

November 5, 2003

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

**Regular Meeting of
November 18, 2003**

SUBJECT: APPEAL OF DIRECTOR'S DECISION TO CONFIRM HEIGHT
MEASUREMENT ON A CONVEX SLOPING LOT.

LOCATION: 1212 LOMA DRIVE

APPLICANT: DAVID AND LYNN WILLIAMS

Recommendation

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

1. Determine the property to be a regularly sloping lot and interpolate the grade from the corner points only; or
2. Determine the property to be a convex sloping lot and interpolate from intermediate points on the top of the slope, as proposed by the applicant.

Background

The subject lot is located on the east side of Loma Drive between 11th Street and Pier Avenue. The lot is zoned R-3 with a height limit of 30-feet, and can be developed with up to three dwelling units. The lot, like others along the east side of this block, is relatively flat for three-quarters of the lot where it fronts on the street, but slopes down steeply at the rear quarter 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, however, also allows consideration of other points for lots with "convex" contours. In these situations, the grade of a lot may be based on alternate points along the property line in addition to the corner points. In cases where the datum for height measurement is disputed, the final determination of the grade may be referred to the Planning Commission.

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 easterly corner points. This will allow the construction of a project with two-stories above a basement on the flat portion of the lot. If a standard straight-line interpolation from the corner points were used, the construction of a second story above a basement and first story would not be possible unless the building is lowered into the grade. Also, two adjacent lots to the north were developed with 2-unit and 3-unit condominium projects¹ with the use of

a convex slope for maximum height determination. Each unit in these projects has two stories above a basement.

The applicant's request appears to be reasonable given the existing condition of the lot and surrounding terrain. The attached photos of the property and surroundings indicate that the grade of the lot, like others on the block, is relatively flat before it slopes steeply in the back portion of the lot, and this convex condition appears to be the natural grade.

CONCUR:

Scott Lunceford
Associate Planner

Sol Blumenfeld, Director
Community Development Department

Attachments

1. Property Survey
2. Photos

Notes

1. A two-unit condominium project at 1216 Loma Drive (the northerly adjacent lot) was approved by the Planning Commission at the July 17, 2001 meeting, and a three-unit condominium project at 1224 Loma Drive was approved by the Planning Commission at the January 20, 1998 meeting.

Appeal 1212

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