

ORSON

Dec 3, 2013

Dear Appeals Commission:

I live immediately next door to 522 S. Venice Blvd. My address is 605 Mildred Avenue, Venice. I have lived there, and used this address, which is posted on the gate, for over 5 years. (picture below). I had heard "rumors" about the 15 unit development planned for 522 and had intended to file all Appeals possible. I did not get any kind of Notice of the Appeal and only learned after the deadline had past, from neighbors, that I should have gotten notice and should have been able to Appeal the Density Bonus aspects of the project. Apparently the Notice process was so flawed that no one knew to appeal.

A few of my specific concerns are:

The project design would place 40 foot tall buildings - higher than any around - that would cast shadows and eliminate all privacy for my home and garden. The driveway would send car and truck noise, rumble and carbon fumes directly into my living room and patio. The addition of 15 units, with zero guest parking, would put an unreasonable burden on all of us neighbors. The 30 car driveway would be add congestion to an already unsafe, narrow street corner. Drivers exiting it would be dangerously obstructed by my existing garage. It's an accident, or 10, waiting to happen! Venice architecture is all about diversity but with architectural merit. This project has no architectural merit - it is solely about greed and with total disregard for community wellbeing.

I have known Mr. Judekan over these past 5 years. He allowed his hedge (which I believe is on public land), to be so overgrown that, not only is there no sidewalk on Mildred, but also, the thickness of his hedge eliminated two feet of width from this already narrow corner block. It took a major effort to get him to trim this back. He has total disregard for the interests of the community, its safety and quality of life.

Please re-open my option to Appeal the Density Bonus. And please deny his proposal. That lot is a prominent corner. Public rights, safety and quality of life cannot be given away for the profit of one thoughtless absentee developer.

Sincerely,

Howell Caldwell

605 Mildred Avenue  
Venice, CA 90291  
email: howcal@mac.com

# SETBACKS



SOUTH VENICE BLVD FROM  
WASHINGTON WAY TO ABBOT KINNEY BLVD

APARTMENTS | & 2 STORY WITH 25' TO 50 FOOT SETBACKS  
MEDIAN: (NOT SHOWN) OPEN SPACE PUBLIC PARK

TRAFFIC: BIKES, RV'S CARS, BUSES...

ADDRESS	HEIGHT	SETBACK
CORNER V. BLVD & ABBOT KINNEY		
582	1	25
570	2	35
568	2	25
564	2	40
562	2	40
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556	1	25
554	1	25
550	2	40
548	2	40
546	2	50
544	2	50
542	1	25
540	2	25
538	2	25
536	2	25
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530	2	25
WASHINGTON WAY INTERSECTION		
522 THIS PARCEL - EXISTING	2	40
PUBLIC CORNER		
OCEAN AVENUE		

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# Notes for 522 Venice Appeal Hearing

December 4, 2013

Sarah Dennison, FAIA, LEED AP, Venice LUPC staff

## SELECTED REGULATIONS

### **VENICE COASTAL ZONE SPECIFIC PLAN**

Section 3 F: Purpose: Too high, too dense and no buffer zone with frontage streets

Section 8 C.1: Findings: Not compatible in scale and character; detrimental to neighbors due to blocked sunlight, increased traffic and 98 safety hazards, no street buffer

Section 9.C: Roof Access: Structures closer to front than back; visible from library and Venice Blvd

### **LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM**

Chapter 2: Policies 305250 & 305251: Has significant adverse effects on neighborhood; not visually compatible with character of surrounding area; does not restore/enhance a visually degraded area

### **COASTAL ACT OF 1976**

Chapter 3, Article 6: Existing development not able to accommodate project; significant adverse effects – blocked sunlight, increased traffic, higher safety risk at intersection; visually incompatible with character of surrounding area

### **VCP**

Design: Buildings do not improve quality and character of community appearance due to lack of architectural features, excessive height, bulk and monotonous facades.

## COMMUNITY ISSUES

### **PARKING**

Multi-family housing – VSP requires ¼ guest parking space per unit; 4 guest spaces for project required; none provided

### **MASS & SCALE**

Sub-division creates 10 separate lots, but side yards between lots eliminated yielding one massive, contiguous building

### **TRACT MAP DETERMINATION FINDING (10/16/13)**

Page 2, 3b; requested street dedication may be granted because it is “unnecessary for public purpose”. This land forms a critical traffic/pedestrian buffer zone created by the City adopted Venice Gateway Plan. Venice needs that buffer.

