

February 10, 2003

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

**Regular Meeting of
February 18, 2003**

SUBJECT: TEXT AMENDMENT 03-4

REVISIONS TO SECTIONS 17.22.060G, 17.22.010 AND 17.22.060F.6 OF THE ZONING ORDINANCE TO CHANGE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR SOUND INSULATION FOR FLOOR/CEILING ASSEMBLIES TO A MINIMUM OF 54 STC IN ALL CASES OTHER THAN BETWEEN STACKED DWELLING UNITS, TO DEFINE "COMMON WALL" AND TO RESTRICT PLUMBING IN FLOOR/CEILING ASSEMBLIES IN STACKED UNITS

Recommendation

To recommend the City Council amend Sections 17.22.060.G, 17.22.020 and 17.22.060.F.6 of the Zoning Ordinance for Sound Transmission Class (STC) requirements relating to plumbing and location of utilities and floor/ceiling assemblies in residential projects.

Background

The City's condominium development standards, in Chapter 17.22 of the Zoning Ordinance, include requirements for sound attenuation between floors/ceiling assemblies that well exceed the minimum Uniform Building Code (UBC) requirements. The UBC requires a minimum Sound Transmission Class (STC) rating of 50. Currently the City requires a minimum STC rating of 58 for all floor/ceiling assemblies. This rating of STC 58 is achieved by pouring a lightweight concrete floor, which is expensive and difficult to install. Condominiums in Hermosa Beach are rarely built as stacked flats, meaning one on top of the other, which is a primary reason the City established the 58 STC rating requirement in the first place.

Analysis

The 58 STC requirement has created a hardship on builders of non-stacked flat projects without resulting in a significantly higher level of sound attenuation for occupants of the unit. However, in order to maintain high quality construction standards for all units other than stacked flats, staff recommends that the Planning Commission maintain that the floor/ceiling rating requirement be reduced to a STC rating of 54, which can be easily achieved by installing a resilient channel below the drywall of the ceiling assembly or by adding an extra level of drywall. The reduction to 54 STC will still achieve a high level of sound attenuation and is in excess of the minimum UBC requirements. The 58 STC requirement would remain in place for all stacked flat developments. Please refer to Exhibit A for a graphic detail of the location of the proposed changes, while the following table summarizes the existing and proposed STC rating requirements.

Unit Separation	Current STC Required	Proposed STC Required
Floor/ceiling Assemblies (Stacked Units)	58	58
Floor/ceiling Assemblies (Non-Stacked Units)	58	54

Common Walls (All Units)	52	52
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To ensure adequate soundproofing for other areas in the condominium developments, such as interior corridors, laundry rooms, recreational rooms and parking areas, staff recommends retaining the 52 STC rating requirement as currently required by the UBC and Zoning Ordinance, which is acknowledged through the City’s plan check and verified through the inspection process.

Floor/ceiling assemblies in stacked units are designed in such a way that noise generated from plumbing installed in the assembly may not be attenuated by insulation alone. As a another means of ensuring high quality development within the City, staff recommends that the plumbing of stacked dwelling units be restricted to exterior walls and dividing walls between dwelling units and that the plumbing be prohibited in the floor/ceiling assemblies altogether.

There are generally two types of construction used for building walls. One method is referred to as a staggered studs wall and the other method is called a parallel stud wall. For purposes of this proposed Text Amendment, parallel stud walls would not be considered a common wall. Please refer to Exhibit B for a graphic detail of the wall types. To clarify these requirements, staff also recommends adding a definition of “Common Wall” to the Zoning Ordinance and requiring the 52 STC rating for common wall construction.

Condominium ordinances of five surrounding cities were researched in regards to the STC requirements. The cities of Redondo Beach, Manhattan Beach, Torrance and Rolling Hills Estates rely solely on the UBC, which only requires a minimum STC rating of 50. The City of Lawndale prohibits stack flats.

Given that stacked flat condominiums are rarely constructed in the City, staff recommends the Planning Commission consider initiating a Text Amendment that slightly reduces the sound attenuation requirements to allow for more cost-effective construction without reducing the quality of development. Staff has prepared exhibits that are attached which graphically show the proposed changes. If these Text Amendments are ultimately approved by the City Council, the City will require future adherence of these new STC rating requirements and plumbing requirements through the building plan check.

Scott Lunceford, Planning Assistant

CONCUR:

Sol Blumenfeld, Director
Community Development Department

Attachments

1. Resolution
2. Exhibit A: Floor/ceiling and wall requirements

3. Exhibit B: Wall details

TAsound

RESOLUTION P.C. 03-

A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF HERMOSA BEACH, CALIFORNIA, RECOMMENDING AMENDING SECTION 17.22.060G, SECTION 17.22.010 AND SECTION 17.22.060F.6 OF THE ZONING ORDINANCE TO CHANGE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR SOUND INSULATION FOR FLOOR/CEILING ASSEMBLIES TO A MINIMUM OF 54 STC IN ALL CASES OTHER THAN BETWEEN STACKED DWELLING UNITS, TO RESTRICT PLUMBING IN FLOOR/CEILING ASSEMBLIES IN STACKED UNITS AND TO DEFINE "COMMON WALL"

The Planning Commission of the City of Hermosa Beach does hereby resolve as follows:

Section 1. The Planning Commission held a duly noticed public hearing on February 18, 2003, to consider amending Section 17.46.010 pertaining to the allowable size and height of chimneys.

Section 2. Based on the evidence considered at the public hearing, the Planning Commission makes the following findings:

1. The Zoning Ordinance requires an STC rating of 58 for floor/ceiling assemblies which requires floor/ceiling assemblies constructed with light weight concrete.
2. Requiring a 58 STC rating for floor/ceiling assemblies for other than between floors of stacked units imposes a hardship on builders, and is not necessary to provide good quality sound proofing.
3. A definition for "Common Wall" is necessary to distinguish between walls that may allow plumbing and walls where plumbing is prohibited.
4. Floor/ceiling assemblies cannot be sound-proofed adequately to attenuate noise generated by plumbing, and installation of such needs to be prohibited in stacked dwelling units.
5. The subject text amendment is exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), pursuant to the general rule set forth in Section 15061(3) of the CEQA Guidelines, as there is no possibility that this modification may have a significant effect on the environment.

Section 3. Based on the foregoing, the Planning Commission hereby recommends that the Hermosa Beach Municipal Code, Title 17-Zoning, Chapter 17.22, be amended as follows:

1. Amend Section 17.22.060G pertaining to sound insulation requirement as follows (underlined text to be added):

17.22.060 G. Sound Insulation.

Wall assemblies separating units from each other or from public or quasi-public spaces, such as interior corridors, laundry rooms, recreation rooms, parking spaces, etc., shall provide airborne sound insulation, impact sound insulation, and isolation of vibration and sources of structure-borne noise (including shock mounting of mechanical equipment). The minimum wall

1 insulation rating between units shall be 52 STC. Floor/ceiling assemblies between stacked
2 dwelling units shall be 58 STC, and in all other cases, the floor/ceiling assembly shall not be
3 less than 54 STC. These ratings shall be detailed on the approved plans and referenced on
4 the section drawings.

5 2. Amend Section 17.22.010 adding the following definition:

6 “Common Wall” means a staggered stud wall with one upper and lower plate, separating two
7 condominium units. For the purpose of this chapter, parallel stud walls with separate top and
8 bottom plates, and air space between are not defined as common walls.

9 3. Amend 17.22.0660F.6 to read as follows:

10 No plumbing fixtures shall be located in a common wall between two individual units. No
11 plumbing fixtures shall be located in a common wall or floor ceiling assembly between stacked
12 units. Each condominium unit shall have the necessary facilities installed (e.g., plumbing,
13 electrical, venting, etc.) for washers and dryers.

14 VOTE: AYES:
15 NOES:
16 ABSTAIN:
17 ABSENT:

18 CERTIFICATION

19 I hereby certify the foregoing Resolution P.C. 03- is a true and complete record of the action
20 taken by the Planning Commission of the City of Hermosa Beach, California, at their regular
21 meeting of February 18, 2003.

22 _____
23 Ron Pizer, Chairman

24 _____
25 Sol Blumenfeld, Secretary

26 _____
27 Date

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