

Venice Neighborhood

Design Workshop Standards

and

Recommendations for the

Local Coastal Plan

North Beach Area "A"

Revised

November 2, 1988

INTRODUCTION

This neighborhood study was initiated to respond to the Planning Department's request for input from the community in formulating a Coastal Land Use Plan for Venice. The information contained in this document focuses on the North Beach area of Venice, and is the result of weekly meetings and neighborhood walks and discussions from August 13, 1988 through November 1, 1988. This study group was composed of the participants shown on the next page. Everyone from and with an interest in the community was encouraged to join, whether through mailings or personal solicitation.

We have arranged the document first by type of street (i.e., residential walk street, residential drive street, Ocean Front Walk and commercial street), and then by issue (e.g., height, lot consolidation, setbacks, etc.). For each section, we have stated our objectives, articulated some discussion of why we want those objectives, and then exposed our recommendations of how to best go about attaining those objectives.

No attempt has been made to take this document to the neighborhood nor to the community at large other than through this planning process. This document represents the views of a number of dedicated, concerned community members who have given freely of their time in trying to express their vision of how growth and change can be directed and accommodated in the North Beach area of Venice.

This document offers the first step in the planning process. It is not the end result. The members of this group feel strongly that the City staff should continue to keep the community involved as the final Land Use Plan is developed. The force and numbers with which members of the Venice community turn out to Planning Department as well as these meetings is a good indication of the level of concern our community has for its future.

We wish to gratefully acknowledge the On the Waterfront Cafe for allowing our group to meet in their courtyard each Tuesday evening.

Due to the diversity of opinions in the North Venice Area A group, the group decided to split up into two smaller groups and produce two separate reports. The group that composed this report represents a broad cross-section of the community: residents, property owners, merchants, developers, architects and renters. The report is a product of compromise and consensus. With the aid of the experts in the field, we have attempted to come up with practical and concrete suggestions for design standards to be adopted in the area.

As explained above, this document does not state the viewpoints of all those who participated in the meetings for this area of Venice. The people listed below attended one, some or all of the meetings of the North Venice Area A group and each of their ideas were taken into consideration in the creation of these proposals.

Mr. Lee Babbitt	Ms. Annette Gustavson	Mr. Bruce Paine
Ms. Maureen Bailey	Ms. Carol Hanson	Ms. Janin Paine
Ms. Bess Barrows	Ms. Laura Harrison	Ms. Barbara Palivos
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Mr. Albert L. Bragg	Ms. Diana Hobson	Mr. Ed Pearl
Mr. Fred Brauer	Mr. Jack V. Hoffmann	Mr. Sherman Rattner
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Ms. Tamra Brink	Ms. Mary Ann Hutchison	Mr. Morrie Rosen
Mr. Paul Casey	Ms. Sarah Devora Izzard	Ms. Sally Rothfuss
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Mr. Michael Dieden	Ms. Phyllis Korn	Mr. Hank Seligsohn
Mr. Don Doyle	Mr. Louis Kent	Ms. Ethel C. Selvester
Ms. Barbara Duffy	Ms. Nancy Kent	Mr. Tom Sewell
Ms. Bonnie Faulkner	Mr. Tom Krauss	Mr. Andrew Solomon
Mr. Donald Feinstein	Ms. Sandy Krauss	Mr. Jeff Solomon
Mr. Mike Felgraber	Mr. Ralph Lebens	Ms. Fran Solomon
Mr. Richard Figueroa	Mr. Jeff Lee	Mr. Arnold Springer
Mr. L. Peter Flax	Ms. Maureen Luna Long	Ms. Preva Springer
Mr. Miguel A. Flores	Ms. Pegarty Long	Mr. Bruce Stanley
Mr. Glenn Freeman	Ms. Linda Lucks	Mr. John Stein
Ms. Danielle Fugere	Mr. J.P. Luebsen	Ms. Kathlene Sullivan
Mr. Howard Gabe	Ms. Ellice Luebsen	Mr. Demetrius Tahmin
Mr. David Gaber	Mr. Eric Mankin	Mr. Bo Taylor
Mr. Chris Ginsky	Mr. James McGlothlin	Mr. Jonathon Thays
Mr. Mitchell Ginsky	Dr. Beth Miller	Ms. Brooks Wachtel
Ms. Betsy Goldman	Mr. Don Mishell	Ms. Laura Waisler
Ms. Judy Goldman	Mr. James Murez	Ms. Martha Walford
Mr. Robert Goodfader	Ms. Melanie Murez	Ms. Gwen Zeller
Ms. Gail Gordon	Mr. Roy Nau	Ms. Robin Zucker
Mr. Tony Greenberg	Ms. Alma Nau	

I. The Area in General

Objectives: To maintain the current diversity in the population of Venice and afford low income people an opportunity to live near the beach by encouraging "granny-style" units through density bonuses. To create a pleasant environment for the residents and visitors, improve air quality and shading, keep the buildings in scale, provide visual relief from the hard edge of the cityscape, and increase the total volume of greenery in Venice by mandating tree planting. To provide visual insulation from objectionable elements and mandate a degree of openness for streets and adjacent yards by allowing tall street walls and fences on the sides and shorter one on the front. To control visual and odor blight from trash. To maintain the historical integrity and charm of the area.

