



# Venice Neighborhood Council

LAND USE AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

PO Box 550, Venice, CA 90294 | [www.VeniceNC.org](http://www.VeniceNC.org)

Email: [Chair-LUPC@VeniceNC.org](mailto:Chair-LUPC@VeniceNC.org)



## Land Use & Planning Committee (LUPC)

### STAFF REPORT--**DRAFT**

October 23, 2025

City Case No: **DIR-2025-1995-CDP-MEL-HCA**

CEQA Case No: **ENV-2025-1997-CE**

Related City Case No(s): **ADM-2025-1996-ADU-VSO**

Address of Project: **635 San Juan Avenue**

Applicant/Property Owner: **Ben Horning**

Applicant's Representative: **Steve Kaplan**

Standard of Review: **Coastal Act, with certified Land Use Plan (LUP) as guidance (for CDPs)  
Venice Community Plan  
Other applicable State laws: Assembly Bill 2097  
Other applicable City laws: ADU ordinance**

Coastal Zone: **Single Permit Jurisdiction**

City Hearing: **Not yet scheduled**

Email for City Planner: **Luis.C.Lopez@lacity.org**

LUPC Staff assigned: **Sarah Wauters and Robin Rudisill**

#### **I. Detailed Project Description:**

**The proposed project is a 6-unit multi-family apartment development divided between two buildings. There are 3 affordable housing units, required by the Mello Act, and 3 ADUs (Accessory Dwelling Units). This level of density is secured through ADU law changes rather than density bonus requests. The front building has one 3-bedroom affordable housing unit, one two-story, 3-bedroom market rate ADU, and two 1-bedroom affordable housing units. The rear building is comprised of two 2-bedroom market rate ADUs. There is a roof deck and a roof access structure on the front building for access by the 3-bedroom market-rate ADU unit.**

**There are three parking spaces on the ground level of the rear building and two additional street parking spaces created by removing the curb cut on San Juan, in order to provide for an open soil parkway and curb, allowing street parking.**



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The landscape consists of a front yard that is 15' deep, side setbacks of 4', a 15' rear setback, which includes the parking, and a restored front parkway where the prior driveway existed. Large trees and plants will enhance the front yard, and smaller trees will be placed in the parkway which will achieve a visual blending of the site into the existing neighborhood. Native plantings will attract native birds and pollinators to the yard and the neighborhood.

## II. Motion:

The Venice Neighborhood Council recommends the City's approval of the project at 635 San Juan Ave, as proposed, and requests the following modifications:

1. Install native plantings that support birds and pollinators and allow residents and neighbors more access to nature.
2. Restore an open soil parkway where presently a concrete curb cut and driveway exist.
3. Incorporate native parkway, front yard, and middle yard plantings in project plan renderings.
4. Incorporate LUPC-recommended board and batten siding and lighter color treatments to reflect the architecture of the neighborhood.
5. Enhance aesthetic quality by referencing neighborhood and community architectural details.

LUPC Staff suggests a LUPC follow up to ensure that these aesthetic changes and the landscaping changes have been incorporated in the final project plans.

## III. Pros & Cons of Project:

### Positive aspects of project:

#### A. Housing Units and Bedroom Count

Approximately ten years ago, prior ownership submitted an application that was ultimately denied. As per the Mello Act, in conjunction with that project application, the planning department had required that 3 affordable housing units be provided. A Mello Act determination survives a denial of the related project and carries forward to any new project proposed.

The developer has now not only delivered on the Mello Act requirement but has also provided the maximum number of bedrooms that could feasibly be included



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within the site's footprint. The inclusion of a 3-bedroom home within the affordable category along with two 1-bedroom affordable units meets the needs of a neighborhood with a variety of household types. Affordable and market rate housing will exist together, providing a development with social and economic diversity.

This lot has been vacant for close to 10 years, so the prospect of adding 6 new units to the housing stock in Venice is a welcome circumstance, especially considering the specific mix of bedrooms and affordability.

## B. Architectural Design

The architectural design provides for 6 units on a small lot with only 2 stories so as to remain compatible with other buildings on the block. The use of board and batten siding relates to several homes on the block and in general to traditional siding of smaller wood construction buildings that are typical of Venice. The color of the buildings will also relate to the neighborhood building colors, either white or lighter colors, as agreed to by the owner.

The height restrictions of the certified Land Use Plan for Oakwood require the building to be no more than 25' high as measured from the center of the street. The center of the street is at 15' above sea level. The parapet of the building total height measures 25' and the roof access stair structure total height measures 30'. The roof access structure is allowed under the certified Land Use Plan. The plans show the surveyors' height of 45' to the top of the roof access stair structure, which includes the 15' above sea level measurement of the street. (45' - 15' (above sea level) = 30').

## C. Landscape

The developer has agreed to include native trees and plants within both the front yard and the newly added front parkway through the removal of a driveway and curb cut. As Los Angeles has been losing urban canopy at an alarming rate in the last 3 decades and the Los Angeles basin is a biodiversity hotspot with many endemic species at risk, this is a welcome and positive aspect. For the residents of the development and the neighborhood, the increase in access to nature, in the form of the front yard and parkway tree growth, plant growth and visiting birds and pollinators, is a welcome enhancement to the community's life. Plantings also enhance the space between the two buildings.

## D. Summary



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The owner had a significant challenge, as the Mello Act, which is a state law, required the owner to replace three units of existing affordable housing. With a very creative and smart design, they have done it, with the help of the ADU laws and the AB 2097 parking regulation. The project is also very unique in that they are proposing a 3-bedroom affordable unit and two 1-bedroom affordable units, which is beneficial to our local families as typically tiny studios are the affordable units. The front building has one 3-bedroom affordable housing unit and one 2-story 3-bedroom market rate unit--that's the ADU--and two, 1-bedroom affordable housing units. The rear building has two 2-bedroom ADUs. So, there are a lot of multiple bedroom units. In addition, it's compatible in scale and character. The developer is working with LUPC, taking our suggestions on landscape and design to heart. It's not a density bonus project. They're not asking for extra height and FAR, etc. This project meets all regulations, using new laws to support the design. It's also a very creative use of the density requirements in the certified Land Use Plan and the ADU rules to get to these six units, which for one lot is very unique.

## Negative aspects of project:

### A. Parking

Because of the location of the property, as per AB 2097, no new parking is required. However, the development is adding three spaces on the property and there will be greater space on the street for parking because of the restoration of the former driveway to a normal curb.

## IV. Neighborhood Outreach/Summary of Community Input:

The applicant sent out a notification to addresses along the entire length of the block of San Juan between 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenues regarding the project and the September 25, 2025 VNC LUPC meeting concerning its approval. Unfortunately, we were told that some neighbors did not receive the first round of this notice:





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## Venice Neighbors: You're Invited to LUPC

Please join the Venice Land Use & Planning Committee on **Thursday, September 25, 2025** for a brief presentation of our project at 635 San Juan Ave, Venice, CA. We value your input and hope you can attend and share feedback.

**When/Where:** Details and agenda attached or please visit the VNC website prior to the meeting.

**Questions?** Please attend to ask questions that you may have.

Thank you for engaging with us!



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VNC | Land Use and Planning Committee

### DRAFT AGENDA

**Thursday, September 25, 2025, 6:00 pm**  
**Venice Abbot Kinney Memorial Library**  
**Community Room**  
**501 S Venice Blvd, CA 90291 (310) 821-1769**

Alternatively, you may submit your public comment via email in advance to the Chair at [Mark.Mack@VeniceNC.org](mailto:Mark.Mack@VeniceNC.org). Participation is open to all Stakeholders of the Venice Neighborhood Council. All items are available for discussion and possible Motion.

- 1) Call to Order
- 6) Chair Update
- 7) Committee introductions and comments
- 8) Pending city and state legislation

#### OLD BUSINESS

#### NEW BUSINESS

- 9) 635 San Juan Ave (between 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> Aves)(DIR-2025-1995-CDP-MEL-HCA; ENV-2025-1997-CE; ADM-2025-1996-ADU-VSO)(case on hold)(Planner: [Luis.Lopez@lacity.org](mailto:Luis.Lopez@lacity.org)):  
6-unit multi-residential apartment building—3 affordable units & 3 ADUs (Robin Rudisill & Sarah Wauters, LUPC Staff)  
<https://planning.lacity.gov/pdiscaseinfo/search/casenumbr/DIR-2025-1995-CDP-MEL-HCA>



**During the LUPC public hearing, concern was expressed that the project is not compatible with the mass, scale and character of San Juan Ave or the Oakwood Community. Questions were asked about the level of affordability of the covenanted affordable units, which is determined by a state law formula as required by Senate Bill 330 and Senate Bill 8. Concerns were expressed about the**



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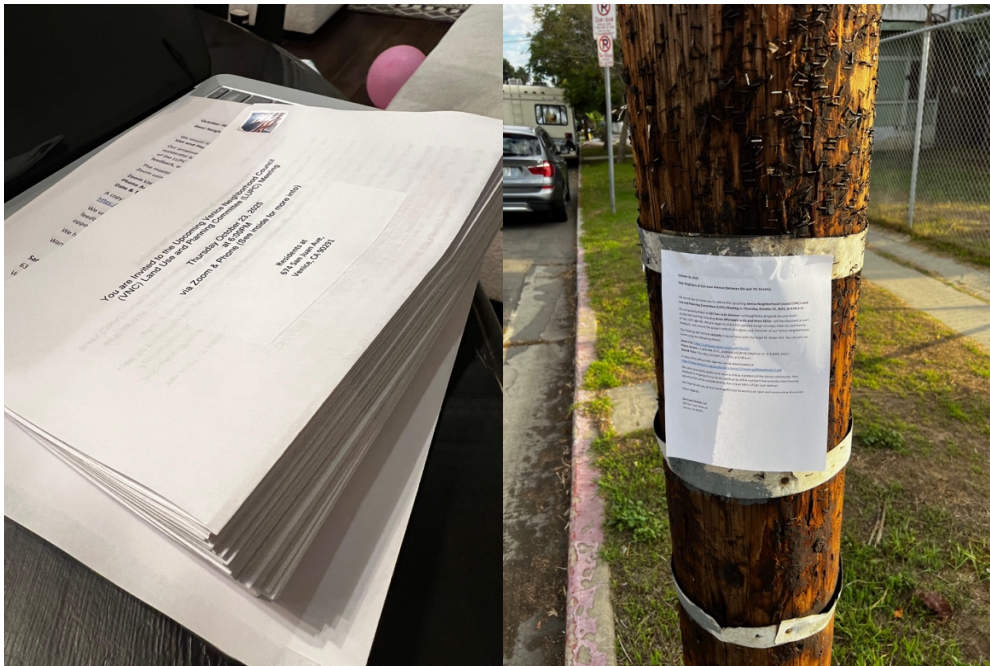
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landscape recommendations, no Indigenous consultant review and the minimal parking. Due to concerns expressed by the neighbors, the Admin Committee of the VNC sent the project back to LUPC and a second round of notices was sent out for a LUPC meeting on October 23<sup>rd</sup>. Notices were also posted on lampposts and other infrastructure in the neighborhood, to ensure that all interested parties could attend the second LUPC hearing.

**FURTHER PUBLIC INPUT FROM THE OCTOBER 23<sup>RD</sup> MEETING WILL BE INCLUDED HERE.**



### **V. Findings re. Entitlements:**

#### **A. Coastal Development Permit (CDP)—Coastal Act & certified Land Use Plan (LUP) are standard of review**

##### **1. Parking/Coastal Access—Assembly Bill 2097 must also be considered in the standard of review**

Coastal Act Section 30252 states: *The location and amount of new development should maintain and enhance public access to the coast by facilitating the provision or extension of transit service...and providing adequate parking facilities or providing substitute means of serving the development with public transportation*



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The proposed development conforms with the Coastal Act and LUP policies for parking and Coastal Access because it is located in an existing developed area contiguous with similar residential uses and will therefore not have a significant adverse impact on coastal resources — it adds three parking spaces under the rear building even though, because of its location in an AB 2907 entitlement area, due to its proximity to transit no additional parking is required. Two additional street parking spots will be created by the restoration of the existing driveway to a straight curb.

## 2. Density Explanation Summary

The project proposes 3 new affordable units plus 1 attached ADU and 2 detached ADUs. The subject property is zoned RD1.5, where multiple dwelling units are permitted by-right, subject to density standards. Per LAMC §12.22.A.33 and California Gov. Code §65852.2, ADUs are exempt from density limits. The attached ADU complies with state and local requirements, and the two detached ADUs are permitted ministerially under Gov. Code §65852.2(e)(1)(C). ZA Memo 143 (Dec 2024), which allows concurrent development of primary units and ADUs. The proposal is consistent with zoning, state ADU laws, and City guidance.

### Certified Venice Land Use Plan Policy I.A.7.d.

#### d. Oakwood, Milwood, Southeast and North Venice

Use: Duplexes and multi-family structures.

Density: One unit per 1,500-2,000 square feet of lot area. Lots smaller than 4,000 square feet are limited to a maximum density of two units.

Replacement Units/Bonus Density: Lots greater than 4,000 square feet can add extra density at the rate of one unit for each 1,500 square feet of lot area in excess of 4,000 square feet on parcels zoned RD1.5, or one unit for each 2,000 square feet of lot area in excess of 4,000 square feet on parcels zoned RD2, if the unit is a replacement affordable unit reserved for low and very low income persons. (See LUP Policies I.A.9 through I.A.16).

Yards: Yards shall be required in order to accommodate the need for fire safety, open space, permeable land area for on-site percolation of stormwater, and on-site recreation consistent with the existing scale and character of the neighborhood.

Height:

Oakwood, Milwood, and Southeast Venice: Not to exceed 25 feet for buildings with flat roofs; or 30 feet for buildings utilizing a stepped back or varied roofline. The portion that exceeds 25 feet in height shall be set back from the required front yard one foot for every foot in height above 25 feet. Structures located along walk streets are limited to a maximum of 28 feet. (See LUP Policy I.A.1 and LUP Height Exhibits 13-16).



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**The project complies with the density requirements above as there are only three units, and the total square footage of the lot allows for these three units. The three ADUs are not counted toward density.**

**The front yard complies with the required depth of 15' feet and employs minimal hardscape, allowing for open space and permeable land area for percolation; the front yard also accommodates recreation onsite such as the enjoyment of nature, as is consistent with other yards on the block. More landscaped space is found in the side yards and between the two buildings, which allows for further plantings and water percolation on site. The building complies with the height requirements laid out in the LUP – see further discussion below.**

### **3. Scenic and Visual Qualities**

Coastal Act Section 30251 Scenic and visual qualities states: *The scenic and visual qualities of coastal areas shall be considered and protected as a resource of public importance. Permitted development shall be sited and designed to protect views to and along the ocean and scenic coastal areas, to minimize the alteration of natural land forms, to be visually compatible with the character of surrounding areas, and, where feasible, to restore and enhance visual quality in visually degraded areas.*

**The project conforms with the Coastal Act and LUP policies for Scenic and Visual Qualities because it is a 2-story structure on a block with other 2-story structures and is thus compatible with the scale of other buildings in the neighborhood and the Venice community. Additionally, the visual enhancement of water-wise and habitat-friendly plantings will benefit the visual qualities of the streetscape along San Juan Ave, for new residents and surrounding neighbors alike.**

### **4. Environmental Justice Policy (if applicable: yesX/no)**

The Coastal Commission's Environmental Justice Policy states: *The Commission recognizes that the elimination of affordable residential neighborhoods has pushed low-income Californians and communities of color further from the coast, limiting access for communities already facing disparities with respect to coastal access and may contribute to an increase in individuals experiencing homelessness.*

Coastal Act Section 30604(f) states: *The Commission shall encourage housing opportunities for persons of low and moderate income,*

Coastal Act Section 30604(g) states: *The legislature finds and declares that it is important for the Commission to encourage the protection of existing and the provision of new affordable housing opportunities for persons of low and moderate income in the coastal zone.*

Coastal Act Section 30116 states: *Sensitive coastal resource areas" means those identifiable and geographically bounded land and water areas within the coastal zone of vital interest and sensitivity. "Sensitive coastal resource areas" include... areas that provide existing coastal housing or recreational opportunities for low- and moderate-income persons. (Emphasis added)*





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**The project conforms with the Coastal Act's Environmental Justice Policies because 6 new units, including 3 affordable housing units, are being created. This addition of housing will create opportunities for low- and moderate-income persons to live in the development and hence gain greater access to the coastal zone.**

## 5. Cumulative Effect

Coastal Act section 30250 (a) states: *New residential, commercial, or industrial development, except as otherwise provided in this division, shall be located within, contiguous with, or in close proximity to, existing developed areas able to accommodate it or, where such areas are not able to accommodate it, in other areas with adequate public services and where it will not have significant adverse effects, either individually or cumulatively, on coastal resources...*

**The project is not likely to create an adverse cumulative effect or an adverse precedent for other similar projects because it is located within a previously developed area with similar housing and has access to sufficient public transportation services such that it will not have significant adverse effects on the public's access to coastal resources.**

## 6. Protection of Special Coastal Communities

Coastal Act section 30253(e) states: *New development shall do all of the following...(e) Where appropriate, protect special communities and neighborhoods that, because of their unique characteristics, are popular visitor destination points for recreational uses.*

LUP Policy Preservation of Venice as a Special Coastal Community states:

### **Preservation of Venice as a Special Coastal Community**

**Policy I. E. 1. General.** Venice's unique social and architectural diversity should be protected as a Special Coastal Community pursuant to Chapter 3 of the California Coastal Act of 1976.

**Policy I. E. 2. Scale.** New development within the Venice Coastal Zone shall respect the scale and character of community development. Buildings which are of a scale compatible with the community (with respect to bulk,

height, buffer and setback) shall be encouraged. All new development and renovations should respect the scale, massing, and landscape of existing residential neighborhoods. Lot consolidations shall be restricted to protect

**Policy I. E. 3. Architecture.** Varied styles of architecture are encouraged with building facades which incorporate varied planes and textures while maintaining the neighborhood scale and massing.

**The proposed project will protect the Special Coastal Community status of Venice because it respects the scale, massing and landscape of the neighborhood's buildings. The building is the same height as most neighboring buildings, utilizes some board and batten wood siding and will be light in color, relating to**



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the siding and colors of other buildings on the block. The architecture incorporates varied planes and textures (both stucco and board and batten). The landscaping plan will both respect the existing landscaping of the block and enhance it by adding native trees and native plantings that will screen the building from view as they mature. The roof access stair is only 8 ft off the roof deck, and only 5' taller than the parapet which comprises the building's total height, and it is well setback from the front of the building and will be minimally visible from the street and public sidewalk. In addition, the 3 covenanted affordable units and 3 ADUs will support Venice's social diversity, as required by Policy I.E.1., as the affordable and ADU units will be lower cost than other types of units and thus provide housing options for lower-income residents, supporting social and economic diversity.