### **DIR DETERMINATION**

Community including one abutting neighbor, VNC, LUPC and all who signed in to 8/14/13 ZA hearing where DIR decision was publicly discussed did not receive 9/6/13

Letter thereby missing chance to appeal.

### **COMMUNITY QUALITY OF LIFE**

Detrimental to existing neighborhood due to:

- Increased traffic
- Blocked sunlight
- Higher risk of traffic accidents
- Lack of buffer zones between pedestrians and traffic
- Reduced setbacks (min. 15' prevailing)
- Extraordinary height, bulk and mass
- No guest parking
- Lack of architectural features and monotonous façades

December 3, 2013

To: City of Los Angeles Building and Planning Department appeals hearing on  
December 4,

2013

From: Bruce and Jan Ferguson, owner-occupants of 1748 Washington Way,  
Venice, CA, 90291

Re; Proposed multiunit development of 15 units for the corner of Venice Blvd.  
South, Ocean Boulevard, and Mildred Avenue

Please note our strong opposition to this proposal. We represent a disabled community that cannot attend your hearing, Four people living on the block of Washington Way are disabled, vulnerable, and would suffer further restriction of our lives if this development is approved as planned. Other disabled people live on Mildred Avenue would suffer also.

I myself have Parkinson's Disease and will speak from this perspective. I use Washington Way, the library, and immediate neighborhood as a relatively safe area within Venice in which to walk as I can. The intense traffic on Abbot Kinney and Venice Boulevard present a physical danger to me, as I move slowly and occasionally gets stuck in my walks have to be rescued by my wife in a car. Washington Way with its speed bumps, relatively light traffic, and well-known neighbors are a safety zone that I use to get the exercise I need to maintain my health and mobility.

The overly congested, dangerous corner of Washington Way, Mildred Avenue and Venice Blvd is one of the limits that I seldom go beyond.

Adding 30 cars resulting from the proposed development of 15 units and the notable increase in traffic of this supersized development proposal would significantly decrease our physical safety. For this reason, as well as the other insults of this proposed development to our neighborhood, we oppose it. In particular, we strongly object to giving public land to the developer in the form of the strip along Venice Blvd., South now enclosed illegally by the fence that the developer has built around his legally-owned property. By any logic, this strip of public land along Venice Blvd. South should form a natural extension of the park to be established on the vacant public lot at the southeast corner of Mildred, Ocean Boulevard and Venice Blvd. South.

I would like to see a well-integrated project replace the former church on the land that the developer now legally owns. However, this project as now proposed is not it. Please reject this insulting proposal and replace it with a project of some quality and congruence with the neighborhood: e.g., 4 units (without contributing to an affordable housing fund) up to 8 units (with a substantial contribution to an affordable housing fund; density bonuses for affordable housing at the site in question apparently get

manipulated or evaded by with some frequency and seem best avoided) with 20–25 feet setbacks (the setback of the multiunit property across the street at the southwest corner of this intersection), architectural quality, and significant visitor parking.

Thank you for taking our comments into consideration.

# EVENING COMMUTE TRAFFIC



View to the left,  
March 13, 2014 @ 6:55:37pm  
(7 seconds before large pic)

Car waiting to turn right onto Ocean Ave.

Car waiting to turn left onto Mildred Ave.

Car has to avoid car waiting to turn left

Man returning to car after visiting Kim's market

Pedestrian almost across Mildred

Busy Kim's market has 15-minute parking on Mildred, across from development



Pedestrian  
March 13, 2014 @ 6:55:42pm  
(2 seconds before large pic)

Severely backed-up on Ocean Ave. traveling south.>

< Traffic lined up going North too.

Another patron exits car to go to Kim's market

Another car waits to turn right from Mildred.

First patron about to get in car after waiting for traffic to pass

Pedestrian about to cross Mildred

Thursday, March 13, 2014 @ 6:55:44pm

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## West Los Angeles Area Planning Commission

November 22, 2013

Project: 522 Venice Blvd.  
Case #'s: ZA 2013-1420-CDP  
TT-70870  
ENV 2009-2489-EAF

### Commissioners:

I am writing to express my concerns about the above-mentioned project that will be heard by your Board on Appeal by local community members on December 4, 2013.