Discussion: There is little affordable housing in the area. The small size of lots generally does not permit significant tree planting, therefore street trees are needed. The issue of screen walls and fences is complicated by the small lots and by the heavy use of our streets and sidewalks by beach-going visitors. A measure of privacy is certainly desirable from a resident's standpoint, but no one wants to walk down a street of walled enclaves. (Taken from the Development Standards and the Local Coastal Program, Venice Neighborhood Study, Central Area draft of September 17, 1988, p. 6). The Venice Historical Preservation Society has been identifying buildings to be preserved as historical landmarks, and should continue to do so as deemed appropriate.

Recommendations:

A. Landscaping

All new construction should require the planting of one mature (a minimum 24" box) tree per property or for each 30 feet of frontage, whichever is less. If trees already exist, the property owner will be required to contribute the amount it would cost him to plant those trees to a Venice Tree Fund.

B. Refuse

All projects shall provide on-site enclosed dedicated trash areas, out of the public view. All multiple housing should have provisions for recycling.

C. Street Walls and Fences

On the residential streets, street walls and fences located on the property line shall be limited in height as follows:

Front yard	42" of solid wall
Side yard	96" " "
Rear yard	96" " "

D. Demolition

Buildings of unique historical significance should be designated and preserved as such where possible.

II. Walk Streets

Objective: To maintain the existing neighborhood feeling, charm and character inherent in the walk streets of Venice. To encourage open porches. To provide adequate fire break, light and air, as well as allow the Fire Department access when needed. To encourage architectural projections and a heightened level of visual interest. (Ibid., p. 5.) To preserve the scale and character of the neighborhood. (Ibid., p. 7.) To allow for more creative uses of the substandard lots in Venice. To allow access to parking from the alley. (Ibid., p. 4.) To encourage a maximum of residential parking.

Discussion: We appreciate the 2 story buildings on the walk streets and would like to continue the tradition of the elevated front porch. Porches are a very important element in Venice housing, due to the small lots in this area. Not only do they provide a transition zone and sense of entry, they encourage neighborhood interaction while creating visual interest from the street. Suitable area for landscaping should be provided to soften the street edge at the pedestrian level. (Ibid., p. 4.)

Recommendations:

A. Usage

Walk streets shall remain residential east of Speedway. They shall be single family residences and duplexes only.

B. Height

Average height of 28', with a 25' front, and a rear height not to exceed 32'.

C. Set Backs

1. Front Yard

15' or the average stringline, whichever is more lenient. All buildings shall have their main entrance located for access from the front property line adjoining the walk street.

Discussion took place about the encroachments into the public rights-of-way. It was decided that either the encroachments should be stopped and the parcels returned to the City, or the owners should buy the parcels and pay taxes on them. The money collected for the purchase of the land should be recycled back into the Venice community.

2. Side Yard

Use the current L.A. Building Code guidelines.

3. Rear Yard

Use the current L.A. Building code guidelines.

D. Lot Consolidation

All lot consolidations must be approved by an Architectural Review Board. The Board should be made up of 1 member of the Venice Town Council, 1 member of the Venice Action Committee, and 3 licensed architects or landscape architects. None of the people on the Board should have a conflict of interest with the project.

E. Parking

A minimum of 2 parking spaces per dwelling unit required.

F. Density Bonuses

Offer density bonuses for each single lot for one low and very low income unit. The parking requirements stated above must still be met, except that only 1 parking space is necessary for residences of less than 500 square feet.

III. Residential Drive Streets

Objective: To maintain the neighborhood look and feel of the streets. To maintain the existing charm and character of the Venice residential streets. To produce a street edge compatible with the existing fabric. To increase the safety and overall sociology of the living environment. To provide adequate fire break, light and air. To encourage architectural projections and a heightened level of visual interest. (Ibid., p. 5.) To create fire breaks and allow the Fire Department access. To allow access to parking from the alley. (Ibid., p. 4.) To preserve the scale and character of the neighborhood. (Ibid., p. 10.) To encourage a maximum of residential parking. To create a pleasant environment for residents and visitors. To improve air quality and shading. To keep the buildings in scale. To provide visual relief from the hard edge of the cityscape. To increase the total volume of greenery in Venice. To provide visual insulation from objectionable elements, and to mandate a degree of openness for streets and adjacent yards. (Ibid., p. 6).

Discussion: As the drive streets are wider than the walk streets, the buildings can be somewhat higher while still maintaining the general look of the area. In addition, the additional height in the drive streets could permit larger buildings (i.e., lot consolidation) but they must be tempered by some sense of scale and rhythm.

Recommendations:

A. Height

Average 30', with a maximum height of 35' and maximum 30' at the front.

B. Set Backs

1. Front Yard

15' or the average stringline, whichever is more lenient.

