# CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

South Coast Area Office 200 Oceangate, Suite 1000 Long Beach, CA 90802-4302 (562) 590-5071





# ADDENDUM

TO: Coastal Commissioners and Interested Parties

FROM: South Coast District Staff

SUBJECT: ADDENDUM #2 TO ITEM F 8a, COASTAL COMMISSION PERMIT APPLICATION #5-03-100-(Halfacre) FOR THE COMMISSION MEETING OF January 14, 2005.

Commission staff recommends revision and additions to the Special Conditions and Section IV (Findings) of the staff report for clarification purposes. Language to be added is shown in **bold underlined italic** and the language to be deleted is in strike out, as shown below:

In response to the applicant's comments from a letter dated January 6, 2005, Commission staff believes the following changes are appropriate.

Page 5 -- Modify Special Condition No.3 and No.4, as follows:

# 3. <u>No Future Bluff Protective Device</u>

- A. By acceptance of this Permit, the applicants agree, on behalf of themselves and all other successors and assigns, that no bluff protective device(s) shall ever be constructed to protect the development approved pursuant to Coastal Development Permit No. 5-03-100, including, but not limited to, the <u>addition to the basement of the</u> residence and, the proposed decks, the proposed stairway connection and any future improvements thereto, in the event that the development is threatened with damage or destruction from bluff and slope instability, erosion, landslides, wave uprush or other natural hazards in the future. By acceptance of this permit, the applicants hereby waive, on behalf of themselves and all successors and assigns, any rights to construct such devices that may exist under Public Resources Code Section 30235.
- **B.** By acceptance of this Permit, the applicants further agree, on behalf of themselves and all successors and assigns, that the landowner shall remove the development authorized by this permit, including the residence and decks, if any government agency has ordered that the structure(s) is/are not to be occupied due to any of the hazards identified above. In the event that portions of the development fall to the beach before they are removed, the landowner shall remove all recoverable debris associated with the development from the beach and ocean and lawfully dispose of the material in an approved disposal site. Such removal shall require a coastal development permit.

Page 25 -- Modify Section IV.C.Conclusion, as follows:

### CONCLUSION

The Commission finds that the proposed project, as currently proposed <u>conditioned</u>, is sited and designed to protect scenic and visual qualities of coastal areas. Approval of the proposed project, as conditioned, would preserve existing scenic resources and would be consistent with preserving the existing community character where structures are sited at the upper bluff face, while the lower bluff face remains largely undisturbed and vegetated. The alteration of the already developed upper bluff face would not result in a significant adverse visual effect when viewed from public vantage points such as the beach and would be visually compatible with the character of the surrounding area. Therefore, as conditioned, the Commission finds that the proposed project is consistent with Section 30251 of the Coastal Act and with the City's LUP policy regarding coastal bluff sites.

# 4. No Future Shoreline Protective Device

- A. By acceptance of this Permit, the applicants agree, on behalf of themselves and all other successors and assigns, that no shoreline protective device(s) shall ever be constructed to protect the development approved pursuant to Coastal Development Permit No. 5-03-100, including, but not limited to, the <u>addition to the basement of the</u> residence and, the proposed decks, the proposed stairway connection and any future improvements thereto, in the event that the development is threatened with damage or destruction from waves, erosion, storm conditions or other natural hazards in the future. By acceptance of this permit, the applicants hereby waive, on behalf of themselves and all successors and assigns, any rights to construct such devices that may exist under Public Resources Code Section 30235.
- **B.** By acceptance of this Permit, the applicants further agree, on behalf of themselves and all successors and assigns, that the landowners shall remove the development authorized by this permit, including the residence and decks, if any government agency has ordered that the structure is not to be occupied due to any of the hazards identified above. In the event that portions of the development fall to the beach before they are removed, the landowners shall remove all recoverable debris associated with the development from the beach and ocean and lawfully dispose of the material in an approved disposal site. Such removal shall require a coastal development permit.

Page 7 -- Modify Special Condition No.7, as follows:

### 7. Drainage and Runoff Control Plan

- A. PRIOR TO ISSUANCE OF THE COASTAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT, the applicants shall submit, for review and approval of the Executive Director, two (2) full size sets of revised drainage and run-off control plans. The drainage and runoff control plan shall show that all roof drainage, including roof gutters and collection drains, and sub-drain systems for all landscape and hardscape improvements for the residence and all yard areas, shall be collected on site for discharge to the street <u>beach</u> through piping without allowing water to percolate into the ground.
- **B.** The permittees shall undertake development in accordance with the approved final plan. Any proposed changes to the approved final plan shall be reported to the Executive Director. No changes to the approved final plan shall occur without a Commission amendment to this coastal development permit unless the Executive Director determines that no amendment is required.
- **C.** The applicants shall maintain the functionality of the approved drainage and runoff control plan to assure that water is collected and discharged to the street <u>beach</u> without percolating into the ground.

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER, Governor

# CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

South Coast Area Office 200 Oceangate, Suite 1000 Long Beach, CA 90802-4302 (562) 590-5071

F 8a

Filed: 49th Day: 180th Day: 270<sup>th</sup> Day: Staff: Staff Report: Hearing Date: Commission Action: May 5, 2004 June 23, 2004 November 1, 2004 January 24, 2005 FSY-LB FSY December 16, 2004 January 12-14, 2004



# RECORD PACKET COPY

# STAFF REPORT: REGULAR CALENDAR

APPLICATION NO.:	5-03-100
APPLICANTS:	Marion and Lulu Halfacre
AGENT:	Sherman L. Stacey
PROJECT LOCATION:	3425 Ocean Boulevard, Corona Del Mar (City of Newport Beach) (Orange County)
PROJECT DESCRIPTION:	Conversion and addition to an existing basement to living area, construction of a new basement-level deck, construction of a new sundeck on the bluff face that does not extend any further than the 33-foot contour line, a new stairway connection to an approved stairway leading down to the toe of the bluff located on the downcoast adjacent property, removal and replacement of existing side yard and rear yard fences, and two 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor after-the-fact decks on the seaward side of the existing single-family residence.

# SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

The subject site is a bluff face lot located between the first public road and the sea in Corona Del Mar (Newport Beach) and is immediately inland of Corona Del Mar State Beach, which is a public beach. The applicants propose work on the bluff face consisting of conversion and addition to an existing basement to living area, construction of a new basement-level deck, construction of a new sundeck on the bluff face that does not extend any further than the 33-foot contour line, a new stairway connection (that conforms to the 33-foot contour line) to an approved stairway leading down to the toe of the bluff located on the downcoast adjacent property, removal and replacement of existing side yard and rear yard fences (a portion of which doesn't conform to the 33-foot contour line), and two 2<sup>nd</sup> floor after-the-fact decks on the seaward side of the existing single-family residence (which do conform to the 33-foot contour line). The primary issues before the Commission are the appropriateness of approving the project given the importance of preserving scenic resources, minimizing landform alteration and avoiding development in hazard prone locations.

Commission staff is recommending <u>APPROVAL</u> of the proposed project with **Ten (10) Special Conditions** regarding: **1)** assumption of risk; **2)** final project plans; **3)** no future bluff protective devices; **4)** no future shoreline protective device; **5)** additional approvals for any future development; **6)** a revised geotechnical investigation; **7)** a revised drainage and run-off control

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plan; 8) a revised landscaping plan; 9) a deed restriction against the property, referencing all of the special conditions contained in this staff report; and 10) condition compliance.

The applicants' original proposed project consisted of conversion and addition to an existing basement of a single-family dwelling to living area, a new basement level deck and also constructing a new sundeck on the bluff face and new stairway down to the toe of the bluff. The basement-level deck and stairway would have been supported by an exposed caisson foundation system. In addition, removal and replacement of existing side yard and rear yard fences were to take place. This original proposal would have resulted in significant seaward encroachments.

In response to Commission's staff's December 2004 recommendation to deny the proposal described above the applicants decided to revise their proposed project significantly. The project has been significantly modified and the following elements have been removed: new sundeck located at the lower bluff face, a new stairway down to the toe of the bluff, and the exposed caisson foundation system. The revised project now consists of: conversion and addition to an existing basement to living area, construction of a new basement-level deck, construction of a new sundeck on the bluff face that does not extend any further than the 33-foot contour line, a new stairway connection to an approved stairway leading down to the toe of the bluff located on the downcoast adjacent property, removal and replacement of existing side yard and rear yard fences, and two 2<sup>nd</sup> floor after-the-fact decks on the seaward side of the existing single-family residence. In addition, the revised project would no longer require an exposed caisson foundation system. Commission staff is recommending special conditions that require, among other things, that all accessory development, including the replaced fences, conform a limit of development that aligns with the 33-foot contour line.

As conditioned, the proposed project is consistent with the Sections 30251 and 30240 (b), of the Coastal Act and the City of Newport Beach Land Use Plan (LUP) regarding development on coastal bluffs. The pattern of development along this segment of Ocean Boulevard consists of structures that are sited upon the upper bluff face, while the lower bluff face remains largely undisturbed and vegetated. With some exceptions, the overall appearance of the bluff in this area is natural and undeveloped. The exceptions include 1) lots that have pre-coastal, Commission-approved, or unpermitted stairways traversing the bluff face and 2) lots that have unpermitted development at the toe of the bluff (including projects that are currently subject to a Commission cease and desist order or are under investigation by the Commission's Enforcement staff). In addition, the toe of the bluff is immediately inland of Corona Del Mar State Beach, which is a public beach.

Commission staff notes that there has been an increased amount of development activity along this segment of Ocean Boulevard over the last several years. As currently submitted, the project does not encroach seaward as significantly as the originally proposed project and now conforms to the character of the area. In addition, approval of this project would be consistent with prior action taken in this area. For instance, in a more recent proposal on the Tabak site (CDP#5-02-203-[Tabak]), which is adjacent to the project site, living space additions were landward of the 48-foot bluff elevation contour, and accessory improvements were limited to the 33-foot elevation contour. However, the remainder of the lower bluff, below the 33-foot elevation contour was required to remain undeveloped. Excepting the proposed property line fences, the current proposed project adheres to this by having the base of the new sundeck located at the 33-foot contour and having the remainder of the lower bluff face undisturbed. Meanwhile, the proposed living space addition is located landward of the livable area approved on the Tabak project, therefore it does not appear

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to be encroaching seaward of that reference point. As modified by the special conditions, the development would conform to the pattern of development that is newly forming in the project area.

**LOCAL APPROVALS RECEIVED:** Approval in Concept (#2842-2002) from the City of Newport Beach Planning Department dated February 27, 2003; and Modification Permit No. MD2003-016 (PA2003-036) from the City of Newport Beach Planning Department dated February 26, 2003.

**SUBSTANTIVE FILE DOCUMENTS:** City of Newport Beach Certified Land Use Plan; Coastal Development Permit #PE-6-7-77-1084-[Walker]; Coastal Development Permit #PE-80-1084; *Geotechnical Investigation for Proposed Additions at 3425 Ocean Boulevard, Corona Del Mar, California (W.O. 209002)* prepared by Coast Geotechnical dated November 4, 2002; Letter to Architectural Design Solutions, Inc. from Commission staff dated April 9, 2003; Response packet from Architectural Design Solutions, Inc to Commission staff received February 18, 2004; *Wave-Runup & Coastal Hazard Study, 3425 Ocean Boulevard, Corona Del Mar, CA* prepared by Skelly Engineering dated September 2003; Letter from Coast Geotechnical to Architectural Design Solutions, Inc. dated November 29, 2003.; Letter from Skelly Engineering to Architectural Design Solutions, Inc dated March 19, 2004; Letter from Architectural Design Solutions, Inc to Commission staff received April 6, 2004 Response packet from Architectural Design Solutions, Inc to Commission staff received May 5, 2004; February 18, 2004; Letter and attachments from Sherman L. Stacey dated December 2, 2004; Letter and attachments from Sherman L. Stacey dated December 2, 2004; Letters from Sherman L. Stacey received December 14, 2004.

# LIST OF EXHIBITS

3

- 1. Vicinity Map
- 2. Assessor's Parcel Map
- 3. Site Plan
- 4. Cross-Section Plan

#### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the Commission adopt the following motion and resolution:

# MOTION:

# *"I move that the Commission approve Coastal Development Permit No. 5-03-100 pursuant to the staff recommendation."*

Staff recommends a <u>YES</u> vote. Passage of this motion will result in approval of the permit as conditioned and adoption of the following resolution and findings. The motion passes only by affirmative vote of a majority of the Commissioners present.

1.

# I. APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS

The Commission hereby **GRANTS** a coastal development permit for the proposed development and adopts the findings set forth below on grounds that the development as conditioned will be in conformity with the policies of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act and 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. Approval of the permit complies with the California Environmental Quality Act because either 1) feasible mitigation measures and/or alternatives have been incorporated to substantially lessen any significant adverse effects of the development on the environment, or 2) there are no further feasible mitigation measures or alternatives that would substantially lessen any significant adverse impacts of the development on the environment.

# I. STANDARD CONDITIONS

- 1. <u>Notice of Receipt and Acknowledgment.</u> 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. <u>Expiration.</u> 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.** <u>Interpretation.</u> Any questions of intent or interpretation of any condition will be resolved by the Executive Director or the Commission.
- 4. <u>Assignment.</u> 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. <u>Terms and Conditions Run with the Land.</u> 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 CONDTIONS

# 1. Assumption of Risk, Waiver of Liability and Indemnify

By acceptance of this permit, the applicants acknowledge and agree (i) that the site may be subject to hazards from bluff and slope instability, erosion, landslides and wave uprush; (ii) to assume the risks to the applicants and the property that is the subject of this permit of injury and damage from such hazards in connection with this permitted development; (iii) to unconditionally waive any claim of damage or liability against the Commission, its officers, agents, and employees for injury or damage from such hazards; and (iv) to indemnify and hold harmless the Commission, its officers, agents, and employees with respect to the Commission's approval of the project against any and all liability, claims, demands,

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damages, costs (including costs and fees incurred in defense of such claims), expenses, and amounts paid in settlement arising from any injury or damage due to such hazards.

## 2. Final Project Plans

- A. PRIOR TO THE ISSUANCE OF THE COASTAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT, the applicants shall submit, for the Executive Director's review and approval, two (2) full size sets of final project plans (i.e. site plan, elevations, cross-sections, grading, foundation, etc.). These final project plans shall show that the proposed enclosed living space additions and any deepened foundation systems shall not extend seaward of the 48-foot elevation contour line and that proposed accessory development (e.g. decks, stairs, fences, planters, pavers, etc.) and any preparatory work (e.g. grading) shall not extend seaward of the 33-foot elevation contour line that is generally depicted on Exhibit No. 3 of the December 16, 2004, staff report.
- **B.** The permittees shall undertake development in accordance with the approved final plans. Any proposed changes to the approved final plans shall be reported to the Executive Director. No changes to the approved final plans shall occur without a Commission amendment to this coastal development permit unless the Executive Director determines that no amendment is required.

### 3. No Future Bluff Protective Device

- A. By acceptance of this Permit, the applicants agree, on behalf of themselves and all other successors and assigns, that no bluff protective device(s) shall ever be constructed to protect the development approved pursuant to Coastal Development Permit No. 5-03-100 including, but not limited to, the residence and decks and any future improvements, in the event that the development is threatened with damage or destruction from bluff and slope instability, erosion, landslides, wave uprush or other natural hazards in the future. By acceptance of this permit, the applicants hereby waive, on behalf of themselves and all successors and assigns, any rights to construct such devices that may exist under Public Resources Code Section 30235.
- B. By acceptance of this Permit, the applicants further agree, on behalf of themselves and all successors and assigns, that the landowner shall remove the development authorized by this permit, including the residence and decks, if any government agency has ordered that the structure(s) is/are not to be occupied due to any of the hazards identified above. In the event that portions of the development fall to the beach before they are removed, the landowner shall remove all recoverable debris associated with the development from the beach and ocean and lawfully dispose of the material in an approved disposal site. Such removal shall require a coastal development permit.

#### 4. No Future Shoreline Protective Device

A. By acceptance of this Permit, the applicants agree, on behalf of themselves and all other successors and assigns, that no shoreline protective device(s) shall ever be constructed to protect the development approved pursuant to Coastal Development Permit No. 5-03-100 including, but not limited to, the residence and decks and any

future improvements, in the event that the development is threatened with damage or destruction from waves, erosion, storm conditions or other natural hazards in the future. By acceptance of this permit, the applicants hereby waive, on behalf of themselves and all successors and assigns, any rights to construct such devices that may exist under Public Resources Code Section 30235.

**B.** By acceptance of this Permit, the applicants further agree, on behalf of themselves and all successors and assigns, that the landowners shall remove the development authorized by this permit, including the residence and decks, if any government agency has ordered that the structure is not to be occupied due to any of the hazards identified above. In the event that portions of the development fall to the beach before they are removed, the landowners shall remove all recoverable debris associated with the development from the beach and ocean and lawfully dispose of the material in an approved disposal site. Such removal shall require a coastal development permit.

# 5. <u>Future Development</u>

This permit is only for the development described in Coastal Development Permit No. 5-03-100. Pursuant to Title 14 California Code of Regulations Section 13250(b)(6), the exemptions otherwise provided in Public Resources Code Section 30610(a) shall not apply to the development governed by Coastal Development Permit No. 5-03-100. Accordingly, any future improvements to the development authorized by this permit, including but not limited to change in use from a permanent residential unit and repair and maintenance identified as requiring a permit in Public Resources Section 30610(d) and Title 14 California Code of Regulations Sections 13252(a)-(b), shall require an amendment to Permit No. 5-03-100 from the Commission or shall require an additional coastal development permit from the Commission or from the applicable certified local government.

#### 6. <u>Geotechnical Investigation</u>

- A. PRIOR TO ISSUANCE OF THE COASTAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT, the applicants shall submit, for the review and approval of the Executive Director, a revised geotechnical investigation for the project, which addresses the required foundation design for the project identified on the plans received on December 13, 2004. The investigation shall be prepared and certified by an appropriate professional (i.e., civil or other appropriate engineer or architect). If the revised geotechnical investigation recommends use of any exposed foundation elements (e.g. caissons) seaward of the proposed enclosed living space, or any stabilization, soil recompaction or other grading seaward of the existing 33-foot elevation contour, an amendment to this permit or a new permit shall be required in order to implement such recommendations. All final design and construction plans, including foundations, grading and drainage plans, shall be consistent with all recommendations contained in this submitted investigation approved by the Executive Director.
- B. PRIOR TO THE ISSUANCE OF THE COASTAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT, the applicants shall submit, for the Executive Director's review and approval, evidence that an appropriate licensed professional has reviewed and approved all final design

and construction plans and certified that each of those final plans is consistent with all of the recommendations specified in the above-referenced geologic evaluation approved by the California Coastal Commission for the project site.

**C.** The permittees shall undertake development in accordance with the approved final plans. Any proposed changes to the approved final plans shall be reported to the Executive Director. No changes to the approved final plans shall occur without a Commission amendment to this coastal development permit unless the Executive Director determines that no amendment is legally required.

# 7. Drainage and Runoff Control Plan

- A. PRIOR TO ISSUANCE OF THE COASTAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT, the applicants shall submit, for review and approval of the Executive Director, two (2) full size sets of revised drainage and run-off control plans. The drainage and runoff control plan shall show that all roof drainage, including roof gutters and collection drains, and sub-drain systems for all landscape and hardscape improvements for the residence and all yard areas, shall be collected on site for discharge to the street through piping without allowing water to percolate into the ground.
- **B.** The permittees shall undertake development in accordance with the approved final plan. Any proposed changes to the approved final plan shall be reported to the Executive Director. No changes to the approved final plan shall occur without a Commission amendment to this coastal development permit unless the Executive Director determines that no amendment is required.
- **C.** The applicants shall maintain the functionality of the approved drainage and runoff control plan to assure that water is collected and discharged to the street without percolating into the ground.

# 8. Landscaping Plan

- A. PRIOR TO ISSUANCE OF THE COASTAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT, the applicants shall submit, in a form and content acceptable to the Executive Director, two (2) full size sets of revised landscaping plans prepared by an appropriately licensed professional which demonstrates the following:
  - (1) The plan shall demonstrate that:
    - (a) All planting shall provide 90 percent coverage within 90 days and shall be repeated if necessary to provide such coverage;
    - (b) All plantings shall be maintained in good growing condition throughout the life of the project, and whenever necessary, shall be replaced with new plant materials to ensure continued compliance with the landscape plan;

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- (c) Landscaped areas in the rear yard area not occupied by hardscape shall be planted and maintained for erosion control. To minimize the need for irrigation and minimize encroachment of non-native plant species into adjacent or nearby native plant areas, all landscaping shall consist of native drought resistant plants, which are noninvasive.
- (d) Landscaped areas in the front (street-facing) and side yards shall consist of native or non-invasive non-native drought tolerant plant species.
- (e) No permanent irrigation system shall be allowed within the property. Temporary above ground irrigation to allow the establishment of the plantings is allowed.
- (2) The plan shall include, at a minimum, the following components:
  - (a) A map showing the type, size, and location of all plant materials that will be on the developed site, the irrigation system, topography of the developed site, and all other landscape features, and
  - (b) a schedule for installation of plants.
- B. The permittees shall undertake development in accordance with the approved plan. Any proposed changes to the approved final plan shall be reported to the Executive Director. No changes to the approved final plans shall occur without a Commission amendment to this coastal development permit unless the Executive Director determines that no amendment is required.

#### 9. Deed Restriction

**PRIOR TO ISSUANCE OF THE COASTAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT**, the applicants shall submit to the Executive Director for review and approval documentation demonstrating that the landowners have executed and recorded against the parcel(s) governed by this permit a deed restriction, in a form and content acceptable to the Executive Director: (1) indicating that, pursuant to this permit, the California Coastal Commission has authorized development on the subject property, subject to terms and conditions that restrict the use and enjoyment of that property; and (2) imposing the special conditions of this permit as covenants, conditions and restrictions on the use and enjoyment of the Property. The deed restriction shall include a legal description of the entire parcel or parcels governed by this permit. The deed restriction for any reason, the terms and conditions of this permit shall continue to restrict the use and enjoyment of the subject property so long as either this permit or the development it authorizes, or any part, modification, or amendment thereof, remains in existence on or with respect to the subject property.

# 10. Condition Compliance

Within 90 days of Commission action on this coastal development permit application, or within such additional time as the Executive Director may grant for good cause, the applicants shall satisfy all requirements specified in the conditions hereto that the applicants are required to satisfy prior to issuance of this permit. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in the institution of enforcement action under the provisions of Chapter 9 of the Coastal Act.

# IV. FINDINGS AND DECLARATIONS

The Commission hereby finds and declares:

# A. PROJECT LOCATION, DESCRIPTION, 2<sup>nd</sup> FLOOR DECKS, STAIRWAY, LOCAL GOVERNMENT APPROVAL AND PRIOR COMMISSION ACTION

# 1. Project Location

The proposed project is located at 3425 Ocean Boulevard in Corona Del Mar, City of Newport Beach, County of Orange (Exhibits #1-2). The subject site is immediately inland of Corona Del Mar State Beach, a public beach. The project site is located along a stretch of Ocean Boulevard where single-family residences have been developed upon the upper bluff face, but where the lower bluff face appears natural and undeveloped. The subject property is accessed by a common descending private driveway off Ocean Boulevard. The single-family residence is terraced down the upper coastal bluff face. Between the lower most portion of the residence and the beach below, is a slope about forty feet in height descending at a gradient of about 1.5:1 (H:V) with locally steeper areas. Lower portions of the bluff appear natural but are landscaped with shrubs, trees and ice plant.

The subject site is currently developed with a 2,805 square foot single-family residence upon the upper bluff face. Ocean Boulevard is located to the north (inland of the existing residence), at the top of the bluff. Up-coast, to the west, are existing single-family homes. Down-coast, to the east is an existing single-family home, and further beyond is a natural vegetated bluff, a bluff park known as Inspiration Point and a public access way from Inspiration Point to the beach (Corona Del Mar State Beach) consisting of a concrete pathway, retaining wall and a grouted rock revetment. Seaward, to the south of the project site is sandy public beach (Corona Del Mar State Beach). The bluff face remains relatively undisturbed and vegetated, with the exception of an existing wooden fence located along the rear side yard. The pattern of approved development along this segment of Ocean Boulevard primarily consists of structural development sited upon the upper bluff face and minimal disturbance of the lower bluff face.

# 2. Project Description

The applicants' original proposal consisted of additions to an existing 2,805 square foot, three-level single-family residence with two 2<sup>nd</sup> floor decks (this will be discussed further on the next page) and with an existing 395 square foot two-car garage as follows: 1) conversion of an existing 580 square foot basement to living area plus a 235 square foot

(7-foot wide by 34-foot long) seaward side living space addition to the basement level; 2) a new 300 square foot basement-level deck upon the bluff face; and 3) a new stairway down to the toe of the bluff and beach with connection to a new 760 square foot sundeck on the bluff face near the toe. The basement-level deck and stairway would have been supported by an exposed caisson foundation system (15-24" caissons). Also, the following components were part of the proposal: retaining walls, planters, removal and replacement of the existing side yard and rear yard fences, underground irrigation, and landscaping. No work was proposed on the two upper livable floors. Grading would have consisted of 29 cubic yards of cut, 21 cubic yards of import and 50 cubic yards of fill.

In response to Commission's staff's December 2004 recommendation to deny the proposal described above the applicants decided to revise their proposed project significantly. The project has been significantly modified and the following elements have been removed: new sundeck located at the lower bluff face, a new stairway down to the toe of the bluff, and the exposed caisson foundation system. The revised project now consists of: conversion and addition to an existing basement to living area, construction of a new basement-level deck, construction of a new sundeck on the bluff face that does not extend any further than the 33-foot elevation contour line, a new stairway connection (also conforming to the 33-foot elevation contour line) to an approved stairway (CDP#5-02-203-[Tabak]) leading down to the toe of the bluff located on the downcoast adjacent property (this will be discussed further below), removal and replacement of existing side yard and rear vard fences (a portion of which doesn't conform to the 33-foot contour line), and two  $2^{nd}$  floor after-the-fact decks on the seaward side of the existing single-family residence (which do conform to the 33-foot contour line). In addition, the revised project would no longer require an exposed caisson foundation system. With the revised project, the applicants only submitted a site plan, elevation plan and cross-section plan (Exhibits #3-5). Other necessary plans such as a revised grading plan, foundation plan or landscape plan were not submitted. Changes to these plans were necessary due to the redesign for the project. In addition, the revised grading amounts or square footages of the livable area or decks were not submitted. However it appears that the original square footages submitted for the conversion and addition to an existing basement to living area and construction of a new basement-level deck remain the same. In addition, an updated geotechnical investigation reviewing the revised project was not submitted.

# 3. <u>2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Decks</u>

The existing 2,805 square foot, three-level single-family residence has two 2<sup>nd</sup> floor decks that no coastal development permit had authorized. The City of Newport Beach Planning Department approved (Variance No. 1153) in May of 1989 the construction of these two 2<sup>nd</sup> floor balconies. One of the conditions of approval for the City permit was that the project obtains Coastal Commission approval. However, no such approval for the construction of these two 2<sup>nd</sup> floor balconies was acquired. A request for "after-the-fact" approval of these two 2<sup>nd</sup> floor decks has been included with the proposed project.

#### 4. <u>Stairway</u>

As described briefly above, the proposed project includes construction of a new stairway connection to an approved stairway (CDP#5-02-203-[Tabak]) leading down to the toe of the bluff located on the downcoast adjacent property. CDP#5-02-203 permitted the repair and maintenance of an existing stairway that was determined to be pre-coastal. There is an

existing agreement between the two owners that allows the residents of the project site to use the stairway located on the Tabak property.

#### 5. Local Government Approval

The proposed development conforms with the applicable standards for development in the R-1 District, except for encroachments into the side yard setback area. The City of Newport Beach approved this exception through a Modification Permit No. MD2003-016 (PA2003-036), which allows an 8-foot high protective guardrail to encroach 4-feet into the 4-foot required side yard setback where the Zoning Code limits the height of structures to 6-feet maximum.

#### 6. Prior Commission Action at the Subject Site

#### a. Coastal Development Permit #P-6-7-77-1084-[Walker]

On July 11, 1977, the South Coast Regional Commission approved Coastal Development Permit #P-6-7-77-1084-[Walker] for the construction of a three-story single-family dwelling with an attached three-car garage. The permit was approved with three (3) special conditions, which required: 1) a statement from a registered geologist/engineer verifying that the plans conform to the geology report recommendations; 2) submittal of a detailed and complete slope restoration and maintenance plan to include drought resistant vegetation cover and landscaping; and 3) submittal of a detailed and complete study and plan indicating method of protection of tidepools, marine resources from construction impacts; and also a signed and notarized statement agreeing to these studies and plans. The applicant completed condition compliance and the permit was issued on July 25, 1977.

b. Coastal Development Permit #PE-80-1084-[Walker]

On March 30, 1980, the South Coast Regional Commission approved Coastal Development Permit #PE-80-1084-[Walker] for a one-year permit extension that would expire March 30, 1981. The permit was approved with no Special Conditions and was issued on April 17, 1980.

#### 7. Prior Commission Action in Subject Area

 a. 5-01-191-[Tabak], 3431 Ocean Boulevard (Located Down-coast & Adjacent to Subject Site)

At the January 2002 Commission Hearing, the Commission denied Coastal Development Permit Application #5-01-191-[Tabak] for the demolition of an existing three (3) story single-family residence and construction of a new single-family residence. The proposed structure would have covered virtually the entire upper and lower bluff face areas. The primary issues of the proposed project were the appropriateness of approving the project given landform alteration, the importance of preserving scenic resources, the seaward encroachment of the development, the community character, and impacts to public access. In denying the proposed development, the Commission found that the project, as submitted, was primarily

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inconsistent with the Sections 30240, 30251 and 30253 of the Coastal Act and the City of Newport Beach Land Use Plan (LUP) regarding coastal bluff sites.

 5-02-203-[Tabak], 3431 Ocean Boulevard (Located Down-coast & Adjacent to Subject Site)

At the January 2003 Commission Hearing, the Commission approved Coastal Development Permit Application #5-02-203-[Tabak] for the demolition of an existing three (3) story single-family residence and construction of a new single-family residence and also demolition and replacement of existing wooden staircase to the beach. The proposed project had been reduced compared with a prior proposal. The Commission found that the proposed development was consistent with the pattern of development in the immediate vicinity and the project would not have a cumulative adverse impact on visual coastal resources. Under this proposal, living space additions were located landward of the 48-foot bluff elevation contour, and accessory improvements were limited to the 33-foot elevation contour. However, no other additions were allowed below the 33-foot elevation contour upon the lower bluff face.

 c. 5-01-112-[Ensign], 3415 Ocean Boulevard (Located 1 Lot Up-coast of Subject Site)

At the February 2002 Commission Hearing, the Commission approved Coastal Development Permit #5-02-112-[Ensign] for the after-the-fact approval of a new switchback bluff face stairway with keystone-type earth retention blocks, landscaping and in-ground irrigation. The primary issues before the Commission were the appropriateness of approving the project given landform alteration, the importance of preserving scenic resources, community character and impacts to public access. As submitted, the proposed project raised issues with Sections 30240, 30251 and 30253 of the Coastal Act and the City of Newport Beach Land Use Plan (LUP) regarding development on coastal bluffs. The Commission found that the proposed stairway that may have followed a pre-Costal Act pathway, as conditioned, does not present an adverse visual impact because it follows the natural topography of the bluff, was effectively screened with vegetation and was consistent with the character of the surrounding area. This approval also included a proposed irrevocable offer to dedicate (OTD) an easement for public lateral access upon the small portion of the sandy beach at the base of the bluff that is located within the applicant's property.

 5-01-080-[Palermo], 3317 Ocean Boulevard (Located 5 Lots Up-Coast of Subject Site)

At the January 2002 Commission Hearing, the Commission denied Coastal Development Permit #5-01-080-[Palermo] for the construction of a pool house, pool, spa and exercise room on a lower portion of the bluff face down to the toe of the bluff. The project is located five lots northwest of the subject site. The primary issues of the proposed project were the appropriateness of approving the project given landform alteration, the importance of preserving scenic resources, the seaward encroachment of the development, the community character, and impacts to public access. In denying the proposed development, the Commission found that

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the project, as submitted, was primarily inconsistent with the Sections 30240, 30251 and 30253 of the Coastal Act and the City of Newport Beach Land Use Plan (LUP) regarding coastal bluff sites.

e. 5-01-199-[Butterfield], 3401 Ocean Boulevard (Located 2 Lots Up-Coast of Subject Site)

At the December 2001 Commission Hearing, the Commission approved in part and denied in part Coastal Development Permit #5-01-199-[Butterfield] for the after-thefact approval of a new "sand pit" cut-out at the toe of the bluff, consisting of three (3) 32" high, 15' long retaining walls enclosed by a rope attached to four wooden posts in the sand, and replacement of a decorative gate and lattice panels on the existing pre-Coastal Act bluff face stairway. The project is located two lots northwest of the subject site. The Commission denied the toe of slope cut-out and approved the portion of the lattice work and gate located on a previously approved landing area. The Commission found that the gate replacement and lattice enclosures on the previously permitted landing areas to be consistent with the scenic and visual resources policies of the Coastal Act, as they will not obstruct views to or along the shoreline and are in keeping with the pattern of development in the area and therefore is consistent with Section 30251 of the Coastal Act. However, the Commission found that the proposed sand pit cut-out would not minimize alteration natural landforms, was not visually compatible with the character of surrounding development and would affect the scenic and visual qualities of the subject area. As such, the portion of the proposed project involving the establishment of a sand pit cut-out area was inconsistent with Section 30251 of the Coastal Act.

# B. GEOLOGIC HAZARD

Section 30253 of the Coastal Act states, in relevant part states:

New development shall:

- (I) Minimize risks to life and property in areas of high geologic, flood, and fire hazard.
- (2) Assure stability and structural integrity, and neither create nor contribute significantly to erosion, geologic instability, or destruction of the site or surrounding area or in any way require the construction of protective devices that would substantially alter natural landforms along bluffs and cliffs.

The findings in this section of the staff report include generalized findings regarding the susceptibility of coastal bluffs to erosion and site-specific findings from the geological investigation.

1. <u>General Findings on Bluff Erosion</u>

The proposed development is located on a coastal bluff, which is subject to wave attack and erosion. Coastal bluffs in California, located at the intersection of land and ocean, are composed of relatively recent uplifted geologic materials and are exposed to severe weathering forces.

Coastal bluff erosion is caused by a combination of inherent environmental factors and erosion caused by human activity. Environmental factors include gravity, seismicity, wave attack, wetting and drying of bluff face soils, wind erosion, salt spray erosion, rodent burrowing and piping, percolation of rain water, poorly structured bedding, surface water runoff and poorly consolidated soils.

Factors attributed to human activity include: improper irrigation practices; building too close to the bluff edge; improper site drainage; use of impermeable surfaces which concentrate runoff; use of water-dependent vegetation; pedestrian or vehicular movement across the bluff top, face and toe, and breaks in irrigation lines, water or sewer lines. In addition to irrigation water or runoff at the bluff top, increased residential development inland leads to increased water percolating beneath the surface soils and potentially outletting on the bluff face along fracture lines in the bluff or points of contact of different geologic formations, forming a potential slide plane.

## 2. <u>Site Specific Bluff Information</u>

To address site-specific geotechnical issues of the originally submitted project design, the applicants have submitted several investigations including a Geotechnical Investigation for Proposed Additions at 3425 Ocean Boulevard, Corona Del Mar, California (W.O. 209002) prepared by Coast Geotechnical dated November 4, 2002; and a Letter from Coast Geotechnical to Architectural Design Solutions, Inc. dated November 29, 2003. The information provided states that the slope is grossly stable and that development is not expected to impact the slope's gross stability and further states that surficial slope stability could be improved through proper slope maintenance. However, the investigations also raise major concerns regarding development on the site. For instance, the investigation states that possible evidence of past surficial failures is present and they most likely occurred due to heavy vegetation, loose surficial soils, and over-irrigation. In addition, the subject slope does show signs of creep within the undocumented fills and slope wash. The investigations also state that a foundation consisting of 24-inch caissons would be necessary to support the development that had been proposed (which was withdrawn by the applicant). While the original geotechnical investigation does recommend deep caisson foundations, a later investigation goes on to provide parameters for deepened footings bearing on bedrock. The information submitted ultimately concludes the coastal bluff on the site is grossly stable and that the project is feasible from an engineering perspective provided the applicants comply with the recommendations contained in the investigation.

The Commission's staff geologist has reviewed the geologic investigations and agrees with the investigations' conclusions. The slope will be subject to subaerial erosion and surficial instabilities, but the geotechnical investigations make recommendations that should assure safety of the development against such instabilities as soil creep. The development previously proposed could be built, but only with the support of fairly massive foundation elements.

Since the project design has changed, a revised and up-to-date geotechnical investigation needs to be submitted. The revised geotechnical investigation should review the adequacy of the newly redesigned project. The applicants have stated that an exposed foundation

system is no longer needed since the stairway and sundeck have been modified. However, no review by a geologist supporting this has been submitted. Given the reduced footprint and the applicants' commitment to use less massive foundation elements, the Commission does not anticipate that the revised plan will be subject to any greater hazards than the previous design.

## 3. Coastal Hazards

To analyze the suitability of the site for development relative to potential wave hazards, Commission staff requested the preparation of a wave run-up, flooding, and erosion hazard analysis, prepared by an appropriately licensed professional (e.g. coastal engineer). The purpose of this analysis is to determine the potential for future storm damage and any possible mitigation measures, which could be incorporated into the project design.

The applicants have provided *Wave-Runup & Coastal Hazard Study, 3425 Ocean Boulevard, Corona Del Mar, CA* prepared by Skelly Engineering dated September 2003, which addresses the potential of hazard from flooding and wave attack at the subject site. The study states that there is a wide (200 feet wide) sandy beach in front of the property 99.9% of the time and that aerial photographs over the last three decades show no overall shoreline retreat in general. This beach is due, in part, to the sheltering effect of the Newport Harbor jetties, and as long as these jetties are present the beach should be fairly stable. Various other findings are discussed in this study and it concludes by stating: " ... *wave runup and overtopping will not significantly impact this property over the life of the proposed improvements. The proposed development will neither create nor contribute significantly to erosion, geologic instability, or destruction of the site or adjacent area. There are no recommendations necessary for wave or wave runup protection. No shore protection is proposed or should be necessary in the next 75 years. The proposed project minimizes risks form flooding.*"

Although the applicants' investigations indicate that the site is safe for development at this time, beach areas are dynamic environments, which may be subject to unforeseen changes. Such changes may affect beach processes.

#### 4. <u>Conclusions and Special Conditions</u>

Section 30253 of the Coastal Act states that new development shall minimize the impacts of the proposed development on bluff erosion and instability, and prevent the necessity for bluff protective structures. William Kockelman, U.S. Geological Survey, wrote an article entitled "Some Techniques for Reducing Landslide Hazards" that discusses several ways to minimize landslide hazards such as bluff erosion and instability, including:

- A. Require a permit prior to scraping, excavating, filling, or cutting any lands.
- B. Prohibit, minimize, or carefully regulate the excavating, cutting and filling activities in landslide areas.
- C. Provide for the proper design, construction, and periodic inspection and maintenance of weeps, drains, and drainage ways, including culverts, ditches, gutters, and diversions.

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- D. Regulate the disruption of vegetation and drainage patterns.
- E. Provide for proper engineering design, placement, and drainage of fills, including periodic inspection and maintenance.

Kockelman also discusses the option of disclosure of hazards to potential buyers by the recordation of hazards in public documents. The recordation of hazards via the assumption of risk is one means the Commission utilizes to inform existing and future buyers of property of the potential threat from soil erosion and slope failure (landslide) hazards. Several of these recommendations are routinely required by local government, including requiring permits for grading, minimizing grading, and requirements for proper engineering design.

The Commission has imposed many of these same recommendations, including requiring the consulting geologist to review foundation and drainage plans in order to confirm that the project conforms to the policies of the Coastal Act. The findings in the staff report regarding the general causes of bluff erosion and the specific findings from the geotechnical investigation confirm that the coastal bluff at this location is eroding and that measures to minimize bluff erosion are necessary. The following Special Conditions will mitigate the impacts of the proposed development on bluff erosion and instability, and will prohibit bluff protective structures, as required by Section 30253 of the Coastal Act.

a. Assumption of Risk

Coastal bluffs in southern California are recently emergent landforms in a tectonically active environment. Any development on an eroding coastal bluff involves some risk to development.

Although adherence to the geotechnical consultant's recommendations will minimize the risk of damage from erosion, the risk is not entirely eliminated. The findings in sections 1-3 above, including site-specific geologic information, support the contention that development on coastal bluffs involves risks and that structural engineering can minimize some of the risk but cannot eliminate it entirely. Therefore, the standard waiver of liability condition has been attached via **Special Condition No. 1**.

By this means, the applicants and future buyers are notified that the proposed development is located in an area that is potentially subject to bluff erosion that can damage the applicants' property. In addition, the condition insures that the Commission does not incur damages as a result of its approval of the Coastal Development Permit.

b. Revised Plans

As stated previously, the applicants revised the project plan. The applicants only submitted a site plan, elevation plan and cross-section plan for the revised project. Other necessary plans such as a revised grading plan, foundation plan and more detailed elevation and cross-section plans were not submitted. Changes to these plans were necessary due to the redesign for the project. In addition, the revised

grading amounts or square footages of the livable area or decks were not submitted. Therefore, the Commission is imposing **Special Condition No. 2**, which requires the applicants to submit revised final project plans such as site plans, elevations, cross-sections, grading, and foundation plans that substantially conform to the preliminary plans submitted by the applicant and all of the requirements of the special conditions.

#### c. Bluff and Shoreline Protective Devices

Coastal bluff lots are inherently hazardous, especially those located adjacent to the ocean. It is the nature of bluffs to erode. Bluff failure can be episodic, and bluffs that seem stable now may not be so in the future. Even when a thorough professional geotechnical analysis of a site has concluded that a proposed development is expected to be safe from bluff retreat or wave up-rush hazards for the life of the project, it has been the experience of the Commission that in some instances, unexpected bluff retreat episodes that threaten development during the life of a structure sometimes do occur. In the Commission's experience, geologists cannot predict with absolute certainty if or when bluff failure on a particular site may take place, and cannot predict if or when a residence or property may become endangered.

Section 30253 of the Coastal Act requires that new development shall not require construction of protective devices that would substantially alter natural landforms along bluffs and cliffs. The proposed development could not be approved as being consistent with Section 30253 of the Coastal Act if projected bluff retreat would affect the proposed development and necessitate construction of a protection device.

No bluff protection device is proposed. However, because the proposed project includes new development, it can only be found consistent with Section 30253 of the Coastal Act if bluff and shoreline protective devices are not expected to be needed in the future. Therefore, the Commission imposes **Special Condition No. 3** and **Special Condition No. 4**. **Special Condition No. 3** states that no bluff protective devices shall be permitted to protect the proposed development. **Special Condition No. 4** states that no shoreline protective devices shall be permitted to protect the proposed development.

#### d. Future Development

will require a permit. To assure that future development is consistent with the Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act, the Commission imposes **Special Condition No. 5**, a future improvements special condition. As conditioned the development conforms with the Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act relating to geologic hazards.

# e. Conformance with Geologic Recommendations

The applicants have submitted geotechnical investigations for the originally submitted --but not withdrawn- project. The geotechnical consultant has found that development is feasible provided the recommendations contained in the geotechnical investigation prepared by the consultant are implemented in regards to the design and construction of the project. The geotechnical recommendations address things such as foundations and runoff on site. However, since the project has been redesigned a revised an up-to-date geotechnical investigation needs to be prepared. In addition, the applicants have stated that the once proposed exposed caisson foundation is no longer necessary. However, no updated investigation has been submitted. Given the reduced footprint and the applicants' commitment to use less massive foundation elements, the Commission does not anticipate that the revised plan will be subject to any greater hazards than the previous design. However, in order to assure that risks of development are minimized, as per Section 30253, the Commission imposes Special Condition No. 6, which requires the applicants to submit a revised geotechnical investigation and evidence that the geotechnical consultants' recommendations are incorporated into the design of the project. If the revised geotechnical investigation recommends use of any exposed foundation elements (e.g. caissons) seaward of the proposed enclosed living space, or any stabilization, soil recompaction or other grading seaward of the existing 33foot elevation contour, an amendment to this permit or a new permit shall be required in order to implement such recommendations.

## f. Drainage and Run-Off and Landscaping

In approving development on a coastal bluff the Commission must ensure that the development minimizes potential erosion or, as it is stated in Section 30253 "...to neither create nor contribute significantly to erosion..."

Along the urbanized bluffs of southern California, geologic instability has been increased through the addition of large volumes of irrigation water required to maintain lawns and non-native vegetation in the yards of cliff top homes. It is difficult to assess the long-term damage caused by the accumulation of water on bluff topsoils due to watering of lawns and other water intensive vegetation. Landscape irrigation alone is estimated to add the equivalent of 50 to 60 inches of additional rainfall each year to garden and lawn areas. This irrigation has led to a slow, steady rise in the water table that has progressively weakened cliff material and lubricated joint and fracture surfaces in the rock along which slides and block falls are initiated. Also, the weight of the saturated soils weakens the cliff. In addition to these effects, surface runoff discharged through culverts at the top or along the face of the bluffs leads to gullying or failure of weakened surficial materials. In this respect the Commission fills an important role in minimizing landsliding and erosion.

The Commission has acted on many coastal development permits in which an applicant has applied for bluff protective measures following the failure of irrigation lines, water or sewer lines which then cause slope failure. It is extremely difficult to discover breaks in in-ground irrigation lines until after a certain period of time passes and plants start to die. By then the slope may have become saturated.

The applicants previously submitted a drainage and run-off control plan for the originally designed project, however it inadequately provided any measures to deal with water quality and erosion issues. In addition, no new drainage and run-off control plans have been submitted for the revised project. Therefore, the Commission is imposing **Special Condition No. 7**, which requires that the applicants shall prepare prior to issuance of this permit a revised drainage and run-off control plan.

Because of the fragile nature of coastal bluffs and their susceptibility to erosion, the Commission requires a special condition regarding the types of vegetation to be planted. The applicants previously submitted landscaping plan for the originally designed project. The previously submitted landscape plan was reviewed by Commission staff and determined to be acceptable since it consisted of native drought tolerant and non-invasive plants. The use of non-native vegetation that is invasive can have an adverse impact on the existence of native vegetation. Invasive plants are generally those identified by the California Invasive Plant Council (http://www.caleppc.org/) and California Native Plant Society (www.CNPS.org) in their publications. In addition, any plants in the landscaping plan should be drought tolerant to minimize the use of water. The term "drought tolerant" is equivalent to the terms 'low water use' and 'ultra low water use' as defined and used by "A Guide to Estimating Irrigation Water Needs of Landscape Plantings in California" prepared by University of California Cooperative Extension and the California Department of Water Resources dated August 2000 available at http://www.owue.water.ca.gov/landscape/pubs/pubs.cfm. However, since the project design has changed, no new landscape plans have been submitted.

Also, the applicants previously submitted irrigation plan system. However, no new updated irrigation plans have been submitted.

Due to the potential impacts to the bluff from infiltration of water into the bluff, the Commission imposes **Special Condition No. 8**, which requires that the applicants shall prepare prior to issuance of this permit a revised landscape plan, which shall be submitted for the review and approval of the Executive Director. To minimize the potential for the introduction of non-native invasive species and to minimize the potential for future bluff failure, a final landscaping plan shall be prepared by a licensed landscape architect and shall incorporate the following criteria: 1) to minimize the introduction of water into the ground, no permanent in-ground irrigation shall be permitted; and 2) landscaping shall consist of native drought tolerant plants which are non-invasive. While the Commission encourages use of native plants in all of the landscaping on the lot, a limited allowance has been given for use of non-native, drought tolerant, non-invasive species in the front yard (street-

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side) and portion of the side yards located landward of the seaward limits of enclosed living space on the property. Invasive, non-indigenous plant species that tend to supplant native species shall not be used anywhere on the project site.

g. Deed Restriction

To ensure that any prospective future owners of the property are made aware of the applicability of the conditions of this permit, the Commission imposes **Special Condition No. 9** requiring that the property owners record a deed restriction against the property, referencing all of the above special conditions of this permit and imposing them as covenants, conditions and restrictions on the use and enjoyment of the Property. Thus, as conditioned, any prospective future owners will receive actual notice of the restrictions and/or obligations imposed on the use and enjoyment of the land including the risks of the development and/or hazards to which the site is subject, and the Commission's immunity from liability.

# **CONCLUSION**

The Commission has required several Special Conditions, which are intended to bring the proposed development into conformance with Section 30253 of the Coastal Act. These Nine (9) **Special Conditions** include: 1) assumption of risk; 2) final project plans; 3) no future blufftop protective device; 4) no future shoreline protective device; 5) additional approvals for any future development; 6) a revised geotechnical investigation; 7) a revised drainage and run-off control plan; 8) a revised landscaping plan; and 9) a deed restriction against the property, referencing all of the special conditions contained in this staff report. Only as conditioned to comply with the provisions of these Special Conditions does the Commission find that the proposed development conforms with Section 30253 of the Coastal Act.

# C. VISUAL RESOURCES

Section 30251 of the Coastal Act states, in relevant part:

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, and, where feasible, to restore and enhance visual quality in visually degraded areas...

The City of Newport Beach Land Use Plan (LUP) was certified on May 19, 1982. Since the City only has an LUP, the policies of the LUP are used only as guidance. The Newport Beach LUP includes the following policies that relate to development at the subject site:

Development of Coastal Bluff Sites, Policy 2 (b) states,

Grading, cutting and filling of natural bluff face or bluff edges shall be prohibited in order to preserve the scenic value of bluff areas, except for the purpose of performing emergency repairs, or for the installation of erosion-preventive devices or other measures necessary to assure the stability of the bluffs.

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The proposed project is located along a coastal bluff face immediately inland of Corona Del Mar State Beach. Because of its' location the project site is highly visible from the sandy public beach. The pattern of development along this segment of Ocean Boulevard is such that structures are sited at the upper bluff face, while the lower bluff face remains largely undisturbed and vegetated. Although several lots have stairways traversing the bluff face and some have unpermitted development at the toe of the bluff (either the subject of a cease and desist order issued by the Commission currently under investigation by the Commission's Enforcement staff), the overall appearance of the bluff in this area is natural and undeveloped, thus giving it a "natural" look. Development at this site, if approved, must be sited and designed to be visually compatible with the undisturbed character of the surrounding area. It is also necessary to ensure that new development be sited and designed to protect views to and along the beach area and minimize the alteration of existing landforms and seaward encroachment of development. The proposed project, as currently submitted, would be encroaching seaward. This seaward encroachment also raises the concern over cumulative impacts if others propose to develop the lower portion of the coastal bluff face. But, the currently proposed project has been reduced in mass, and although the proposed project still encroaches seaward, it conforms to the community character and will not affect public views of the vegetated lower bluff face from the adjacent public beach.

#### 1. <u>Scenic Resources and Landform Alteration</u>

The applicants' original proposal consisted of additions to an existing 2,805 square foot, three-level single-family residence with two 2<sup>nd</sup> floor decks (this will be discussed further on the next page) and with an existing 395 square foot two-car garage as follows: 1) conversion of an existing 580 square foot basement to living area plus a 235 square foot (7-foot wide by 34-foot long) seaward side living space addition to the basement level; 2) a new 300 square foot basement-level deck upon the bluff face; and 3) a new stairway down to the toe of the bluff and beach with connection to a new 760 square foot sundeck on the bluff face near the toe. The basement-level deck and stairway would have been supported by an exposed caisson foundation system (15-24" caissons). Also, the following components were part of the proposal: retaining walls, planters, removal and replacement of the existing side yard and rear yard fences, underground irrigation, and landscaping. No work was proposed on the two upper livable floors. Grading would have consisted of 29 cubic yards of cut, 21 cubic yards of import and 50 cubic yards of fill.

In response to Commission's staff's December 2004 recommendation to deny the proposal described above the applicants decided to revise their proposed project significantly. The project has been significantly modified and the following elements have been removed: new sundeck located at the lower bluff face, a new stairway down to the toe of the bluff, and the exposed caisson foundation system. The revised project now consists of: conversion and addition to an existing basement to living area, construction of a new basement-level deck, construction of a new sundeck on the bluff face that does not extend any further than the 33-foot elevation contour line, a new stairway connection (also conforming to the 33-foot elevation contour line) to an approved stairway leading down to the toe of the bluff located on the downcoast adjacent property, removal and replacement of existing side yard and rear yard fences (a portion of which doesn't conform to the 33-foot contour line), and two 2<sup>nd</sup> floor after-the-fact decks on the seaward side of the existing single-family residence (which do conform to the 33-foot contour line). In addition, the revised project would no longer require an exposed caisson foundation system.

Although the proposed project has elements that encroach seaward, such as conversion and addition to the basement and construction of the new decks, the proposed project will not significantly adversely affect public views of the vegetated bluff from the adjacent public beach (Corona Del Mar State Beach).

a. Landform Alteration

The Coastal Act also requires new development to be sited to "protect views to and along the ocean and scenic coastal areas" and "minimize the alteration of natural land forms." The proposed project would be located along a coastal bluff face. The existing bluff face is a natural landform visible from public vantage points such as the beach (Corona Del Mar State Beach) and Inspiration Point. Any alteration of this landform would affect the scenic views of the coastline when viewed from the State Beach and Inspiration Point. Although the proposed project has elements that encroach seaward, such as the proposed enclosed living space and decks, the proposed project will not significantly adversely affect public views of the vegetated bluff from the adjacent public beach (Corona Del Mar State Beach) area. As such, new development at the subject site is proposed to be sited to minimize adverse effects to existing scenic resources and protect views. Thus, the proposed project is consistent with those requirements of Section 30251 of the Coastal Act regarding scenic resources.

The City's LUP policy regarding coastal bluffs states that grading, cutting and filling of natural bluff face or bluff edges is prohibited in order to preserve the scenic value of the bluff area. The policy on grading requires that the alteration of natural coastal landforms be minimized and that waivers of liability are required in areas of geologic hazard.

Originally the proposed project required grading consisting of 29 cubic yards of cut, 21 cubic yards of import and 50 cubic yards of fill for the proposed project. The amount of grading required for the revised project is unknown and this staff report has been conditioned for submittal of this information (**Special Condition No. 2**). Nonetheless, since the project has been reduced, the amount of grading should be less or at least equivalent to the previously proposed amount. This amount of grading is minimal and does not result in extensive visible landform alteration. Thus, this aspect of the project is consistent with Coastal Act Section 30251. In addition, as per the LUP requirements, an assumption of risk special condition is being required. Therefore, as conditioned, the proposed development is consistent with the certified LUP policies as well.

b. City Setback, Stringline Analysis and Geologic Setback

Seaward encroachment of new development can often have adverse impacts on a variety of coastal resources. For example, the seaward encroachment of private development toward a beach can discourage public utilization of the beach adjacent to such development. The seaward encroachment of structures can also have adverse visual impacts. In addition, the seaward encroachment of structures can increase the hazards to which the new development will be subjected (the hazard and access issues are discussed elsewhere in these findings). Therefore, the

Commission has often used either 1) City-required setbacks from the seaward property line; 2) a string line evaluation; or 3) a minimal 25-foot bluff edge setback in areas where geologic conditions are such that the site can be presumed stable for the useful economic life of the development. If a stringline is used, two types of string lines are applied to evaluate a proposed project—a structural string line and a deck string line. A structural string line refers to the line drawn between the *nearest* adjacent corners of the adjacent structures on either side of the subject site. Similarly, a deck string line refers to the line drawn between the nearest adjacent corners of adjacent decks on either side of the subject site. Setbacks, string lines and geologic setbacks are applied to limit new development from being built any further seaward than existing adjacent development. If not properly regulated the continued seaward encroachment of development can have a significant cumulative adverse impact on coastal resources.

(1) City Setback

Section 30251 of the Coastal Act states that permitted development shall be designed "to be visually compatible with the character of the surrounding area." Therefore, proposed development must be compatible with its' surroundings. The plans submitted by the applicants show that the project conforms to the City zoning setback requirement of 10-feet, but conformance to the City required setback however does not address the potential impacts that the seaward encroaching development will have on the project site. Adhering to the City setback of 10-feet would allow development on the lower bluff face and would not achieve the objectives of Coastal Act Section 30251. Section 30251 of the Coastal Act states that permitted development should minimize landform alteration, visual impacts and the cumulative adverse impact that would occur if other lots develop the bluff face in the manner proposed.

