

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

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W17c

6-21-0758 (POLLOCK)

November 16, 2022

CORRESPONDENCE



November 10, 2022

Delivered via email

To: Karl Schwing
District Director, San Diego Coast
California Coastal Commission

Re: W 17c - Application No 6-21-0758, Kate and AJ Pollock, 529 Pacific Avenue, Solana Beach

Honorable Commissioners,

The Surfrider Foundation is a nonprofit grassroots organization dedicated to the protection and enjoyment of our world's ocean, waves, and beaches through a powerful network. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this project. We opposed this project in front of Solana Beach City Council in October 2021. The city's current trajectory of perpetuating blufftop development and rewarding reckless redevelopment by permitting seawalls has set us up for the inevitable loss of the public's beaches. This proposed project exemplifies these concerns. We gratefully support Coastal Commission staff's recommendation to deny this project now.

Staff summarizes why the proposed development presents unacceptable risks to our coastline and beaches :

"The home was constructed 71 years ago and is therefore reaching the end of the typical economic lifespan anticipated for residential structures, which is 75 years. The extensive remodeling proposed is expected to extend the life of the structure significantly. Since the proposed addition and all of the changes being made to the structure are seaward of the Geologic Setback Line (GSL), the project substantially increases the potential that the structure will require shoreline protection." (page 2)

"As the coastline of Solana Beach continues to become more fortified and sea levels continue to rise, it will be even more likely that the public beach fronting the bluffs will become inaccessible at all but the lowest tides." (page 4)

We agree with staff's recommendation to deny the proposed development on the

following grounds:

- The development will not conform with the policies of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act.
- Approval of this development will prejudice the ability of the city of Solana Beach to prepare a Local Coastal Program (LCP) conforming to the provisions of Chapter 3. Despite the city's Land Use Plan (LUP) being certified by the Commission almost a decade ago, the city has yet to start work on the Implementation Plan to complete the LCP.
- Approval of the permit would not comply with the California Environmental Quality Act because there are feasible mitigation measures or alternatives that would substantially lessen the significant adverse impacts of the development on the environment.
- The proposed development would all be located seaward of the Geologic Setback Line (GSL) which is not allowed per LUP Policies 4.17 and 4.25.
- The proposed development does not comply with Section 30253 of the Coastal Act and Policy 4.17 of the LUP, which both preclude new development from ever requiring shoreline protective devices.

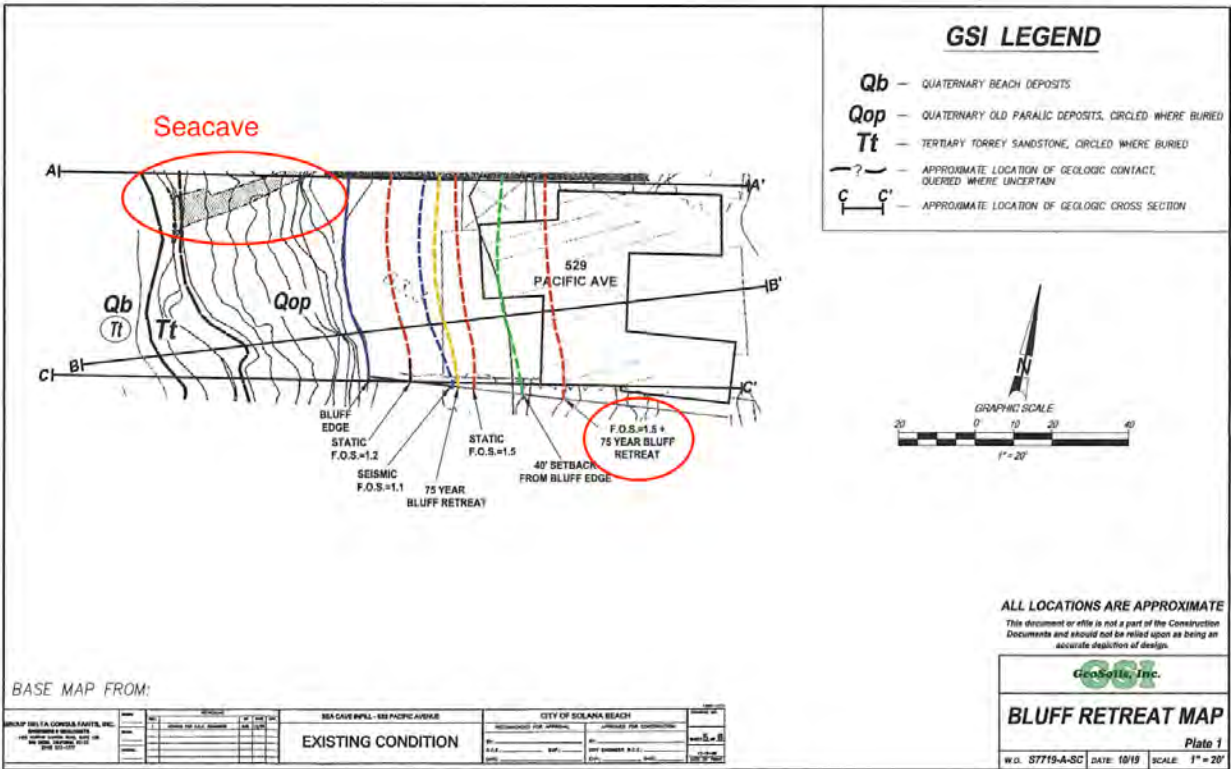
In addition to our support of Staff's recommendation of denial, we also believe that due to errors and omissions in the applicant's Geological Report, the GSL is in actuality further landward than calculated. The recommendation to deny still stands, but there is even more substantial evidence that it should be denied as the GSL should be even further landward.

The City of Solana Beach's engineer stated, in his April 11, 2021 letter, that the stability analysis included material filled in the cave. He continued to state that the concrete in the cave behaved the same as natural bluff material. This analysis is inaccurate, as a filled cave is clearly more stable than an unfilled cave and is not the natural condition of the bluff. Additionally, stability analysis and therefore calculation of the GSL cannot take into account shoreline armoring per Solana Beach LUP:

Policy 4.18: A legally permitted bluff retention device shall not be factored into setback calculations...

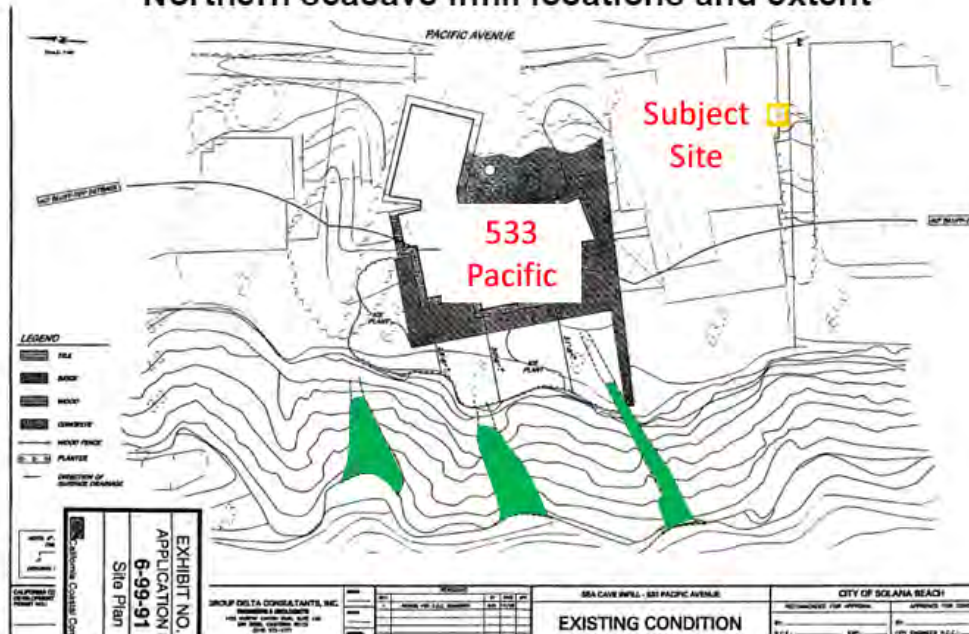
Including cave fill for the determination of the GSL was therefore incorrect. We do not believe the Commission Geologist's Report removed the additional stability provided by the seacave fill when determining stability and GLS setback. While the recommendation to deny remains unchanged as either way the proposed development is seaward of the GLS, the situation is even worse than presented by the current geotechnical reports.

The plate below from GeoSoils report indicates the criticality of proper determination of the GSL. (Plate 1, page 74 of City's 2021 staff report). The GSL indicating a Factor of Safety of 1.5 and 75 years of erosion is represented by the red dotted line on the right, landward of the 40 feet setback. Also visible in the plate is a filled seacave which is a shoreline protective device. This is shown by the gray shaded area (circled by us in red) that intersects the cross section A-A'.

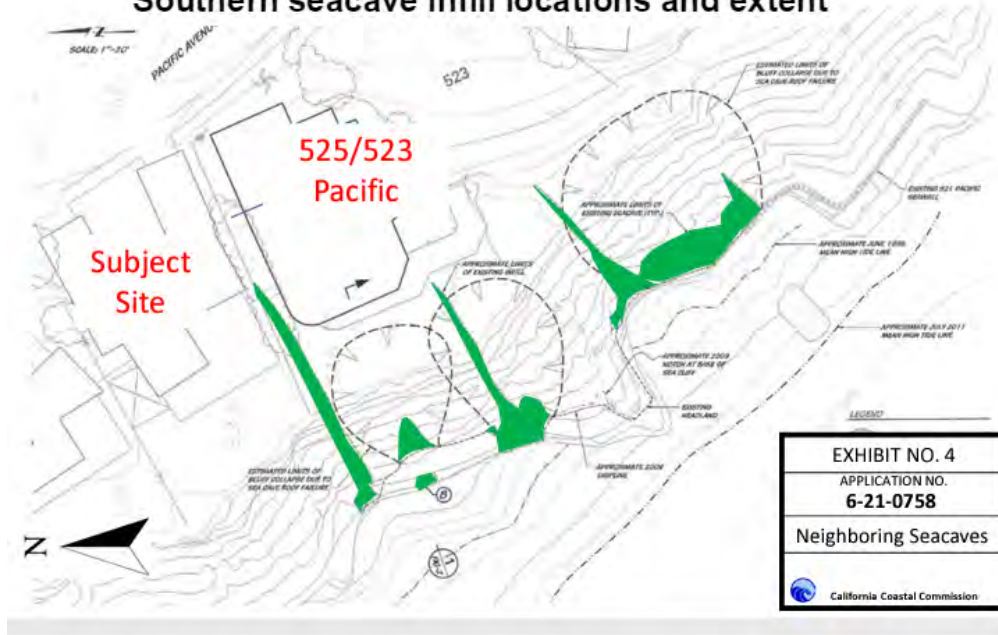


The Coastal Commission exhibits demonstrate even more clearly the location of the existing seacave fills and the proximity to cross sections A-A' and C-C' relied on for stability analysis.

Northern seacave infill locations and extent



Southern seacave infill locations and extent



From the above exhibits illustrating the northern and southern seacaves that bracket the subject site at 529 Pacific Ave, it is evident that the cross sections A-A' and C-C' traverse filled seacaves. Therefore, the stability analysis relies on shoreline protection of filled seacaves in the calculation of stability factors. This analysis is in contrast with the requirement that stability analysis not rely on existing shoreline protection. Therefore

we respectfully request that the stability analysis be supplemented with stability factors calculated assuming the seacaves are unfilled. In that way the Commission can rely on proper substantial evidence in making its findings to deny this permit.

To summarize: both the Coastal Act and the city's LUP support denial of this proposed development. Additionally, the geotechnical analysis and GSL should be updated to correct for the fact that the stability analysis incorrectly relied upon filled seacaves. An analysis should be done to calculate stability absent any fill of existing seacaves on both the north and south sides of 529 Pacific Ave.

Sincerely,

Kristin Brinner & Jim Jaffee
Residents of Solana Beach
Co-Leads of the Beach Preservation Committee
San Diego County Chapter, Surfrider Foundation

Mitch Silverstein
Policy Coordinator
San Diego County Chapter, Surfrider Foundation