2. Side Yard

Use the current L.A. Building Code guidelines.

3. Rear Yard

Use the current L.A. Building Code guidelines.

C. Lot Consolidation

2 lot consolidation permitted without approval of the Architectural Design Board. With the approval of the Architectural Design Board, lot consolidations of 3 or more.

D. Parking

A minimum of 2.25 parking spaces per dwelling unit required (including guest parking) plus BIZ parking of 1 space per 1000 square feet of footprint. In lieu of the Coastal Commission replacement requirement, BIZ parking will be adopted.

E. Density Bonuses

Offer density bonuses of a 25% increase for low and moderate income units. The parking requirements stated above must still be met, except that only 1 parking space is necessary for residences of less than 500 square feet.

IV. Ocean Front Walk

Objectives: To restore the splendor of Abbot Kinney's dream for Ocean Front Walk. To make Ocean Front Walk safe in the evenings for everyone, especially families with children and senior citizens, by increasing visitor-serving facilities that stay open (i.e., cafes, overnight accommodations, museums, etc.). To lessen the impact on the residents, deter week-end traffic and public parking east of Pacific Avenue to satellite parking lots linked with the "Kinney Shuttle". Discourage parking lots in the North Venice Area west of Pacific Avenue and encourage pedestrian use. To maintain the current mix of commercial and residential use on the boardwalk, and meet the objectives of the California Coastal Act by encouraging the increase of visitor-serving facilities. To maintain the current backdrop to the Ocean. To conform with the existing structures on the boardwalk. To provide a homogeneous commercial frontage and to discourage openings between buildings which can harbor crime and refuse. To diminish the unsightly trash in the area.

Discussion: Venice serves as the City of Los Angeles' public beach, and the LCP must reflect the social obligation to provide visitor-serving uses along Ocean Front Walk. Development must be sensitive to residents as much as possible. High ceilings in visitor serving commercial space on the ground floor are desirable and provide a welcoming, open, spacious feel. The residential or second floor commercial space does not require the higher ceilings, but they would benefit from them as well. Setbacks would in no way serve the visitor serving purpose of the buildings in this area, and would only take valuable space away from the visitor-serving usage. The current public right-of-ways adequately segment Ocean Front Walk. In addition, side yard and front yard setbacks provide areas which harbor trash and crime. Light and air are not needed from the side of commercial spaces as they are for residences. Ground floor in mixed usage space is best devoted to visitor-serving purposes and for meeting the strict parking requirements rather than providing setbacks. Lot consolidation prohibition would in no way contribute to the enhancement of Ocean Front Walk. However, it should be recognized that lot consolidation without sensitive architectural treatment can produce undesirable massing of structures. Cars should be kept as much as possible east of Pacific Avenue.

Recommendations:

A. Usage

Mixed usage buildings are preferable with visitor serving uses on the ground level, and either commercial or residential above ground. For the commercial space, at least 50% of the area of the ground floor street wall shall be devoted to pedestrian entrances, display windows or windows affording views into retail, office gallery or lobby space.

B. Height

Maximum 35'.

C. Set Backs

1. Front Yard

Comply with the one foot setback ordinance for commercial usage. 15' or the average stringline, whichever is more lenient, for the residential portion.

2. Side Yard

Zero set back for the commercial space. Use the current L.A. Building Code guidelines for the residential space.

3. Rear Yard

Use the current L.A. Building Code guidelines.

D. Lot Consolidation

No limit to lot consolidation, however, a lot consolidation of 3 or more lots must go before an Architectural Review Board (see Lot Consolidation of Drive Streets above).

E. Parking

For the commercial space, the ICO guidelines should be maintained, except for lots less than 3000 square feet, where only one space (handicap) should be required for the first 500 square feet, and then the ICO guidelines should be followed. A minimum of 60% of the parking is required on-site, but 40% can be located off-site. For the residential area, a minimum of 2 on-site parking spaces per dwelling unit required. In lieu of the Coastal Commission replacement requirement, BIZ parking shall be adopted.

[2.25 except on lots of single dev/mt, -? where 2 sp only + BIZ not on single lot.]

F. Density Bonuses

Offer density bonuses of a 25% increase for low and moderate income units. The parking requirements stated above must still be met, except that only 1 parking space is necessary for residences of less than 500 square feet.

V. Commercial Streets

Same as commercial requirements for Ocean Front Walk stated above, with the following exceptions:

1. Zero front yard setback.
2. Where possible, parking should be located between the rear of the building and the rear property line.

[Car per 1000 sq ft parking for 20 commercial]

3. Every commercial project shall include a street wall (the building front), which shall extend for at least 65% of the length of the street frontage, and shall be located at the property line or within five feet of the property line. Adjacent to a sidewalk cafe, public plaza, retail courtyard or arcade, the required street wall may be set back no more than 15 feet along the portion of the project which consists of the cafe, plaza, courtyard or arcade. The required street wall at the sidewalk level shall have a minimum height of 13 feet.