

October 11, 2005

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

**Regular Meeting of  
October 18, 2005**

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

LOCATION: 1532 PROSPECT AVENUE

APPLICANT: JIM LIEBSHIRE

**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 Prospect Avenue between 15<sup>th</sup> Street and 17<sup>th</sup> Street. The lot is zoned R-1 with a height limit of 25-feet, and can be developed with one dwelling unit. The lot, like others along the east side of this block, slopes up steeply from the street at the front of the lot and then is relatively flat for the majority of the lot thereafter.

A similar convex slope determination was made for another property on the east side of Prospect Avenue located at 1734 Prospect Avenue.

**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 elevation 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 westerly corner points. This will allow the construction of a proposed second-story addition to an existing single-family dwelling (which currently has a single story over a garage/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 addition would not be possible unless the building is lowered into the grade.

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, slopes steeply up from the street and is relatively flat in the back portion of the lot. This condition appears to be a convex slope condition (see topographic profile).

CONCUR:

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Scott Lunceford  
Associate Planner

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Sol Blumenfeld, Director  
Community Development Department

Attachments

1. Property Survey
2. Topographic Profile
3. Photos



1532 Prospect Avenue



Properties northerly adjacent to 1532 Prospect Avenue



View of the east side of Prospect Avenue north of the subject property



Properties southerly adjacent to 1532 Prospect Avenue