



4455 Lamont Street Suite 101
San Diego, CA 92109

March 12th, 2026

HEARING OFFICER GIBBS

Via email: HearingOfficer@sandiego.gov

RE WOODFORD DRIVE RESIDENCE – PRJ 1134889

Please allow this Letter to serve as additional background and clarification on the Woodford Residence SDP application that is being heard before the Hearing Officer on March 25th. We felt it would be beneficial to clarify both the La Jolla Shores Advisory Board denial vote on this project as well as to preemptively offer clarification should any opponents attend the Hearing Officer Meeting.

This project is located in the Upper La Jolla Shores neighborhood on the mesa between Interstate 5 and La Jolla Scenic Drive North and La Jolla Parkway to the south. The project is proposed to be a single family residence and attached ADU constructed on an empty over 20,000 sq. ft. lot that was the site of a former tennis court. The lot is mostly flat with some moderate sloping at the rear (south) and the west side as well. The perimeter of the lot is protected by mature trees that surround the parcel on all sides and significant grade change to the abutting neighbors to the west and south who are unable to see any part of the proposed building Pad for this project. In fact, the only home that has a clear view of the proposed house is the neighbor to the north across Woodford Drive but it is important to note that in addition to the 56' right of way of Woodford Drive, there is a mapped front setback of 25' for each side so there is at least 100' restricted open right of way and setback between the proposed home and that one visible neighbor. We would reference the site aerial illustration below that indicates the home across the street is 104' away at the closest point and an average of almost 150' given the homes are at angles to each other. The western neighbor is approximately 57' away but also down an approximate 25' slope and thru mature vegetation. The rear Southern neighboring homes are 89' and 109' at their closest points and again, both are approximately 25' below this parcel and protected by extensive existing trees and vegetation. The house immediately to the east side of the proposed home was part of the original two lots that made up this project site and was remodeled and sold by the same client proposing this new home. At great expense, a mature tree line was installed between those lots to provide complete privacy by the time that the new house would be constructed. Also, the remodeled house has since been sold with complete disclosure of the proposed new home on the vacant lot next door. At the closest point the home is approximately 25' feet away but that home enjoys all its outdoor entertaining spaces on the opposite or east side of that home so there is no lost privacy for this home.

The following exhibits illustrate the inherent privacy of this parcel and setbacks to neighbors:



EXHIBIT 1 – Setback diagram for neighboring homes



EXHIBIT 2 – Existing site view looking to the rear of the lot & tree rows on both sides of the lot



EXHIBIT 3 – Existing site view looking to the west of the site and existing trees and grade drop



EXHIBIT 4 – Existing site view looking from the rear to front and showing tree rows to the east



EXHIBIT 5 – Existing site view looking to the front of the lot and neighbor across Woodford



EXHIBIT 6 – Existing site view at the rear of the lot showing existing trees and grade drop

The first item we would like to address is Floor Area Ratio. The first item to note is that the proposed house itself is 6,562 square feet. It also has a 790 square foot garage as well as a mostly detached 987 square foot ADU in the rear of the site. There was discussion and reference to FAR in the denial motion from the Shores Advisory Board. In fact, they went so far as to “creatively” state that if approved, this project would be “***an outlier statistically***” due to the proposed size. However, the board completely failed to consider numerous items that refute the idea that the size of the home (6,562 sq. ft.) is too large for this lot & neighborhood.

Most critical to note is that FAR & massing based on a “Form Based Code” is no longer the primary method of judging the size of a project. For decades, La Jolla Shores Planned District Ordinance specifically did not have an FAR mathematical limit to the size of homes and the ultimate size was a judgement call based on a “Form Based Code” to be compatible and consistent with the existing context for the site. Ironically, many of the very same people who now make up the La Jolla Shores Review Board fought the City of San Diego incessantly for years and years to have the City-wide FAR tables from the Land Development Code (Table 131-04J) be adopted for La Jolla Shores and approximately 2.5 years ago the City did just that action thru a Land Development Code update which moved La Jolla Shores from a zone with no defined FAR to one that is now restricted by the FAR tables in the Land Development Code. Given that code amendment, this project is on a 20,108 square foot lot and per the Land Development Code and the now updated La Jolla Shores PDO, it is allowed a 0.45 FAR for the lot or up to a 9,049 square foot build. **As proposed, the total square footage of this project, including garages and the ADU, is 8,319 square feet which is a 0.41 Floor Area Ratio.** As such, the proposed the design is approximately 10% below the now City of San Diego defined mathematical FAR limit governing square footage.

Additionally, the project was denied because they felt it was too big which the above analysis proves is mathematically incorrect so while the Board also attempted to “have it both ways” and completely ignore the mathematical FAR limitations now codified but return to the former method of arbitrary and personal judgment basis of what “feels right” using the old Form Based Code concept. While this project is one of the largest in the immediate 300’ radius, **that radius in no way reflects the entire actual neighborhood when you consider these lots are mostly ½ acre or larger in size so you only end up with a handful of homes that can significantly skew the curve of this type of limited analysis.** When this proposed home is considered using the entire actual neighborhood, the proposed home is entirely consistent with the fabric of the neighborhood in terms of size, massing and stories and is literally nowhere near the largest home when expanding beyond the precise 300’ limited analysis.

