

June 11, 2002

**Honorable Chairman and Members of the
Hermosa Beach Planning Commission**

**Regular Meeting of
June 18, 2002**

**SUBJECT: APPEAL OF DIRECTOR'S DECISION REGARDING THE GRADE USED FOR
THE HEIGHT MEASUREMENT ON A CONVEX SLOPING LOT.**

LOCATION: 702 MARLITA PLACE

**APPLICANT: JOHN AND CINDY SMET
2810 TENNYSON PLACE
HERMOSA BEACH, CA 90254**

Recommendation

To direct staff as deemed appropriate by minute order, from the following alternatives:

1. Interpolate the grade from the corner points only.
2. Interpolate from intermediate points on the top of the slope, as proposed by the applicant.

Background

The subject lot is located at the south end of Marlita Place where it dead-ends as a T-head turn-around. The lot, like others along this block, is fairly flat at the top where it fronts on the street, but slopes down steeply for approximately a third of the lot.

Analysis

Pursuant to the definition of building height, as set forth in Section 17.04.040 of the Zoning Ordinance, and the method of determining building height, as set forth in Section 17.46.015, the grade used for the height measurements is based on the surveyed elevations points at the property corners. The method for determining building height also allows consideration of other points for lots with "convex" contours. In these situations the grade of a lot may be based on a detailed survey, and points along the property line may be used for grade in addition to the corner points. Pursuant to the definition, with the final determination of the grade referred to the Planning Commission, if required.

For the subject lot, the applicant is requesting consideration as a convex lot, and is proposing alternative points at the top of the bank as the basis for measuring height rather than the southerly corner points. This would allow the building to be two-stories from the front of the lot to the top of the bank on existing grade. A conceptual design of the proposed structure has been prepared based on the applicant's proposal. If a standard corner points interpolation is used instead, the potential for a second story would be eliminated on the back half of the lot, unless the first floor is lowered to a level substantially below existing grade (see exhibit).

The applicant's request may be reasonable given the existing condition of the slope, as the abrupt change from flat to sloping terrain appears to represent the natural terrain in the area and would be

consistent with a height measurement for a similarly situated lot a 712 Marlita Place, constructed in 1997. In that case, the determination was made to use alternative points along the top of the bank.

CONCUR:

Ken Robertson
Associate Planner

Sol Blumenfeld, Director
Community Development Department

Attachments

1. Exhibit showing alternative height measurement lines.
2. Photos