



Venice Neighborhood Council

P. O. Box 550, Venice, CA 90294

www.VeniceNC.org



LUPC STAFF REPORT

June 4, 2025

Case No: CPC-2024-5346-DB-CU3-CDP-SPPC-MEL-PHP-HCA

CEQA Case No: ENV-2024-5347-EAF

Address of Project: 657-659 Sunset Avenue

Property Owner: Keith Abouaf

Owner's Representative: Kevin Scott, Brian Silveira & Associates

Standard of Review: Coastal Act, with certified Land Use Plan (LUP) as guidance, State laws: AB 2097 and Density Bonus law

Coastal Zone: Single Permit Jurisdiction

City Hearing: Not yet scheduled

LUPC Staff: Robin Rudisill

Project Description:

Demolition of two (2) duplexes (one duplex contains 1 studio and 1 two-bedroom unit and the other contains 1 two-bedroom unit and 1 three-bedroom unit) and the construction of a 4-story, 48'-7.5" high, 18,773 square foot, 25-unit Density Bonus multi-family dwelling, with 11 studio units, 13 one-bedroom units and 1 two-bedroom unit, including 6 Very Low Income (VLI) units (2 studios, 4 one-bedrooms), on a 9,414.5 square foot lot, with 11 parking spaces provided. There is no roof deck/roof access structures.

The case is still on hold at City Planning, waiting for ??.

Motion:

The Venice Neighborhood Council (VNC) Land Use and Planning Committee recommends that the VNC

Moved by XXX, Seconded by XXX
Approved X-X-X (X absent)

Neighborhood Outreach:

2024

August--meeting with Naomi Nightingale and Sarah Mahir



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September--correspondence with Ohana Ulloa, neighbor who reached out
December--discussion with Jodi Givenner, who lives across the street and is concerned with shadows cast on her house and solar panels
December--meeting with Robin Rudisill (LUPC Staff), Lydia Ponce, and Sarah Mahir on zoom, who requested a shade study be completed

2025

January--shade study provided to Robin, Lydia, Sarah and Jodi
February--meeting with Keith (owner), Naomi, and Sarah
March--Kevin distributed letters to the abutting neighbors describing the project and asking them to reach out to speak about it
March--Kevin spoke to Brina, who lives across Sunset from the project, who received the letter
April--Kevin corresponded with Kiersten Timpe, who lives directly behind the project in the multi-unit building, who received the letter
May--meeting with Lydia, Sarah, Robin
May--Kevin mailed out letters describing the project to approximately 50 addresses surrounding the project
May--Kevin corresponded with neighbor on Flower, Daniel Liggett
June--Kevin corresponded with John Castillo, neighbor

The concerns that have been expressed by the neighbors include shadow impacts on nearby houses, worries about street parking scarcity due to reduced off-street parking, worries about mental illness and criminal behaviors of potential tenants, concern that the project will set a precedent for others in the neighborhood to go to 4 stories with no affordable units, worries about gentrification, concern about the Ficus tree removal.

Some neighbors believe it could be a good project for the neighborhood and wouldn't impact the neighborhood character and scale if it was 3 stories high, with a proportional reduction in number of units.



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Entitlements:

1. City Coastal Development Permit (CDP)

The project is for a 4 story, 48'-7.5" high, 18,773 square foot, 25-unit multi-family dwelling, on a 9,414.5 square foot lot. The proposed project includes a front yard of 10', the required rear yard of 15' from the center of the alley, and two side yards of 5' each.

56.25 parking spaces are required by the certified Land Use Plan (does not reflect any reduction for bicycle parking) for a 25-unit multi-family dwelling. However, the property qualifies for the State Assembly Bill 2097 parking exemption and no spaces are required. In spite of the exemption, 11 spaces are provided (unbundled), including 1 handicapped space, 4 standard spaces and 6 compact spaces, as well as an option for dedicated, shared cars (Envoy System). Reducing car ownership and vehicle trips conforms with Coastal Act section 30253(d) Minimize energy consumption and vehicle miles traveled.