## 7. Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area

Section 30240 of the Coastal Act states in part: (a) Environmentally sensitive habitat areas shall be protected against any significant disruption of habitat values and only uses dependent on those resources shall be allowed within those areas. (b) Development in areas adjacent to environmentally sensitive habitat areas and parks and recreation areas shall be sited and designed to prevent impacts which would significantly degrade those areas and shall be compatible with the continuance of those habitat and recreation areas.

While the site is located within a fully developed residential community, much of Venice has become an environmentally sensitive habitat area because of the city-wide degradation of the urban canopy. This impacts birds, particularly coastal and migratory birds. This project sensitively addresses this issue by planting native trees and plants to which our native and migratory bird and pollinator populations have evolved over eons. Many endangered migratory species lack the nourishment required over their journey and this landscape will offer such food.

## B. Mello Act (MEL)(if applicable)

The Mello Act is a statewide law that requires local governments to comply with provisions designed to protect, preserve and increase the supply of affordable housing in California's coastal zone. Generally, converted or demolished existing affordable units must be replaced one-for-one.

The Housing and Community Investment Department made a Mello Act determination in 2015, which called for 3 affordable housing units at this site. The project proposed by the owner at that time was denied as it did not meet both the Mello Act and Coastal Act requirements.



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The project as currently planned will comply with the Mello Act as it replaces the affordable housing units that existed on the lot approximately 10 years ago.

## C. Housing Crisis Act (HCA)

The HCA (SB 330/SB8) requires that if even one RSO unit is demolished, all new units in the project have “protected “ RSO status. Under the HCA, in the absence of occupant income documentation (rents are not used for HCA), the prior existing units would be considered protected lower income housing. In this case, the 3 existing affordable units are being replaced in the new project.

Pursuant to SB 8, when incomes of existing or former tenants are unknown, the required percentage of affordability is determined by the percentage of extremely low, very low, and low income rents in the jurisdiction as shown in the HUD Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) database. At present, the Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) database shows 31% extremely low income, 18% very low income and 20% low income for Transit Oriented Communities (TOC) projects and 49% very low income and 20% low income for Density Bonus projects. In the absence of specific entitlements, the affordability will default to 49% very low income and 20% low income. The remaining 31% of the units are presumed above-low income. The levels of affordability will be covenanted in the property’s deed.

## VI. History of Lot Ownership:

In 2014, the land was purchased by Monterey Holdings, LLC and it appears that a construction firm by the name of Rockport was engaged to perform construction services. Rockport may have been the entity that stripped the previously existing three units down to the studs. Rockport never owned the site or progressed past the partial demolition. Monterey Holdings, LLC did not move forward with the project at that time as the project they proposed was denied. Monterey Holdings, LLC went bankrupt, and the property was lost in a foreclosure proceeding.

The bank, Goldman Sachs, took possession of the property. They then sold the property to an individual, Oleg Spektorov, in December 2020. In March 2021, Spektorov and Ben Horning, the applicant, came to an agreement for a future sale of the property. 635 San Juan LLC (Oleg Spectorov, Principal) is the present owner, and the present owner-in-escrow is San Juan Venice LLC (principal is Ben Horning). Ben Horning has handled all development activities for the subject application.





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## I. Existing structure:



**LOT # 39**  
**"SITE"**



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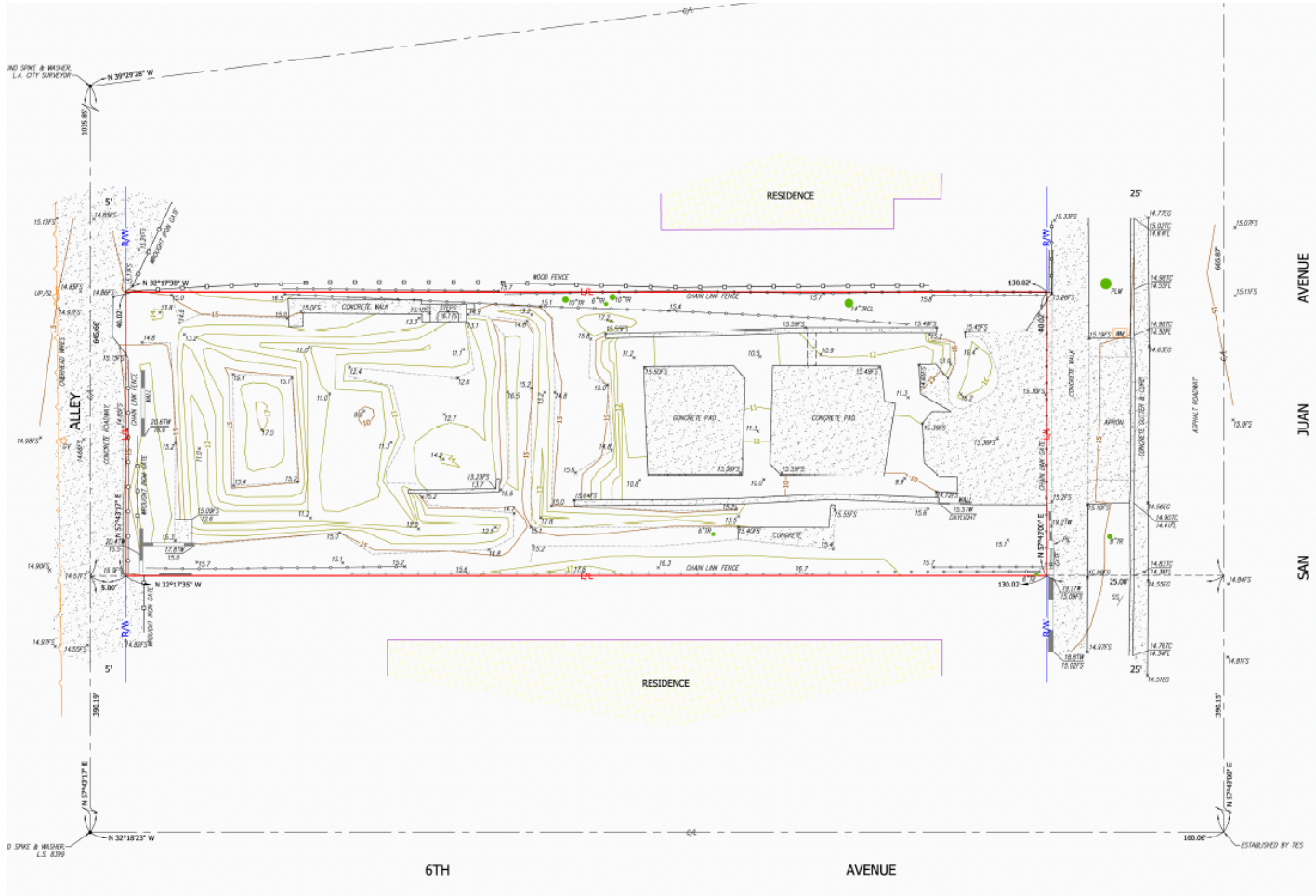
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## II. Existing Site Plan:









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## III. Renderings of proposed project, continued

With full landscaping: (color of building in rendering on prior page is accurate)



1 BUILDING A: FRONT WITH TREES

|                                                                                                                     |             |        |                                                                                                                                          |                                                       |                                                                        |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|--------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ARCHITECT:                                                                                                          | STRUCTURAL: | CIVIL: | LANDSCAPE:                                                                                                                               | OWNER:                                                | PROJECT:                                                               |
| Archer Brown & Partners Architects<br>3333 La Grange Blvd. #4, Suite 101<br>Los Angeles, CA 90008<br>(310) 452-8204 |             |        | MULTIPLA GARDENIA L.L.C.<br>P.O. BOX 1000000<br>10000 WILSON BLVD<br>MILPITAS, CA 95035<br>MULTIPLA.GARDENIA@GMAIL.COM<br>(408) 258-1000 | MR. HORNES<br>10000 WILSON BLVD<br>MILPITAS, CA 95035 | 2 STORY MULTIFAMILY HOUSING<br>20000 WILSON BLVD<br>MILPITAS, CA 95035 |

|     |            |              |     |            |              |
|-----|------------|--------------|-----|------------|--------------|
| NO. | DATE       | DESCRIPTION  | NO. | DATE       | DESCRIPTION  |
| 1   | 10/10/2020 | 3D RENDERING | 1   | 10/10/2020 | 3D RENDERING |
| 2   | 10/10/2020 | 3D RENDERING | 2   | 10/10/2020 | 3D RENDERING |
| 3   | 10/10/2020 | 3D RENDERING | 3   | 10/10/2020 | 3D RENDERING |
| 4   | 10/10/2020 | 3D RENDERING | 4   | 10/10/2020 | 3D RENDERING |
| 5   | 10/10/2020 | 3D RENDERING | 5   | 10/10/2020 | 3D RENDERING |



**BUILDING A  
RENDERINGS**

**T092**



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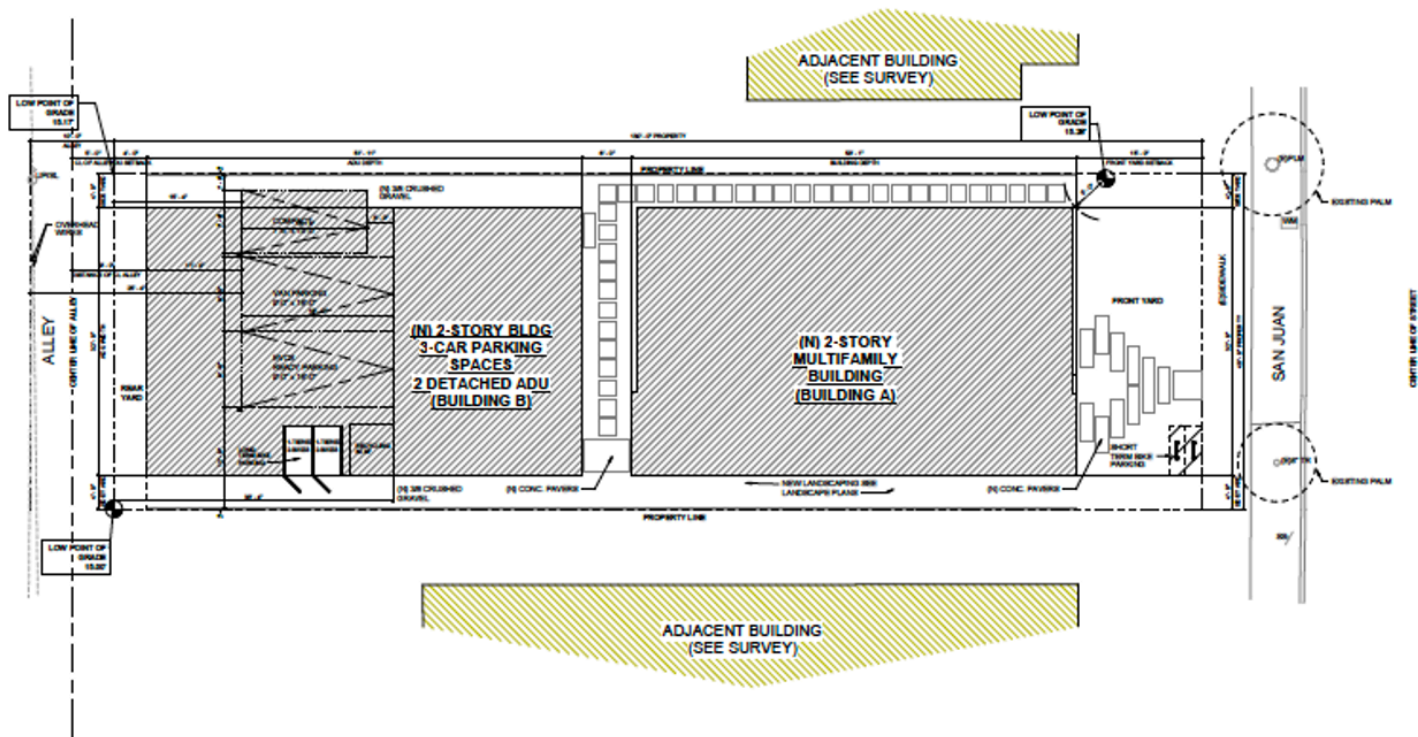
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## IV. Site Plan:







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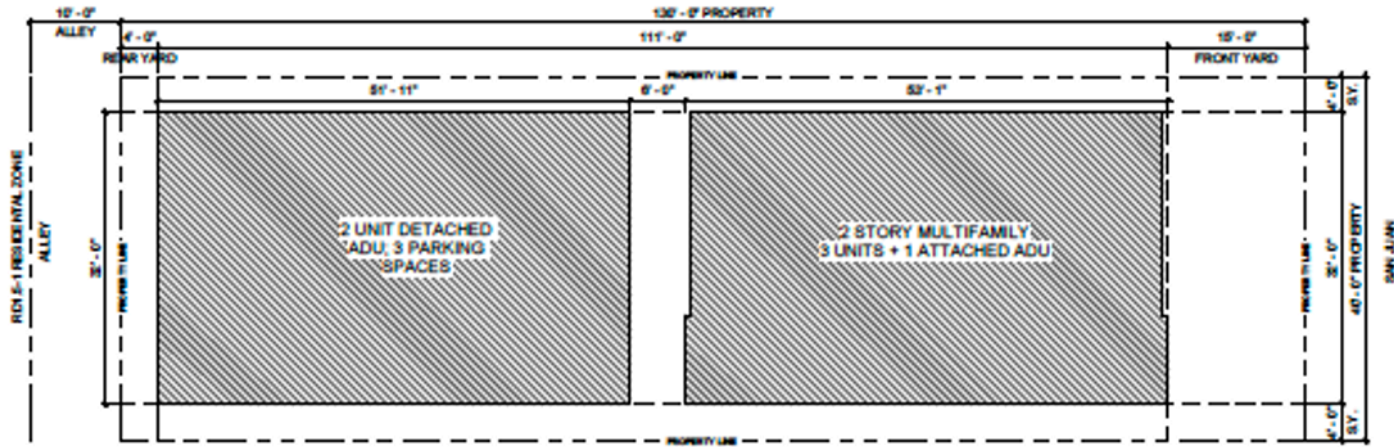
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## V. Plot Plan:





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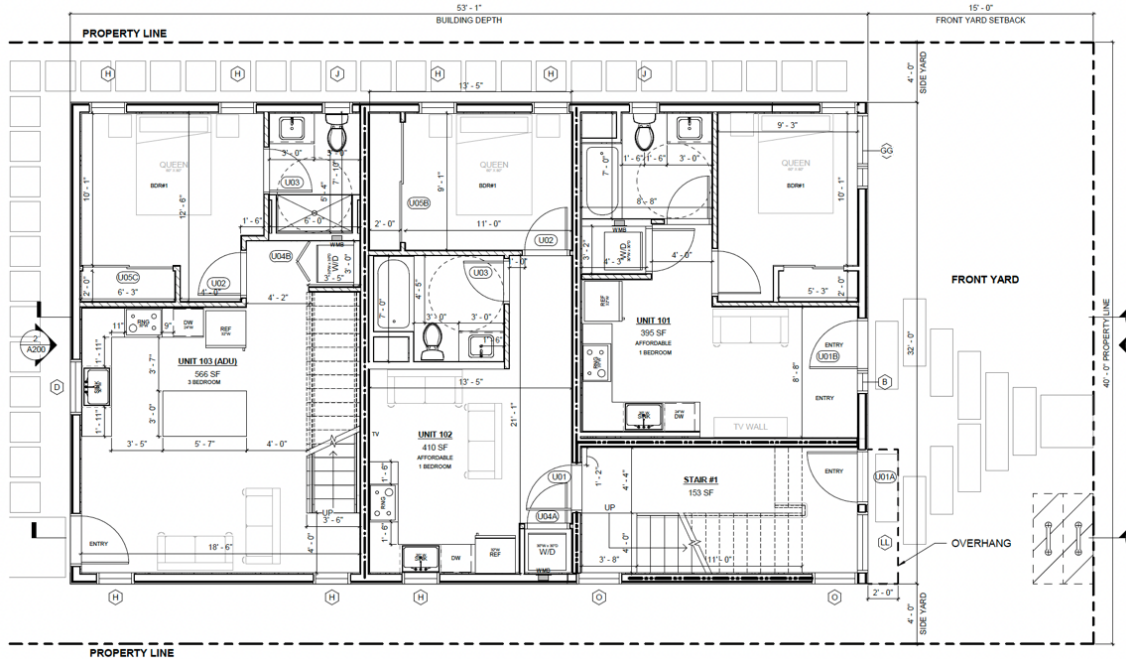
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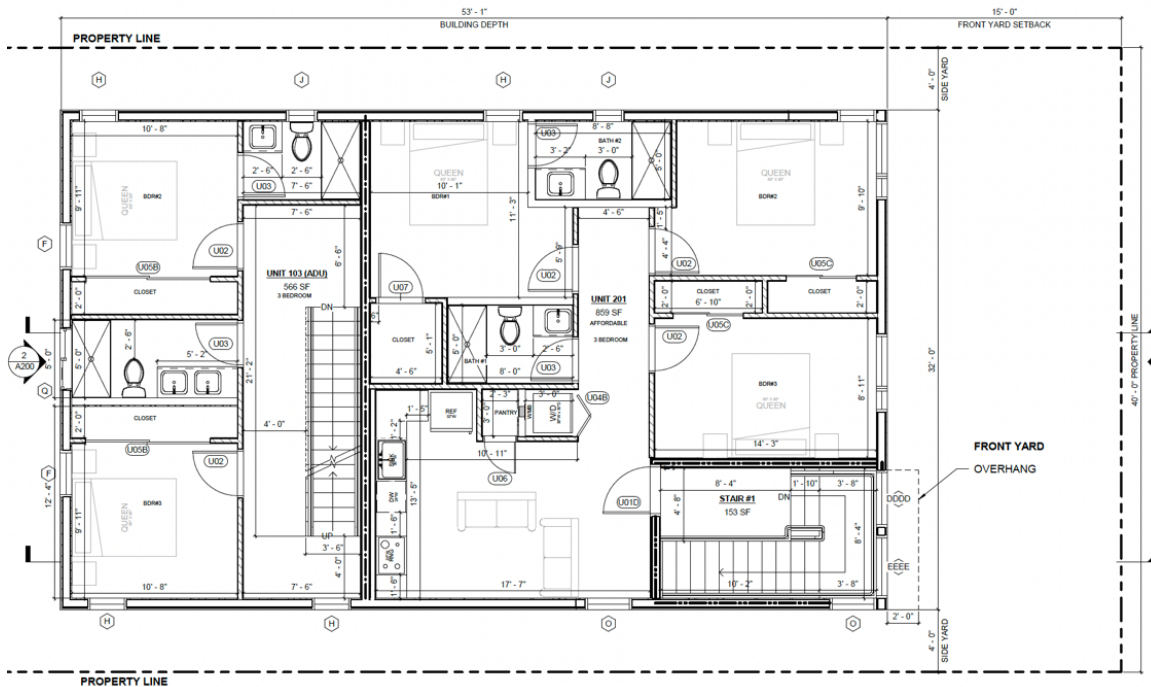


## VI. Floor Plans:

### Front Building, First Floor



### Front Building, Second Floor





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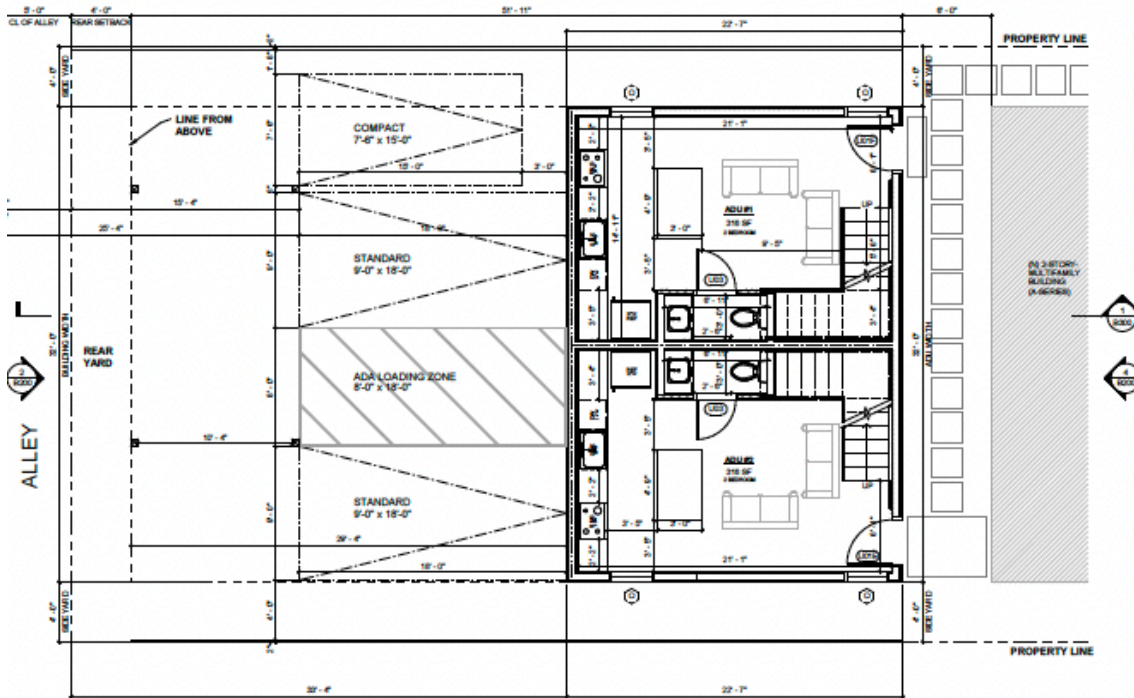
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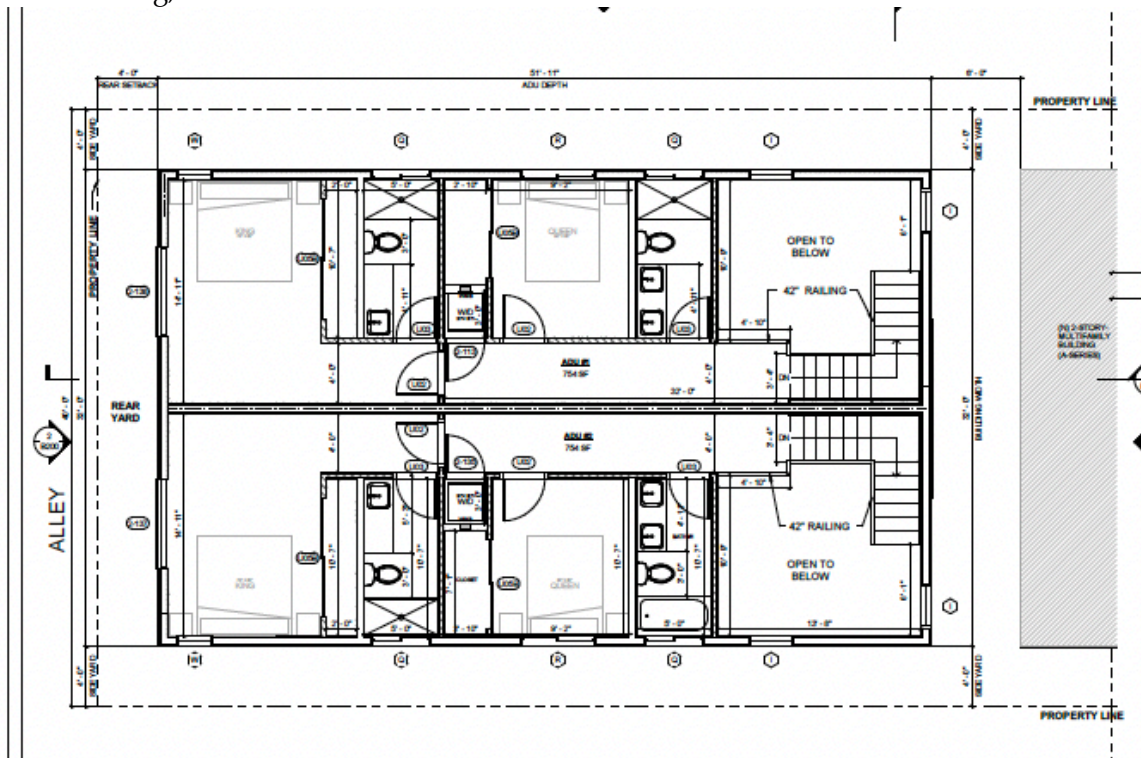
Email: [Chair-LUPC@VeniceNC.org](mailto:Chair-LUPC@VeniceNC.org)



## Rear Building, First Floor



## Rear Building, Second Floor





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## VII. Elevations:

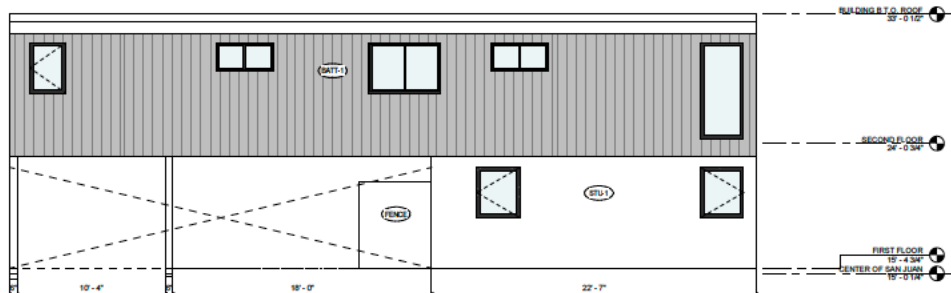
### A. East elevation:

Front Building



VENICE COASTAL SPECIFIC PLAN SECTION 5.2.B.  
BUILDING SHALL BE DESIGNED WITH VISUAL BREAKS OR ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES, INCLUDING BALCONIES OR TERRANCES, WITH A CHANGE OF MATERIAL OR A BREAK IN THE PLANE FOR EVERY 20 FEET IN HORIZONTAL LENGTH AND EVERY 15 VERTICAL FEET. RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS SHALL PROVIDE HABITABLE SPACE ON THE GROUND FLOOR, A GROUND LEVEL ENTRANCE, AND LANDSCAPING AND WINDOWS FRONTING THE STREET.

Rear Building



BUILDING B - EAST ELEVATION - MATERIAL CHANGE





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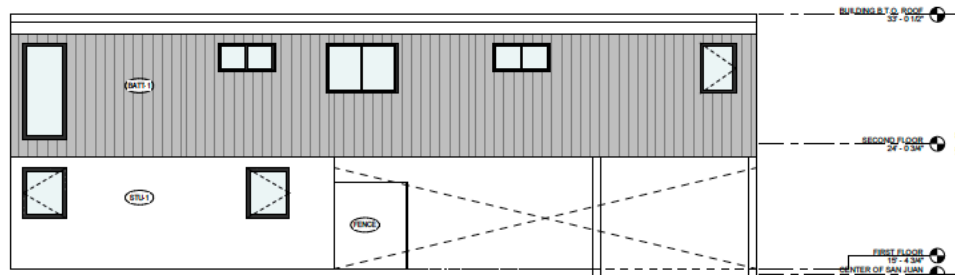
## B. West elevation:

### Front Building



BUILDING A - WEST ELEVATION - MATERIAL CHANGE

### Rear Building



BUILDING B - WEST ELEVATION - MATERIAL CHANGE



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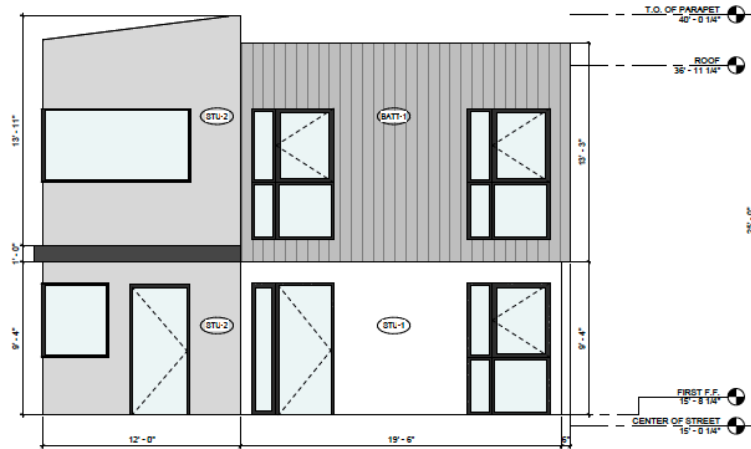
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Email: [Chair-LUPC@VeniceNC.org](mailto:Chair-LUPC@VeniceNC.org)

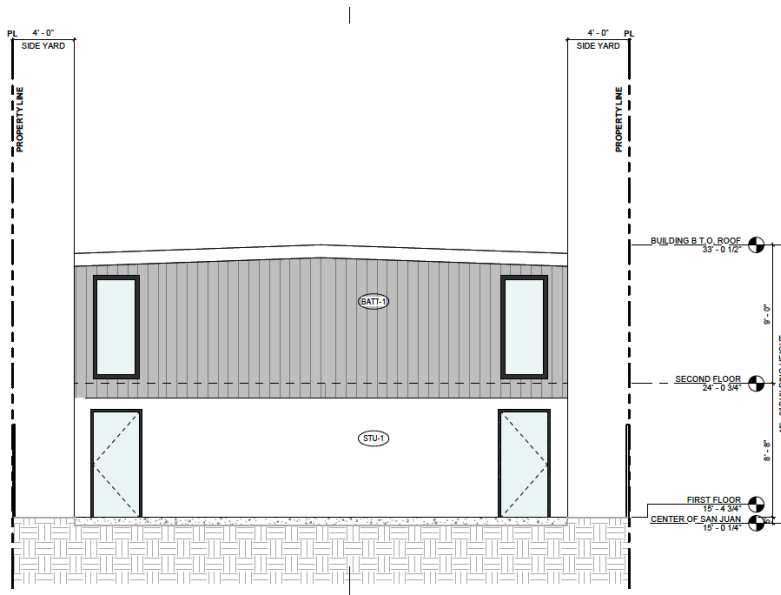


## C. South elevation:

### Front Building



### Rear Building



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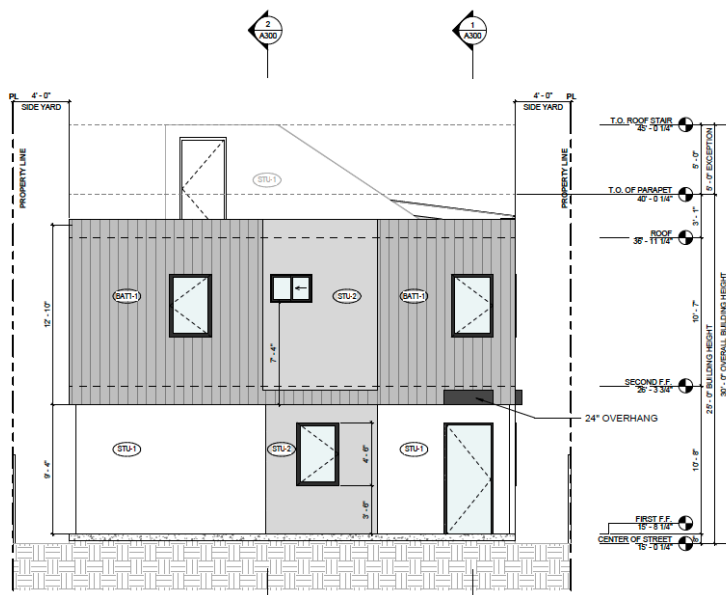
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#### D. North elevation:

Front Building:



Rear Building:

