

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING
OFFICE OF ZONING ADMINISTRATION

STAFF INVESTIGATOR REPORT

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CASE NO. ZA-2007-0752
(CDP)(ZAA)(ZAD)(MEL)
COSTAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT,
ZONING ADMINISTRATOR'S
ADJUSTMENT & DETERMINATION,
MELLO ACT COMPLIANCE
649, 651, and 653 West Oxford Avenue
Venice Community Plan Area
Zone : R1-1
D. M. : 105B149
C. D. : 11
CEQA : ENV-2007-0753-CE
Fish and Game : Exempt
Legal Description : Lots 48 – 50, Tract
5878

Request

1) A Coastal Development Permit, pursuant to the provisions of Section 12.20.2 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code, to permit the demolition of two existing one-story single-family dwellings and the construction, use and maintenance of three new 2,500 square-foot two-story with roof deck single-family dwellings, one on each lot, located within the single jurisdiction of the California Coastal Zone. 2) Pursuant to Section 12.28-A of the Los Angeles Municipal Code, a Zoning Administrator's Adjustment from Section 12.10-B,2 to permit a reduced rear yard of 5 feet in lieu of the required 15 feet on each lot; and 3) pursuant to Section 12.24-X,7, the construction, use and maintenance of a hedge/fence 5 feet in height with a pedestrian gate within the front yard setback area of each new dwelling. The Los Angeles Municipal Code permits a fence height of 3 feet 6 inches within the front yard setback area.

Property Description

The subject properties are composed of three relatively level, rectangular -shaped, interior record lots, consisting collectively of 10,000.4 square-feet, having a frontage of 75 feet on the north side of Oxford Avenue, and an even depth of 100 feet. Lot 48 consists of 2,500.1 square feet; Lot 49, Arb 1 consists of 1,250.1 square feet; Lot 49, Arb 2 consists of 1,250.1 square feet; and Lot 50 consists of 2,500.1 square feet. Legal addresses for the property presently range from 649 to 653 West Oxford Avenue. The property is currently developed with two existing two-bedroom, single-family dwellings, consisting of 985 and 1,116 square

feet. Both homes were constructed in 1954, and will be demolished to make room for the proposed three new single-family dwellings. The lots are modestly landscaped with mature vegetation, some of which will be required to be removed. Recent photographs of the subject site and the surrounding properties are enclosed within the case file. The property is located within the Grass Roots Venice area of the Venice Community Plan.

The Project

The applicant proposes to demolish two existing one-story, two-bedroom, single-family residences and construct three new two-story, three-bedroom, 2,500 square-foot, single-family dwellings, each with attached two-car garages, on three adjacent 2,500 square-foot lots all within the R1-1 zone. The heights of the new structures will be 25-feet. The maximum height permitted for a flat roof per the Venice Specific Plan is 25 feet. However, open railings, an access door, and other roof-top structures leading to an open roof deck will extend the true height to above 30 feet. The architect for the project is requesting reduced rear yard setbacks (5 feet in lieu of the required 15 feet) in order to avoid massing and provide interesting articulations. The applicant is also requesting a 5-foot high wall/fence and pedestrian gate to provide a greater level of security and privacy for the project residents.

Each newly-created lot will be exactly 25 feet wide by 100 feet. This lot size is substandard per general plan requirements for R1 zoned properties (minimum area of 5,000 square feet and minimum lot width of 50 feet). This narrow lot width impedes the possibility of designing a building with reasonable spatial clearances that could accommodate or be considered standard to comparable spaces or buildings in Venice.

On-site parking will be available for each unit within a proposed 342 square-foot, two-car garage with access via the rear alleyway. Off-site parking on nearby streets is restricted by permits only, unmetered, and in extremely high demand.

The adjoining properties potentially most affected by the proposal include the one-story, two-bedroom, 814 square-foot, single-family residence located directly west of the subject property at 647 West Oxford Avenue (currently owned by Jehouda Arad), and the 1,092 square-foot, one-story, two-bedroom, single-family residence located directly east at 655 West Oxford Avenue (presently owned by Marjory Canton). Due to the proposed increase in height at the subject property, and the close proximity of the neighboring structures as a result of small lot sizes, the adjoining properties specified above may experience some degree of impact particularly in terms of privacy, noise generation, air/light, and increased rear yard activity. The row of single-family dwellings located north of the rear alley with frontages along the 600 block of Marr Street are also potentially impacted, especially in terms of increased pedestrian and vehicular activity

An Adjacent Property Owner's list has been provided with the application; however, the signatures of the nine (9) abutting property owners in support of the request have not been included on the applicant's Master Land Use Permit. At the time of the Zoning Investigator's site visit on May 17, 2006, an official Notice of Public Hearing was posted

on the property, in accordance with the code requirement to post the ZA notice at least ten (10) days prior to the scheduled hearing date.

In order to receive an approval from the Zoning Administrator for the requested Zoning Administrator's Adjustment (ZAA), the applicant has forwarded the following Findings for consideration and review: That the granting of such adjustment will 1) result in development compatible and consistent with the surrounding uses, 2) be in conformance with the intent and purpose of the general plan of the city, 3) be in conformance with the spirit and intent of the planning and zoning code of the city, 4) mitigate against any adverse impacts, and 5) address the impracticality or infeasibility of the strict adherence to the zoning regulations. In addition, the applicant states that the open space for the adjustment conforms to the objectives of the open space provisions of the code.

In order to receive an approval from the Zoning Administrator for the requested Zoning Administrator's Determination (ZAD), the applicant has addressed the required Finding that the proposed building will be compatible in scale with existing adjoining uses and nearby structures and uses, as well as adopted plans. (See applicant's responses enclosed within the case file.)

According to information submitted by the applicant: "There are other properties in the 600 and 700 block of Oxford with over-in-height wall / fences. As such, the granting of this adjustments (sic) will result in development compatible and consistent with the surrounding areas." The applicant further states: "This project seeks a modest adjustment of rear yard in order to develop the property on a par with properties in similar zone in the immediate area which are characterized with reduced yards". The Zoning Investigator's review of the project plans and on-site observation of the property and surrounding areas confirm the above statements.

Surrounding Land Uses

Surrounding properties are zoned R1-1 and are characterized by a variety of bungalow-type and even modern-styled single-family residences, many of the older buildings having been constructed in the early to mid-1900's. Venice is a unique and eclectic beachside community with a wide-ranging and rich collection of development representing many styles of architectural expression, especially modern architecture. The temperature, weather and open-mindedness of the community, with an inclination to the artistic, have fostered an experimental and nurturing environment for creative and inspirational architecture.

Land is extremely expensive in the Venice Community and it is a desirable area to live being close to the beach with good air. Streets that were developed with inexpensive housing are being replaced with very costly condominiums, duplexes and single-family dwellings. This process has recently begun south of Abbot Kinney Boulevard where several nearby properties are also being redeveloped. The current zoning case is only 900 feet from the beach and it appears inevitable that further redevelopment will occur in this area.

Previous Cases, Affidavits, Permits, and Orders on the Applicant's Property

There are no similar or relevant Office of Zoning Administration, Area Planning Commission, or City Planning Commission cases on the applicant's property. Also, there were no past or present Building and Safety citations issued at the site, and no outstanding code enforcement activity was found. In addition, there are no relevant Q conditions or D limitations which may restrict the project proposal.

Previous Cases, Affidavits, Permits, and Orders on Surrounding Properties

The following cases were found within a 500 foot radius of the subject property. In addition, the applicant has submitted several additional cases within a much broader radius within the surrounding Venice community (see Exhibit 1 in case file).

Case No. ZA-2007-0461(CDP)(ZAA)(MEL) - The Zoning Administrator is presently reviewing an application to permit a two-unit condominium at 2416 S. Abbot Kinney Boulevard.

Case No. ZA-2006-6707(CDP)(ZAA)(SPPA)(SP) - On May 10, 2007, the Zoning Administrator approved a coastal development permit to allow the demolition of a single story duplex and the construction of a new 3-story, 4,675 square-foot duplex with an attached 4-car garage, and a Zoning Administrator Adjustment to allow a reduced side yard setback of 3 feet, 6 inches at 2523 S. Abbot Kinney Boulevard.

Case No. ZA 2005-0602(CDP)(ZV)(ZAA)(SPPA)(MEL) – On May 16, 2006, the Zoning Administrator approved at 2337 Abbot Kinney Boulevard, a Coastal Development Permit for the demolition of an existing single-family dwelling and the subsequent construction, use and maintenance of two new single-family townhouses, served by four parking spaces, in conjunction with Parcel Map LA No. AA-2005-0583-PMLA-SL, in the single-permit jurisdiction area of the California Coastal Zone; denied a Specific Plan Adjustment to permit a 33-foot building height in lieu of the maximum 25- to 30-foot height permitted for two new townhouses in conjunction with Parcel Map LA No. AA-2005-0583-PMLA-SL; dismissed a Variance to permit required parking in the required front yard setback; and, dismissed an Adjustment and determined that the establishment of the no minimum passageway width requirement for small lot townhouse subdivisions qualify for the Owner Occupied exemption from the Mello Act.

Case No. ZA 2004-6491(CDP)(ZV)(ZAA)(SPP)(SPPA)(MEL) – On July 13, 2005, the Zoning Administrator approved at 1712 and 1712-1/2 Abbot Kinney Boulevard, a Coastal Development Permit for the demolition of an existing one-story duplex and the construction, use and maintenance of a new two-story duplex with habitable basement; approved a Variance to allow tandem parking for the four standard parking spaces provided; and, dismissed an Adjustment to permit a 7-foot high raised landing in the northerly side yard, as the corrected drawings indicated that it no longer exceeds the permitted maximum height of 6 feet.

Case No. ZA 2004-5897(ZAA)(SPP)(MEL) – On March 25, 2005, the Zoning Administrator

at 2416 Abbot Kinney, dismissed a Venice Coastal Zone Specific Plan Project Permit Compliance review, in as much as the request consists of less than four units, which is eligible for a Director's sign-off; approved an Adjustment to permit the construction, use and maintenance of a two-story plus mezzanine rear dwelling unit with garage and carport to observe a reduced side yard of 0 feet in lieu of the required 5 feet on a lot zoned R3; and, approved an Adjustment to permit a reduced passageway width from the street to the rear dwelling's entrance of 6 feet in lieu of the required 10 feet.

Case No. ZA 2004-1030(CDP)(ZAA)(SPP)(MEL) – On May 17, 2004, the Zoning Administrator approved at 1718-1720 Abbot Kinney Boulevard, a Coastal Development Permit for the construction, use and maintenance of a two-story, 4,250 square-foot two-family dwelling; approved Adjustments to permit the construction, use and maintenance of 3-foot side yards in lieu of the required 4 feet and a 3-foot passageway in lieu of the required 12 feet; and, approved a Specific Plan Project Permit Compliance for the construction, use and maintenance of the above-described project.

Case No. ZA 2004-0062(ZAD) – On August 30, 2006, the Zoning Administrator approved at 509 Boccaccio Street, a Determination to permit the establishment, use and maintenance of a one-unit, 2,850 square-foot in area structure as a joint living and work quarters (artist-in-residence) observing 0-foot side yards and determined the subject joint living and work quarters (artist-in-residence) project is in permit compliance with the applicable regulations of the Venice Coastal Specific Plan; approved Adjustments to permit reduced side yard setbacks of 3 feet in lieu of the required 4 feet, and a reduced passageway width of 3 feet in lieu of the required 10 feet; dismissed a Venice Coastal Zone Specific Plan Compliance Review as the community planner for the Venice Specific Plan indicated that the application does not require one and it qualifies for a Venice Director Sign-off; and, approved a Specific Plan Permit Adjustment to permit an increased building height of 27 feet 6 inches in lieu of the maximum 25-foot height permitted by the Venice Coastal Zone Specific Plan.

Case No. ZA 2001-3030(CDP)(SPD) – On November 8, 2001, the Zoning Administrator approved a Coastal Development Permit for the demolition of an existing carport and recreation room and the construction of a new four-car garage with a new second dwelling unit above, and a Specific Plan Project Permit Compliance for the above-described project at 2353 Abbot Kinney Boulevard.