In addition, the applicant has prepared an extensive "parking study," which shows that 1) the area of the subject property exhibits much less demand for coastal access parking because of its distance from the coast, 2) the project's parking garage and the availability of on-street parking are sufficient to accommodate any increased parking demand the project might create, 3) Existing and planned infrastructure and amenities support resident and visitor alternatives to automobile transportation, 4) Where demand for automobile transportation does exist, options such as on-site electric vehicle share, on-demand municipal ride services, and app-based rideshare can greatly reduce the need for car ownership, and 5) Reducing car ownership and vehicle trips helps the city complete its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reductions and active transportation goals.

There is a significant step back on the 4th floor (10-15 feet on Sunset Ave and 6-20 feet on 7th Ave). The project provides significant articulation with several balconies on all three residential levels.

Coastal Act section 30250 regarding cumulative effect of minimal off street parking and re. the size of the structure, which is much larger than the surrounding structures, is a concern.

The project is extremely unlikely to create a precedent because required base density is 6 units and this cannot generally be done with the size of lots in Oakwood (no one has tried to string together 3 lots to create a base density of 6-units, which would allow for a density bonus project); and it's very difficult to acquire 3 abutting lots in Oakwood. In addition, building luxury single family homes is still much more lucrative and far less risky for developers. It should be noted that the VNC Community Plan/LCP ad hoc committee has recommended that lot consolidation in Oakwood be reduced to 2 lots.



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Many other properties in the area have roof decks and Roof Access Structures (RAS) that result in the appearance of a 3rd or 4th story. This project does not have a roof deck or RAS's and so it is somewhat comparable to 3 story structures with roof deck and RAS's. Also, from the "pedestrian view" on the sidewalk below, the 4th floor is obscured and the building appears to be 3 stories.

The sun/shade study shows that there is some impact on the neighbor to the east in the winter when the biggest shadows are cast across 7th Ave, but it doesn't really impact that house until about 4pm.

A "character analysis" was performed by the applicant. The study area includes both sides of Sunset Ave and the south side of Flower Ave, between 6th & 7th Avenues. Although the project is larger than other structures in the immediate vicinity, the project's size is necessary to provide the deed-restricted affordable units and market rate units needed in new development to address the housing crisis.

2. Density Bonus Act/Conditional Use (CU3)

Under AB 2334, a Density Bonus over 35% is allowed because the applicant is planning to include 67% of the base allowable density as units affordable to Very Low Income households, making the project eligible for an additional 175% density bonus to be eligible for a total of up to 25 dwelling units. The applicant is providing 6 Very Low Income units for a 175% density bonus, an increase of 12 units over what would be permitted through the by-right 35% density bonus. The project meets the findings required for a Conditional Use permit for the increased density as it is consistent with and implements the affordable housing provisions of the Housing Element of the General Plan.

The "Major Transit Stop" qualifying the project is at Lincoln Blvd. & Rose Ave, per planned 2024 SCAG RTP"--Metro Lincoln BRT per planned 2024 SCAG RTP.

With 6 Very Low Income (VLI) units, the project qualifies for three incentives (unlimited waivers of development standards is allowed).

The following Density Bonus incentives are requested:

1. Off Menu request for a 33% decrease in the front yard setback, from 15' required to 10'.
2. Off Menu request for a 29% decrease in the west side yard setback from 7' required to 5'.
3. Off Menu request for a 29% decrease in the east side yard setback from 7' required to 5'.

The following Waivers of Development Standards are requested:

1. 23'-7.5" increase in allowable height from 25' per the LUP for a project with a flat roof to 48'-7.5".
2. 100% decrease in usable open space from 2,525 square feet required.



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3. Mello Act (MEL)

As per the Mello Act analysis (letter from LAHD dated 4.18.25), there are no existing affordable units under the Mello Act (LUPC Staff confirmed by reviewing the source documents for rent paid). Although no affordable units were found pursuant to the Mello Determination, three affordable units are required to be replaced under the HCA, as noted below.

4. Housing Crisis Act (HCA)

There are 4 existing RSO units. HCA/SB8 requires that if even one RSO unit is demolished, that all new units in the project have "protected " RSO status. Under the HCA, 3 of the 4 existing units are considered protected Lower Income Housing and are being replaced in the new project as tenant income information was not available (rents are not used for HCA). The six new deed-restricted Very Low Income (VLI) affordable units (24% of 25 total units) will be distributed throughout the building. **Applicant to clarify whether 55 years or will increase to 99 years.** All residents of the proposed project will have access to all common amenities within the building.

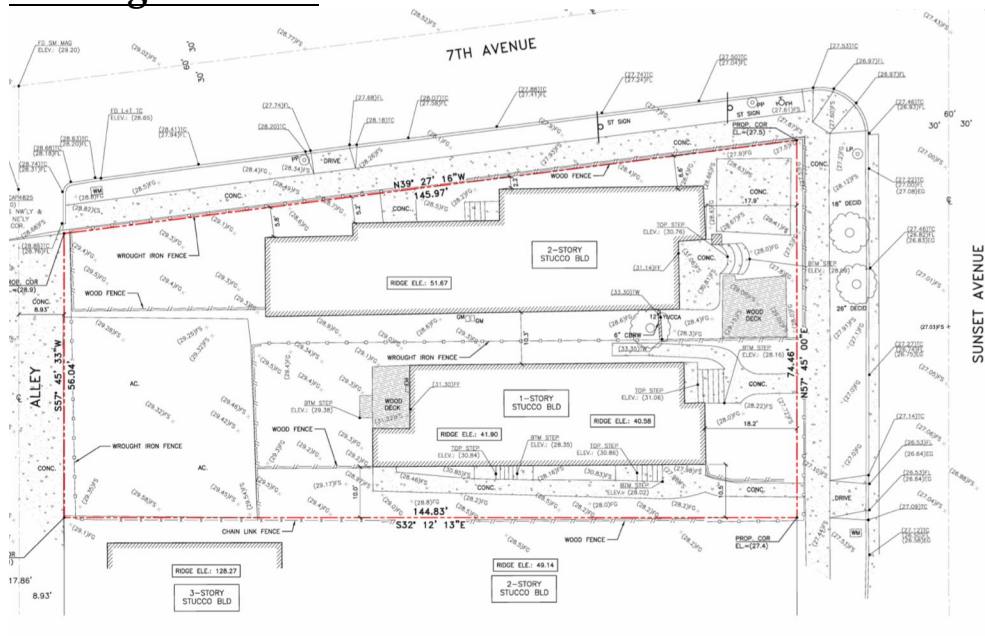
5. Priority Housing Program (PHP)

Under the Priority Housing Program, developments that include over 20% of their units as affordable receive priority case processing – this project is at 24% Very Low Income (VLI) units (6 divided by 25), thus it qualifies for PHP.

Existing two duplexes:



Existing Site Plan:





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Rendering of proposed project:





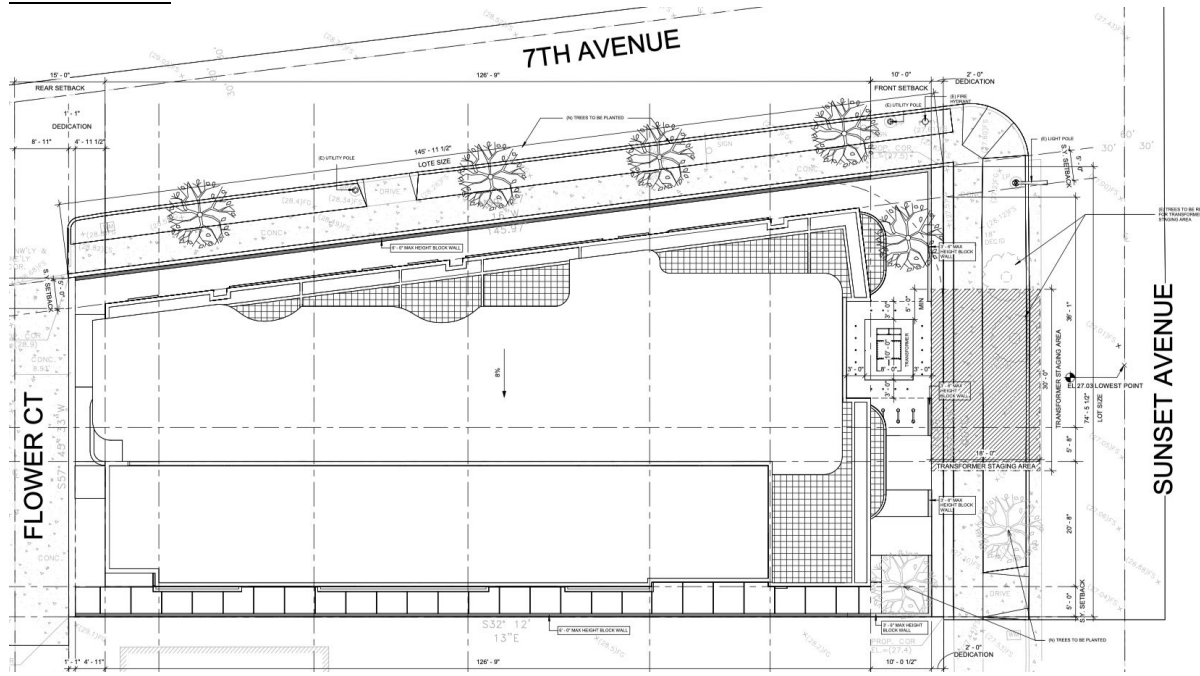
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Site Plan:





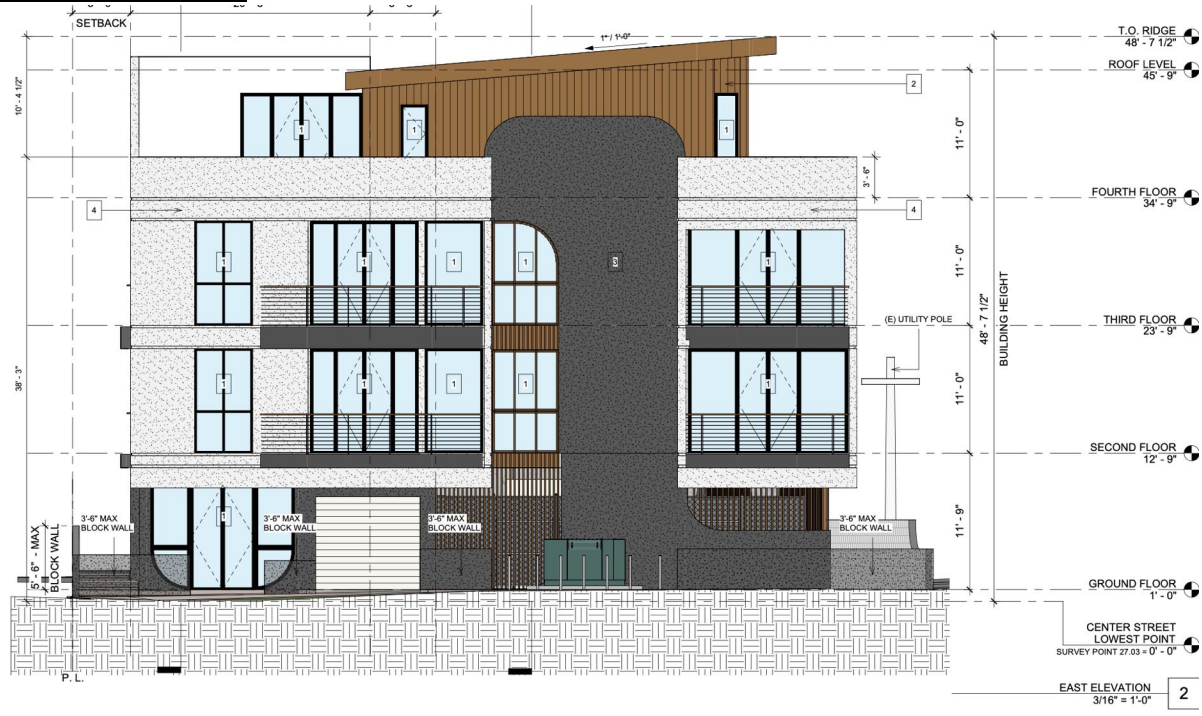
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East elevation:





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West elevation:





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North elevation:





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South elevation:

