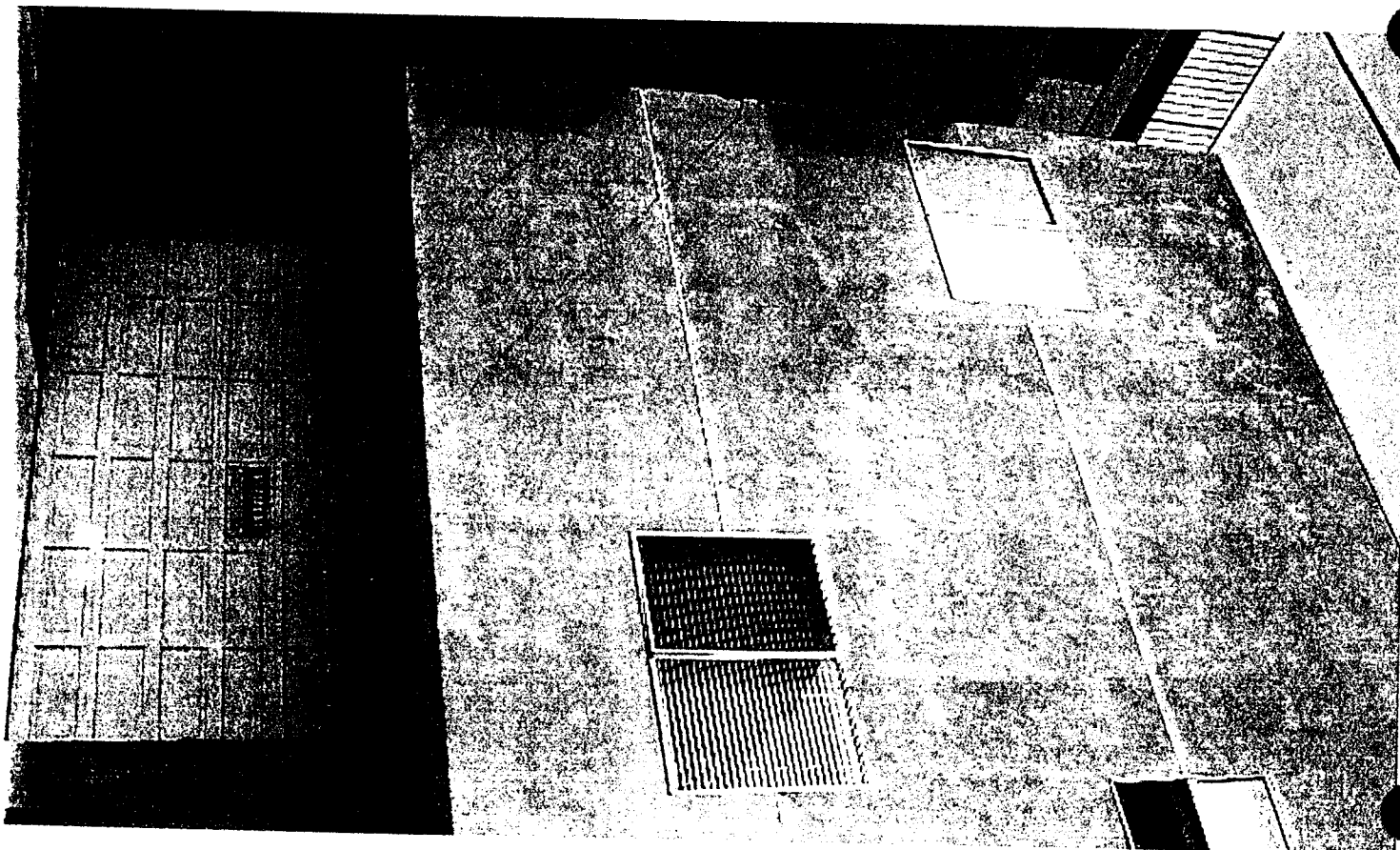


DWELLING ADJACENT TO WEST
PHOTO TAKEN FROM ALLEY

A



48' BUILDING ACROSS ALLEY



35' BUILDING ACROSS ALLEY



CINDY MISCIKOWSKI

City of Los Angeles
Councilwoman, Eleventh District
Assistant President Pro Tempore

Committees
Chair, Public Safety
Vice-Chair, Rules, Election &
Intergovernmental Relations
Member, Budget and Finance
Member, Personnel

Ms. Pam Emerson
Regulation and Planning Supervisor
California Coastal Commission
200 Oceangate, 10th Floor
Long Beach, CA 90802

RECEIVED
JAN 17 2003
January 10, 2003
CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

Dear Ms. Emerson:

I am writing to you regarding a project located at 21 Reef Street in Venice. As you are aware, this case was recently heard by the Los Angeles City Council and approved unanimously.

The request before the City Council was for a Specific Plan Exception to permit a project height of 38' 6" in lieu of the allowable 28 feet with a varied roofline and a modification for a rear-yard setback of 12'6" in lieu of the required 15 feet. Since the adoption of the Venice Specific Plan the Council has felt very strongly about upholding its requirements, however, this proposed home is a perfect example of why the plan allows for exceptions.

This home will only reach a height of 38 feet for the rear 20% of the property demonstrating that there was an effort by the owner and the architect to comply with the spirit of the Specific Plan on a street where almost every other property does not. You will note this property is surrounded by homes that are over 40 feet, reaching as high as even 43 feet. In addition, the design of this home is such that it softens any impact of the increased height. While surrounded by stucco apartment buildings, this project is proposed to be designed in the Craftsman style reminiscent of the properties that used to front along the Venice walk streets.

I am aware that the Commission is also concerned about the fire access to this property. It is important to point out that while Reef Street is designated as a walk street in the Venice Specific Plan, the street is actually paved and cars are able to drive onto and park along it. The request for the encroachment into the rear yard addresses this fire access by adding a second route for residents to evacuate or fire personnel to enter the building in case of an emergency.

Westchester Office
7166 W. Manchester Boulevard
Westchester, CA 90045
(310) 568-8772
(310) 410-3946 Fax

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200 N. Spring Street, Room 415
Los Angeles, CA 90012
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(213) 473-6926 Fax

COASTAL COMMISSION
5-02-353
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As you know, I have been a strong supporter of coastal protection ordinances and see the benefit in making certain that development near our coastline is in keeping with its surroundings as well as its history. This proposal meets those qualifications and more because of careful design of the architect. I appreciate your consideration of this project and encourage your support of its approval.

Sincerely,

Cindy Miskowski

COASTAL COMMISSION
5-02-353

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