The reality is this lot is part of a specific neighborhood of the overall La Jolla Shores area and the ONLY entrance in or out of this neighborhood of upper La Jolla Shores where this house is located is via Woodford Drive and that is the actual neighborhood that should be used when considering the size and suitability of this design. This entire neighborhood uses Woodford Drive from La Jolla Scenic North to access a landlocked neighborhood of approximately 70 homes and that is the neighborhood which should be considered when analyzing the context for this project. When you use this consideration of what is the actual neighborhood is, the

concept that this home is “too big” completely falls apart. In fact, nearly 2/3 of the homes in this neighborhood are of 2 or 3 stories in height with homes exceeding 10,000 square feet in size! We invite you to review **ATTACHMENT 1** to this letter that shows just how many homes are 2 or 3 stories and even though the Shores Advisory Board and several neighbors in attendance tried to paint the idea of a 2 story home as not legal nor contextual, there simply is no truth to that nor any basis to say a 2 story home is inappropriate for this site. In fact, only 2 lots east of this site is a brand new 2 story home that the Board did not even consider in arriving at their denial vote (*see below for image*).



Additionally and ironically, at the February 25th HEARING OFFICER meeting, 7856 La Jolla Vista Drive was approved ON CONSENT and that project proposed a remodel and addition bringing that home to 7,030 square feet and that site is only approximately 225’ south of this proposed project. Adding to the irony, the Shores Advisory Board approved that project with a 6-0 vote. Please see **ATTACHMENT 2** to this letter for the backup on this most recent approval.

Even more disturbing is the Board in their discussion (*also noted in the motion*) attempted to mis-read the La Jolla Community Plan and imply that somehow the Community Plan “requires” all second floors to step in from the lower floor. Even though this misinterpretation has been kept alive by several professional project opponents for years now, that is NOT what the Community Plan states. The La Jolla Community Plan suggests that “second story homes *should* step back” but the use of the word “should” is a passive suggestion and it does not state “*shall* step back” which would be a regulation. This has been a favorite of project opponents for years but it simply is not a requirement whereas the cumulative goal of that statement is overall good design and this project does in fact use considerable offsets on the street facing front façade to provide significant relief and architectural interest. In fact, we have included

ATTACHMENT 3 to this letter that includes a series of renderings for the proposed home that illustrate the care that went into the placement and siting of the home on this odd shaped parcel. In the Board discussions, they claimed the house of that size would overwhelm the site yet La Jolla Shores is also limited to a maximum of 60% coverage and this project only has a coverage of **26.6%** mathematically illustrating that the site can easily support the proposed project.

In conclusion, the Board, in their deliberation and discussion, referenced design suggestions from the La Jolla Shores Design Manual. This is quite ironic as that Manual actually encourages 2 story homes per the excerpt below:

- Strive for variety between groups of houses by inclusion of two story houses, variation in lot sizes, and changes in materials or detailing. Let the most significant variations come between groups rather than from house to house. Relate houses to topographic slopes and to each other rather than to alignment of the street.
- Develop alternative methods of handling setbacks to increase usable open space and minimize narrow useless sideyards.



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The Board also attempted to use one of the main design quotes from the La Jolla Shores Design Manual to attempt to justify their denial vote. This section states that no home should be **“so different in quality, form, materials, color and relationship”** that it would actually DISRUPT the unity of the area. (see below section)

Within the limitations implied above, originality and diversity in architecture are encouraged. The theme "unity with variety" shall be a guiding principle. Unity without variety means simply monotony; variety by itself is chaos. No structure shall be approved which is substantially like any other structure located on an adjacent parcel. Conversely, no structure will be approved that is so different in quality, form, materials, color, and relationship as to disrupt the architectural unity of the area.

*The entire text of the ordinance creating the La Jolla Shores Planned District is included in the appendix of this Design Manual.

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This comment is again without merit as it relates to this proposed project as the Board recently approved a much more stark, modern two-story stucco box only 2 lots away from our site and an image of that home is again pasted below for reference:



Regardless of prior approvals, we would again invite a review of the attached **ATTACHMENT 3** which are the Renderings of this proposed house. A Decision Maker would have to review those renderings and come to a conclusion that this proposed house is “*so different*” from the neighborhood context that it would actually “*disrupt the Architectural unity of the area*” if approved as the house meets all numerical codes and requirements so any denial must now be based on subjective review. Please also note that even this quote says “*area*” and not the 300’ Public Notice radius which is key to avoiding a ultra-limited review of this project site where the lot sizes only catch a very small sampling when 300’ is the distance to utilize to set context. To further assist the Decision Maker, we have included **ATTACHEMENT 4** to this letter that includes a series of Context pictures of the neighborhood to establish what is quite an eclectic mix of styles, sizes, heights and site placement for the neighboring homes in this area.

We trust this information will assist in the evaluation of the Project especially in terms of understanding the Shores Advisory Board vote and a preemptive understanding of the outdated, inapplicable or inaccurate claims against the project that may be made by any opposition at the hearing.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Tim Golba', written over a light-colored rectangular background.

