

DOCUMENTS FROM APPELLANTS

Council File 26-0975
Council File 26-0975-S1



Pamela Thornton <pamela.thornton@lacity.org>

Proposed amended protection language

3 messages

Emma Rault <emmarault@proton.me>

Wed, Aug 12, 2026 at 9:54 PM

To: "councilmember.mcosker@lacity.org" <councilmember.mcosker@lacity.org>, Pamela Thornton <pamela.thornton@lacity.org>

Cc: Andrew Salimian <asalimian@laconservancy.org>

Hi!

Thank you for the nudge today! Andrew and I have been talking at greater length about protections that both the Conservancy and myself feel would meet the goals of protecting the historic cafe's future.

Here are our suggested amendments/additions to the protections as currently worded by the Councilmember:

Wording regarding modifications to the project ("2. Site Design and Function")

The Council Office's current proposed wording states that "All new construction shall be designed and operated to preserve and support the function and visual integrity of the café, ensuring adequate access for deliveries, service, and patron circulation. To accommodate the needs of future tenants, the property owner **may propose minor modifications to the site plan related to deliveries, service, and patron circulation**. Any proposed changes shall be submitted to the Department of City Planning for review and, if approved, incorporated into the project case file."

We are concerned that merely giving the property owner the *option* of proposing minor modifications will not result in the modifications to the plan to support the cafe's function that are very much needed. We propose rewording this to something more binding and hence more likely to achieve the intended outcome, such as:
"the property owner shall make some modifications to the site plan to better facilitate deliveries, service and patron circulation"
or alternatively,
"the Council Office asks that the property owner present modifications to the current site plan that better facilitate deliveries, service and patron circulation."

Proposed setback between the house and the cafe

We are concerned that the current 13'3" allotted between the cafe and the proposed residential build does not give enough room for the cafe's operations and creates insufficient privacy for both the residents and cafe patrons, effectively pitting both uses against each other in a way that will make it difficult for them to coexist and is likely to cause issues further down the line. Future residential tenants are not adequately protected from the nuisance aspects of restaurant operations, including noise, garbage, etc.

To guarantee the ongoing reactivation of the historic resource, we propose the stipulation of a minimum **setback of 30 feet between the cafe and the house (an increase of 16'75")**. This is more in keeping with the adjacent context (710 and [720 Paseo del Mar](#) to the west have a separation of closer to 35' between the main home and ancillary structures, for example). It would give the restaurant more rear space for seating and other business needs order to support future operations, and allow larger kitchen facilities, either within the historic structure or in an adjacent annex. Most importantly, it would go a long way toward alleviating our and community members' concerns about the residential portion of the project overshadowing and impeding the historic cafe.

Let me know if you have any follow-up questions. I'll try you by phone tomorrow, too (I narrowly missed your call this afternoon). Many thanks for your ongoing work on this project. I'm optimistic that we are on track to a viable compromise, and I'm very appreciative of your time and attention throughout this process.

Warmly,
Emma

Sent with [Proton Mail](#) secure email.

700 Paseo del Mar/Walkers's Café
ZA-2023-7218-ZV-CDP-MEL-HCA-2A

ADDITIONAL CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL & REAR YARD VARIANCE FINDINGS

For Consideration in Connection with Appeal in Council File 26-0975-S1, and City Charter Section 245 Motion in Council File 26-0975

Introduction

Appellants respectfully submit the following Additional Conditions of Approval for consideration by the Planning and Land Use Management (PLUM) Committee and the Los Angeles City Council in connection with the pending appeal in Council File 26-0975-S-1 and the City Charter Section 245 motion in Council File 26-0975.

Appellants have consistently supported reasonable residential development on the property. The issue presented by this appeal is not whether residential development should occur, but how it should be restructured so that it remains compatible with the surrounding neighborhood, preserves the historic setting of Walker's Café, and provides sufficient functional space for Walker's Café to succeed as a public restaurant.

