

January 28, 2024

To: Michael Jensen, Chair, LUPC Committee

From: Richard Stanger

Subject: 567 Rialto Avenue Project's LUPC Staff Report

This staff report conforms with the requirements of the Bylaws: *The Land Use and Planning Committee recommendations to the Board of Officers shall be in the form of a written report, including a project description, pros & cons, a summary of community input, and any LUPC findings.*

Basic Information:

Project Address:	567 Rialto Avenue
All Case Numbers:	ZA—2023-6876-CDP-ZAA-MEL-HCA
LUPC Member Assigned:	Richard Stanger
Applicant/Applicant's Representative:	Patrick McKinley
Email for City Planner assigned:	Luis.Lopez@lacity.org
Detailed Project Description:	Variance from required front yard setback of 15' to 10' and the 2 nd floor from 15' to 8.5'.
Link to LUPC Staff Report:	tbd

Link to City Planning website where application and plans are posted:
[Case Information & Documents - Los Angeles City Planning \(lacity.gov\)](#)

What the Project is Seeking:

The applicant, the homeowner and architect, is rebuilding his 1-story home to two stories. The existing house has a setback of 8.5'. The applicant is asking for a variance from the required front yard setback 15' to a setback of 10'. The applicant is also asking that its second floor be allowed to extend 1.5' farther into the prevailing front yard setback, but still within the setback of the existing structure.

Recommendation:

The requested first floor variance to 10', the prevailing setback, should be allowed. The approval of the additional second floor extension into the front yard of 1.5' should also be allowed.

Discussion, Pros & Cons, Community Input:

The project is in the Lost Canal neighborhood of Venice. (While Rialto Avenue itself was not a canal, Cabrillo Avenue and Grand on either side were canals.) Six of the ten homes along the project's side of Rialto Avenue between Cabrillo and Navarre Court were built between 1910 and 1924, the canal era, the other four between 1952 and 1954. The prevailing front yard setback of the ten parcels is 9.6'. All ten homes are presently 1-story; their average height is 14'. The proposed project is two stories and will be 26' high.

Pros: Given that the prevailing front yard setback is 9.6', and given that newer homes across the wide street have similarly short front yard setbacks, this variance from the required 15' to the prevailing setback (actually to 10') seems reasonable. In fact, it puts the new first floor façade 1.5' farther back than the setback of the existing 1-story house.

The applicant is also asking that the second floor be allowed to encroach 1.5' into the prevailing front yard setback. The justification is that the second floor extension would be no farther forward than the setback of the existing house at 8.5'.

Cons: There is really no reason to oppose the requested first floor setback. One could argue that asking for an additional second-floor setback into the prevailing setback after getting a 5' variance on the first floor is one bite of the apple too much. The second floor could also be seen as "looming" over the sidewalk only 8.5 feet away.

Community Input: The three neighbors contacted were fine with the requested variances, and the extension is still within the setback of the existing structure. (Four other neighbors could not be contacted in part because of their high front yard fencing and locked gates.)

I went over my draft report with the homeowner/architect. They had provided no comments back to me on its recommendation, which supports their request for the two variances.