



**Land Use and Planning Committee
Staff Report to Venice Neighborhood Council Board of Officers
As Of February 20, 2007**

Case Number: APCW 2006-0213 SPE ZAA SPP
Address of Project: 718 Oxford Avenue
Size of Parcel: 2,996 square feet
Size of Existing Dwelling: 2,559 square feet
Size of Proposed Dwelling: 2,859 square feet
Venice Subarea: Oxford Triangle

Permit Application Date: January 11, 2006

Applicant: John Genovese, 310.245.1760
jhigenovese@yahoo.com

Representative: Greg Flewin_Design & Planning
1021 5th Street, #101, Santa Monica, CA 90403
phone: 310-393-6016

Date heard by LUPC: December 6, 2006

WLA Area Planning Commission Dates: February 7, 2007
March 7, 2007
Community Planning Bureau Date: August 14, 2006

LUPC Motion to Recommend that the VNC Board of Officers deny this project as presented. Vote 5-4-0 to deny.

REPORT

Project Description: Mr. Genovese wants to add a third story to a house that is already the maximum height allowed in the Venice Coastal Zone Specific Plan. His application clearly states, “permit an addition to a single family dwelling unit with a maximum height of 30 feet, in lieu of the maximum 25 feet permitted for projects with a flat roof, and an adjustment to permit 5-foot side yards in lieu of the minimum required 6 foot.”

The hearing notice goes on to state that the proposed project was, “Construction of an approximately 300 square foot, third floor addition to an existing two-story single family dwelling located on a 3,000 square foot lot.”

Applicant stated at the hearing that he wanted to put a personal gym or work out room in the rooftop structure. Please refer quote below from Section 5, re roof top structures, in our specific plan.

Project Description by Applicant on submitted LUPC Project Form Stating Requested Action by Venice Neighborhood Council:

“Enlarge existing roof deck access room to create a third floor, 300 square feet room to an existing 2-story residents with roof deck.”

Section of Venice Coastal Zone Specific Plan governing this particular site:

Pages 19 and 20 of the Venice Coastal Zone Specific Plan, Section 10, Land Use and Development Regulations for Subareas, sub paragraph H, Oxford Triangle, under #2 Height states:

- a. R-1 Residential Zone. Venice Coastal Development Projects with a Flat Roof shall not exceed a maximum height of 25 feet; Venice Coastal Development Projects with a varied roof line shall not exceed a maximum height of 30 feet.

Section of the Venice Coastal Zone Specific Plan governing rooftop structures:

Page 4, Section 5, Definitions, U. Roof Access Structure.

An enclosed stairway or elevator housing that provides access to a roof, but contains no storage, habitable or living area.

Page 11, Section C, Roof Structures, 1,

- c. Roof Access Structures shall be designed and oriented so as to reduce their visibility from adjacent public walkways and recreation areas;
- d. The area within the outside walls of the Roof Access Structure shall be minimized and shall not exceed 100 square feet as measured from the outside walls.

Pros: One might argue that a householder should have the right to add to an existing structure in spite of the zoning regulations against that addition by the granting of a variance.

Cons: Approval of this project would set a dangerous precedent with respect to the other 41 almost identical dwellings both north and south of Washington Boulevard on Oxford Avenue. Approval would encourage owners of all 42 homes to apply for variances to expand and enclose their rooftop structures.

City planners may encourage the granting of variances and density bonuses to facilitate development of more housing, but granting requests such as this one would only further the trend toward larger homes while doing nothing to provide additional housing.

Summary: Zoning Administrator, Jon Foreman, found that there was no hardship to Mr. Genovese or anything unique about this project. Applicant clearly wants to enlarge a 50 square-foot rooftop structure into a 300 square-foot room. After much debate, a motion was made to recommend to the VNC Board of Directors to approve this project. Vote 4-5-0. Motion failed. Another motion was made to recommend to the VNC Board of Officers that they deny this project. Vote 5-4-0 and passed.

West Los Angeles Area Planning Commission hearing January 17, the zoning staff recommended disapproval of the entire project. Part of the staff report stated, "At a minimum, the requested exception to permit increased height could set a precedent for other such requests for increased height, beyond that permitted by the Venice Coastal Zone Specific Plan, for the other 2-story, 25 height dwellings located along the west side of Oxford (in the Oxford Triangle)."

February 7, 2007 the staff recommended disapproval of the specific plan exception, and approval of the rest of the project. Only change was that the applicant agreed to slant the roof of the proposed addition to conform to varied roof line requirements of having a 30' height in this subarea. This project is still out of compliance with the zoning governing rooftop structures quoted above in the project description.

Public Comment: Majority of the public comments, both verbal and written, opposed this project. Seven letters from Oxford Triangle residents against, five speaker cards against, three for (including the owner and the architect).

Author of Report

By: Challis Macpherson

Date: February 16, 2007