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If you have any questions, please contact the Commission Office at (213) 978-1300.

SECONDARY SUBMISSIONS



Planning APC East LA <apceastla@lacity.org>

proposed development at 1236 N Cliff Drive 90065

1 message

alyssa lehner <alyssa.d.lehner@gmail.com>
To: apceastla@lacity.org

Tue, Jun 30, 2026 at 8:50 PM

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing about the proposed development at 1236 N Cliff Drive 90065. My main concern is traffic safety. I walk my dog and kids and drive on that corner daily. It's a very narrow street that you need to reverse out of if anyone is coming the other way. If there is anyone walking on the corner it's hard to see them when the brush is grown over. The only thing that keeps it semi safe is that you can see through the chainlink so you don't accidentally run someone over or hit a car. I drive extremely slowly on that section just because it is SO incredibly hard to see around. With the new house(s) going in, it will cut off the view of anyone walking or cars coming around the corner.

Without a street widening and a sidewalk, it will definitely cause some accident at some point. I truly hope it's not someone's dog or child that ends up getting hurt if the sidewalk and street widening are not part of the plan.

I live up the street and have my little chunk of sidewalk and street widening in front of my property that I had to put in when I built my house in 2005 and I didn't mind doing it since it improves the street. I don't see any problem with asking them to widen the street and put a sidewalk in on their street frontage, especially when it's a known hazard already to drive and walk on that corner. It would also greatly improve any sort of emergency vehicle access to have a wider street for them to get up.

Thank you for reading my concerns.

Sincerely,

Alyssa Lehner



Planning APC East LA <apceastla@lacity.org>

Case No. ZA-2025-2856-CU1-SPPC-HCA-1A Development Address: 1236 N. Cliff Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90065

1 message

Pollner, Adrian <apollner@omm.com>
To: "apceastla@lacity.org" <apceastla@lacity.org>
Cc: Ozioma Akagha <oakagha@gmail.com>

Mon, Jul 6, 2026 at 12:48 PM

Dear Members of the East Los Angeles Area Planning Commission,

I write on behalf of myself and my partner, Ozioma Akagha. We reside at [3574 Tacoma Avenue](#), just two lots from the proposed development at 1236 N. Cliff Drive, and urge the Commission to sustain the appeal filed by Andrew Keoghan and Brianna MacGillivray.

We share the concerns outlined in the community letter and appeal, including the approval of a 0-foot front yard setback (instead of the required 5-foot minimum), the failure to require full street improvements (curb, gutter, sidewalk), and the fire safety risks of building two homes on a substandard hillside lot in a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone.

We want to particularly emphasize the pedestrian safety danger. The curve on Cliff Drive at this location is narrow, tight, and considerably sharper than 90 degrees with no sidewalk. Families with children and dog walkers use this road daily. I have personally experienced multiple close calls with vehicles coming around the blind corner while walking my dog. With just a fence erected visibility around the curve has reduced and I have seen an increase in the number of unsafe pedestrian-car incidents. If the current plan is approved, replacing the existing guardrail with a structure at a 0-foot setback, visibility will be further and permanently reduced and this corner will become even more dangerous. A recent Amazon truck crash into the road barrier at this very spot confirms the existing hazard. Without intervention, a serious pedestrian accident is inevitable.

I also note that our property at 3574 Tacoma Avenue was excluded from the plan's average setback calculations. Given our proximity, this omission is wrong and calls into question the developer's claims of consistency with the Mt. Washington-Glassell Park Specific Plan.

We urge the Commission to deny the requested variances, or at minimum require the full 5-foot setback and complete street improvements including a sidewalk.

To be clear, we are not opposed to development of this lot. But it should be developed safely and responsibly, in compliance with the same rules that every other property owner in this neighborhood has had to follow.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Adrian Pollner Ozioma Akagha [3574 Tacoma Avenue Los Angeles, CA 90065](#)

O'Melveny

Adrian O. Pollner

Counsel

apollner@omm.com

O: +1-213-430-7516

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Los Angeles, California 90064
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July 6, 2026

Robert L. Glushon, Esq.
Luna & Glushon, APC
16255 Ventura Boulevard, Suite 950
Encino, California 91436

Re: Review of Plans Without Required Front Yard Setback
ZA-2925-2856-CU1-SPPC-HCA-1A Variance
1236 N Cliff Drive/Los Angeles, California

Dear Mr. Glushon:

I have been retained by you to review the Plans and Application Materials for the above listed project requesting relief from the Code-required Front Yard Setback requirements and to provide an independent opinion as to feasibility of development of both dwelling units with Code compliance.

The proposed development is located at 1236 N Cliff Drive, Los Angeles, California. Based upon my review, it is clear that there is no necessity for any deviation from the Code-required Front Yard Setback. Revisions can be made to the Plans that will allow the property to be developed with the maintenance of a minimum 5'-0" Front Yard Setback as required by Code without impacting the area or height of the proposed structures

The Area Planning Commission should also know that the Project Plans can be revised to allow the reasonable development of the site with less detrimental impacts to neighboring properties and residents.

Background/Experience

I am a registered architect and planner, licensed in the State of California; License No. C-13491. I am also a current member of the American Institute of Architects. I have more than 45 years of experience in designing new and remodel projects, many of these projects have included the planning and design of homes in the Hillside areas. I have been the Past President of the North Beverly Drive/ Franklin Canyon Homeowners Association. I have been a representative to the Hillside Federation in Los Angeles. I also sit on the Roscomare Valley Architectural review committee. I attended the University of Florida for a Bachelor of Science degree in Architecture and the University of Minnesota for a Master's degree in Architecture. In addition, I received a Juris Doctorate Degree from Loyola Law School in 1986. I have been the principal of the Neiman Group Architects, Inc. since 1987. My expertise encompasses a wide array of projects including housing, commercial, medical, and educational facilities.

I also have expertise in the regulatory approval processes that are governed by various code and regulatory requirements. I have also participated in presentations before numerous design review boards, neighborhood groups, planning commissions, and other regulatory bodies including those related to Hillside regulations within the City of Los Angeles.

Relevant Materials

I reviewed the relevant portions of the following:

- Project Application.
- ZA-2925-2856-CU1-SPPC-HCA-1A / 1236 North Cliff Drive
- City of Los Angeles Baseline Hillside Ordinance
- Google Earth images and site photos
- Site Plan, Floor Plans, Elevations, Sections prepared by Designer Hallie Black and Architectural Studio SEO PLLC dated January 13, 2025
- Photographs and information provided by the Appellant showing the narrow, substandard street width; incidents of property damage; drainage and access issues.

Proposed Development

The purpose of the review is to assess if the requested deviation from the Code-required Front Yard Setback is necessary for the development of the proposed two dwelling units on the subject property.

The proposed new development consists of subdividing an existing undeveloped 9,305.80 sq.ft. in a designated Hillside Area parcel, within a Very High Fire Severity Zone, into 2 lots and constructing a new home on each lot. The homes will be 2 stories each with a 1 compact car covered carport serving each home. The area of the northernmost home is 1,313.05 sq.ft. The area of the southernmost home is 2,380.78 sq.ft. As noted, the lot is located within a designated Hillside Area in the City of Los Angeles. Both homes are of wood construction and are Type V B (non-fire rated construction) construction. The lot's topography consists of steep terrain sloping downward from the street level. There are also various types of vegetation on the site including some protected species. The presented plans call for the removal and replacement of 2 of the protected tree species. The home appears to fall within the height per the relevant zoning although it is my opinion, that the required first 20'-0" of the home's height be measured from the 5'-0" setback and not the proposed new setback of the home.

Findings

Please note that we have prepared several schematic alternatives showing how the Project could be redesigned while maintaining the required 5'-0" Front Yard Setback and matching the existing amount of floor area. These schematics are by no means exhaustive and there are, in my opinion, many other potential revisions that would allow for the Project and comply with the Code-required Front Yard Setback.

- From the drawings examined, it appears that no other design solutions were explored other than using a rectangular form roughly matching the existing proposed design. This limits possible alternative designs that address the unique characteristics of the site while still maintaining the required 5'-0" Front Yard Setback. The proposed footprint of the proposed plan, in my opinion, has resulted in a self-created hardship.

- Adjacent homes with similar site issues have been configured to comply with the 5'-0" Front Yard Setback.

- The Plans could easily be modified to comply with the 5'-0" Front Yard Setback requirement by lowering the height of the structure and adding area to the east side of the proposed home. Note, the lower-level floor of the proposed southern home as indicated has an 11'-6" floor to floor height. The second floor has an overall floor to floor height of approximately 16'-0" to the top portion of a sloping roof. It is my opinion that the overall height can easily be reduced and additional area added to the home at the lower level without impacting the overall height of the structure and avoiding impacting any protected

trees. This would allow area to be added to the home to offset the area deleted by complying with the required Front Yard 5'-0" setback.

The Commissioners should note that most houses have 9'-0" floor to floor height so the proposed home could be redesigned and lowered to save over 6'-0" in height. There are many other design options that can be explored when the ceiling is lower and additional area added without impacting the current proposed height. [See attached Exhibits A, B and C].

- The Plans could easily be modified to comply with the required Front Yard Setback by simply elongating the home. Again, this would allow area to be added to offset the area deleted. [See enclosed Exhibit D].

- The northern-most home could easily be redesigned to comply with the required 5'-0" Front Yard Setback simply by "squaring" off the form to capture area that was designed within the setback [See Exhibit A].

- From a strict infrastructure and public safety perspective, setbacks on winding, single-lane-each-direction roads are not merely aesthetic - they are critical buffer zones.

- Allowing 1 compact parking stall should be denied as it is insufficient parking in lieu of 2 required standard parking spaces as it will most probably increase street parking compounding an already Substandard Street.

Conclusion

In my professional opinion, for all of the reasons set forth above, the requested deviation from the Code-required Front Yard Setback should be denied. It is my professional opinion; the proposed homes could be re-designed to achieve Code compliance and minimize detrimental and harmful impacts to neighboring properties and residents.

Here, the Applicant cannot meet the required legal findings to support relief from the Zoning Code.

There are no exceptional or extraordinary circumstances or conditions applicable to the subject property or to the intended use.

There is a blind curve with documented vehicle incidents/accidents.

From a strict infrastructure and public safety perspective, setbacks on winding, single-lane-each-direction roads are not merely aesthetic - they are critical buffer zones.

Granting the requested deviation from Code requirements would be detrimental to the neighbors and immediate community.

There are numerous options to revise the Project Plans to easily achieve Code compliance.

If a home is built closer than 5 feet to this narrow road, it is my opinion that there are potential significant impacts on access, especially fire trucks and equipment; an ambulance; or evacuating residents.

Winding narrow roads require strict geometric sight-lines for safety. Waiving the Front Yard Setback as required by Code would allow the physical massing of a structure to move closer to the street curve, creating blind corners. This significantly increases vehicular and pedestrian collision risks on roadways that lack sidewalks.

Encroaching into the required Front Yard Setback could also bring massive foundation structures dangerously close to public infrastructure possibly adding a Surcharge on Retaining Walls. The 5'-0" setback also allows for an essential swale or drainage easement to capture hillside runoff before it sheet-flows onto public asphalt. Eliminating this space exacerbates localized flooding, mudslides, and pavement erosion.

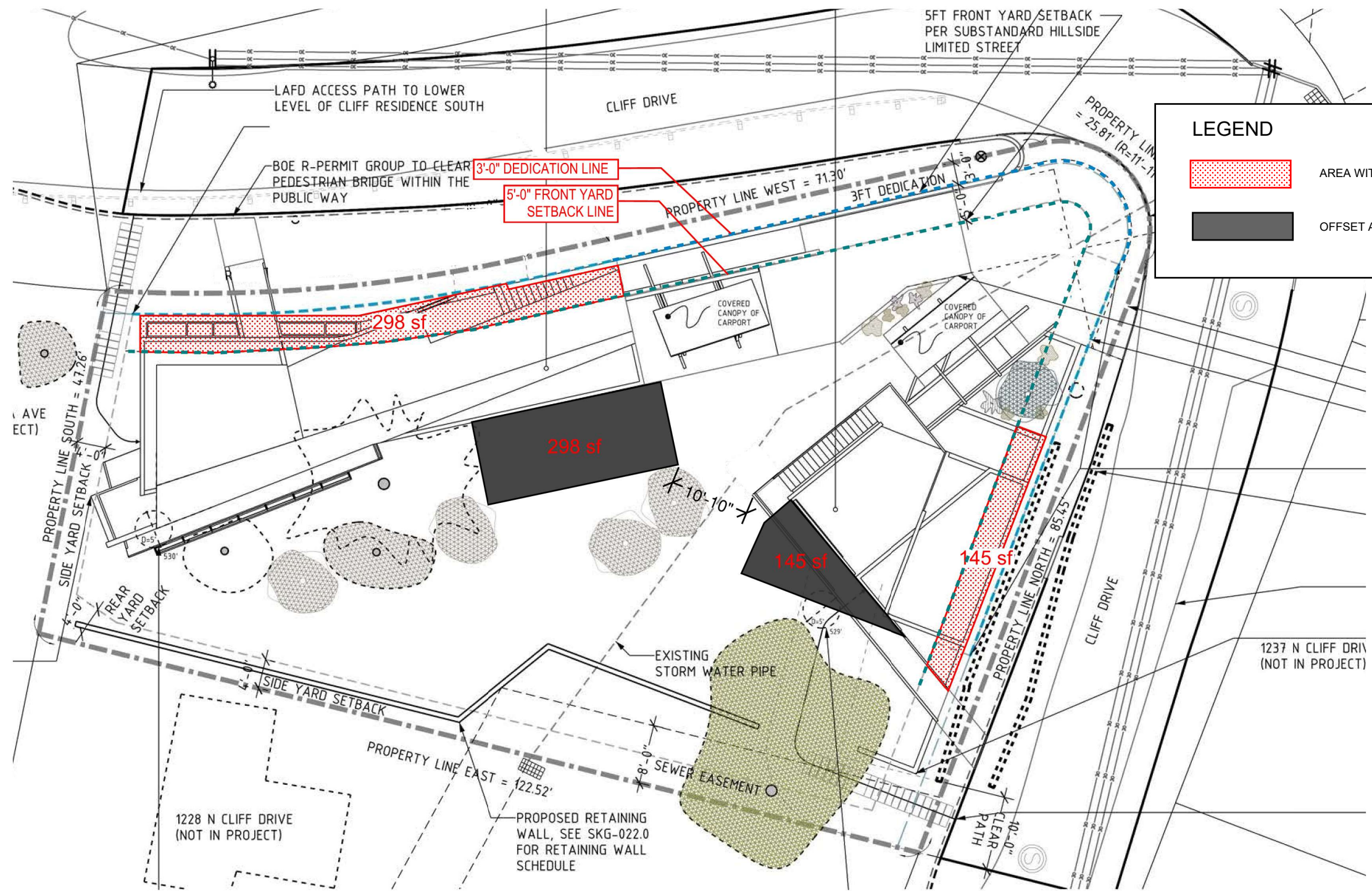
Respectfully submitted for your consideration,

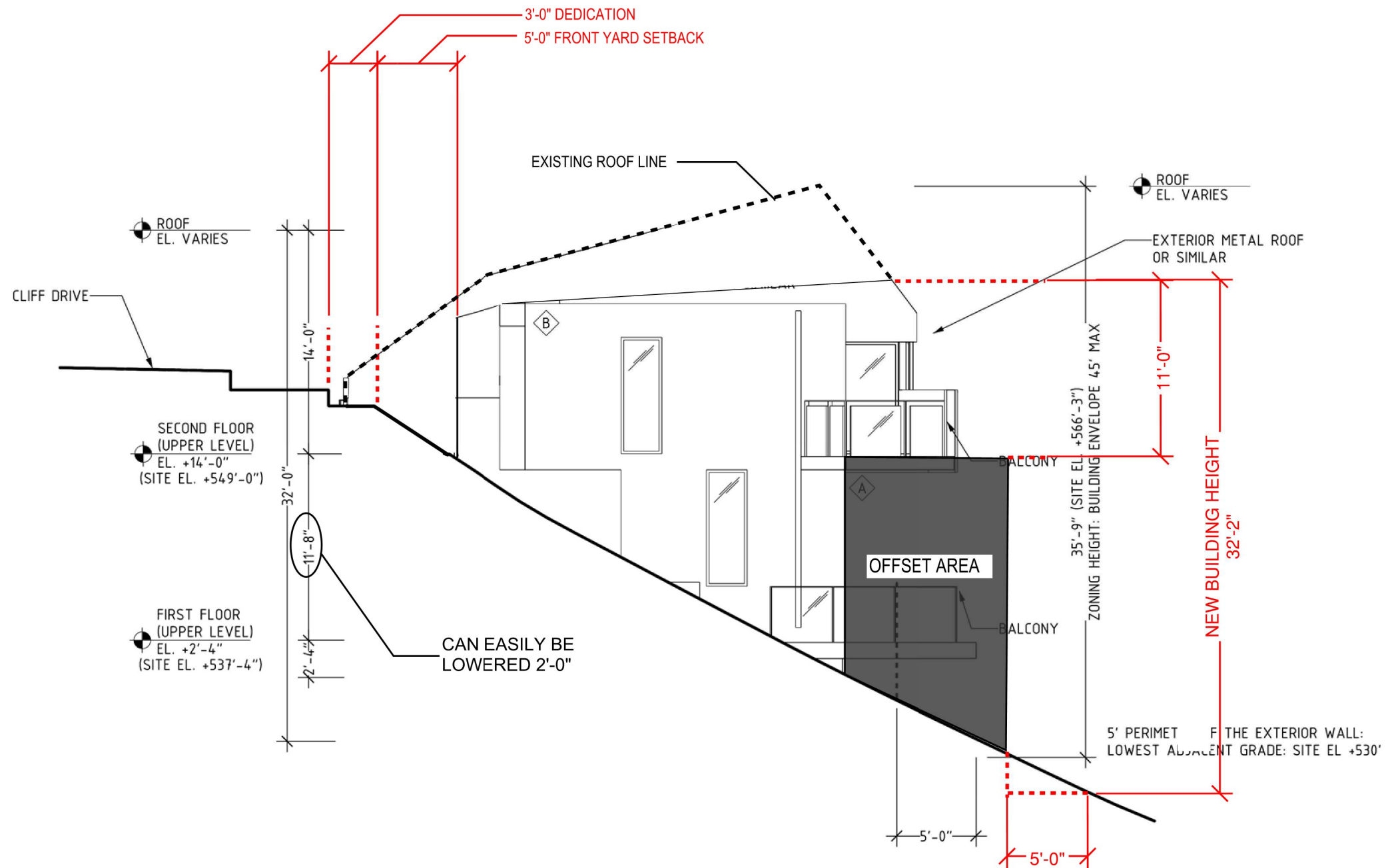


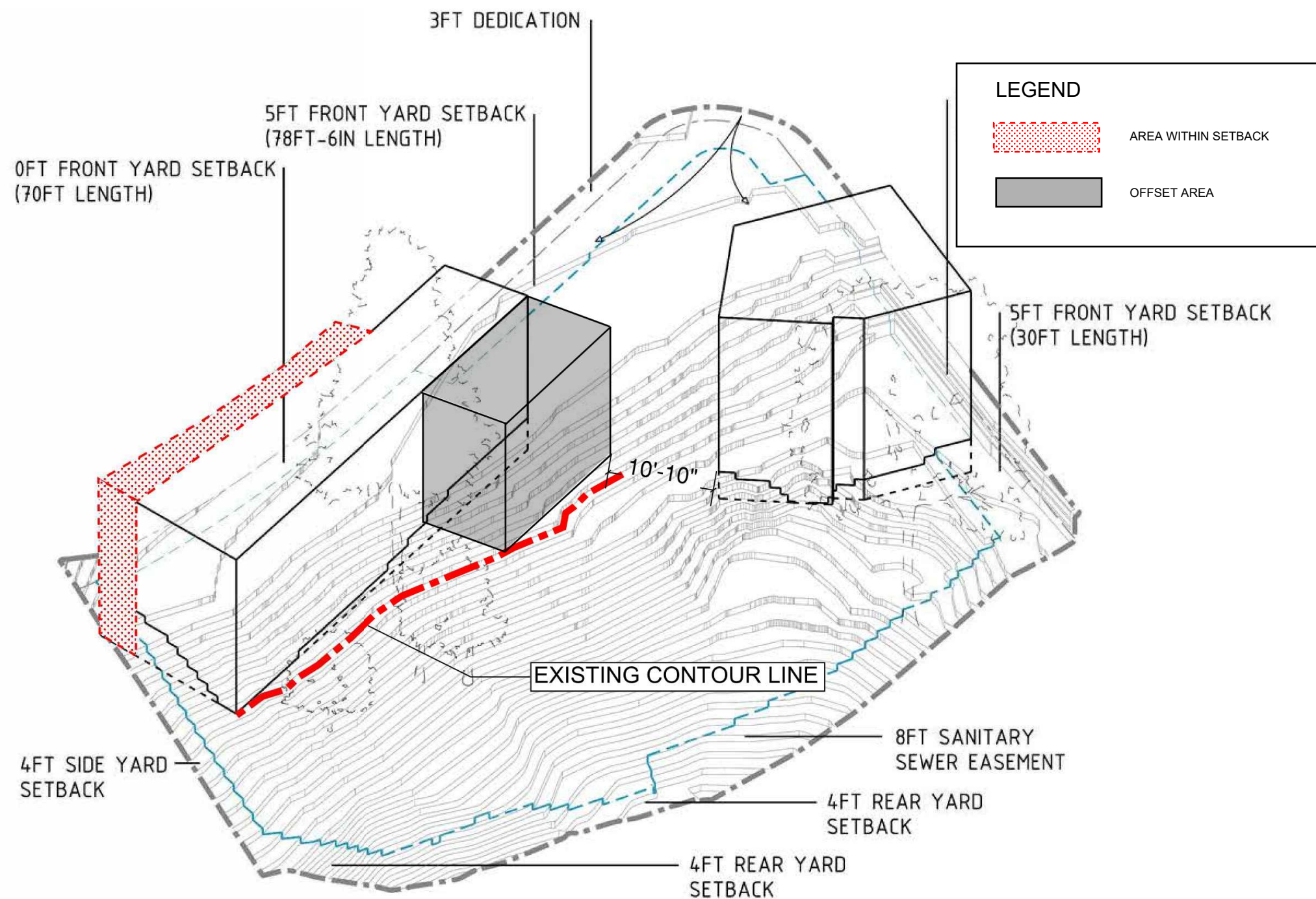
Cliff Neiman AIA; J.D.
Principal: The Neiman Group Architects; Inc.

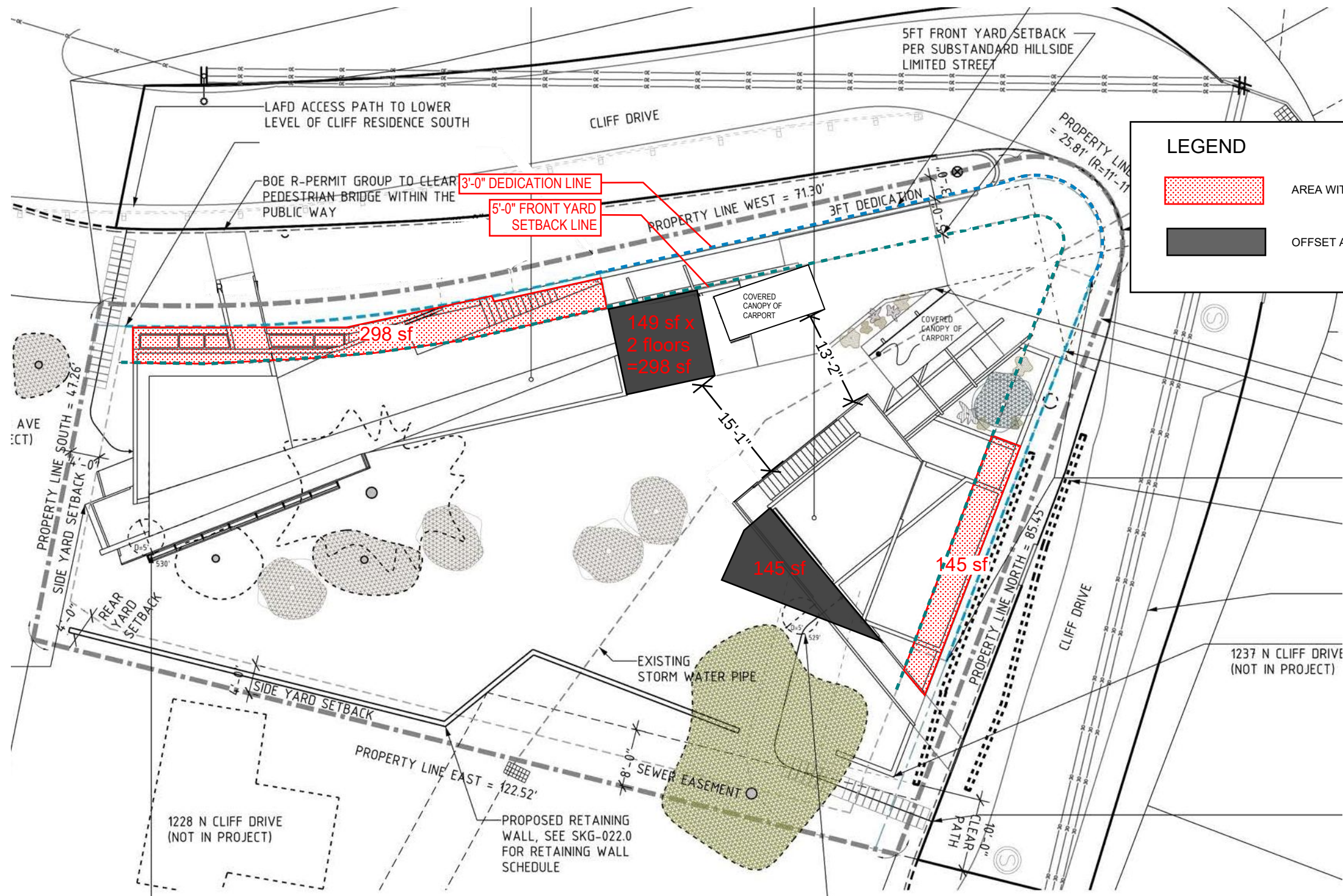


Enclosures: Exhibits "A", "B", "C" & "D"









As The Crow, LLC

Hallie Black
hallie.black@me.com
617.449.8518

Applicant Letter _
Response to Appeal

1236 N Cliff Dr

2026-0706

East Los Angeles Area Planning Commission
c/o Bryan Sanchez, Commission Executive Assistant (apceast@lacity.org)
cc: Nicole Sanchez, City Planner (nicole.sanchez@lacity.org)

RE: Case No. ZA-2025-2856-CU1-SPPC-HCA-1A
1236 N Cliff Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90065
July 8, 2026, Hearing _ Appeal Response Letter from Applicant

Dear Chair and Commissioners,

I respectfully submit this response to the appeal of Associate Zoning Administrator Jonathan Hershey's April 10, 2026 determination approving a two-unit, SB 9-compliant project at 1236 N Cliff Drive. The determination followed extensive review and is set out in a detailed 50-page Letter of Determination. The appeal raises three grounds, addressed in turn below. At its core, the appeal reflects concern over a private downhill view, which carries no legal right; its remaining points rest on misunderstandings of fact and law, several of which fall outside the scope of this proceeding.

1. Front Yard Setback

The appellant contends the reduced front yard setback conflicts with a "prevailing" setback. Under the Mount Washington-Glassell Park Specific Plan, a prevailing front yard setback is established only where 40 percent or more of the block's minimum developed lots have front yards varying by no more than 10 feet. No such condition exists on this block, so no prevailing setback can be calculated, and the 5-foot default applies whereby relief was properly sought. The appellant offers no evidence to the contrary.

The reduced setback is a necessity, not a preference. I tested several configurations against the proposed design (Figure 1-a). Holding the full 5-foot setback together with the 3-foot dedication forces the structures off the limited flat buildable area and down the slope; to approach the allowable floor area while staying under the height limit, that configuration would require removing protected and significant trees that provide erosion control and a privacy buffer for the downhill neighbor (Figure 1-b). Centering the buildings to avoid the tree canopy compromises that neighbor's privacy and corner traffic safety (Figure 1-c). Pushing the buildings toward the corner compromises traffic safety and eliminates the two required parking stalls (Figure 1-d). The proposed reduced setback instead frees the sightline at the corner, provides off-street parking beyond the two required (three are provided), maintains a minimum 10-foot fire separation between buildings, and preserves both the trees and the downhill neighbor's privacy.

As The Crow, LLC

Hallie Black
hallie.black@me.com
617.449.8518

Applicant Letter _
Response to Appeal

1236 N Cliff Dr

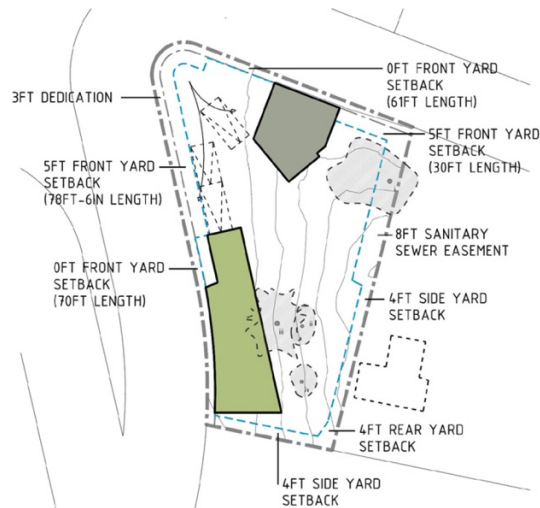


Figure 1-a: Current Proposal (baseline) _ the proposed reduced-setback design keeps both homes on the flat buildable area, preserves the protected trees, maintains a 10-foot fire separation, frees the corner sightline, and provides three off-street parking spaces where two are required.



Figure 1-b: Setback Scenario 1 _ holding the full 5-foot setback pushes the homes off the flat buildable area and would require removing protected, slope-stabilizing trees.

As The Crow, LLC

Hallie Black
hallie.black@me.com
617.449.8518

Applicant Letter _
Response to Appeal

1236 N Cliff Dr

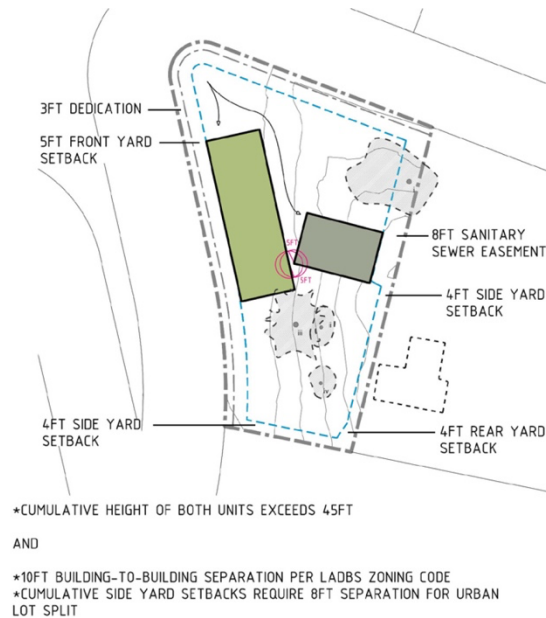


Figure 1-c: Setback Scenario 2 _ centering the buildings to avoid the tree canopy worsens massing toward the downhill neighbor and compromises both privacy and corner sightlines.

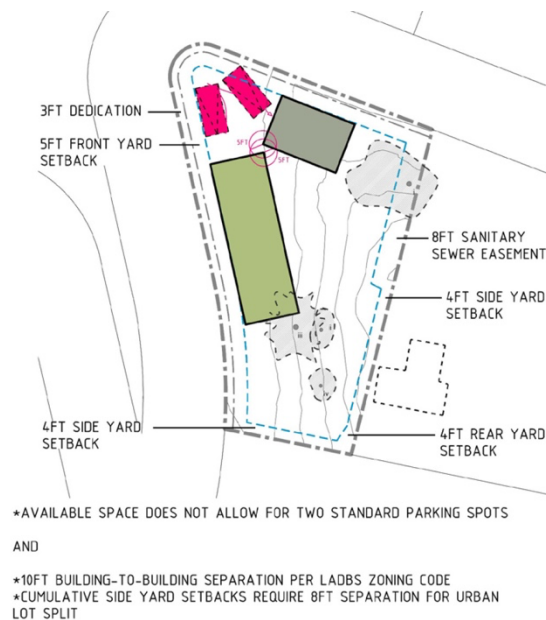


Figure 1-d: Setback Scenario 3 _ shifting the buildings toward the corner compromises traffic safety and eliminates the two required parking stalls.

As The Crow, LLC

Hallie Black
hallie.black@me.com
617.449.8518

Applicant Letter _
Response to Appeal

1236 N Cliff Dr

Contrary to the appeal, the structures and retaining walls do not sit at the roadway edge. As dimensioned on the plans, they stand between 7 feet 8 inches and 13 feet 8 inches from the edge of pavement (see Figure 2), and the existing roadway already encroaches onto private property along this stretch.



Figure 2: As dimensioned, the structures and retaining walls stand 7'-8" to 13'-8" from the edge of pavement, not at the roadway edge.

Reduced and zero front yard setbacks are well established in this area. Zero front yard setbacks were granted within the same Mount Washington-Glassell Park Specific Plan at 461, 465, and 467 Del Norte (Case No. DIR-2018-826-SPP), and numerous nearby buildings sit on, over, or within a few feet of their front property lines (see Figure 3).

Applicant Letter –
Response to Appeal

1236 N Cliff Dr



Figure 3: The existing roadway already sits partly on private land, and nearby buildings sit on or over their front property lines.

2. Street Improvements

The appellant asks the Commission to require full street improvements. The Zoning Administrator has no authority over street-design specifications; curb, gutter, and sidewalk are determined by LADOT and the Bureau of Engineering through B-Permit plan check. Zoning determines only whether the roadway must be widened, and the required 20-foot width is being provided. No code threshold requires a sidewalk at this location, and this request is beyond the scope of these proceedings.

3. Drainage and Stormwater

Because the appeal emphasizes stormwater, the existing condition warrants explanation. A permitted stormwater grate on N Cliff Drive collects runoff, with pipes crossing the subject property (see Figure 4). An unpermitted alley grate, pipe, and rip-rap system was installed on 1228 N Cliff Drive in 2015 to address runoff experienced between 2011 and 2015, as reported by the prior owner. This cross-lot drainage condition predates the project and was disclosed to the appellant during escrow through the prior owner's 2020 seller disclosure. The appellant also signed a Cross-Lot Drainage Condition Disclosure and Acknowledgment on September 22, 2025, acknowledging and accepting the condition (the signed Cross-Lot Drainage Disclosure and Acknowledgment sets out the full terms); under that acknowledgment, all necessary improvements within 1236 are to be completed and maintained at my sole expense.

As The Crow, LLC

Hallie Black
hallie.black@me.com
617.449.8518

Applicant Letter _
Response to Appeal

1236 N Cliff Dr

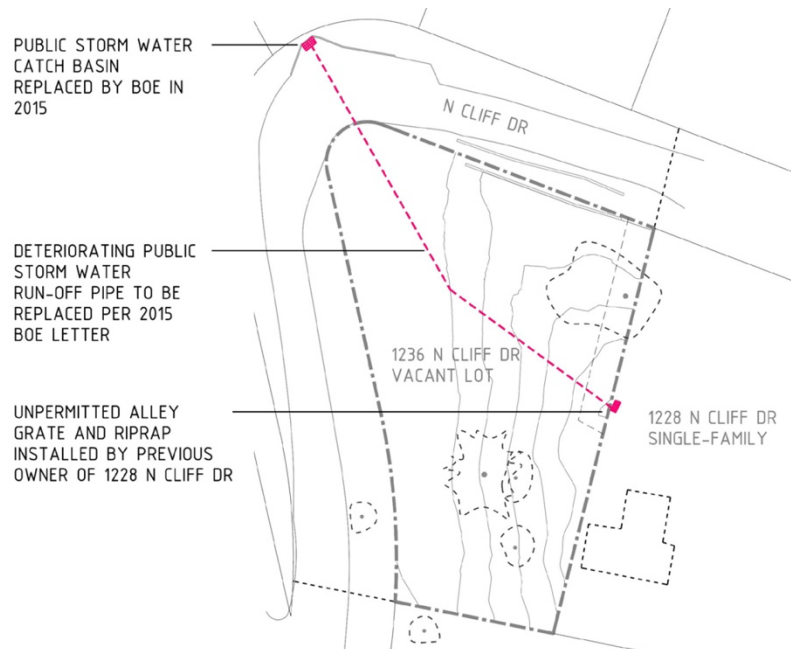


Figure 4: Existing drainage _ a permitted street grate and cross-lot pipe, with the unpermitted 2015 alley grate and rip-rap on 1228 N Cliff Dr.

A licensed civil engineer has prepared plans for a watercourse permit, and the Bureau of Engineering has granted approval. The system collects stormwater from both sides of Cliff Drive and from uphill properties before discharging along the shared property line. Permitting and building this system to current code improves stormwater conditions relative to the existing unpermitted solution, and I am voluntarily adding catch basins to help contain runoff.

4. Specific Plan Compliance

The project was reviewed and approved for Specific Plan Project Compliance under Case No. ZA-2025-2856-CU1-SPPC-HCA, and the Zoning Administrator set out each compatibility finding in detail. No specific code violation is cited.

Building height is an objective measurement, not a matter of perception. On a hillside lot, height is measured from the lowest adjacent grade within 5 feet of the lowest exterior wall to the highest point of the structure. This is the most conservative reference and already accounts for the downhill drop the appeal describes. Measured this way, Cliff Residence South is 35 feet 9 inches (Figure 5-b) and Cliff Residence North is 29 feet 2 inches (Figure 5-a), both well under the 45-foot limit.

Applicant Letter _
Response to Appeal

1236 N Cliff Dr

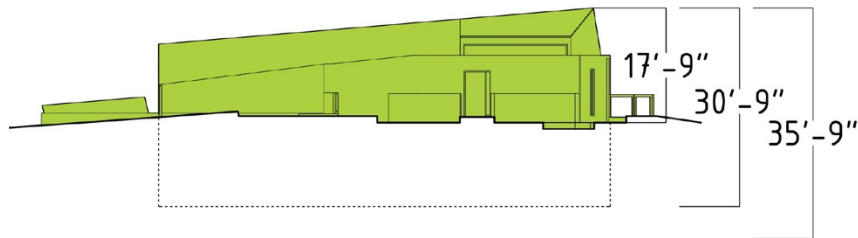


Figure 5-b: The street elevation of Cliff Residence South measures 17'-9" and 35'-9" from the lowest adjacent grade, well under the 45-foot limit.

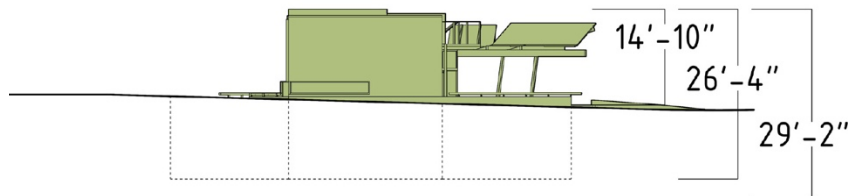


Figure 5-a: The street elevation of Cliff Residence North measures 14'-10" and 29'-2" from the lowest adjacent grade, well under the 45-foot limit.

Grading is minimal. The net export is approximately 61 cubic yards, far below the by-right allowance, and the great majority of the earthwork is exempt remedial-slope and foundation work. The retaining walls conform to code, replace a deteriorating existing wall, and stabilize the hillside and roadway; their tops sit at approximately 0 feet above the roadway, so no tunnel effect is created.

As The Crow, LLC

Hallie Black
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Applicant Letter _
Response to Appeal

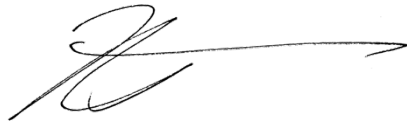
1236 N Cliff Dr

This is an SB 9 project intended to receive a streamlined path toward addressing the housing crisis, yet it has undergone extraordinary scrutiny, generating hundreds of documented communications since 2023 across City agencies, neighbors, the Mount Washington Alliance, and the Arroyo Seco Neighborhood Council. I engaged the community from the outset, adjusted the design in response to concerns, and reached out to the appellant repeatedly, but the appellant declined to meet. The project also has the formal support of the Mount Washington Alliance: VP of Land Use Juanita Martinez submitted a letter on behalf of the Alliance Board opposing the appeal, and Director Pat Winters submitted her own letter in support.

For these reasons, the project meets and exceeds applicable requirements. I respectfully request that the Commission deny the appeal and uphold the Zoning Administrator's determination.

Due to an outstanding family commitment, I will be represented at the hearing by my representative, Elsy Alam, who is fully authorized to present this response on my behalf.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'H. Black', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Hallie Black
Owner, As The Crow, LLC
Applicant, 1236 N Cliff Drive

ARROYO SECO
NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL
PO BOX 42254, LOS ANGELES,
CA 90042
MESSAGE PHONE:
323-418-ASNC
<http://www.asnc.us>

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Luis Barrera	Montecito Heights
Gloria Sierra	Monterey Hills
Lynnette Kampe	Mt. Washington
Natalie Seaman	Mt. Washington
Tom Mapp	Sycamore Grove
Roy Payan	At Large
Zachary Pitts	At Large
Reed McNab	At Large
VACANT	At Large
VACANT	At Large
VACANT	At Large
VACANT	At Large
Teresa Bonsell	Community Interest
Lynda Valencia	Community Interest

Los Angeles City Planning Department

200 North Spring Street

Los Angeles, California 90012-2601

Sent to: r.vasquez@lacity.org

Date: April 28, 2025

Case Number: CPC-2022-6108-ZC-CA

Address: 1236 Cliff

Description of Project: Two-unit single family residences with Urban Lot Split

Applicant: Hallie Black

Dear Mr. Vasquez:

This will advise that at a regular meeting of the Arroyo Seco Neighborhood Council (ASNC) on April 28, 2025 the following motion was moved and passed - **Motion:** To acknowledge the sensitive design but not support the project due to the request to waive a portion of 20' adjacent street widening and to deny reduction of front yard setback to zero. Recommend removal and replacement of protected toyon 4:1.

The project was presented to the PLUC Committee on April 14, 2025 as follows: Permissible under SB9 and within allowable floor area. The homes will have fire resistant exterior materials, low street profile and modern, angular, geometric appearance. Downhill lot at elbow turn of street with remnants of historic, failing retaining walls and significant trees. The new homes will have a shared driveway and are situated to preserve the significant trees. Improved street support and storm water run-off is planned.

Actions requested: 1. Action to reduce widening to no less than 16' for 20% of frontage. (Concern to preserve Toyon, additional retaining wall and grading would be needed to widen. Removing guard rail to improve street width. Vacant lots across the street could potentially improve the street. And potential impact on large deodar cedar downslope.)

2. Action to waive street contiguous widening to outside of hillside.

3. Action: to reduce front yard setback to zero to preserve significant slope stabilizing trees downslope and to preserve toyon at the street.

Committee comments: remove toyon and widen street at that location, suggest waiver of highway dedication but keep front yard setback of 5', very well considered design.

Community comments: Good outreach, is improving most of the roadway but would like to see street widening with removal of toyon. Pleased with drainage issues. Very sensitive development with smaller units. Safety issue with 16' street section. One community member spoke in favor of a waiver of adjacent street widening for 20% of frontage.

Thank you for your attention. Please provide a copy of the decision letter to the ASNC at the letterhead address above.

Sincerely,

Lynda Valencia

Lynda Valencia
President



Planning APC East LA <apceastla@lacity.org>

Fw: Ref: ZA-2025-2856-CU1-SPPC-HCA-1A,1236 N. Cliff Drive Proposed Residential Development Project

1 message

Norma Hunt-Allen <normahunt-allen@msn.com>
To: "apceastla@lacity.org" <apceastla@lacity.org>

Fri, Jul 3, 2026 at 4:57 PM

To the East Los Area Planning Commission:

I live across from 1236 N. Cliff Drive, Mt. Washington, Los Angeles, Ca 90065. Mount Washington is in a high fire danger zone, with substandard, narrow, winding streets, steep grades and sharp, blind corners, such as the one at the proposed development project. Releasing the proposed development project of the required 5-foot setback would eliminate and re-establish the "PREVAILING SETBACK" for every new residential development on this hillside. Allowing this waiver for one development establishes a new precedence for every new development in the area to have a 0-foot setback as the change becomes the "NEW PREVAILING SETBACK." This is a very dangerous precedent for a substandard hillside street within a very high fire hazard severity zone. Furthermore, allowing a 0-setback is not in keeping with the most recent State of California Uniform Building Code (UBC).

Please know that I am in agreement with all of the attached *Summary of Concerns* for ZA-2025-2856-CU1-SPPC-HCA-1A.

I look forward to talking with you further about our community concerns on Wednesday, July 8, at Ramona Hall, after 4:30pm or on Zoom.

Sincerely,
Norma Hunt-Allen
[3571 Tacoma Ave.](#)
Los Angeles, CA 90065

**Summary of Community Concerns - 1236 N. Cliff Dr. Development.pdf**
304K

Summary of Concerns:

The proposed two-unit, SB 9 development at 1236 N. Cliff Drive is located on a **substandard hillside street within a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone**. For the following reasons, the Developer should not be granted deviations from city and state code requirements that are in place to protect the safety of the community.

1. Granting a 0-foot front yard setback is injurious to public safety.

Background: On constrained hillside corridors such as Cliff Drive, the minimum 5-ft front yard setback requirement performs several critical safety and infrastructure functions simultaneously:

- *It provides a **pedestrian refuge zone** where no sidewalk exists;*
- *It allows space for **surface drainage swales, trench drains, and subdrain outlets** rather than forcing stormwater infrastructure into the public right-of-way. There are already well documented flooding and drainage issues at the street corner directly adjacent to the property;*
- *It creates tolerance for **vehicle swing radius, emergency hose and ladder deployment**, and temporary service stops;*
- *It offers relief from continuous street-edge retaining walls that otherwise intensify blind-curve hazards and visual dominance.*

Eliminating these safety features is contrary to the city's adopted pedestrian-safety and complete street principles. Furthermore, the **Developer has provided no evidence as to why the elimination of the 5-ft setback requirement is necessary**. These are simply aesthetic design choices. Both units could reasonably be reduced in size to accommodate the minimum 5-ft setback and meet the minimum standards of an SB 9 project. Instead, the proposed development plans to remove the existing guardrail along Cliff Drive, replacing it with a residential home immediately adjacent to the roadway.

2. The project is inconsistent with the Mt. Washington–Glassell Park Specific Plan.

Background: The Mt. Washington–Glassell Park Specific Plan is intended to preserve hillside character, visual relief and openness, neighborhood compatibility, and an appropriate relationship between development and the public street.

- The Project replaces open space with significant building mass. **The proposed homes occupy nearly 55% of the property's 240-ft frontage** along Cliff Drive while substantially reducing the separation between the roadway and new residential development at a blind hillside curve.
- The plans propose approximately **191 feet of retaining walls, including an approximately 100-foot-long freestanding retaining wall**.
- Compatibility must be assessed relative to adjacent parcels and prevailing development patterns. Two new structures of this aggregate size (3,693 sq ft) and building footprint, combined with extensive retaining wall infrastructure, risk creating a **disproportionate visual and physical presence** when viewed from neighboring properties and the public right-of-way. Furthermore, **the increased density of two units on one constrained hillside lot increases fire risk and emergency access issues**.

3. The Area Planning Commission (APC) should recommend full street improvements, including curb, gutter, and sidewalk, to ensure public safety.

Background: The Developer has stated that she will widen the road along the property frontage to 20 feet. This is the bare minimum required by code for any new construction for fire safety. However, the Developer has also stated she will not add full curb, gutter, and sidewalk as part of the road widening – improvements which are critical to public safety and considered part of the city's complete street frontage standards.

- **Widening the street along Cliff Drive *without* providing full curb, gutter, and sidewalk improvements will not resolve underlying safety and infrastructure deficiencies.** These include: a blind corner that already experiences sightline obstruction, turning radius limitations for emergency vehicles, major runoff concentration, and significant vehicle and pedestrian safety concerns, including a recent documented crash.
- **Without a sidewalk, pedestrians will be forced to walk directly in the travel lane at a blind corner.** These conditions are further exacerbated by the Developer's intention to place the driveway apron directly abutting the street's blind corner, increasing the risk of collision at a known conflict point.
- Eliminating curb, gutter, and sidewalk infrastructure removes the primary mechanism by which water runoff is captured, directed, and maintained along the frontage of the 1236 N. Cliff Drive development. Currently, water runoff pools at the blind corner directly opposite the proposed development's driveway apron. **By not adding these street improvements, water will continue to spread laterally across the roadway, increasing hydroplaning risk, accelerating pavement degradation and transferring drainage burdens to downslope neighbors.**



Planning APC East LA <apceastla@lacity.org>

Comments about 1236 Cliff Dr LA 90065

2 messages

Yael Pardess <yaelp33@icloud.com>
To: apceastla@lacity.org

Mon, Jul 6, 2026 at 11:38 AM

LA CITY PLANNING

Case # ZA-2025-2856-CU1-SPPC-HCA-1A.

[1236 Cliff Dr LA 90065](#)

I would like to comment on this upcoming case

I live in Mount Washington- a very high severity fire zone, and am deeply concerned that the city continues to waive safety regulations in favor of developers.

Our safety and ability to protect our home or evacuate in case of fires or other emergency is our main issue.

When homes are built here- it is of crucial importance that developers adhere by Mt Washington Glassell Park Specific Plan, so that homes are not bigger than allowed, that narrow streets are widened and that proper setbacks are kept.

These rules are not frivolous. They are there to keep the community safe as well as the new homeowner. If setbacks are not kept and homes are too close to each other or to the street and to traffic- the potential for accidents, fire intensity or trucks causing property damage are far greater. It has been shown again and again.

In the case of 1236 Cliff drive, these important setbacks were waived in order to allow two homes instead of one on a relatively small lot.

SB 9 which unfortunately passed without any consideration for our safety, allowed the developer to put two homes on her lot.

If the developer followed the setback rules she would be able to fit one home only, or reduce the sizes of the two homes proposed. She can still do that.

As a result of recent fires in California, many studies have been conducted to assess which factor contributes to their intensity and conflagration.

We now know scientifically, that fire intensity is augmented by the proximity of structures to each other. In other words- DENSITY.

In VHSFZ, where streets are narrow and evacuation almost impossible- it is highly irresponsible to allow such density, in spite of the fact that the state approved SB9 without considering its dangerous implications. Implementation of densification in VHSFZ through SB 79 was delayed by 3 years to allow cities to come up with plans to implement it safely on the hillsides and allocated better areas for developments.

Why is this relevant? Because two extra homes on a small lot will augment dangers for everyone. It means two more cars and more flammable structures, closer to neighbors and to each other.

In the case of 1236 Cliff, The street curb and fence were recently damaged twice by cars as well as in the past as can be seen on a google street view. Please see images from recent accidents caused by cars and trucks.

On our hill, you can see many signs of past collisions and property damage. As cars and trucks, fly by daily, or are unable to make sharp turns, they damage property walls or fences, or collide with each other. Homes that are too close to streets, will bear heavier damages. My fence has been damaged 3 times!

Homeowners should want to be safe. I truly cannot understand this developer intention to put residents in more danger.

I am also showing where homes are according to their proposal and where they should have been if setbacks were not waived.

Additional concerns are the sharp curve of Cliff Dr and the allocation of the driveway. Please take a look at photos and note the blind corner and the collision potential of cars exiting into the street. Locating the driveway in this corner is an oversight by architect and does not promise safety.

Another major concern is that there will be no system in place to collect storm water. Normally, a gutter system should be required to collect storm water. Residents of these future properties should be concerned about mud debris and water that will surely flood their steep downhill homes and gardens. Cliff drive and nearby Future street have seen their share of muddy disasters in recent years due to lack of proper curbs and gutters on uphill streets.

I am requesting that City Planning reviews these plans and waivers very carefully, and re assess their decisions. Proper setbacks, gutters and drains are important!

If the city waives the setbacks on these 2 properties, it will set a dangerous precedent signaling that regulations and our safety-do not matter. We will see more waivers granted that will put all our lives at risk.

Thank you

Yael Pardess
yaelp33@icloud.com

 **1236 Cliff Dr comments Yael Pardess.pdf**
2585K

Norma Hunt-Allen <normahunt-allen@msn.com>

Mon, Jul 6, 2026 at 1:43 PM

To: Yael Pardess <yaelp33@icloud.com>, "apceastla@lacity.org" <apceastla@lacity.org>

Wow! Your email is great and those photos are amazing! Would you be willing to send it to Jack Dolan at the LA Times? According to my husband Bob who just sent Jack an email about this situation, Jack covers these issues . I believe his email address is jack.dolan@latimes.com.

Also, may I send this to Andrew and Brianna Keoghan who live in the Arroyo below the proposed development - they are seeking legal help and your photos tell it all.

Norma

From: Yael Pardess <yaelp33@icloud.com>

Sent: Monday, July 6, 2026 11:38 AM

To: apceastla@lacity.org <apceastla@lacity.org>

Subject: Comments about [1236 Cliff Dr LA 90065](#)

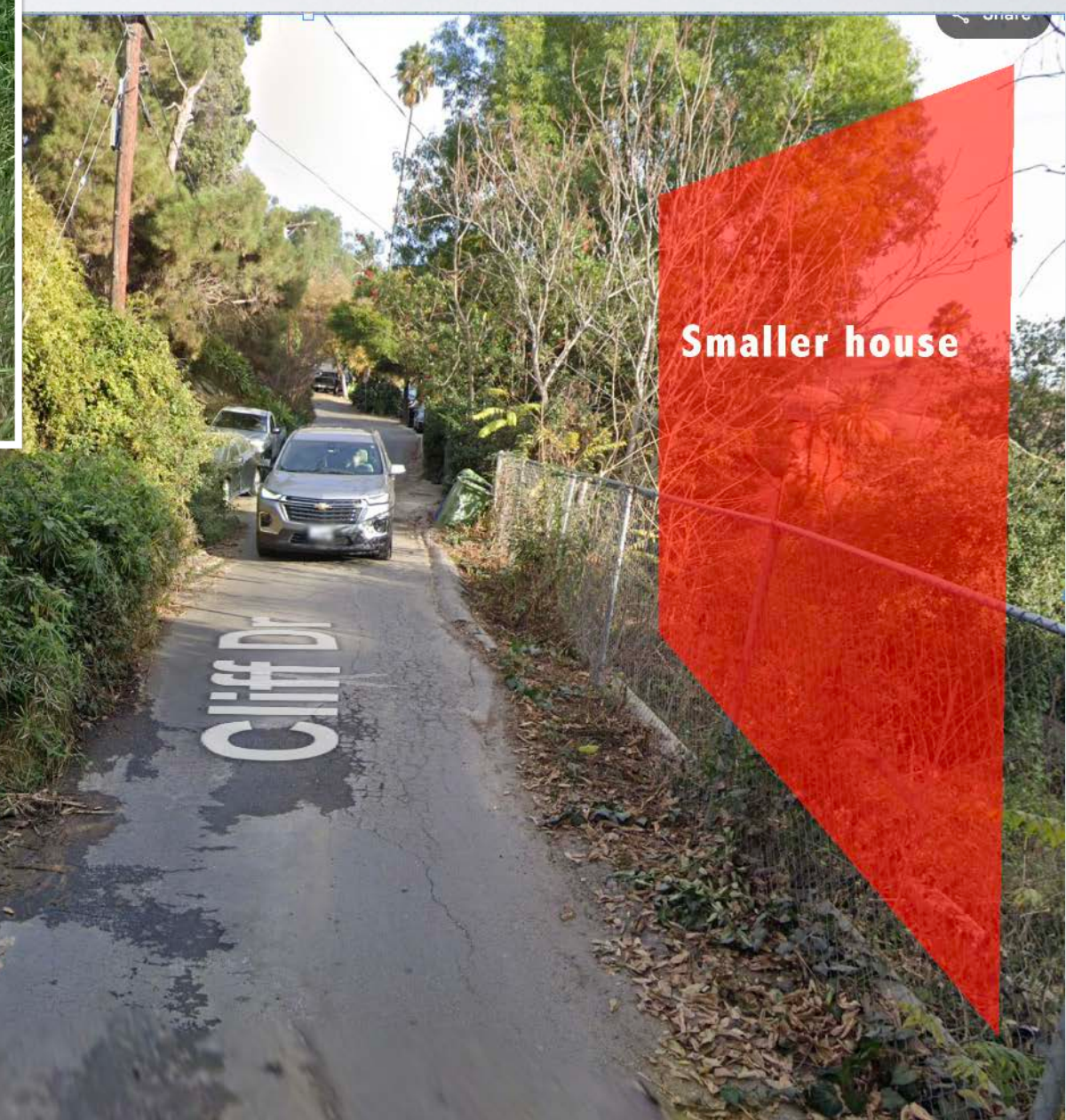
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Recent damage to barrier

1236 CLIFF DR LA 90065

Appeal comments By Yael Pardess



Smaller house



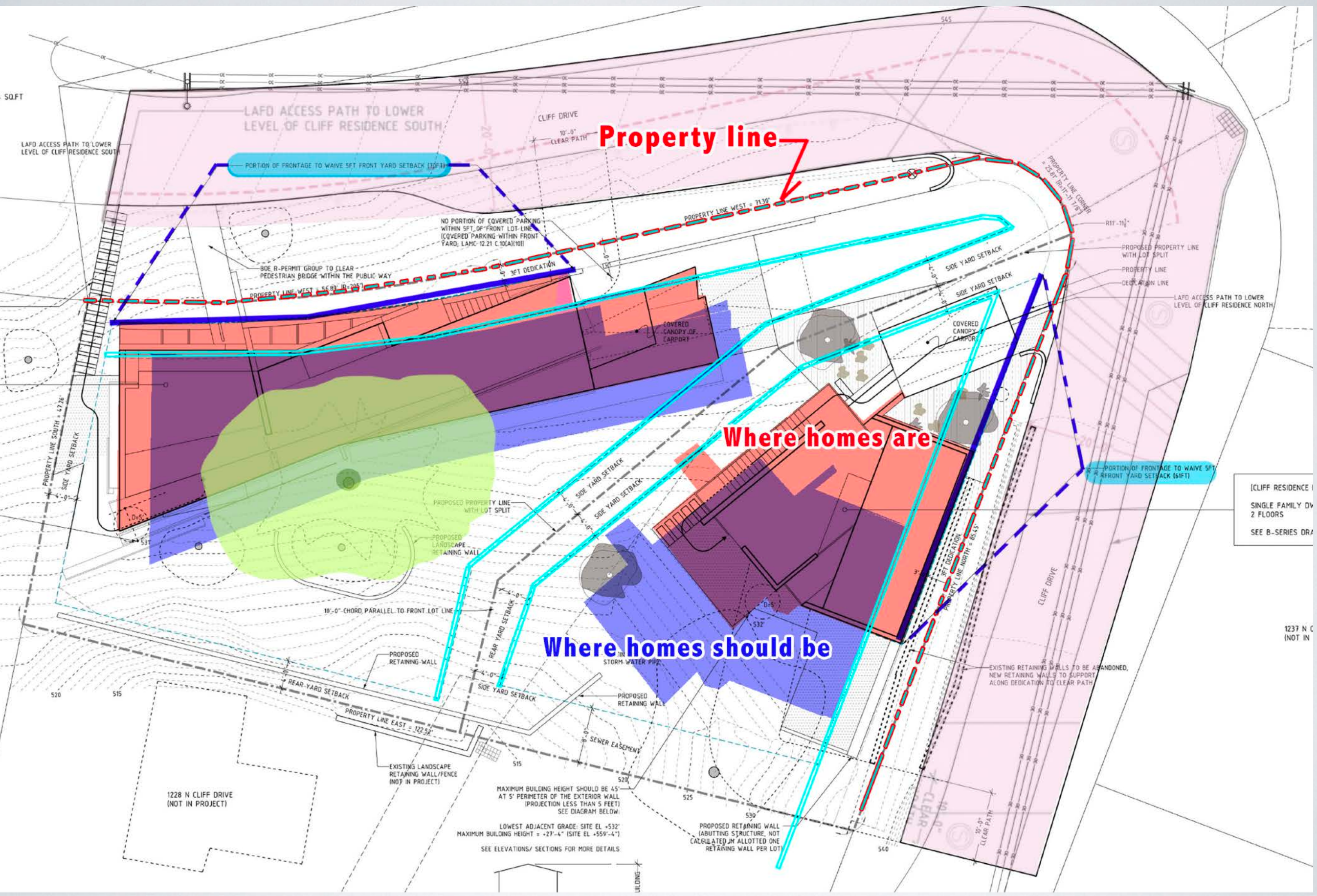
Note blind curve



Future home location

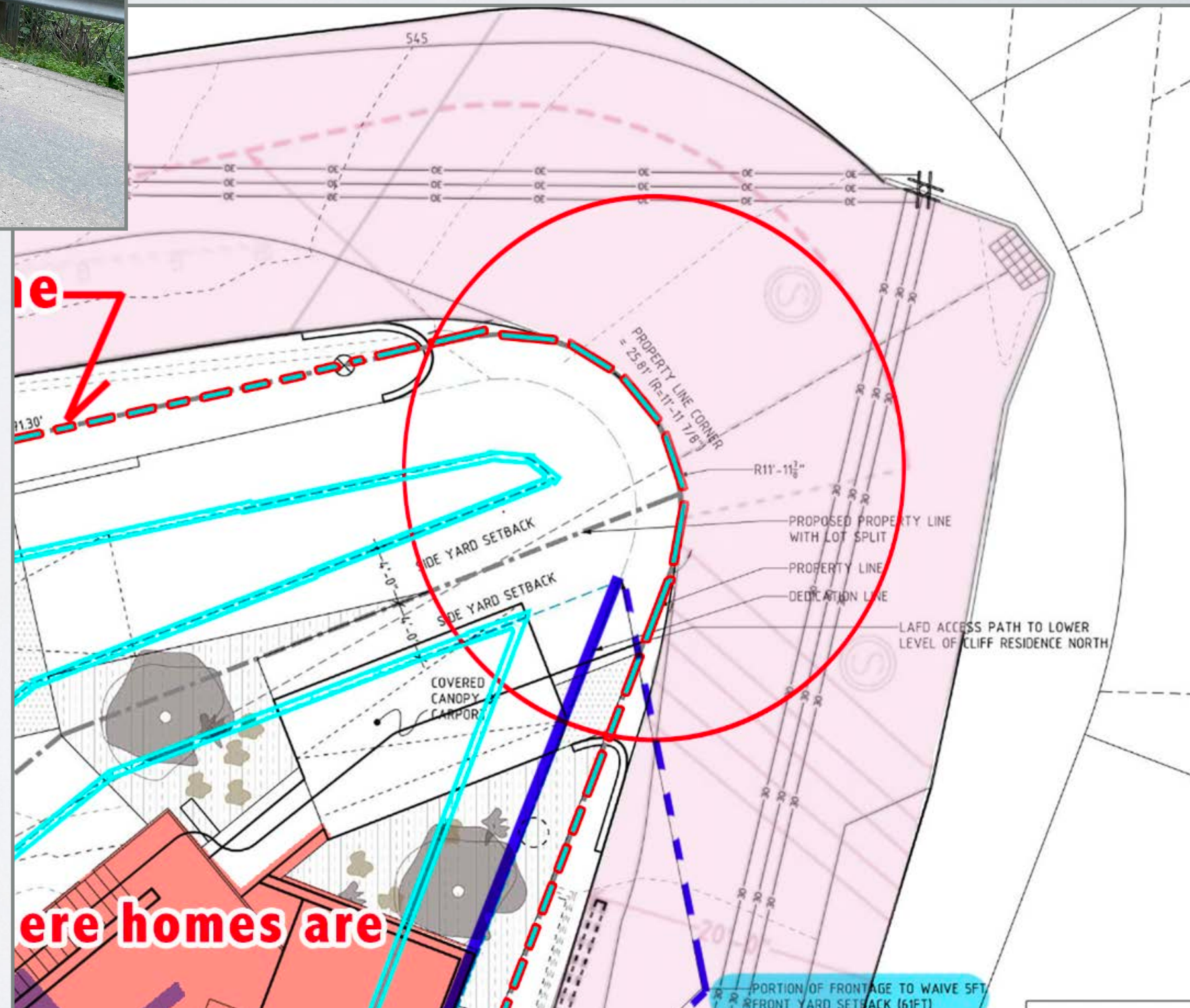


Illustration shows homes in red, with reduced setbacks, and where they should be in blue with correct setbacks





Driveway access located in blind curve



DAY OF HEARING SUBMISSIONS



February 23, 2026

Associate Zoning Administrator Jonathan Hershey
Los Angeles Department of City Planning
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: 1236 North Cliff Dr., ZA-2025-2856-CU1-SPPC-HCA, Council District 1 Comment

Dear Associate Zoning Administrator Jonathan Hershey,

On behalf of Council District 1, I am writing to express my office's opposition to the requested waiver for the proposed development at 1236 North Cliff Drive.¹ Although I support the creation of new housing, I will continue to oppose development in a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ) that fails to incorporate essential safety infrastructure.

We have seen the catastrophic effects of wildfires ripping through hillside communities. The frequency and severity of wildfires and other extreme weather events will only increase over time in VHFHSZs, given the very real threat of climate change. As a city, we must stop allowing developers to waive out of requirements to improve roads and infrastructure that would support their development projects and improve safety for the surrounding hillside community. My office is a strong advocate of these infrastructure improvements that are needed to support new development and requests that the following waiver be denied:

1. Pursuant to Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) Chapter 1 Section 12.24X.28 and Chapter 1A Section 13B.2.1, a Class 1 Conditional Use Permit to allow the construction, use, and maintenance of two (2) new single-family dwellings on a lot fronting a Substandard Hillside Limited Street without providing a minimum 20-foot wide roadway adjacent to the property along Cliff Drive as required by LAMC Chapter 1 Section 12.21 C.10(i)(2).

The profound safety concerns expressed by the Mount Washington community regarding infrastructure and fire danger are well-founded. We have seen cases, including the devastating fire involving Francisco Hernandez², that provide stark evidence of how substandard, narrow roadways critically delay and impair emergency fire response. This alarming precedent makes it imperative that the Department of City Planning deny the requested waiver for the Adjacent Minimum Roadway improvements along Cliff Drive and implement all the necessary drainage infrastructure without compromise to protect this property and its neighbors from the risk of catastrophic flooding.

¹ Los Angeles Department of City Planning. (2025). Case no. ZA-2025-2856-CU1-SPPC-HCA: 1236 North Cliff Dr. Planning Case Tracking System. <https://planning.lacity.gov/pdiscaseinfo/search/casenumbr/ZA-2025-2856-CU1-SPPC-HCA>

² Saillant, C. (2014, February 23). Man dies in Mount Washington house fire. Los Angeles Times. <https://www.latimes.com/local/la-me-0223-house-fire-20140223-story.htm#infrastucture>



I want to thank the Mount Washington community for its persistent advocacy and for bringing these critical issues to our attention. I also thank the applicant for their transparent communication and for significant consultation with local community groups regarding the proposed development. Their responsiveness to concerns and to the knowledge of longtime residents has helped ensure that the proposed development is sensitive to the geography and neighborhood context.

Projects in VHFHSZs and hillside communities present unique safety and infrastructure concerns. Waiving required safety improvements in such a high-risk area undermines public safety. My office is committed to ensuring adjacent road infrastructure maintains community safety and sets a precedent for similar Mount Washington projects. For these reasons, I urge you to deny the waiver. If you have any questions, please contact my Planning Director, Helen Campbell, at helen.campbell@lacity.org. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Eunisses Hernandez
Los Angeles City Councilmember, District 1

Los Angeles City Hall
200 N. Spring Street, Room 460,
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Applicant Letter _
Response to Appeal

1236 N Cliff Dr

2026-0708

East Los Angeles Area Planning Commission
c/o Bryan Sanchez, Commission Executive Assistant (apceast@lacity.org)
cc: Nicole Sanchez, City Planner (nicole.sanchez@lacity.org)

RE: Case No. ZA-2025-2856-CU1-SPPC-HCA-1A
1236 N Cliff Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90065
July 8, 2026, Hearing _ Appeal Response Letter from Applicant

Dear Chair and Commissioners,

The appellant's hearing presentation, now prepared with retained counsel and a paid consultant, introduces no new facts. It repackages the same objections the Zoning Administrator addressed in a detailed 50-page determination. My July 6 response letter answers the appeal grounds in full; this submission responds only to the new material.

1. "It is clear that there is no necessity for any deviation from the Code-required Front Yard Setback." (Neiman letter)

An eight-page code-compliance opinion that never mentions the Mount Washington-Glassell Park Specific Plan, the governing document here; it is absent even from his materials-reviewed list. The Specific Plan supersedes the LAMC (Section 2.B) and caps floor area at "0.50 times the lot area" (Section 6.A). The required street dedication, unsettled until after the LOD issues, diminishes the lot by 3 feet; his 5 feet on top pushes both homes off the flat pad, into protected slope-stabilizing trees and the grading limits of 12.21 C.10(f). It is also not a "variance": the code authorizes the reduction (12.21 C.10(a)(13), per 12.24 X.28).

2. "The Plans could easily be modified ... by lowering the height of the structure and adding area" / "by simply elongating the home." (Neiman letter)

Exhibits A through D contain no Specific Plan floor-area check, no grading analysis, no tree survey and no foundation load surcharge analysis over the watercourse pipe. The approved plans are organized around to avoid surcharging, the same "Surcharge" hazard his own letter warns about.

3. "The required first 20'-0" of the home's height be measured from the 5'-0" setback." (Neiman letter)

Cited improperly: no such methodology exists in the code. Hillside height is measured under 12.21 C.10(d); both homes are well under the limit (35'-9" and 29'-2").

4. "All roads shall have a minimum of two 10-foot-wide traffic lanes ... CLIFF DRIVE DOES NOT COMPLY." (Appellant presentation)

Correct, and it stays that way if the appeal is sustained. LAMC 12.21 C.10(i)(2) expressly provides for approval on streets under 20 feet; Condition

Applicant Letter _
Response to Appeal

1236 N Cliff Dr

10 requires widening to 20 feet along the full frontage. LAFD stamped the plans. Denial widens nothing.

5. “Replace Guardrail with a new dwelling unit?” (Appellant presentation)

No. The guardrail is superseded by the widened 20-foot roadway with an asphalt-concrete berm; the structures sit 7’-8” to 13’-8” from the proposed edge of pavement, and the widened corner improves the sightline. [*see Applicant presentation page 26-39 to understand the relationship between proposed building to existing street pavement, existing guardrail to be removed and proposed street pavement*].

6. “I don’t see any problem with asking them to widen the street and put a sidewalk in on their street frontage.” (Lehner letter)

The street is being widened, to 20 feet along the full frontage. Sidewalk, curb, and gutter are set by LADOT and BOE through the B-Permit (Ref. 202400265), not by this Commission.

7. “The change becomes the ‘NEW PREVAILING SETBACK.’” (Hunt-Allen letter)

Cited improperly. Prevailing setback is arithmetic over built homes (MWGPSP Section 6.C; LAMC 12.21 C.10(a)(1)), not over approvals. A discretionary reduction enters neither formula, and every future application requires its own findings.

8. “Our property at 3574 Tacoma Avenue was excluded from the plan’s average setback calculations.” (Pollner letter)

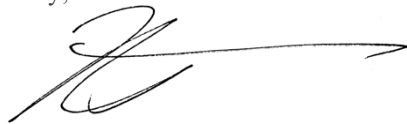
The Specific Plan’s own rule: the average uses “lots along the same right-of-way” (Section 6.C). 3574 Tacoma fronts Tacoma Avenue, not Cliff Drive.

9. “Storm Drain Problem” (Appellant presentation, photo caption)

The photographs show the unpermitted system installed at 1228 N. Cliff Drive in 2015. The appellant signed a Cross-Lot Drainage Acknowledgment on September 22, 2025, before purchasing. The project replaces that system with engineered drainage under a BOE-approved watercourse permit.

Each submission asks the Commission to preserve a substandard roadway, a failing guardrail, and unpermitted drainage, all in the name of public safety. The determination is the only path that improves all three. I respectfully request that the Commission deny the appeal and sustain the Zoning Administrator’s determination.

Sincerely,



Hallie Black
Owner, As The Crow, LLC
Applicant, 1236 N Cliff Drive



Planning APC East LA <apceastla@lacity.org>

Comments regarding 844 8210 4751 Passcode 13987

1 message

JEFFREY RICHARD CAREW <jcarew@ucla.edu>
To: apceastla@lacity.org

Wed, Jul 8, 2026 at 10:28 AM

I'm writing in regards to the property development at 1236 N Cliff Drive. My name is Jeff Carew and live at 1201 Cliff Drive. My major concerns for this development are fire risk along with with access by the fire Department and widening the road to accommodate pedestrians and increased traffic flow.

Another concern is any potential blocking of cliff drive during construction which could impeded regular traffic flow as well as any emergency vehicle traffic.

There is a guard rail that partially surrounds this property. This guardrail was recently damaged, was repaired and damaged again, a serious indication requiring road widening. A zero foot building setback will only add additional safety issues for all concerned.

I have lived on Cliff Drive for almost thirty years. I am not opposed to developing this lot but building two structures will cause among other things additional street parking issues which are already a serious problem!.

Jeff Carew



Planning APC East LA <apceastla@lacity.org>

Case number ZA-2025-2856-CU1-SPPC-HCA-1A

1 message

t <tonyfederico@gmail.com>
To: apceastla@lacity.org

Wed, Jul 8, 2026 at 5:08 PM

Hi-

I'm emailing regarding the proposal at 1236 North Cliff Drive 90065. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to make the hearing in person. I've have lived a few houses up the street for close to 20 years. I walk the neighborhood daily. I understand the proposal is for the structure to be up to street. I don't see why the developer needs to eliminate of a front yard/minimum setback. The area is a high fire zone. There is open space across from this property. There are two curves. The metal barrier at this location has been hit and dented numerous times. There are rock and mud slides during severe rain storms. This street has been blocked because of flooding. I don't see a just for the builder not to build a sidewalk or improve street. The portion of this street is extremely tight. Sometimes two cannot fit on this street especially during the landslides. My car was hit at a similar curve around this bend. Parking is already an issue with regular illegal parking. I never see parking enforcement patrol the area. This is a high pedestrian/cycling zone- especially within the last few years. I've see way more people walking this neighborhood than ever. I counted 15 people walking by this morning- and those are the ones I noticed and usually more in the after to evening. Like I said in walk everyday, many people walk from the neighborhood below to enjoy the surrounding beauty. This developer has already cut down native trees. Cars speed regularly speed as there are never traffic cops here. Again, the street is too narrow. I have to regularly think fast and jump out of the way. This area needs more sidewalks, not less. Again, the water runoff had been a major problem during storms with the Cliff and Tacoma intersection closed many times. I am happy to provide additional photos, video. Feel free to contact me.

Thank you-

Tony Federico



Planning APC East LA <apceastla@lacity.org>

OPPOSE — Case No. ZA-2025-2856-CU1-SPPC-HCA-1A, 1236 N. Cliff Dr.

1 message

Winston Morris <morris.winston@gmail.com>
To: apceastla@lacity.org

Wed, Jul 8, 2026 at 12:13 PM

To the Area Planning Commission,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed development at [1236 N. Cliff Dr, Los Angeles, CA 90065](#) (Case No. ZA-2025-2856-CU1-SPPC-HCA-1A).

As a resident of this neighborhood, I have serious concerns about the safety and appropriateness of this project as currently proposed:

Fire Safety: This is a constrained hillside lot located within a Very High Fire Severity Hazard Zone. Building two homes on this site raises significant concerns about evacuation capacity, emergency vehicle access, and overall fire risk to the surrounding community. Given the increasing frequency and severity of wildfires in Los Angeles, this is not a risk that should be taken lightly.

Pedestrian and Traffic Safety: The developer has requested a 0-foot building setback at a location that sits on a blind corner. This poses a direct and serious hazard to motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians. Neighbors have documented multiple incidents at this corner, underscoring that this is an active, ongoing safety concern rather than a hypothetical one.

Given these risks, I respectfully urge the Commission to deny approval of this project as proposed, or at minimum require substantial revisions that address fire safety access and eliminate the dangerous setback variance at this blind corner.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Winston

Winston Ross Morris
[3671 Tacoma Ave](#)
[Los Angeles, CA 90065](#)
+1.206.245.3636

[dusk.work](#)