

Related Issues not Previously Covered:

- Roof Decks & Roof Access Structures**
- Roof Types**
- Front Yard Fencing and Landscaping**

VNC's Venice Community Plan and
Local Coastal Program Ad Hoc Committee

1. Roof Access Structures and Roof Decks



Roof Access Structures

No Roof Access Structures



Results of Preference Survey – All Venice

• No Roof Decks:	18%	} 57%
• Roof Decks w/o Roof Access Structures:	39%	
• Roof Decks and Roof Access Structures:	43%	

Problems with Roof Access Structures:

- 57% of survey responders prefer not having RASs.
- Adds visual mass above main structure.
- Adds internal space that is heated/cooled with rest of home, although roof decks are rarely used.
- Perfectly good option exists – outside door and stairs starting from top floor.

Reasons to Oppose Roof Decks:

- Flat roofs are incompatible with the character of the older Venice homes and neighborhoods. (Roof decks started to appear in the 1990's and increased after 2000 with larger footprint homes.)
- Roof decks are very rarely used.
- They are viewed by neighbors as intrusions of their privacy.
- They make adding solar and solar thermal panels more difficult to install and less effective.

Problems with Roof Decks:

- They are often used by developers to “justify” larger building footprints by falsely equating the roof deck with the non-existent back yard.
- Having a roof deck often leads to additions such as frameworks for lighting or heat lamps, canvas shading, etc., all prohibited by code.
- Deck furniture, etc., can be unsightly.

Reasons to Continue Having Roof Decks:

- 43% of survey responses supported having them.
- Offer better views than top-floor windows.

Should Roof Decks Be Allowed But Limited?

- No roof decks on three-story structures or above? If adjacent to R1- or R1.5-zoned land uses?

(Present limits: none.)

- No roof decks in front third of structure to lessen visual intrusion of deck furniture, etc.? Front 10 feet?

(Present requirement: 3 feet.)

- Roof decks railings must be 6' from edge of structure to eliminate perceived intrusion on neighbor's privacy. 9 feet?

(Present requirement: 3' from edge.)

Possible Recommendations:

- Roof Access Structures are no longer allowed for residentially-zoned land uses. Access to roof must be provided with outside stairs from top floor located inside exterior wall. Required housing for elevator access to roof is allowed.
- No roof decks on structures above ____ stories.
- Roof decks cannot be in front _____ of roof.
- Roof decks railings must be at least ___ feet back from edge of structure.

2. Roof Types

Definitions from Land Use Plan

- Roof
 - Flat Roof – Any roof form that has a slope of 2” to 12” or less.
- Roofline:
 - Stepped-back roofline – a roof on which the portion that exceeds the flat roof height limit is set back from the required front yard one foot for every foot in height above the flat roof height limit.
 - Varied roofline - any roof which has a slope in excess of 2” to 12”, including but not limited to a sloped, curved or stepped-back roofline.

Traditional Venice Roof Type:

- Sloped – A roof composed of several low-pitched, sloped planes meeting either at ridgeline(s) or point(s).



Benefits of Sloped Roofs:

- After “Homelessness” and “Safety & Security” “Change in Architectural/Neighborhood Character” was seen as major concern. Sloped roofs are an important element in Venice’s traditional architectural style. (Like roof decks, residential flat roofs started to appear in the 1990’s and increased after 2000 with larger footprint homes.)
- May allow productive use of attic spaces.
- South- or southwest-facing sloped roofs allow easy and efficient solar panel installations.

Possible Recommendation:

- That the term “Sloped Roof” be added to any List of Definitions in the Venice Community Plan and Land Use Plan:

“Sloped – A roof composed of several low-pitched, sloped planes meeting either at ridgeline(s) or point(s).”

- That these sentences also be included:

“Sloped roofs are the traditional style of Venice roofs and are encouraged. They also are also best for solar panels and thermal water heating.”

3. Front Yard Fencing

Results of Preference Survey – All Venice:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----|
| • No front yard fence: | 5% |
| • Low walls, fence & hedges: | 42% |
| • Tall fence, no taller hedges: | 20% |
| • Tall fence & taller hedges: | 33% |

Notes:

- Code requires front yard walls to be no more than 42' high. (Non-permanent fences & hedges can be higher.)
- Very little, if any, enforcement – understandably.
- Experience has shown that the more “eyeballs” on a house the safer it is (“defensible space”).
- Tall fences and hedges are pedestrian-unfriendly and might be eroding the character of Venice.
- Venice is becoming a neighborhood where fewer of us interact with each other because we are increasingly walled-off from each other.

Possible Recommendations:

- None.