

August 29, 2007

Honorable Chairman and Members of the
Hermosa Beach Planning Commission

Regular Meeting of
September 18, 2007

SUBJECT: APPEAL OF DIRECTORS DECISION TO BASE THE HEIGHT
MEASUREMENT ON A CONVEX SLOPING LOT

LOCATION: 3216 HERMOSA AVENUE

APPLICANT: JEFF AND ROBERTA COPPERSMITH

Recommendation

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

1. Determine the property to be a uniformly 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 a through lot located on the easterly side of Hermosa Avenue between Longfellow Avenue and 33rd Street. The property is located within the R-3 zone with a height limit of 30 feet. The lot, like others along this block, slopes up substantially from the street at the front of the lot (Hermosa Avenue) and then is relatively flat for the majority of the lot thereafter. The elevation change from the front of the lot to the rear is approximately 11.38 feet.

The applicant is requesting consideration of alternate points along both the north and south property lines where the survey and topographic profile show a convex condition as compared to a straight line interpolation.

Analysis

Pursuant to the definition of building height and grade, 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 height measurements is based on the surveyed elevations points at the property corners. The method for determining the building height, however allows for consideration of other points along the property line 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 property corner points. The intent of this convex slope finding is to allow the use of alternate points if the evidence supports that there is a natural or unaltered convex condition. In cases where the datum for height measurement is disputed, the final determination of the grade may be referred to the Planning Commission.

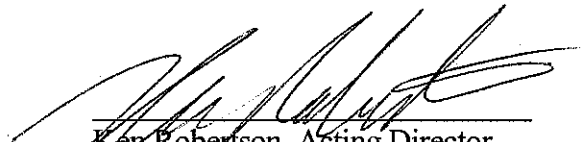
The grade along both side yards slope up substantially from the front of the lot to about the midpoint and is relatively flat for the remainder of the lot east to Palm Drive. The topographic profile clearly shows an abrupt change in grade in both side yards. The elevation change from the front to the middle of the lot is approximately 11.9 feet along the northern property line and 11.38 feet along the southern property line. The same condition appears to exist within other properties in the surrounding neighborhood. The property four lots to the north of the subject lot (3311 Palm Drive) was determined to have a convex contour and the convex slope interpretation was used as the basis for height calculation for a new single family residence.

Summary

The current grades demonstrate a convex slope, which appears to be a natural condition consistent with other properties on the block to the north.

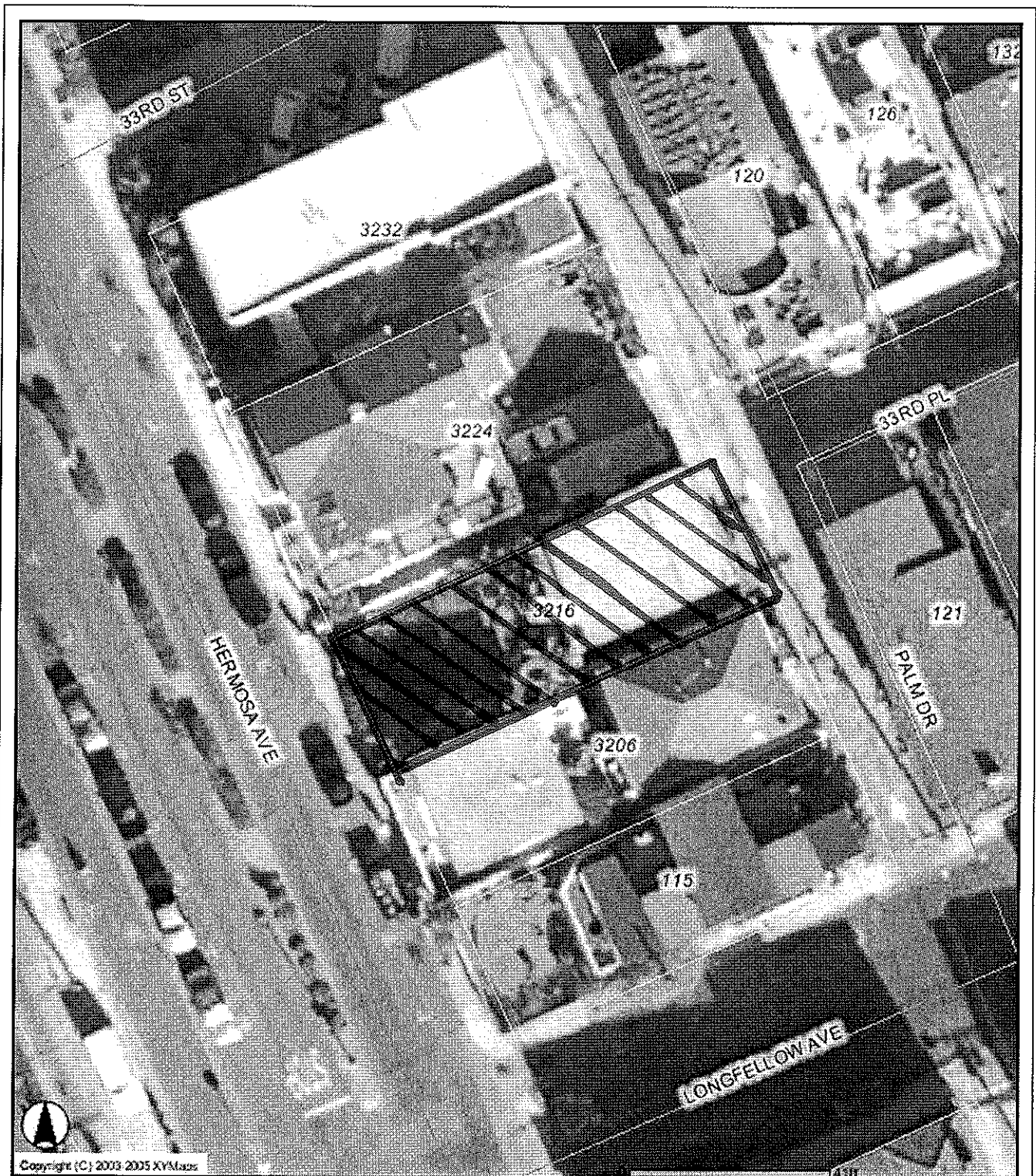


Christopher Wilson
Planning Division Intern


Ken Robertson, Acting Director
Community Development Department

Attachments

1. Location Map
2. Photo Survey
3. Property Survey
4. Topographic Profile



City of Hermosa Beach
3216 Hermosa Avenue