As the Venice Neighborhood Council Land Use and Planning Committee staff person for this project, I have been involved for 3 years and am struck by how little the applicants have taken into consideration the opinions of the local neighbors during that period of time. Repeatedly, neighbors have spoken publicly against the mass, scale, character and compatibility of the project relative to the existing smaller residences in close proximity to the applicants' site. The project's design has been revised 3 times, but has grown larger and denser with each set of plan changes. The building facades have not changed substantially from the first design save for the use of different paint colors, added units and the additional floor height acquired through the use of the density bonus.

The applicants have a history of ignoring City rules going back many years. The property is occupied by a church building, registered with the City as having residential units, but is currently used for office space. The applicants erected an illegal fence around public property that had been designated for Venice public open space and posed sightline issues for cars turning the corners at Venice, Mildred and Ocean. They did not remove the fence despite multiple complaints by neighbors.

This project was heard by the LUPC and the VNC two times and voted down due to the applicants' refusal to consider community recommendations. When the most recent revised design application was submitted to the City, the LUPC requested that the applicants return a third time, but they refused to meet with LUPC or the VNC or to provide the revised plans or any other documentation requested by either body.

For the following reasons, I urge that you vote for the appeal and the community of Venice.

- The project is too large and dense for the site and the existing community leading to a lack of on-site open space, minimal front yard setbacks much smaller than prevailing setbacks on adjacent blocks of South Venice, minimal front yard landscaping, an unsafe driveway entrance, and traffic generation far above the limitations of Mildred Ave.
- The character of the proposed building is not compatible with the surrounding smaller scale neighborhood north of the project site in terms of bulk, mass, scale, façade articulation, use of materials and architectural design features.
- The building height and mass obstructs neighbor's views, shades surrounding properties, and walls off the existing community from the rest of the Venice community to the north.
- The applicants' request to vacate public land along South Venice, if granted, will narrow the width of that street significantly so that it no longer lines up with the sidewalks and dedicated public right of way to the east, thus reducing the potential for future pedestrian

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- friendly development that would allow for landscaped areas and street trees to provide visual separation from vehicular traffic.
- The corner of Mildred, Ocean and South Venice is very busy with automobile, bike and pedestrian traffic, and despite traffic signals, many injury accidents have occurred there over the years. The additional traffic added from 15 dwelling units using Mildred for primary vehicular access heightens this existing safety risk.
  - The building façade facing west as it will be seen driving east along South Venice Blvd. is an monolithic, unarticulated, virtually blank wall that is inappropriate for this portion of Venice Blvd. that forms the City approved "Venice Gateway" from the ocean to Lincoln Blvd.

Many of us from the Venice community attended the ZA/VTT hearing for this project held at City Hall on August 14, 2013. We were told at that time that it would be the only hearing held by the City for the case and that if we signed in we would receive determinations letters. No one in our group who signed in received the DIR determination. We did receive copies of the ZA determination.

Staff person Joey Vasquez publically told the ZA/VTT Board during this August 14<sup>th</sup> hearing that the "Director" (I believed that to be Michael Lo Grande) had called him to tell Joey that he had decided he would approve the DIR for this project. Joey's announcement led me to believe that the DIR would be mailed to all those in attendance who signed in. Despite that fact, it appears that the DIR letter did not go out until September 6, 2013 (the appeal period was only 14 days), and neither the community members who signed in at the meeting at which that DIR decision was publicly discussed, nor Venice LUPC members nor the Venice NC received copies of that letter, thus all missing the deadline to file an appeal of that DIR decision.

There are four governing documents that provide policy, regulations and guidelines to project applicants as well as to City and community decision-makers regarding the character, mass and scale of a proposed project slated for development in Venice. Attached is my documentation of many of the sections from those documents that I think might apply in this case.

If all of this language exists within the *Venice Coastal Zone Specific Plan*, the *Venice Local Coastal Program*, the *California Coastal Act of 1976*, and the *Venice Community Plan*, why has it become so difficult for Venice citizens to have the City follow and enforce the clearly well documented policies and regulations laid out within these documents?

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Sarah Dennison, FAIA, LEED AP  
Venice Neighborhood Council  
Land Use and Planning Committee  
Assigned staff