Case No. ZA-2001-0494(ZAA) - On September 13, 2001, the Zoning Administrator approved a request to construct a new workshop over an existing garage at 666 W. Marr Street.

Case No. ZA-1997-0865(YV) - On February 4, 1998, the Zoning Administrator approved a yard variance request to remodel - adding a master bed and bath to a single-family residence in the R1-1 zone at 2416 S. Bryan Avenue.

Case No. ZA-1997-0727(YV) - On October 24, 1997, the Zoning Administrator approved a yard variance to permit the construction of a 6-foot wall and landscape along the required front yard of the Mildred Avenue frontage (Lots 1-16, Tract 51373) at 650 W.

Oxford Avenue.

Case No. ZA-1993-0158(YV) - On May 5, 1993, the Zoning Administrator withdrew a yard variance application to allow a reduction of lot areas from 5,000 to 3,000 square feet and front yard setbacks from 12 feet (20% of 60 feet) to 5 feet in the C1-1 and R1-1 zone at 618 W. Oxford Avenue.

Case No. ZA-1991-0451(YV) - On August 2, 1991, the Zoning Administrator approved a yard variance to permit the remodel and modest expansion of a single-family dwelling in the R1-1 zone but with said remodeled dwelling observing a reduced rear yard of 11 feet, 1 inch at 2337 S. Bryan Avenue.

Case No. ZA-1989-0187(YV) - On May 17, 1989, the Zoning Administrator denied a yard variance to permit the construction, use and maintenance of a second-story recreation room addition to an existing detached garage with said addition observing the existing 1 foot, 10 inch northerly side yard for a linear distance of approximately 20 feet, 2 inches instead of the required 4 foot side yard on an R1-1 zoned property at 2425 S. Bryan Avenue.

Case No. ZA-1988-1103(YV) - On November 30, 1988, the Zoning Administrator approved a yard variance to permit a rear yard of 7 feet 6 inches in depth in the R1-1 zone at 2329 S. Wilson Avenue.

Case No. CPC-2000-4046(CA) - On May 23, 2001, the City Planning Commission approved a code amendment affecting areas within the Venice Community Plan.

Case No. CPC-1998-119(LCP) - On August 1, 2003, the City Planning Commission approved amendments to the Venice Local Coastal Program Specific Plan.

Case No. CPC-1987-648(ICO) - On April 18, 1998, the City Planning Commission approved an Interim Control Ordinance for the entire Venice Coastal Zone which will temporarily permit only building development which is in conformance with regulations substantially based on the California Coastal Commission's interpretive guidelines for the area.

General Plan, Specific Plans and Interim Control Ordinances

Community Plan:

The Venice Community Plan Map designates the property for R1 A Low Residential land uses with corresponding zones of R2, RD3, RD4, RZ3, RZ4, RU and RW1, and height limited to District No. 1.

Specific Plans and Interim Control Ordinances:

The property is located within the area of the Venice Coastal Zone and the Los Angeles Coastal Transportation Corridor (Ordinance No. 168,999), effective September 22, 1993,

which addresses trip generation and traffic impacts associated with new developments. With two required parking spaces per new dwelling unit, the application is not directly affected.

Streets

Oxford Avenue, adjoining the subject property to the south, is a Local Street dedicated a width of 60 feet and improved with curbs, gutters, and sidewalks on both sides.

The alleyway, adjoining the subject property to the rear, is a through alley and is improved with asphalt pavement and concrete center gutter-line within a 20-foot dedication.

Flood Hazard Evaluation

The National Flood Insurance Program rate maps, which are a part of the Flood Hazard Management Specific Plan adopted by the City Council by Ordinance No. 172,081, have been reviewed and it has been determined that the property is located in Zone C, areas of minimal flooding.

Environmental Clearance

On February 14, 2007, the project was issued a Notice of Exemption (Article III, Section 3, City CEQA Guidelines), log reference ENV-2007-0753-CE, for a Categorical Exemption, Class 3, Category 2, City CEQA Guidelines, Article VII, Section 1, State EIR Guidelines, Section 15100.

Comments from Other Departments or the General Public

At the time of report preparation, no public agency had submitted any written comments and no correspondences or complaints were received from the general public.

M. ANDRE PARVENU
Zoning Investigator

MAP: