

1222 Abbot Kinney Boulevard - Zoning Administrator Adjustment Findings

1. Describe what site characteristics or existing improvements make strict adherence to the zoning regulations impractical or infeasible; and explain why the project nonetheless conforms with the intent of those regulations

The project proposes the conversion of an existing single family dwelling and ground floor retail to retail-only, a 144 square-foot addition of commercial floor area to the existing/proposed retail space, and the relocation of the existing dwelling to a new 366 square-foot live/work dwelling unit on the rear of the property. Zoning regulations require a passageway from the street to the entrance of a dwelling unit of not less than ten feet in width. The existing dwelling unit uses the entrance of the retail space—which fronts Abbot Kinney Boulevard—as its entrance, and therefore no passageway to the street is required. However, with the relocation of the dwelling unit to the space currently occupied by the garage, although the live/work space observes all required setbacks, the ten-foot passageway to its entrance is not possible without demolishing a significant portion of the existing structure. This existing structure is a bungalow built in 1921. While the building itself is not considered historic, the site sits next to a lot identified by SurveyLA as a historic resource. The retention of the architectural features of the existing bungalow preserves the historic character of Abbot Kinney Boulevard.

A similar adjustment, along with side yard reductions, was approved in June of 2020 in conjunction with case number DIR-2019-4064-CDP-MEL-SPP and the property at 1107 Abbot Kinney Boulevard, located approximately 600 feet from the subject property.

The regulation requiring a ten-foot passageway from the street to the entrance of a dwelling unit was written on a Citywide basis and does not take into account the unique characteristics of an individual property or neighborhood. The requested passageway reduction is consistent with the development pattern of the existing developments along Abbot Kinney Boulevard, and the precedent of 1107 Abbot Kinney Boulevard. The reduced passageway will not alter the residential character of the existing land use on the subject property or that of the immediate surroundings. Adequate open space is maintained to permit emergency access, light, and air to the property and the adjacent lots. Thus, the granting of relief from passageway requirements is consistent with the existing nearby structures and the project is in conformance with the intent of the zoning regulations.

2. Describe how (in light of the project as a whole, including any mitigation measures imposed) the project's location, size, height, operations and other significant features will be compatible with and will not adversely affect or further degrade adjacent properties, the surrounding neighborhood, or the public health, welfare, and safety.

The project involves the conversion of a retail space and dwelling unit to retail only with an addition of 144 square feet. The additional square footage will not dramatically alter or intensify the retail use, and the height of the structure will be unchanged. The area occupied by the existing garage will continue to be occupied by a one-story structure, and that new structure will have a smaller footprint than the existing structure, and will have a maximum height of 17'-8", as measured from the centerline of Abbot Kinney Blvd. The adjacent structures on Abbot Kinney

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Boulevard are one-story commercial and residential buildings and the structures across the alley are two- and three-story residential buildings. Therefore, the proposed project will not adversely affect or degrade adjacent properties, the surrounding neighborhood, public health, welfare, or safety.

3. Explain why the project is in substantial conformance with the purpose, intent and provisions of the General Plan, the applicable community plan and any applicable specific plan.

Abbot Kinney Boulevard is a vibrant community- and tourist-facing mixed-use district, known for its boutique shops and cafes. Policy I.B.3 of the certified Venice Land Use Plan (LUP) designates the street as Commercial Artcraft, which is designed to “create enclaves in which the artisan segments of the population may live, create, and market their work, to maintain the variety and distinctiveness of Venice's lifestyles.” Specifically in regards to Abbot Kinney Boulevard, the LUP describes appropriate uses as “Artcraft activities including mixed-use, combining residential and commercial uses which emphasize artist-in-residence uses, small businesses...”

Therefore, the preservation of both a retail space and a live/work dwelling unit is in line with the goals of the Venice LUP and the intentions for the North Venice subarea of the Venice Coastal Zone Specific Plan.

Additionally, the Venice LUP Policy I.F.2 states “Wherever possible, the adaptive reuse and renovation of existing historic structures shall be encouraged so as to preserve the harmony and integrity of historic buildings identified in this LUP,” and “Protecting rather than demolishing historic or culturally significant properties by finding compatible uses which may be housed in them that require a minimum alteration to the historic character of the structure and its environment.”

The subject building is an original 1921 bungalow. The building is an asset to Abbot Kinney Blvd because it retains most of its original architectural character and because its presence as an original bungalow helps to maintain the historical pattern and scale of buildings along Abbot Kinney Blvd. Abbot Kinney Blvd is a cultural asset to Venice, in part, because so many of the original buildings remain, and because these buildings were able to be adaptively re-used or converted to a commercial use as the street has transitioned from its original residential character to a commercial thoroughfare, characterized by retail, office, and restaurant uses.

The intent of the Specific Plan and the LUP was clearly to allow a means by which older, more culturally-significant buildings could be retained and those buildings could continue to contribute to the overall character of the Venice Community. Therefore, allowing the project to proceed as designed, with a three-foot passageway from the street to the residential unit in lieu of a ten-foot passageway, and keeping the original structure mostly intact, is consistent with the intentions of the Venice LUP and the Venice Coastal Zone Specific Plan.