(2) Stringline

Seaward encroachment of new development can often have adverse impacts on a variety of coastal resources. For example, the seaward encroachment of private development onto a beach can discourage public utilization of the beach. The seaward encroachment of structures can also have adverse visual impacts. In addition, the seaward encroachment of structures can increase the hazards that the new development will be subject to. Therefore, the Commission has often used a string line evaluation to review seaward encroachment of development. If a stringline is used, two types of string lines are applied to evaluate a proposed project-a structural string line and a deck string line. A structural string line refers to the line drawn from the nearest adjacent corners of adjacent structures. Similarly, a deck string line refers to the line drawn from the nearest adjacent corners of adjacent decks. String lines are applied to limit new development from being built any further seaward than existing adjacent development. If not properly regulated the continued seaward encroachment of development can have a significant cumulative adverse impact on coastal resources.

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The applicants previously submitted a structural stringline plan. Since the proposed structural portion of the project remains the same (conversion of an existing basement to living area plus a seaward side living space addition to the basement level), this stringline analysis will also be used for the currently proposed project. This structural stringline analysis shows that the proposed improvements extend further seaward than the existing adjacent residences. In addition, the proposed decks and after-the-fact decks would also extend further seaward compared with existing development. On the other hand, the proposed development (excepting the re-constructed property line fence) is consistent with the alignment of the enclosed living space and decks authorized by the Commission on the Tabak project (CDP#5-02-203). Thus, the existing development doesn't provide a useful reference point considering the recent Tabak approval. Rather, other points of reference must be used to establish a consistent limit of seaward encroachment along this section of Ocean Boulevard (i.e. from 3317 Ocean Boulevard. to 3431 Ocean Blvd). Accordingly, development on each lot must be independently evaluated to take into consideration the overall pattern of development in this section of Ocean Boulevard.

In this case, a useful point of reference is the Tabak property located downcoast adjacent to the project site, that in January of 2002 obtained a Coastal Development Permit #5-02-203-[Tabak] for the demolition of an existing three (3) story single-family residence and construction of a new single-family residence. The habitable area for CDP#5-02-203 extends out to the 48-foot bluff elevation contour, while the proposed pool and decks were required to be located landward of the 33-foot contour (the Commission placed a special condition limiting the to the 33-foot contour line). The proposed project's livable area aligns with the 46-foot elevation contour line, while the lower level deck is landward of the 33-foot contour line. Due to topography, the proposed project's livable space is located landward of the Tabak livable area, therefore not appearing to be encroaching seaward. The proposed project's lower level deck will be in conformity with the Tabak lower level deck located at the 33-foot contour. However, the proposed project also includes re-construction of a property line fence that includes elements that extend seaward of the 33-foot contour, down the bluff face and onto the sandy beach. This element would not be consistent with the line of development approved on the Tabak site (which did not include any property line fence beyond the 33-foot contour). Therefore, the Commission imposes Special Condition No. 2 that requires submittal of revised plans showing that all proposed development conforms with the applicable limits of development. Thus, as conditioned, the proposed project is consistent with emerging pattern of development apparent from recent Commission approvals along this section of Ocean Boulevard. The Commission notes that the bluff elevation contours used to identify appropriate limitations on seaward development at this site and the adjacent Tabak site may not be appropriate elsewhere along Ocean Boulevard due to changes in the topography and elevation of the beach and bluff.

The basis of the stringline is to prevent seaward encroachment of new development that can have adverse impacts on a variety of coastal resources. The proposed project would encroach seaward. However, the proposed project would be consistent with the distinct community character present in the area where development is located upon the upper bluff face, while the lower bluff face remains largely undisturbed and vegetated. Furthermore, the development would be consistent with the pattern of development recently approved by the Commission (CDP#5-02-203). Thus, the proposed project is consistent with Section 30251 of the Coastal Act.

(3) Geologic Setback

In cases where use of a stringline to limit seaward encroachment of development is not appropriate, the Commission may use a geologic bluff edge setback for primary structures and accessory improvements. Such a setback is derived for site-specific conditions and is designed to assure stability of the development for its useful economic life. A minimal setback may be warranted where those slopes are stable and historic bluff retreat has been minimal. In these cases, the Commission typically requires that structures be setback at least 25-feet from the bluff edge and hardscape features be setback at least 10-feet from the bluff edge to minimize the potential that the development will contribute to visual impacts. However, the development site is located entirely on a coastal bluff face. Therefore, application of a bluff edge setback is not appropriate for this project.

#### c. <u>Cumulative Impacts</u>

The proposed project is located along a coastal bluff immediately inland of Corona Del Mar State Beach, a public beach. The site is highly visible from the sandy beach. Although several lots have stairways traversing the bluff face and some have unpermitted development at the toe of the bluff (either the subject of a cease and desist order issued by the Commission or currently under investigation by the Commission's Enforcement staff), the overall appearance of the bluff in this area is natural and undeveloped. Approval of the proposed project, as conditioned, would be consistent with the pattern of development in this area and would preserve scenic resources.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The Commission finds that the proposed project, as currently proposed, is sited and designed to protect scenic and visual qualities of coastal areas. Approval of the proposed project, as conditioned, would preserve existing scenic resources and would be consistent with preserving the existing community character where structures are sited at the upper bluff face, while the lower bluff face remains largely undisturbed and vegetated. The alteration of the already developed upper bluff face would not result in a significant adverse visual effect when viewed from public vantage points such as the beach and would be visually compatible with the character of the surrounding area. Therefore, as conditioned, the Commission finds that the proposed project is consistent with Section 30251 of the Coastal Act and with the City's LUP policy regarding coastal bluff sites.

# C. WATER QUALITY

Section 30230 of the Coastal Act states, in pertinent part:

Marine resources shall be maintained, enhanced, and where feasible, restored.

Section 30231 of the Coastal Act states:

The biological productivity and the quality of coastal waters, streams, wetlands, estuaries, and lakes appropriate to maintain optimum populations of marine organisms and for the protection of human health shall be maintained and, where feasible, restored through, among other means, minimizing adverse effects of waste water discharges and entrainment, controlling runoff, preventing depletion of ground water supplies and substantial interference with surface water flow, encouraging waste water reclamation, maintaining natural vegetation buffer areas that protect riparian habitats, and minimizing alteration of natural streams.

The proposed project takes place on a coastal bluff. Any development on a bluff involves some risk to development. In addition, the geologic instability of bluffs have been increased through the addition of large volumes of irrigation water required to maintain lawns and non-native, non-drought tolerant vegetation in the yards of homes on slopes. Typically, adverse water quality impacts to coastal waters can be avoided or minimized by directing storm water discharges from impervious surfaces to landscaped areas where pollutants may settle out of the storm water. In addition, reducing the quantity of impervious surfaces and increasing pervious water infiltration areas can improve water quality. These methods would allow the pollutants found in storm water discharge to settle out of the storm water before heading into coastal waters. Water pollution decreases the biological productivity of coastal waters. However, these common techniques of addressing water quality problems, by design, result in increased infiltration of water into the ground. As previously noted in the Hazard section of this staff report, the infiltration of water into the slope would result in adverse impacts to the site. Therefore, directing run-off to pervious areas and encouraging water infiltration for water quality purposes could have adverse impacts upon slope stability.

There are other measures, however, that would contribute to increases to water quality that could feasibly be applied even to slope lots, such as the project site, without decreasing stability. One of these measures relates to irrigation. These can be eliminated or significantly reduced even on bluff top lots. For example, permanent, in-ground irrigation tends to result in over-watering, causing drainage to run off site. Irrigation runoff carries with it particulates such as soil, debris, and fertilizers. Limiting irrigation to that necessary to establish and maintain plantings, reduces the chance of excess runoff due to over-irrigation. Permanent, in-ground irrigation, in general, is set by timer and not by soil moisture condition. Thus, the site is irrigated on a regular basis regardless of the need, resulting in over-saturation and run off. The run off, carrying soil, fertilizer, etc, is then directed either to the storm drain system (which then enters the ocean) or directly over the bluff to beach and ocean below. This can be avoided by limiting irrigation on the bluff. Another measure is the use of native drought tolerant plantings. Low water use, drought tolerant, native plants require less water than other types of vegetation, thereby minimizing the amount of water introduced into the bluff top. As these plantings use less water than ornamental plants, incidents of over-watering, causing saturation and excess run-off, is substantially reduced. As previously

stated, reducing site run-off reduces the extent of pollutants carried into the storm drain system and into the ocean.

The applicants previously submitted an irrigation plan, drainage and run-off control plan and landscape plan for the originally proposed project. However, no new updated plans have been submitted in relation to the revised project. The previously submitted drainage and run-off control plan inadequately provided any measures to deal with water quality and erosion issues. The previously submitted landscape plan was reviewed and determined to be acceptable since it consisted of native drought tolerant and non-invasive plants.

Therefore, in order to protect water quality, the Commission imposes **Two (2) Special Conditions**. **Special Condition No. 7**, requires that the applicants shall prepare prior to issuance of this permit a revised drainage and run-off control plan. **Special Condition No. 8**, requires that the applicants shall prepare prior to issuance of this permit a revised landscape plan, which shall be submitted for the review and approval of the Executive Director. To minimize the potential for the introduction of non-native invasive species and to minimize the potential for future bluff failure, a final landscaping plan shall be prepared by a licensed landscape architect and shall incorporate the following criteria: 1) to minimize the introduction of water into the ground, no permanent in-ground irrigation shall be permitted, temporary above ground irrigation to establish the plantings is permitted; and 2) landscaping shall consist of native drought tolerant plants which are non-invasive. Invasive, non-indigenous plant species, which tend to supplant native species shall not be used. Only as conditioned does the Commission find the proposed development to be consistent with Sections 30230 and 30231 of the Coastal Act.

# D. PUBLIC ACCESS AND RECREATION

Section 30212 of the Coastal Act states, in relevant part states:

- (a) Public access from the nearest public roadway to the shoreline and along the coast shall be provided in new development projects except where:
  - (2) adequate access exists nearby.

Section 30252 of the Coastal Act states, in relevant part states:

The location and amount of new development should maintain and enhance public access to the coast by...

(4) providing adequate parking facilities or providing substitute means of serving the development with public transportation...

The subject site is located between the nearest public roadway and the shoreline. Adequate access and public recreation opportunities exist adjacent to the site at Corona Del Mar State Beach. The site is currently developed with a single-family residence. Upon completion of the project, the development will remain as a single-family residence. The proposed development would provide adequate parking based on the Commission's regularly used parking standard of two (2) parking spaces per individual dwelling unit. Therefore, the Commission finds that the proposed development would be consistent with Section 30212 and 30252 of the Coastal Act regarding public access.

# E. VIOLATIONS

Development has occurred on the subject site including construction of two 2<sup>nd</sup> floor decks on the seaward side of an existing single-family residence without the required coastal development permit. The applicants are proposing to retain the two 2<sup>nd</sup> floor decks.

To ensure that the unpermitted development component of this application is resolved in a timely manner, **Special Condition No. 10** requires that the applicants satisfy all conditions of this permit, which are prerequisite to the issuance of this permit within 90 days of Commission action. Although construction has taken place prior to submission of this permit application, consideration of the application by the Commission has been based solely upon the Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act. Approval of this permit does not constitute a waiver of any legal action with regard to any alleged violations nor does it constitute an admission as to the legality of any development undertaken on the subject site without a coastal permit.

## F. LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM

Section 30604(a) of the Coastal Act provides that the Commission shall issue a Coastal Development 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 the Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act.

The Newport Beach Land Use Plan was effectively certified on May 19, 1982. The certified LUP was updated on January 9, 1990. The City currently has no certified implementation plan. Therefore, the Commission issues CDP's within the City based on the development's conformance with the Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act. The LUP policies may be used for guidance in evaluating a development's consistency with Chapter 3. As per the LUP requirements, an assumption of risk special condition is being required and a comprehensive geological investigation was supplied with the application.

The City of Newport Beach certified Land Use Plan includes policies regarding the development on coastal bluffs. Pages 25-27 of the LUP contain policies regarding definition of a bluff, grading, provision of geologic investigations, setbacks and building in hazardous areas.

The policy on grading requires that the alteration of natural coastal landforms be minimized and that waivers of liability are required in areas of geologic hazard. Another LUP requirement is the submittal of a site-specific geologic investigations to assess areas of potential geologic instability.

The certified LUP includes a discussion of hazardous areas, which it defines as areas where natural processes can pose a threat to the public health, safety, and welfare. It further defines specific geologic hazards as earthquake faults, existing or potential landslides, areas with expansive or collapsible soil, excessive settlement and subsidence, flood hazard areas, and areas subject to potential erosion and siltation. Coastal bluffs qualify as areas of geologic hazard and areas subject to erosion.

The certified LUP also contains a discussion of bluff top setbacks. However, the setback policies pertain only to all new tracts and subdivisions, residential developments greater than four residences, and commercial development. This policy states: "As a general guideline, the property

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line setback from the edge of a bluff should be no closer to the edge of the bluff than the point at which the top of the bluff is intersected by a line drawn from the solid toe of the bluff at an angle of 26.6 degrees to the horizontal."

The intent of this policy section, as stated in the certified LUP, is to require setbacks in new subdivision development for public access purposes. Because the proposed development is a single-family residence it is exempt from this policy. Therefore, there are no specific LUP policies, which would provide guidance as to bluff setbacks in this instance.

Minimal grading is proposed in conjunction with the project and therefore no extensive landform alteration will take place. As per the LUP requirements, an assumption of risk special condition is being required and a comprehensive geological investigation was supplied with the application. Therefore, the proposed development is consistent with the guidance as provided by certified LUP policies.

The proposed development, as conditioned, is consistent with Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act and with the certified Land Use Plan for the area. Approval of the project, as conditioned, 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.

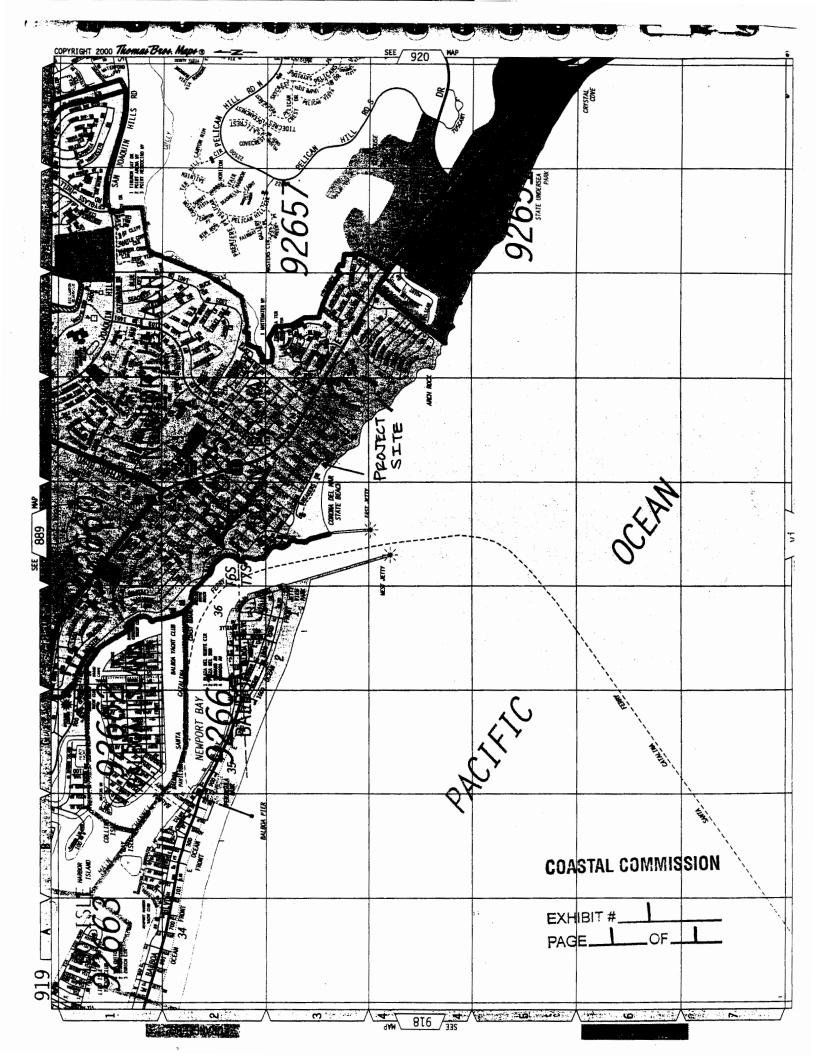
# G. CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)

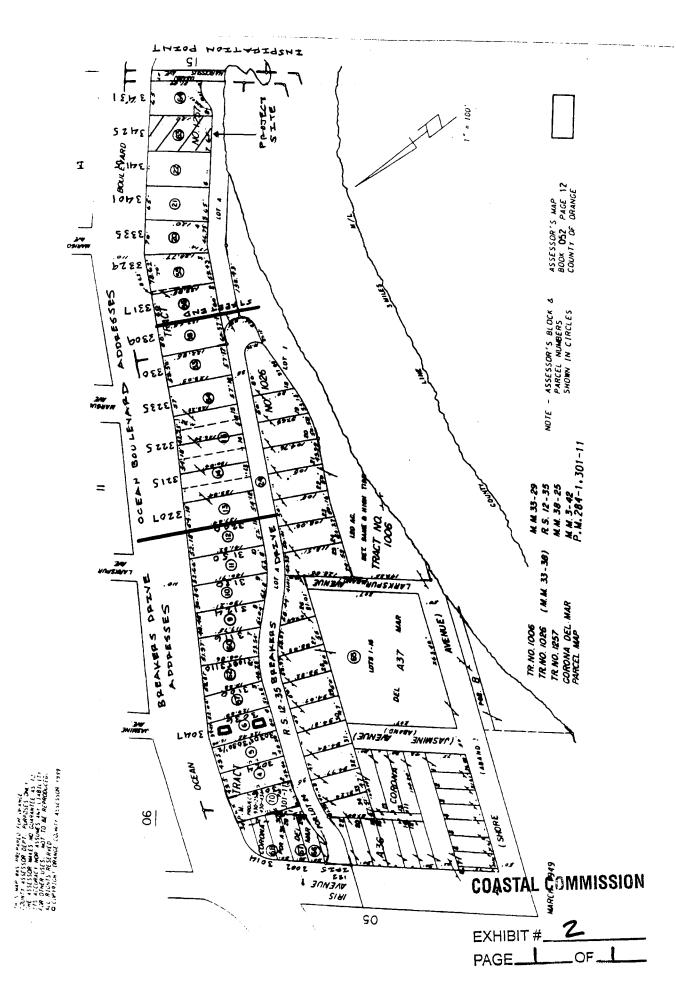
Section 13096(a) of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations requires Commission approval of Coastal Development Permit applications to be supported by a finding showing the application, as conditioned by any conditions of approval, to be consistent with any applicable requirements of the California 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 further feasible mitigation measures available which would substantially lessen any significant adverse effect which the activity may have on the environment.

The proposed project is located in an urban area. All infrastructure necessary to serve the site exists in the area. As conditioned, the proposed project has been found consistent with the hazard, visual resource, water quality, and public access policies of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act. Mitigation measures include special conditions requiring conformance with geotechnical recommendations and setback requirements, submittal of a drainage and run-off control plan and submittal of a revised landscaping plan.

As conditioned, there are no feasible alternatives or additional 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.

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