Appellants do not seek denial of residential development on the property. Rather, appellants seek approval of a residential project that is properly structured to preserve Walker's Café as a functioning Historic-Cultural Monument and coastal visitor-serving restaurant while remaining compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

The following additional conditions are intended to demonstrate that the City's objectives are compatible with one another. Walker's Café can remain a viable Historic-Cultural Monument and coastal visitor-serving restaurant while allowing reasonable residential development. *Achieving both objectives requires reorganizing the site so that the functional operational needs of Walker's Café are satisfied before the residential building envelope is established.*

Since filing the appeal, appellants have continued reviewing the administrative record and supporting materials. That review has identified several factual matters that may assist the Committee during its independent de novo review, including correction of a recurring discrepancy in the existing floor area identified for Walker's Café. Several project documents identify Walker's Café as containing 736 square feet, whereas City records (ZIMAS) identify the building as 763 square feet. Clarifying the correct existing floor area is important because the approved determination incorporates the incorrect 736 square foot figure into conditions intended to govern future alterations of the Historic-Cultural Monument. Appellants have also assembled additional documentation regarding the historic physical organization and operation of the site and evidence supporting an alternative site design that better accommodates both Walker's Café and the residential development. *We believe the resulting project will be much more attractive to both the future residents and café management.*

Accordingly, appellants respectfully submit the following Additional Conditions of Approval.

In addition, we will provide alternative residential structure design to show that the conditions related to increasing yards/open space are feasible and reasonable.

Finally, we recommend approval of a rear yard variance. See section at end for required findings.

EXISTING CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL:

7. Coastal Development Permit. Approved herein is:

- a. **Dual Permit Jurisdiction Area.** The project is located within the Dual Permit Jurisdiction area of the California Coastal Zone. The applicant shall file an application for a second (or "dual") coastal development permit with the Coastal Commission. Prior to the issuance of any permits, the Applicant shall submit proof of a valid ("dual") permit issued by the Coastal Commission.
- b. **Residential Use.** The project shall be limited to a maximum density of one (1) new single-family dwelling and one (1) new Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU), for a total of two (2) dwelling units on the subject property.
- c. **Commercial Use.** The existing historic cafe shall be limited to 736 763 square feet plus the historically permitted but subsequently demolished storage shed.
- d. **Height.** The existing historic cafe shall maintain the building height of 12 feet 10 inches, and the proposed two-story single-family dwelling and attached ADU shall be limited to a building height of 21 feet as measured from the average existing natural grade for the new attached structures, as shown in Exhibit "A".
- e. **Roof Deck.** Railings used on the proposed roof deck shall not exceed 36 inches and be of an open design per San Pedro Specific Plan Section 5.B.5, as shown in Exhibit "A".
- f. **Parking and Access.** As shown in "Exhibit A", a minimum of three (3) covered parking spaces shall be provided for residential use. Final approval of the number and location of parking is subject to review and approval by the Department of Building and Safety.
- g. **Single-Family Zones Regulations.** Prior to the issuance of a grading or building permit, the applicant shall demonstrate compliance with Ordinance 184,802 including but not limited to:
 - i. The project shall provide an encroachment plane, a 45° angled plane above a height of 20 feet that the house cannot intersect.
 - ii. Side wall more than 45 feet in length and 14 feet in height require articulation.
 - iii. Roof decks are required to be set back at least 3 feet from the minimum side yard.
 - iv. Driveways are limited to width to 25% of lot width (but not less than 9 feet) or the width of the existing driveway.
- h. **San Pedro Specific Plan.** Prior to the issuance of a grading or building permit, the Department of Building and Safety shall determine that a project complies with the regulations of the San Pedro Specific Plan pursuant to Ordinance No. 166,352, including but not limited to:
 - i. Building or Structure for residential use shall be limited to two stories or a height of 26 feet as measured from the average existing natural grade to the highest point of the roof or parapet wall of the building, whichever

is higher per San Pedro Specific Plan Section 5. 8.1.

ii. Roof deck railings that do not exceed 36 inches and are of an open design.

i. Outdoor lighting shall be designed and installed with shielding so that light does not overflow into adjacent residential properties.

j. Prior to the commencement of site construction activities, construction schedule and contact information for any inquiries regarding construction activities shall be provided to residents and property owners within a 100-foot radius of the project site. The contact information shall include a construction manager and a phone number and shall be posted on the site in a manner, which is readily visible to any interested party.

ADDITIONAL CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL:

k. Walker's Café shall be maintained and operated as a public restaurant consistent with its Historic-Cultural Monument designation, historic restaurant use, and coastal visitor-serving function. The café shall not be converted to another principal use, reduced in functional capacity, or operated in a manner inconsistent with its historic restaurant use without subsequent discretionary approval, including any required Coastal Development Permits or permit amendments. This condition shall run with the land and shall bind all successors, assigns, lessees, operators, and future owners.

l. Prior to approval of revised construction plans, the applicant shall submit a Functional Café Operations Plan demonstrating that Walker's Café will have adequate operational space to function as a successful public restaurant. The plan shall demonstrate adequate provision for indoor and outdoor patron circulation, employee circulation, food service, deliveries, refrigeration and storage, refuse and recycling, service access, emergency access, accessibility, maintenance activities, future operational flexibility, and other functions reasonably necessary for continued restaurant operation. The Department of City Planning shall obtain physical sign off from the Los Angeles Fire Department, Department of Building and Safety, the Office of Historic Resources, and any other agency having jurisdiction before determining that this condition has been satisfied.

m. Prior to issuance of any building permit for the rear residential development, the applicant shall submit to the Department of City Planning, in consultation with the Office of Historic Resources and other agencies having jurisdiction, a Café Restoration and Reopening Plan demonstrating substantial progress toward restoration of Walker's Café. The plan shall include, at a minimum: required permits, restoration schedule, anticipated reopening schedule, proposed restaurant operator or leasing plan, kitchen completion, utility connections, building systems, Health Department approvals, and all actions reasonably necessary to return Walker's Café to active public restaurant use. No Certificate of Occupancy for the rear residential development shall be issued until Walker's Café has completed restoration and has received all approvals necessary to reopen for public restaurant operation.

n. The plans shall be revised to allow for a total of 30 feet of open space between the café building and the residential structure, to provide for adequate operational space for the café and a required yard area for the residential uses. The residential structure shall be redesigned accordingly in the remaining space on the lot. The residential yard area shall be landscaped with appropriate coastal

San Pedro and Southern California native plants and shall contribute positively to the visual setting of Walker's Café rather than creating the appearance of a walled residential compound.

o. Roof decks shall not create the appearance of an additional story or otherwise dominate Walker's Café or its historic setting. No enclosed roof access structure shall be permitted. Perimeter walls, fences, gates, lighting, privacy features, balconies, landscaping, and other residential improvements shall be designed to preserve neighborhood compatibility, maintain light and air, avoid creating a compound-like appearance, and minimize adverse impacts upon the Walker's Café Historic-Cultural Monument, adjacent residential properties, and emergency access. Continuous six foot concrete masonry walls immediately adjacent to Walker's Café shall be avoided where alternative site planning can accomplish the same objectives while preserving a more appropriate relationship between the residence and the historic resource.

p. Following reopening of Walker's Café, any cessation of public restaurant operations for more than sixty (60) consecutive days shall require the property owner to submit a Café Operations Status Report to the Department of City Planning and Council District 15 explaining the reasons for the interruption and describing the proposed schedule for resumption of restaurant operations.

q. For a period of five (5) years following reopening of Walker's Café, the property owner shall submit an annual Compliance Report to the Department of City Planning and Council District 15 documenting compliance with these Conditions of Approval. The report shall include, at a minimum, continued public restaurant operation, compliance with circulation and operational requirements, maintenance of required operational areas, compliance with recorded covenants, any material changes affecting operation of Walker's Café, and corrective actions taken during the preceding year. The Department of City Planning may require additional documentation reasonably necessary to verify continued compliance.

Conclusion

Appellants respectfully submit these proposed Conditions of Approval as a constructive planning alternative intended to assist the PLUM and the City Council in conducting the required de novo review.

These proposed conditions demonstrate that the City's objectives are not mutually exclusive. Walker's Café can continue as a viable Historic-Cultural Monument and coastal visitor-serving restaurant while allowing substantial residential development on the property. *Achieving both objectives, however, requires organizing the site around Walker's Café's functional operational needs and the applicable planning requirements, rather than requiring Walker's Café to function within the limited residual space remaining after the residential footprint has been established.*

The requested conditions/modifications provide a practical framework through which both the historic public restaurant and a compatible residence may coexist in a manner that satisfies the Coastal Act, historic preservation principles, neighborhood compatibility, and the City's independent obligations under the applicable de novo standard of review.

REAR YARD VARIANCE FINDINGS:

A Variance to permit a reduction of the required rear yard from 15 feet to 4 feet in order to relocate the building envelope for the proposed residence away from Walker's Café, a designated Historic-Cultural Monument, and toward the rear alley, thereby providing greater physical and visual separation between the new residential construction and the historic resource, preserving additional open area around the historic cafe, and maintaining and enhancing its public visibility.

The requested four foot rear yard is the zoning relief necessary to accomplish this preservation objective.

FINDING 1 – Practical Difficulties or Unnecessary Hardship

The strict application of the provisions of the zoning ordinance would result in practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships inconsistent with the general purposes and intent of the zoning regulations.

Strict application of the 15 foot rear yard requirement would result in practical difficulties and unnecessary hardship because it would require the building envelope for the proposed residence to be located closer to Walker's Café, a designated City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument that will be retained and rehabilitated as part of the project.

The approximately 6,138 square foot property must accommodate both the preservation of the existing historic resource and reasonable residential development consistent with its R1 zoning. Unlike a typical R1 parcel, the location of new development on this site must take into account the physical and visual relationship between the new construction and the historic café.

The requested variance allows the building envelope to be relocated away from the Historic-Cultural Monument and toward the rear alley. Doing so increases the physical separation between the proposed residence and Walker's Café, preserves additional open area around the historic structure, reduces the visual encroachment of new construction upon the historic cafe, and maintains and enhances the café's public visibility.

Strict enforcement of the 15 foot rear yard would frustrate these preservation objectives by pushing the new construction toward the historic resource. The requested four-foot rear yard is therefore the zoning relief necessary to permit a site configuration that accommodates reasonable residential development while better protecting and preserving the historic cafe.

FINDING 2 – Special Circumstances Applicable to the Property

There are special circumstances applicable to the subject property, such as its size, shape, topography, location or surroundings, which do not apply generally to other property in the same zone and vicinity.

The subject property has special circumstances that do not generally apply to other R1-zoned properties in the vicinity.

Most significantly, the approximately 6,138 square foot parcel contains Walker's Café, a designated Historic-Cultural Monument that is being retained and rehabilitated. The presence of the historic cafe creates an unusual development constraint because the placement of new construction must

take into account not only the ordinary R1 development standards, but also preservation of the historic structure and its physical and visual relationship to the remainder of the site.

The property is further distinguished by the fact that its rear property line abuts a public alley. This provides an opportunity to locate the new residential construction toward the alley and away from the historic cafe without placing the structure directly against the rear yard of an adjoining residential property.

The combination of the relatively limited lot area, the presence and preservation of a designated Historic-Cultural Monument, the need to maintain physical and visual separation between that resource and new construction, and the location of a public alley along the rear property line constitutes a set of circumstances that does not generally apply to other R1 properties in the same zone and vicinity.

The requested variance responds directly to those special circumstances by allowing the building envelope to be relocated toward the alley and away from the historic resource.

FINDING 3 – Preservation of a Substantial Property Right

The variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right or use generally possessed by other property in the same zone and vicinity but which, because of the special circumstances and practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships, is denied to the property in question.

Other R1-zoned properties in the vicinity generally enjoy the ability to develop a single-family residence of reasonable size and configuration without simultaneously accommodating and preserving a designated Historic-Cultural Monument on the same parcel.

The subject property possesses the same underlying residential zoning, but its reasonable development is uniquely constrained by the presence and preservation of Walker's Café.

Strict application of the 15 foot rear yard would require the residential building envelope to shift toward the historic cafe in order to accommodate reasonable residential development. The requested variance instead allows that building envelope to be relocated in the opposite direction – away from Walker's Café and toward the rear alley.

The variance therefore allows the property to enjoy the reasonable residential use generally available to other R1-zoned properties while accommodating a constraint that those properties generally do not bear: the preservation of a designated historic resource on the same relatively small parcel.

The requested relief is thus not intended to obtain a special privilege or simply to maximize development of the property. Rather, it allows a substantial residential property right generally enjoyed by other R1 properties to be exercised in a manner that also provides greater protection, separation, open area, and visibility for the Historic-Cultural Monument.

FINDING 4 – No Material Detriment to Public Welfare or Surrounding Properties

The granting of the variance will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to property or improvements in the same zone or vicinity.

Granting the requested rear yard variance will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to surrounding properties or improvements.

The requested zero foot rear yard is located along a property line that abuts a public alley rather than the rear yard of an adjoining residential property. The alley therefore provides physical separation between the proposed residence and properties located beyond the alley and reduces the potential effects ordinarily associated with a reduced rear yard setback.

At the same time, relocating the building envelope toward the alley provides a direct preservation benefit at the opposite side of the development area. It increases the physical separation between the new residence and Walker's Café, preserves additional open area around the historic cafe, reduces the visual dominance of new construction in relation to the historic structure, and maintains and enhances public visibility of the café.

The requested variance therefore places the reduced setback where its effects can be most appropriately accommodated — adjacent to a public alley — while using the resulting additional space where it provides the greatest public and preservation benefit — adjacent to the designated Historic-Cultural Monument.

The variance is limited to the rear yard requirement and does not itself authorize additional height, floor area, density, or a change in the underlying zoning.

Accordingly, the requested rear yard reduction can be accommodated without material detriment to neighboring properties or the public welfare and will facilitate a site plan that better protects and preserves an important historic resource.

FINDING 5 – No Adverse Effect on the General Plan

The granting of the variance will not adversely affect any element of the General Plan.

Granting the requested variance will not adversely affect any element of the General Plan.

The variance does not alter the property's underlying land use designation or R1 zoning. Rather, it allows residential development consistent with the underlying residential zoning to be configured in a manner that better accommodates the preservation and rehabilitation of Walker's Café.

The requested relief is narrowly limited to the rear-yard requirement and responds to the unusual historic and physical circumstances of this particular property. By permitting the residential building envelope to be relocated toward the rear alley, the variance increases the separation between the new construction and the Historic-Cultural Monument, preserves additional open area around the historic resource, reduces visual encroachment upon the Historic-Cultural Monument, and maintains and enhances its public visibility.

The project will remain subject to all other applicable development standards and to the applicable requirements of the San Pedro Community Plan, San Pedro Specific Plan, certified San Pedro Land Use Plan, Coastal Act, and other applicable land use regulations.

Accordingly, granting the requested rear yard variance will not adversely affect any element of the General Plan and will allow the property to accommodate reasonable residential development in a manner that better preserves and respects the designated historic resource.

I have reviewed the proposed development at 700 Paseo del Mar, including the ZA-approved plans dated April 1, 2026. I was asked to determine whether the site could reasonably be developed in a manner that increases the open space/yard area between the café and the residential building and reduces the scale and mass to make the project more compatible with the surrounding neighborhood and with the historic café, while minimizing loss of square footage.

In my professional opinion, it can.

I have prepared a conceptual alternative plan to demonstrate one such configuration. The alternative is not intended to constitute construction drawings or a complete project design. Rather, it demonstrates at a conceptual level that an alternative configuration is physically feasible and could accomplish the principal objectives of the proposed project while keeping both the single-family dwelling and the ADU, and substantially increasing the open space between the café and residential structure in order to facilitate deliveries, service and patron circulation, add back the square footage of the demolished café storage shed, and to alleviate concerns about the residential portion of the project overshadowing and impeding the historic café.

To maximize the square footage of the residential component, I am suggesting reducing the side yards to 4' on the west side and 5' on the east side, as well as reducing the rear yard from 15' to 4'. (It is worth noting that even without these accommodations, it would still be possible to balance the cafe and the residential component's needs while maintaining a 30' separation between the two.)

The residential structure would be 30' from the rear of Walkers Café and 57'4" from the front property line. Square footage, in my proposed design, is adjusted to 2,420 sf for the single-family dwelling, as compared to 2,453 sf in the existing plans, while the ADU square footage has been reduced from 1,070 sf to 855 sf.

I have limited the second story areas to a minimum to reduce bulk and scale, while remaining at the current height. The roof garden/terrace is contained to the upper level of the single-family dwelling, which is positioned to occupy the rear 30' of the site and located above the parking.

I am available for questions.

Signed:

**David Turnbull, Design Consultant
Marina del Rey, California**

Rough Sketches-- the more sophisticated overlay drawings and conceptual plans and sketches for an alternative will be forthcoming:



