3/3/05

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

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

Filed:	
49th Day:	
Staff:	
Staff Report:	
Hearing Date:	

Waived AJP-LB 9/20/05 10/12-14/05

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STAFF REPORT: APPEAL SUBSTANTIAL ISSUE for A-5-SNP-05-081

LOCAL GOVERNMENT:	City of Los Angeles
LOCAL DECISION:	Approval with Conditions
APPEAL NUMBER:	A-5-SNP-05-081
APPLICANT:	John Mavar
PROJECT LOCATION:	2045 Paseo Del Mar, San Pedro
PROJECT DESCRIPTION:	Lot line adjustment and construction of a 11 foot high (above finished grade), 2,340 square foot single-family residence with a detached two-car garage.
APPELLANTS:	Executive Director, California Coastal Commission

SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The staff recommends that the Commission, after public hearing, determine that <u>a</u> <u>substantial issue exists</u> as to conformity with Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act. The lot line adjustment allows the applicant to create a developable lot along the end of the most eastern and undeveloped portion of a row of existing single-family residences, and allows the construction of a single-family residence that would extend development further to the east (downcoast). The creation of a new lot and development of a residential structure on this undeveloped area will have an adverse impact on public coastal views and will be inconsistent with Section 30251 and 30240 (b) of the Coastal Act.

SUBSTANTIVE FILE DOCUMENTS:

1. Coastal Development Permit: 5-99-281(Mavar)

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I. STAFF RECOMMENDATION ON SUBSTANTIAL ISSUE

The staff recommends that the Commission determine that <u>a substantial issue exists</u> with respect to the conformity of the City's approval of the project with the provisions of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act (commencing with Section 30200), pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 30625(b)(1).

MOTION: Staff recommends a No vote on the following motion and adopt the following resolution:

I move that the Commission determine that Appeal No. A-5-SNP-05-081raises **NO** substantial issue as to conformity with Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act.

An affirmative vote by a majority of the Commissioners present is required to pass the motion.

RESOLUTION:

The California Coastal Commission hereby finds that Appeal number A-5-SNP-05-081 presents a Substantial Issue with respect to the grounds on which the appeal has been filed under Section 30602 of the Coastal Act regarding consistency of the approved development with Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act.

II. DUAL PERMIT JURISDICTION

Section 30601 of the Coastal Act states:

Prior to certification of the Local Coastal Program and, where applicable, in addition to a permit from local government pursuant to subdivision (b) or (d) of Section 30600, a coastal development permit shall be obtained from the Commission for any of the following:

- (1) Developments between the sea and the first public road paralleling the sea or within 300 feet of the inland extent of any beach or of the mean high tide line of the sea where there is no beach, whichever is the greater distance.
- (2) Development not included within paragraph (1) located on tidelands, submerged lands, public trust lands, within 100 feet of any wetland, estuary, stream or within 300 feet of the top of the seaward face of any coastal bluff.
- (3) Any development which constitutes a major public works project or a major energy facility.

Within the areas specified in Section 30601, which is known in the City of Los Angeles permit program as the *Dual Permit Jurisdiction* area, the Coastal Act requires that any development that receives a local coastal development permit also obtain a "dual" coastal development permit from the Coastal Commission. For projects located inland of the areas

identified in Section 30601 (*Single Permit Jurisdiction*), the City of Los Angeles' local coastal development permit is the only coastal development permit required.

The proposed development is located seaward of Paseo del Mar (the first public road inland of the beach). This area is located within the coastal zone area of the City of Los Angeles that has been designated in the City's permit program as the "*Dual Permit Jurisdiction*" area pursuant to Coastal Act Section 30601 and Section 13307 of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations. Accordingly, the applicant has submitted a separate "dual permit" application directly to the Commission, review and action independent of this appeal. This staff report only addresses the question of whether the appeal raises a substantial issue. If the Commission finds that the appeal raises a substantial issue, it may act on the dual permit in conjunction with its <u>de novo</u> review of this appeal.

The Commission's standard of review for the proposed development in the *Dual Permit Jurisdiction* area of Los Angeles is the Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act. The City of Los Angeles does not have a certified Local Coastal Plan for the San Pedo area.

III. APPEAL PROCEDURES

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Prior to certification of a local coastal program Section 30602 of the Coastal Act allows any action by local government on a Coastal Development Permit application pursuant to Section 30600(b) to be appealed to the Commission. Sections 13301-13325 of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations provide procedures for issuance and appeals of locally issued Coastal Development Permits prior to certification of a LCP.

After a final local action on a Coastal Development Permit issued pursuant to section 30600(b) of the Coastal Act prior to certification of the LCP, the Coastal Commission must be noticed within five days of the decision. After receipt of a notice, which contains all the required information, a twenty working day appeal period begins. During the appeal period, any person, including the applicant, the Executive Director, or any two members of the Commission, may appeal the local decision to the Coastal Commission (Section 30602). Section 30621 of the Coastal Act states that a hearing on the appeal must be scheduled for hearing within 49 days of the receipt of a valid appeal, unless a waiver of the 49 days is received from the applicant or representative.

In this case, on March 3, 2005, the Executive Director of the California Coastal Commission filed an appeal of the Local Coastal Development Permit during the 20 working day appeal period, which ended on March 3, 2005. On March 3, 2005, Commission staff requested the City to forward all relevant documents and materials regarding the subject permit to the Commission's South Coast District office in Long Beach. Subsequently, prior to receiving the City's record, the applicant submitted a 49-day waiver on March 18, 2005. On April 21, 2005, the City submitted their record of documents and materials to the South Coast District office.

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The appeal and local action are analyzed to determine if a substantial issue exists as to the conformity of the project to Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act (Section 30625(b)(1)). If the Commission finds that a substantial issue exists, the Commission holds a new public hearing to act on the Coastal Development Permit as a <u>de novo</u> matter.

The Commission may also decide that the appellants' contentions raise no substantial issue as to conformity with the Coastal Act, in which case the action of the local government stands. Alternatively, if the Commission finds that the proposed project, as approved by the City, may be inconsistent with the Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act of 1976, and that the questions of consistency raised by the appeal are significant, it will find that a substantial issue exists with the action of the local government. If the Commission finds substantial issue, then the hearing will be continued open and scheduled to be heard as a <u>de novo</u> permit request at the same or subsequent hearing. Section 13321 of the Commission's regulations (in Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations) specifies that <u>de novo</u> actions will be heard according to the procedures outlined in Section 13114.

If the Commission finds that no substantial issue exists in regards to the City's approval of the local coastal development permit, then the local coastal development permit approved by the City will be final, and the Commission will act on the required "dual" Coastal Commission coastal development permit application as a separate agenda item (Coastal Development Permit Application 5-05-211). In this case, as staff is recommending that the Commission find the appeal to raise a substantial issue, the <u>de novo</u> hearing and hearing on the Commission's Coastal Development Permit have been combined as one item and is scheduled for this hearing.

IV. APPELLANTS' CONTENTIONS

The City approval of the proposed development was appealed on March 3, 2005, by the Executive Director of the California Coastal Commission. The appellant contends that the proposed development is not consistent with the resource protection policies of the Coastal Act, for the following reasons:

 The proposed project is located on Paseo del Mar, just west of Western Avenue, in the San Pedro area of the City of Los Angeles. The proposed lot line adjustment allows the applicant to merge two lots, Lots 190 and Lot 191, and create a new buildable lot by dividing Lot 190 into two separate lots (Parcel A and B). The new lot will be located in the undeveloped eastern portion of Lot 190, along Paseo del Mar.

Paseo del Mar offers turn-outs and view site areas between Point Fermin Park and Western Avenue. Western Avenue, which runs perpendicular to Paseo del Mar, and the ocean, also offers public coastal views for pedestrians and motorist. These areas offer panoramic views of the ocean, Catalina Island, and the San Pedro bluffs. Furthermore, the certified Land Use Plan designates the City owned vacant parcel adjacent to and east (down coast) of the proposed site as a scenic view site. From this view site, the ocean, Catalina Island and the bluffs to the west and east are visible.

The City's staff report indicates that views of the ocean will still be afforded to the public from the public street but does not analyze the impact the development will have on existing views within the project's location and how the single-family residence will be sited and designed to protect coastal views. The construction of the proposed residence in this undeveloped area will obstruct public coastal views from Paseo del Mar, Western Avenue, and the adjoining City owned parcel to the east.

2. The Coastal Development Permit approved by the City is for a single-family residence located on a 9,706 square foot lot on Paseo del Mar, just west of Western Avenue, in the San Pedro area of the City of Los Angeles. The City has indicated that its CDP also provides after-the-fact authorization for a lot line adjustment that was approved earlier through the following, separate permitting process. In 1996, the City of Los Angeles approved a Lot Line Adjustment (Parcel Map Exemption No. 96-059) for two adjoining lots (Lots 190 and 191) creating the subject 9,706 square foot property as a separate single lot. However, the Lot Line Adjustment was not issued a Coastal Development Permit. Therefore, without a Coastal Development Permit for the Lot Line Adjustment, the proposed single-family residence would be proposed on a lot that was not legally created through the Coastal Development Permit process.

Since the existing underlying lot is improved with a single-family residence and is zoned only for a single-family residence, and a Coastal Development Permit for the Lot Line Adjustment has not been approved by the City nor the Commission, the City's approval of ZA 2004-3078 is inconsistent with the City's zoning and the permit is improperly before the Commission.

V. FINDINGS AND DECLARATIONS

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The Commission hereby finds and declares:

A. Project Description and Area History

The proposed project includes a Lot Line Adjustment and construction of a 2,340 square foot single-family dwelling with two-car detached garage on a 9,766 square foot parcel of land located within the dual permit area of the California Coastal Zone.

The project site involves two lots: Lot 190, consisting of approximately 42,055 square feet, and Lot 191, consisting of approximately 5,060 square feet (see Exhibit No. 3 & 4). The majority of the two existing lots will become one parcel (with the new name of "Parcel A") and a second, 9,706 square foot parcel (Parcel B) will be created in the eastern portion

of what is now Lot 190 (just east of the new Parcel A). There will be no net change in the number of lots. In addition to the lot line adjustment, a new 2,340 square foot single-family residence is being proposed on the newly created 9,706 square foot parcel (Parcel B).

The site is located off of Paseo del Mar, just southwest of the intersection of Western Avenue and Paseo del Mar in the San Pedro area of the City of Los Angeles (see Exhibit No. 1, 2 & 3). Paseo del Mar is a two and four lane road paralleling the bluff for a distance of approximately 1 3/4 miles between Western Avenue and Gaffey Street, which are two major thoroughfares that bring visitors to the area. Paseo del Mar is the major access road for vehicles along this area of the coast. The road provides access to Royal Palms beach Park, bluff top parks, bluff top and beach trails, turn-outs for scenic coastal viewing, and the drive along the road offers coastal views. From the scenic viewing areas and from the road panoramic views of the ocean, Catalina Island, and the San Pedro bluffs are available.

The two existing lots are bluff top lots with frontage along Paseo del Mar. Lot 190, has approximately 250 feet of frontage along Paseo del Mar and extends partly down the bluff face. Lot 191 consists of approximately 5,060 square feet, measuring approximately 78 feet wide along Paseo del Mar, and 60-67 feet deep, all on the bluff top. Lot 191 is surrounded by residential development on the east, south and west sides, and is separated from the bluff face by an existing single-family residence.

The subject property is located adjacent to a developed residential neighborhood. The subject site is the eastern most privately owned bluff top parcel within this residential neighborhood. Surrounding land uses include multi-family residential structures directly north of the project site across Paseo del Mar, a vacant City of Los Angeles owned property immediately to the east, Royal Palm Beach County Park and parking lot located south at the foot of the bluff, and single family residences to the west (see Exhibit 5).

B. DESCRIPTION OF LOCAL APPROVAL

On January 12, 2005, the City's Zoning Administrator approved coastal development permit ZA 2004-3078(CDP), with conditions. The project is described in the report as:

A coastal development permit for the construction, use and maintenance of a 2,340 square-foot single-family dwelling with two-car detached garage on an exiting 9,766 square foot parcel of land located within the dual permit area of the California Coastal Zone.

In conjunction with the City's Coastal Development Permit, according to the Zoning Administration Office of the City of Los Angeles, the Deputy Advisory Agency approved a Lot Line Adjustment on December 30, 1997 (Parcel Map Exemption No. 96-059). According to

the City, as part of the City's action on the CDP (ZA 2004-3078), the Lot Line Adjustment previously granted by the Advisory Agency was given CDF approval as well and was a necessary and integral component of the approved City's CDP for the single-family residence Therefore, the City revised the CDP project description as follows:

A coastal development permit for the construction, use and maintenance of a 2,340 square-foot single-family dwelling with two-car detached garage on an exiting 9,766 square foot parcel of land <u>that is a separate legal lot created through a Lot Line</u> <u>Adjustment, for which a coastal development permit is also granted herein, and</u> located within the dual permit area of the California Coastal Zone.

The City's Coastal Development Permit provides an analysis of the construction of the new single-family dwelling on the lot created by the Lot Line Adjustment and the development's consistency with applicable Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act, with regards to public coastal views and community character. Based on this analysis, the Zoning Administrator found, as part of their CEQA findings, that the project is consistent with development policies of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act. However, as stated below, the proposed project raises substantial issues with respect to the Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act.

C. SUBSTANTIAL ISSUE ANALYSIS

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Section 30602 of the Coastal Act states:

Prior to certification of its local coastal program, any action taken by a local government on a coastal development permit application may be appealed by the executive director of the commission, any person, including the applicant, or any two members of the commission to the commission.

Coastal Act Section 30625(b)(1) states that the Commission shall hear an appeal filed pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 30602 (the pre-certification permit option) unless it determines:

(1) ... that no substantial issue exists as to conformity with Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 30200).

The term "substantial issue" is not defined in the Coastal Act or its implementing regulations. The Commission's regulations indicate simply that the Commission will hear an appeal of a locally issued coastal development permit unless it "finds that the appeal raises no substantial issue in accordance with the requirements of Public Resources Code Section 30625(b), and Section 13115(a) and (c) of these regulations" (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, section 13321.) In previous decisions on appeals, the Commission has been guided, in assessing whether a potential conflict is substantial, by the following factors:

1. The degree of factual and legal support for the local government's decision that the development is consistent or inconsistent with the Coastal Act;

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- 2. The extent and scope of the development as approved or denied by the local government;
- 3. The significance of the coastal resources affected by the decision;
- 4. The precedential value of the local government's decision for future interpretations of its LCP; and
- 5. Whether the appeal raises only local issues, or those of regional or statewide significance.

Even when the Commission chooses not to hear an appeal, appellants nevertheless may obtain judicial review of the local government's coastal permit decision by filing petition for a writ of mandate pursuant to the Code of Civil Procedure, section 1094.5.

In this case, for the reasons discussed further below, the Commission exercises its discretion and determines that the development approved by the City raises a substantial issue with regard to the appellants' contentions regarding coastal resources.

1. Appellants' Contentions

The contentions raised in the appeal present valid grounds for appeal in that they allege the project's inconsistency with the resource policies of the Coastal Act and the Commission finds that a substantial issue is raised.

Listed below are the appellant's contentions that address resource policies of the Coastal Act:

a. Visual Resources

The Executive Director, as appellant, contends that the project violates Section 30251 by failing to prohibit disruption of views along scenic coastal areas.

Section 30251 of the Coastal Act states:

The scenic and visual qualities of coastal areas shall be considered and protected as a resource of public importance. Permitted development shall be sited and designed to protect views to and along the ocean and scenic coastal areas, to minimize the alteration of natural land forms, to be visually compatible with the character of surrounding areas, and, where feasible, to restore and enhance visual quality in visually degraded areas. New development in highly scenic areas such as those designated in the California Coastline Preservation and Recreation Plan prepared by the Department of Parks and Recreation and by local government shall be subordinate to the character of its setting.

and Section 30240 (b), in part states:

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

The proposed lot line adjustment allows the applicant to effectively shift the location of the buildable lot from the northwest side of the current Lot 190 to the eastern edge of what is now Lot 190. Lot 191 is vacant and measures approximately 5,060 square feet and abuts Lot 190 along the northwest side. Lot 190, is developed with a single-family residence, and measures 42,055 square feet in area. Both existing lots are zoned for single-family development (R1-1XL). The new buildable lot (Parcel B) will measure 9,706 square feet in area and will be located along the eastern portion of what is now Lot 190, and will be zoned for single-family development.

There will be no increase in the existing number of legal lots (2); however, the lot line adjustment relocates a buildable lot from the western side of a developed lot (Lot 190), within a developed neighborhood, to the eastern portion of Lot 190. Lot 191 is surrounded by residential development along the property's eastern, southern and western sides. Because of existing surrounding residential development Lot 191 does not have bluff top access.

The proposed lot line adjustment allows the applicant to create a developable lot (Parcel B) along the end of the most eastern and undeveloped portion of a row of existing single-family residences and allows the construction of a single-family residence that would extend development further to the east (downcoast) of existing residential development. The creation of a new lot and development of a residential structure on this undeveloped area will have an adverse impact on public coastal views.

According to the plans that have been submitted as part of the City record, the residence will have an average height of 10'-11" from the frontage road height (158 .25 feet) with a maximum height of 12 feet from finished grade. Natural grade along the frontage road will be lowered approximately one to three feet to finished grade (155.00 feet).

The proposed project is located south of Paseo del Mar and west of Western Avenue in the San Pedro area of the City of Los Angeles. Paseo del Mar offers turn-out and view site areas between Point Fermin Park and Western Avenue. These areas offer panoramic views of the ocean, Catalina Island, and the San Pedro bluffs. Furthermore, along this 1 3/4 mile stretch the certified Land Use Plan designates three areas as *Scenic View Sites*. The certified LUP states that:

Turn-out and view site areas from Paseo del Mar, as shown on the Special Features Map (Appendix C), shall provide unobstructed views of the ocean.

One of the *Scenic View Sites* is located on the City owned parcel adjacent to and east (down coast) of the proposed site. The site has recently been improved with a pathway, landscaping and seating area, as part of the City's Harbor Walkway project (CDP No. 5-00-393). From this view site, the ocean, Catalina Island and the bluffs to the west and east are visible.

Although coastal views from the adjoining City improved walkway and view site will not be impacted due to existing development to the west of the project site that obstruct upcoast views, the creation of a buildable lot and construction of the proposed residence with approximately 80 feet of building frontage along Paseo Del Mar will have an adverse impact on coastal views to the south and southeast from Western Avenue and Paseo del Mar. Furthermore, a new bluff top residential development in the eastern portion of this residential neighborhood will be visible from the public beach (Royal Palms) located below the project site at the base of the bluffs and would have an adverse visual impact from the park.

The City's staff report indicates that views of the ocean will still be afforded to the public from the public street but does not analyze the impact the development will have on existing views within the project's location and how the single-family residence will be sited and designed to protect coastal views. Furthermore, the City's report does not analyze or compare the alternative of not permitting the lot line adjustment and allowing the construction of a single-family residence on the west side of the existing lot (Lot 191).

The lot line adjustment allows the applicant to create a buildable lot along the end of the most eastern and undeveloped portion of a row of existing single-family residences and allows the construction of a single-family residence that would extend development further to the east (downcoast) in an area that is currently developed and provides unobstructed views of the ocean. The creation of a new lot and development of a residential structure on this undeveloped area will block public coastal views across this portion of property from the adjacent public areas, adversely impacting public coastal views, and will be inconsistent with Section 30251 and 30240 (b) of the Coastal Act.

b. Lot Line Adjustment

In 1996, the City of Los Angeles approved a Lot Line Adjustment purporting to create the subject 9,706 square foot property as a separate single lot through a Parcel Map Exemption (No. 96-059). However, the City did not grant Coastal Act authorization for the lot line adjustment (i.e., did not approve a CDP for it), and there was no indication in the CDP approved this year for the single-family residence that the CDP included the Lot Line Adjustment, which requires a CDP. Therefore, without a Coastal Development Permit for the Lot Line Adjustment, the proposed single-family residence was being proposed on a lot that was not legally created through the Coastal Development Permit process, and without recognition of the lot line adjustment, the proposed single-family

residence was being sited on a single-family zoned lot already developed with a single-family residence. However, after the Commission received the City record, the City's Associate Zoning Administrator, who reviewed and approved the CDP for the proposed single-family residence, subsequently submitted a letter, dated March 29, 2005, stating that:

the intent of the Zoning Administrator was to approve the project, as submitted, with all associated characteristics of the project, including the lot Line Adjustment previously granted by the Advisory Agency. The prior action by the Advisory Agency for a Lot Line Adjustment ... was presumed a necessary and integral component of the approved Coastal Development Permit granted by the Zoning Administrator.

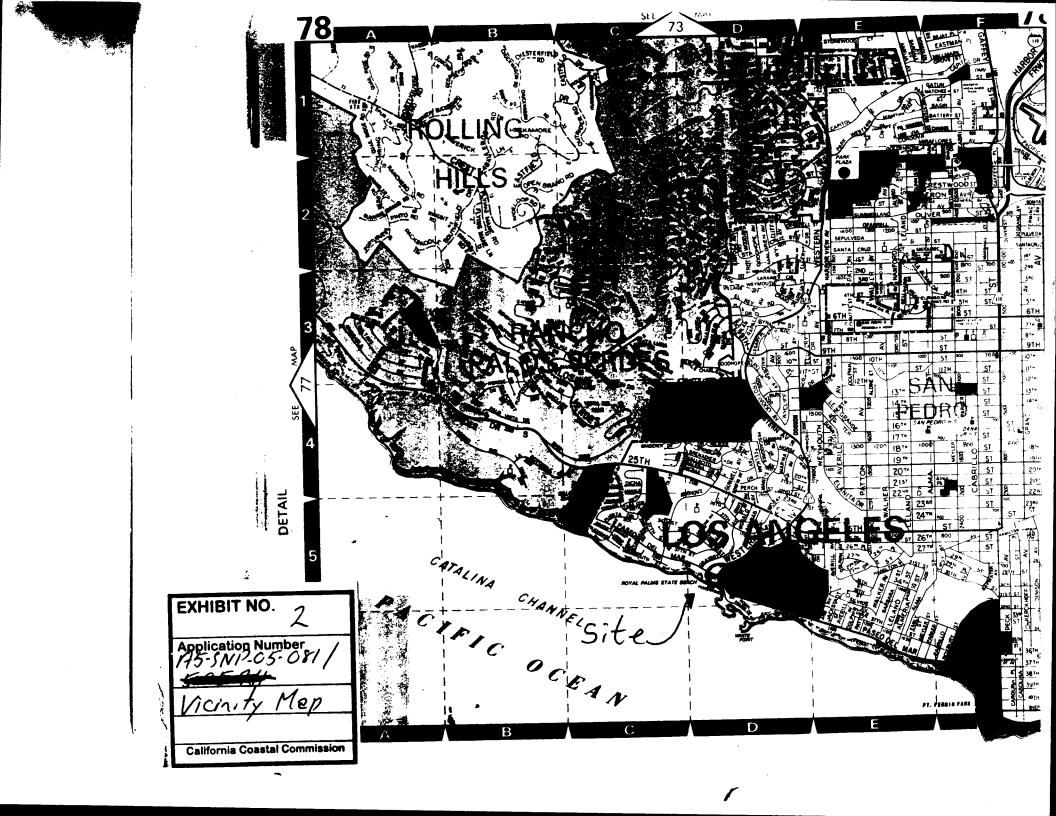
After reviewing the documents submitted by the City, Commission staff concurs with the Associate Zoning Administrator's decision that the approved Lot Line Adjustment should be considered part of the issued CDP. Therefore the Coastal Development Permit approved by the City, which is the subject of this appeal, should be considered to include approval for the construction of a single-family residence and the Lot Line Adjustment. With the acceptance of the City's letter and modification to the project description to include the Lot Line Adjustment, the City's CDP is for the construction of a single-family residence and Lot Line Adjustment, as modified by the City.

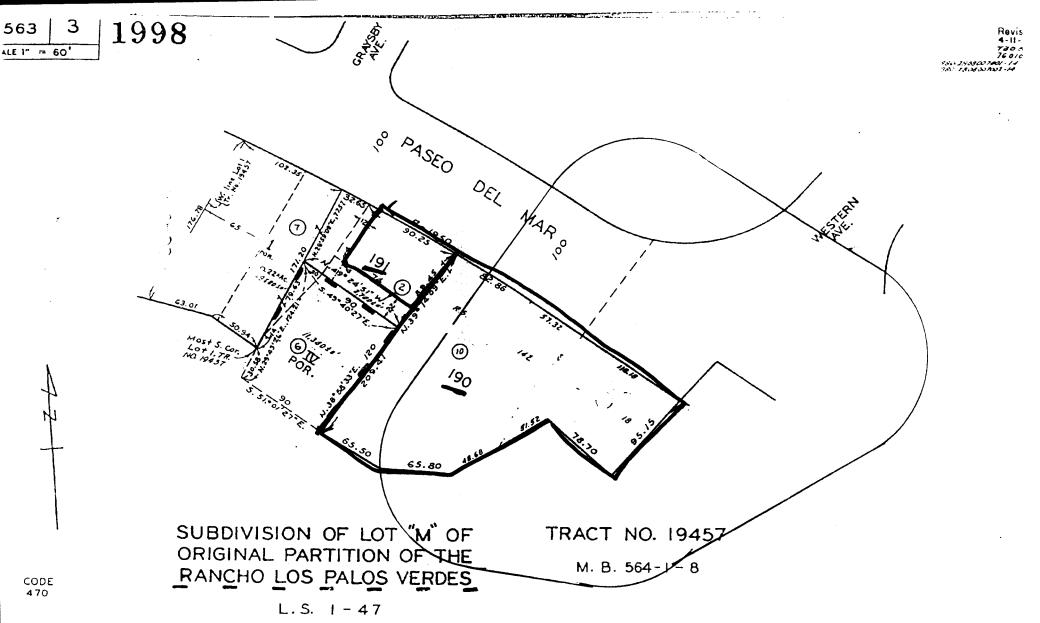
However, the City, in approving the Lot Line Adjustment, did not include any Coastal Act findings addressing the potential impact that a Lot Line Adjustment would have on coastal views and the Lot Line Adjustment's consistency with the Coastal Act. Furthermore, the City did not include any findings addressing alternative siting locations and alternatives to the Lot Line Adjustment that may have minimized the visual impacts of the project. Therefore, the City's action on the Lot Line Adjustment did not recognize or avoid some of the impacts that change could have on coastal resources, and the approval raises a substantial issue with the Coastal Act.

Conclusion

The proposed Lot Line Adjustment and construction of a single-family residence will have an adverse impact to coastal visual resources and raises a substantial issue regarding the project's conformity with the policies in Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act. The Commission finds that a Substantial Issues exists with respect to the approved project's conformance with the resource protection provisions of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act. Therefore, appeal No. A-5-SNP-05-081 raises Substantial Issue with respect to the above stated grounds on which the appeal has been filed.







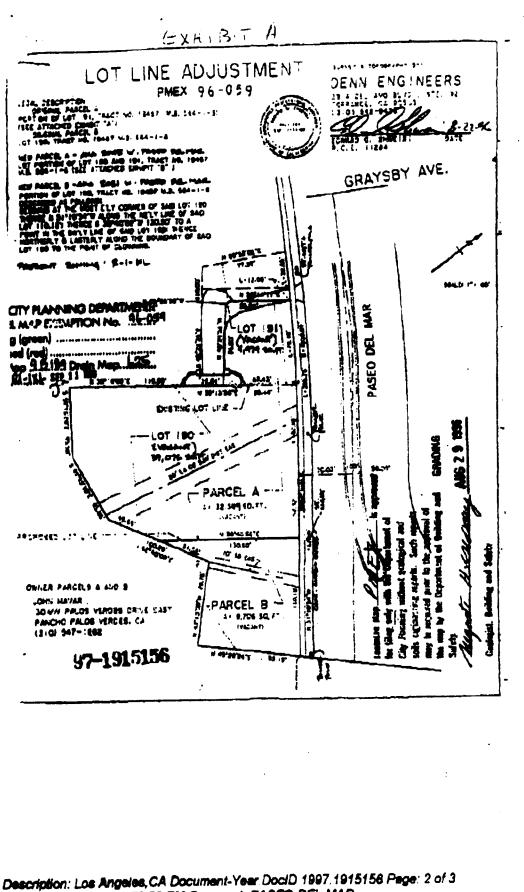
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EXHIBIT NO. 3 Application Number 17-5-SU/2-C5-C81 Sr(2

California Coastal Commission



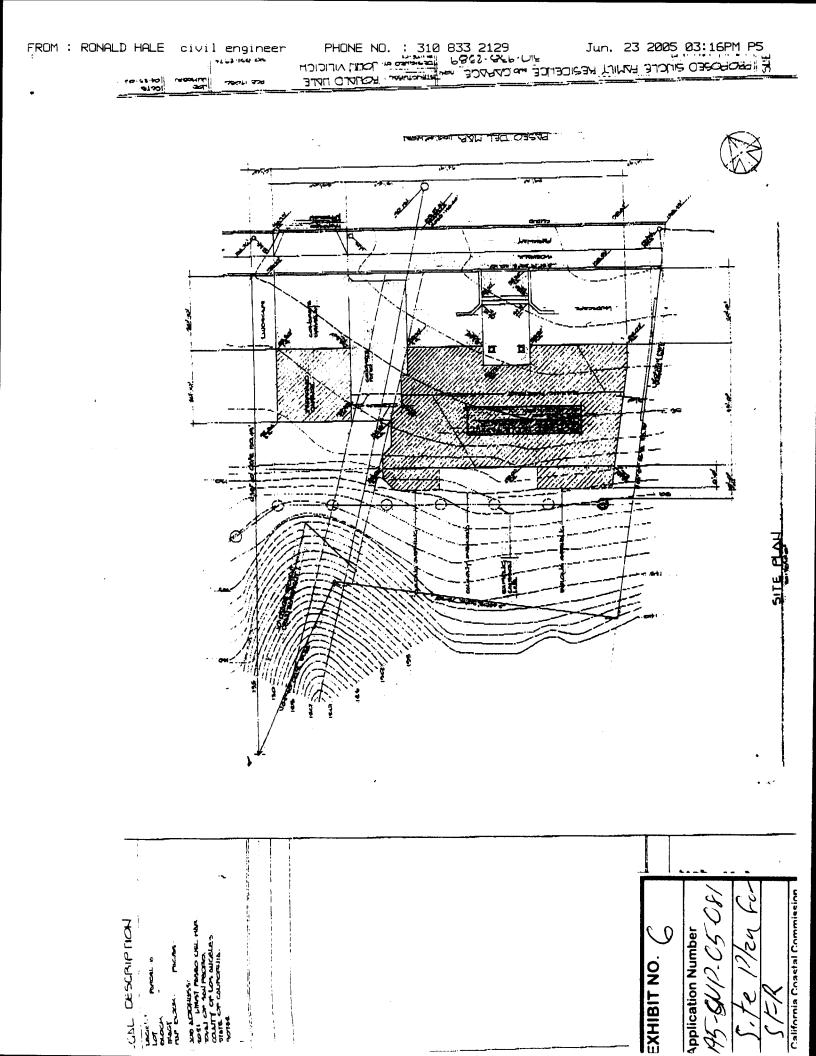


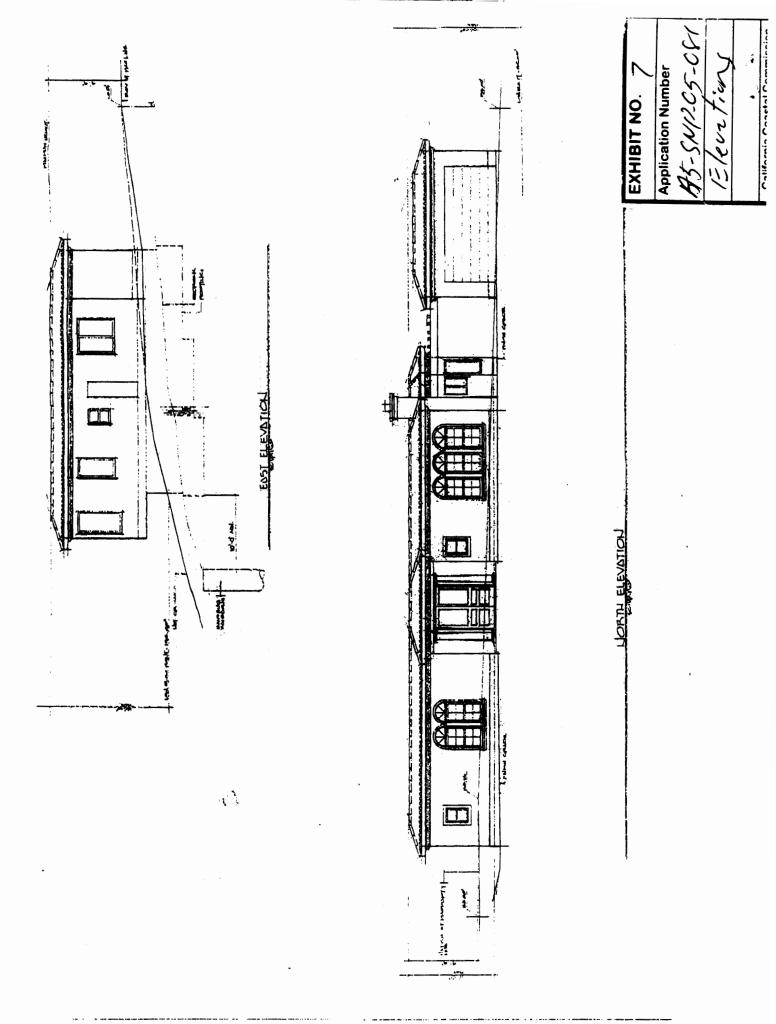
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EXHIBIT NO.4 APPLICATION NO. 175-SMP.C5-C81 Lot Line Adjustin

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