

414 Carroll Canal

From: **Israel, Brian D.** | Brian.Israel@arnoldporter.com

Wednesday, Aug 9 at 6:57 PM

To: **board@venicenc.org** | board@venicenc.org

Dear Board –

I am an environmental attorney, but I am writing this in my personal capacity as a neighbor and property owner in the Venice Canals.

In sum, with animus toward nobody, I believe that the VNC Board should approve development proposals (including modest exceptions where needed) where such proposals are consistent with applicable regulations and land use codes. This practice promotes certainty for home-owners and prospective home-owners, ensures protection of property values and property rights, and secures the character and charm of the Venice Canals. To put a fine point on it: if property owners are unable to invest in their properties (in a manner consistent with the applicable land use restrictions), then investment in the Canals generally will suffer and, ultimately, the neighborhood we all cherish will be diminished, perhaps profoundly so.

Of course, as neighbors we also have a responsibility to work cooperatively with each other to accommodate each other's needs where possible, even beyond the strict application of the land use requirements. This requirement includes common sense values such as transparency, pragmatism, and compromise. At the end of the day, our "neighborhood" is not just water and houses, but a community. As a community we must always look for ways to help each other, and treat each other with respect and dignity.

With this backdrop, I fully support the exception requested by the property owner at 414 Carroll Canal. I have reviewed the proposed plan, and I am aware of the unanimous recommendation of the LUPC committee in support of the exception. I note, in particular, the following:

- Overall, in the scheme of possible new construction, this is an extraordinarily modest project. The homeowner has elected to construct a two story home, when nearly every other new project in the canals is three stories, and the homeowner could have done so here.
- As a result, the proposed home is well within the permissible building envelope. There will be unbuilt volume at the roof, front and back of the permissible envelope
- While I personally disagree (if it were my property), the homeowner has elected to have no stairway pop up over the roofline to access the roof deck
- The second floor unit frontage is at 16.5' setback from front property line, which is 1.5' in from the required setback of 15'
- The existing structure is located a mere 4' from the front property line. If the homeowner's proposal is accepted, the project **opens up** tremendous space in the front yard (opening to 15' & 16.5' at the respective floors), thereby providing open space on the canal side for the public to enjoy
- Removing the existing structure also removes visual obstruction from neighbors' diagonal views of the canal.

- With regard to the LUPC-approved exception, the requested exception will have no adverse impact on neighbors or others in the community. The exception request is simply to add 3 stairs and a landing (18" off the ground) to enable entering and existing the front of the house, as enjoyed by most every house in the canals. The stairs and landing are low and are placed at the far end of the front yard; as such, the proposal will not obstruct any views and will be barely noticeable from the canal.

In closing, I support the request for an exception at 414 Carroll Canal. I know the property owner to be a person of the highest integrity, decency and warmth. He is collaborative and kind, and he treats everyone (friend, neighbor and stranger) with utmost dignity and respect. We are very fortunate that he is a member of our community and any one of us would be privileged to call him a neighbor. He is also a person who greatly respects this process and I know that he holds no bitterness towards others even if they have a different opinion from his own. Having studied his plans for his dream home, I am struck that the modesty of the proposal—and the respectful way in which it was developed—very much mirrors the man himself.

Please feel free to reach out should you have any questions or require follow-up.

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