

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

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STAFF REPORT: CONSENT CALENDAR

Application No.: 5-19-1196

Applicant: Jay Ramras

Agent: Henry Ramirez

Location: 21 E. Voyage Street, Venice, Los Angeles, Los Angeles County (APN: 4294007004)

Project Description: After-the-fact approval of the conversion of storage and recreation rooms into a 764 sq. ft. accessory dwelling unit within an existing 2,034 sq. ft., 35-ft. tall duplex with six onsite parking spaces.

Staff Recommendation: Approval with conditions.

SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The proposed project requests after-the-fact approval for the conversion of an existing storage room and recreation room into a single 746 sq. ft. accessory dwelling unit (ADU) within an existing 2,034 sq. ft., 35-ft. tall duplex with six onsite parking spaces. The project site is located at 21 E. Voyage St., Venice, City of Los Angeles, in Los Angeles County. The Commission's standard of review for the proposed development is the Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act. The City's certified Land Use Plan (LUP) for Venice provides guidance for projects throughout the coastal zone in Venice.

The proposed project will not adversely impact the availability of on-street public parking or coastal access. The project provides six onsite parking spaces for two dwelling units

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and one ADU, which is consistent with the Venice LUP and prior Commission action. Because the converted unit is an ADU, which under the State ADU law, does not count towards a site's density limit, the proposed project is consistent with the Venice LUP's maximum density for this site of two dwelling units. Furthermore, no adverse impacts to coastal resources are expected due to the small size of the unit.

Therefore, **Special Condition 1** requires the applicant to maintain the new unit as an accessory dwelling unit. **Special Conditions 2 and 3** require the applicant to obtain any necessary local government approvals and adhere to the conditions of such approvals. Finally, **Special Condition 4** requires the landowner to record a generic deed restriction recording that the terms of this permit run with the land.

Commission staff recommends that the Commission **APPROVE** coastal development permit (CDP) application 5-19-1196, as conditioned. The motion to carry out the staff recommendation is on **page 4** of this report.

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I. MOTION AND RESOLUTION

Motion:

I move that the Commission approve the coastal development permit applications included on the consent calendar in accordance with the staff recommendations.

Staff recommends a **YES** vote. Passage of this motion will result in approval of all the permits included on the consent calendar. The motion passes only by affirmative vote of a majority of the Commissioners present.

Resolution:

The Commission hereby approves the Coastal Development Permit for the proposed project 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.

II. STANDARD CONDITIONS

- 1. Notice of Receipt and Acknowledgment.** The permit is not valid and development shall not commence until a copy of the permit, signed by the applicant or authorized agent, acknowledging receipt of the permit and acceptance of the terms and conditions, is returned to the Commission office.
- 2. Expiration.** If development has not commenced, the permit will expire two years from the date on which the Commission voted on the application. Development shall be pursued in a diligent manner and completed in a reasonable period of time. Application for extension of the permit must be made prior to the expiration date.
- 3. Interpretation.** Any questions of intent or interpretation of any condition will be resolved by the Executive Director or the Commission.
- 4. Assignment.** The permit may be assigned to any qualified person, provided assignee files with the Commission an affidavit accepting all terms and conditions of the permit.

5. **Terms and Conditions Run with the Land.** These terms and conditions shall be perpetual, and it is the intention of the Commission and the applicant to bind all future owners and possessors of the subject property to the terms and conditions.

III. SPECIAL CONDITIONS

1. **Retention of Two Onsite Units and an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU).** The development approved by Coastal Development Permit No. 5-19-1196 is for conversion of a storage room and recreation room into one accessory dwelling unit (ADU). The applicant and all assigns/successors shall maintain the unit as an ADU. At no point may the ADU be converted into a full unit or to a non-residential use without a Commission-approved permit amendment.
2. **Local Government Approval.** The proposed development is subject to the review and approval of the local government (City of Los Angeles). This action has no effect on conditions imposed by a local government pursuant to an authority other than the Coastal Act. In the event of conflict between the terms and conditions imposed by the local government and those of this coastal development permit, the terms and conditions of Coastal Development Permit 5-19-1196 shall prevail.
3. **City of Los Angeles, Department of Building and Safety Approval.** PRIOR TO ISSUANCE OF COASTAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT, the applicant shall provide to the Executive Director evidence, acceptable to the Executive Director, of preliminary approval by the City of Los Angeles, Department of Building and Safety (LADBS). The applicant shall inform the Executive Director of any changes to the project required by LADBS. Such changes shall not be incorporated into the project until the applicant obtains an amendment to this coastal development permit, unless the Executive Director determines that no amendment is legally required.
4. **Deed Restriction.** PRIOR TO ISSUANCE OF THE COASTAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT, the applicant shall submit to the Executive Director for review and approval documentation demonstrating that the applicant, Jay Ramras, has 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 shall also indicate that, in the event of an extinguishment or termination of 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.

IV. FINDINGS AND DECLARATIONS

A. Project Description and Background

The project site is in a residential neighborhood in the Marina Peninsula sub-area of Venice in the City of Los Angeles. The property fronts E. Voyage Street and vehicular access to onsite parking is provided by the unnamed alley at the rear of the property. The subject site is currently developed with a 2,034 sq. ft., 35-ft. tall duplex with six onsite parking spaces. The subject lot is a residential lot approximately 35-ft. wide by 90-ft. deep (approximately 3,149 sq. ft. in area), designated R3-1, Multiple Dwelling by the City's uncertified Zoning Code and Low Medium Residential II by the certified Venice LUP. This location is within 300 ft. of Venice Beach and within 250 ft. of Ballona Lagoon ([Exhibit 1](#)) and is designated a Beach Impact Zone (BIZ). The Venice community – including the residential neighborhoods, beach, boardwalk, canals, and eclectic architectural styles of the neighborhoods – is one of the most popular visitor destinations in California.

The existing structure was originally constructed in 1987 as a 35-ft. tall, three-story duplex with a detached four-car garage¹. On January 11, 2013, the Commission issued an exemption for conversion of the 490 sq. ft. first floor storage room of into a recreation room². The exemption indicates six total parking spaces existing onsite, suggesting the addition of a two-car garage prior to 2013.

Subsequent to receiving a Commission-issued exemption, the applicant applied for a local CDP with the City of Los Angeles to convert the existing recreation room into a new, third dwelling unit. On December 3, 2014, the City denied the applicant's application³ on the basis of R-3 zoning, which limits the subject site to no more than two dwelling units per lot. The City additionally determined that the six onsite parking spaces did not comply with relevant LUP parking policies, which would require seven total parking spaces for three dwelling units (two spaces per unit, plus an additional guest parking space). On October 12, 2015, the applicant (Jay Ramras) appealed the City's determination to the Coastal Commission⁴. The applicant waived the 49th Day hearing requirement on October 19, 2015 and requested that the appeal remain open.

On May 24, 2017, the applicant submitted a request to the City seeking approval of the unpermitted conversion of a recreation room and storage room into a single dwelling unit under the City's Unpermitted Dwelling Unit (UDU) ordinance. The City's UDU ordinance allows the legalization of existing unpermitted dwelling units provided that they are in conformance with the State Density Bonus provisions of California Government Code Section 65915, including the provision of the dwelling unit as a moderate income-restricted affordable unit for a minimum of 55 years. On July 23,

¹ Ref. CDP No. 5-86-569.

² Ref. Exemption No. 5-13-005-X

³ Ref. Action No. APCW-2014-364-SPE-SPP-CDP.

⁴ Ref. Appeal No. A-5-VEN-15-0062.

2019, the City of Los Angeles Director of City Planning approved the application, pursuant to local CDP No. DIR-2018-404-CDP-SPP-MEL, which became effective on September 13, 2019.

The applicant has now changed the project description and is proposing an ADU, rather than an affordable, covenant-restricted UDU. In contrast to UDUs, the City does not subject ADUs to affordability requirements. The City has an existing process to dissolve covenant agreements that are not ultimately finalized as a permit requirement. The applicant has already worked with the City through this process to dissolve the previously proposed covenant agreement because it is no longer required. However, the City will still require that the new unit be rented for a minimum of 30 days (i.e. not a short-term rental) and due to its small size, the unit will likely be more affordable relative the other much larger residential units in the Venice.

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 which receives a local CDP also obtain a second (or “dual”) coastal development permit from the Coastal Commission. The Commission's standard of review for the subject development in the Dual Permit Jurisdiction area is the Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act.

The proposed conversion of the storage space within an existing duplex to an ADU does not raise issues with the Venice LUP's maximum density for this site of two dwelling units, because under the State ADU law, ADUs do not count towards a site's density limit. The State ADU law is not part of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act, and therefore it is not the standard of review. The law explicitly states that it does not supersede or lessen the application of the Coastal Act. Section 30604 of the Coastal Act encourages the protection of affordable housing opportunities in the coastal zone for persons of low and moderate income. The considerations set forth in 30604 inform the Commission's review of the potential public access impacts of the proposed development. Given the Commission's responsibility to encourage affordable housing under Section 30604 of the Coastal Act, the Commission may consider the ADU law in its determinations of projects' consistency with Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act, and whether the addition of an ADU raises potential for adverse impacts to coastal resources. No adverse impacts to coastal resources are expected due to the accessory nature of the unit and the sufficient provision of onsite parking.

B. Public Access & Recreation

Many of the older developments near the subject site do not have adequate onsite parking. In this case, the subject duplex was originally permitted in 1987 with two dwelling units and a four-car garage but has increased parking to six total spaces (three covered tandem spaces) onsite. Vehicular access to the site is taken from the unnamed alley at the rear of the property ([Exhibit 2](#)). The amount of on-street parking in the area surrounding the subject site is limited because most of the residential streets on the Marina Peninsula are walk streets that provide no space for vehicle storage. Competition for the limited amount of on-street parking is intense, especially on busy

summer weekends. Hence, the project is within the BIZ identified in the certified Venice LUP, which typically requires additional parking spaces (above and beyond what is normally required by the LUP) to be provided onsite when new development is proposed. The closest public parking areas are the public beach parking lot (a block from the subject site), metered street parking along Washington Boulevard, and street parking along Voyage Street and Pacific Avenue. The project site is located near transit options: approximately 530 ft. from the nearest bus stop at Pacific Avenue and Yawl Street, approximately 0.6 miles from major bus lines on Via Marina, and one mile from major bus lines on Washington Boulevard.

The certified Venice LUP, which provides guidance from which the Commission can evaluate a project's consistency with Chapter 3, contains the following policies related to parking standards:

Policy II.A.3 (Parking Requirements) of the Venice LUP states, in part:

The parking requirements outlined in the following table shall apply to all new development, any addition and/or change in use...The public beach parking lots...shall not be used to satisfy the parking requirements of this policy. Extensive remodeling of an existing use or change of use which does not conform to the parking requirements of the table shall be required to provide missing numbers of parking spaces or provide an in-lieu fee payment into the Venice Coastal Parking Impact Trust Fund for the existing deficiency...

The Parking Requirement Table referenced in Policy II.A.3 states, in part:

Residential Uses	Off-Street Parking Required
Multiple dwelling and duplex on lots 40 ft. or more in width, or 35 ft. or more in width if adjacent to an alley	2 spaces for each dwelling unit; plus a minimum of 1 (one) guest parking space for each 4 (four) or fewer units (i.e. 2.25 spaces per unit; always round-up to highest whole number of spaces)...

Policy II.A.4 (Parking Requirements in the BIZ) of the Venice LUP states, in part:

Any new and/or any addition to commercial, industrial, and multiple-family residential development projects within the Beach Impact Zone shall provide additional (in addition to parking required by Policy II.A.3) parking spaces for public use or pay in-lieu fees into the Venice Coastal Parking Impact Trust Fund. Beach Impact Zone (BIZ) Parking Impact Trust Fund criteria:

...Multiple family residential projects in the BIZ shall provide an additional parking space for each 1,000 sq. ft. of floor area on the ground floor for multiple dwelling projects of three units or more...In no event shall the

number of BIZ parking spaces (over and above those spaces required by the parking requirements set forth in Policy II.A.3) required for projects of three or more dwelling units, or commercial or industrial projects, be less than one (1) parking space for residential projects...

Per the standards of the Venice LUP, five parking spaces would be required for the existing permitted two-unit apartment building at this location (two spaces per unit; plus a minimum of one guest space). Policy II.A.4 of the LUP does not apply to this project, because it only applies to multiple dwelling projects of three units or more, and the proposed ADU does not count toward the density onsite. However, in order to ensure that coastal access is not adversely impacted by the ADU, the Commission sometimes has required new ADUs to provide one onsite parking space. Thus, the resulting two-unit residential structure with an ADU would require six off-street parking spaces (two spaces per unit, one guest space, and one space for the ADU). The project maintains six onsite parking spaces, and thus the conversion of the storage room into an ADU is not anticipated to increase the demand for on-street parking at this location or to adversely impact public access.

However, if the ADU were converted to another use or into a full unit in the future, it could become a third unit, which would require two parking spaces of its own (LUP Policy II.A.3), and trigger the need for an additional BIZ parking space (LUP Policy II.A.4). Therefore, **Special Condition 1** requires all development be carried out in accordance with the approved plans and seek a permit amendment for any proposed changes for the use of the ADU. In order to ensure that any future owners or interests in the property are aware of these conditions, **Special Condition 4** requires the landowner to record a generic deed restriction recording that the terms of this permit run with the land.

As conditioned, the proposed development will not affect the public's ability to gain access to, and/or to make use of, the coast and nearby recreational facilities. Therefore, as proposed the development conforms to Sections 30210 through 30214, Sections 30220 through 30224, and 30252 of the Coastal Act and to the public access policies of the Venice LUP.

C. Coastal Act Violations

Violations of the Coastal Act have occurred at the site including, but not limited to, the unpermitted addition of a kitchen in the ground floor recreation room. It is unclear when the kitchen was added to the recreation room; however, any non-exempt development activity conducted in the Coastal Zone without a valid CDP, or which does not substantially conform to a previously issued permit, constitutes a violation of the Coastal Act. In this case, the City found that legalization of the conversion of the storage to a dwelling unit requires a local CDP.

The City of Los Angeles granted the applicant a local CDP on July 23, 2019 for approval of after-the-fact conversion of storage and recreation rooms in a two-unit apartment building into an additional dwelling unit, designated affordable, resulting in a three-unit

apartment building with six onsite parking spaces. The applicant also submitted a dual CDP application on October 18, 2019 to the South Coast District Office. The applicant has modified their project description to be an ADU, which will not be restricted as an affordable unit. Commission review and action on the dual CDP will resolve the violation identified in this section.

Commission review and action on this permit does not constitute a waiver of any legal action with regard to the alleged violations (or any other violations), nor does it constitute an implied statement of the Commission's position regarding the legality of the development undertaken on the subject site without a coastal permit, or of any other development, other than the development approved herein, undertaken on the subject site without a coastal permit. In fact, approval of this permit is possible only because of the conditions included herein, and the applicant's presumed subsequent compliance with said conditions, and failure to comply with these conditions in conjunction with the exercise of this permit would also constitute a violation of this permit and of the Coastal Act. Accordingly, the applicant remains subject to enforcement action just as it was prior to this permit approval for engaging in unpermitted development, unless and until the conditions of approval included in this permit are satisfied.

D. Local Coastal Program

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

E. California Environmental Quality Act

Section 13096 of the Commission's administrative regulations requires Commission approval of coastal development permit applications to be supported by a finding showing the application, as modified 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 approval of a proposed development if there are feasible alternatives or feasible mitigation measures available that would substantially lessen any significant impacts that the activity may have on the environment. The project as conditioned herein incorporates measures necessary to avoid any significant environmental effects under the Coastal Act, and there are no less environmentally damaging feasible alternatives or mitigation measures. Therefore, the proposed project is consistent with CEQA.

APPENDIX A – SUBSTANTIVE FILE DOCUMENTS

1. Certified Venice Land Use Plan.
2. Coastal Development Permit No. 5-86-569 and associated files.
3. Coastal Exemption No. 5-13-005-X and associated files.
4. Local Coastal Development Permit No. DIR-2018-404-CDP-SPP-MEL and associated files.