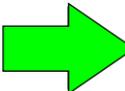
Tim Golba, Principal
Golba Architecture Inc.

ATTACHMENT 1

■ NEIGHBORHOOD HEIGHT EXHIBIT



-  3 STORY HOME
-  2 STORY HOME
-  1 STORY HOME

 SUBJECT PROPERTY

 INDICATES ONE ENTRY TO THIS SECTION OF LA JOLLA HEIGHTS or the ACTUAL NEIGHBORHOOD

ATTACHMENT 2

■ HO PROJECT APPROVAL from 3/25/2026



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Hearing Officer

DATE ISSUED: FEBRUARY 11, 2026 REPORT NO. HO-26-010

HEARING DATE: FEBRUARY 25, 2026

SUBJECT: 7856 LA JOLLA VISTA DRIVE. PROCESS THREE DECISION

PROJECT NUMBER: [PROJECT NO. PRJ-1123371](#)

OWNER/APPLICANT: HEME VC PROPERTY LLC/ MICHAEL MORTON

SUMMARY

Issue: Should the Hearing Officer Approve modifications and additions to an existing single dwelling unit to create a new single dwelling unit with a detached Accessory Dwelling Unit and detached garage and other site improvements located at [7856 La Jolla Vista Drive](#) within the [La Jolla Community Plan](#)?

Proposed Actions:

1. APPROVE SITE DEVELOPMENT PERMIT NO. PMT-3318269.

Fiscal Considerations: None. All costs associated with the processing of the application will be paid by the applicant.

Code Enforcement Impact: None.

Housing Impact Statement: The project proposes the addition of an Accessory Dwelling unit, that does not count towards the zoning density, pursuant to [San Diego Municipal Code \(SDMC\), section 141.0302\(b\)\(6\)](#), but does increase the number of dwelling units. The proposed single dwelling unit will replace the existing single dwelling unit.

Community Planning Group Recommendation: On October 3, 2024, the La Jolla Community Planning Association voted 15-0, with 1 abstention, to recommend approval of the project without conditions.

La Jolla Shores Advisory Board Recommendation: On November 20, 2024, the La Jolla Shores Advisory Board voted 6-0, with no abstentions, to recommend approval of the project without conditions.

Environmental Impact:

This project was determined to be categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15301 (Existing Facilities) and Section 15303 (New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures). This project is not pending an appeal of the environmental determination. The environmental exemption determination for this project was made on December 10, 2025, and the opportunity to appeal that determination ended December 24, 2025.

BACKGROUND -

Location: The 1.49-acre site is located at 7856 La Jolla Vista Drive. The site is approximately one-quarter of a mile north of La Jolla Parkway, one-tenth of a mile east of La Jolla Scenic Drive, one-quarter of a mile west of the Interstate 5 freeway, and one and a half miles south of La Jolla Village Drive.



Figure 1

Community Plan: The project is in the La Jolla Shores Planned District within the La Jolla Community Plan.

Zoning: The site is within the LJSPD-SF (La Jolla Shores Planned District Single Family) zone, the Airport Land Use Compatibility Overlay Zone (MCAS Miramar), the ALUCP Airport Influence Area for MCAS Miramar (Review Area 2), the Coastal Height Limit Overlay Zone, and a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone.

Mobility: According to Figure 13 of the La Jolla Community Plan (Community Plan), the project site is near two bus routes, with Route 34/34A approximately a third of a mile east on Gilman Drive, and the Route 30 (Express), approximately one-half mile to the west on Torrey Pines Road. Gilman Drive

and Torrey Pines Road have existing Class II bike routes. A future Class II bike route is proposed for La Jolla Scenic Drive, according to Figure 14 of the Community Plan.

Existing Use: The project site is currently developed with an existing one-story, single dwelling unit. There is also an existing tennis court and tennis pavilion on the west end of the property.

Adjacent Uses: The project site is surrounded by large, single-dwelling units of varying design styles. Most of the adjacent properties are single-story, with occasional two-story structures.

DISCUSSION

Project Description:

The project proposes modifications and additions to an existing 4,764-square-foot one-story single dwelling unit to create a new, one-story, 5,457-square-foot single dwelling unit. There are no deviations. Modifications include 1,768 square feet of demolition, and a 3,010-square-foot remodel of the existing structure. Project additions include the construction of a new detached 694 square foot accessory dwelling unit (ADU) that is separated from the primary structure by a covered exterior overhang, which will serve as a new attached carport. Other additions include a new, detached 818-square-foot garage to the west of the primary structure, near Revelle Drive, and a new, detached 61-square-foot tennis pavilion. The new project will total 7,030 square feet and will also include new retaining walls and a new swimming pool.

The project meets the requirements of the San Diego Municipal Code (SDMC) for the La Jolla Shores Planned District (LJSPD), Single Family (LJSPD-SF) zone, which allows for one-family dwellings and ADUs pursuant to San Diego Municipal Code ([SDMC Section 1510.0303 \(a\) and \(c\)](#)). The project is proposing a single-family dwelling unit with an ADU, in conformance with the zone.

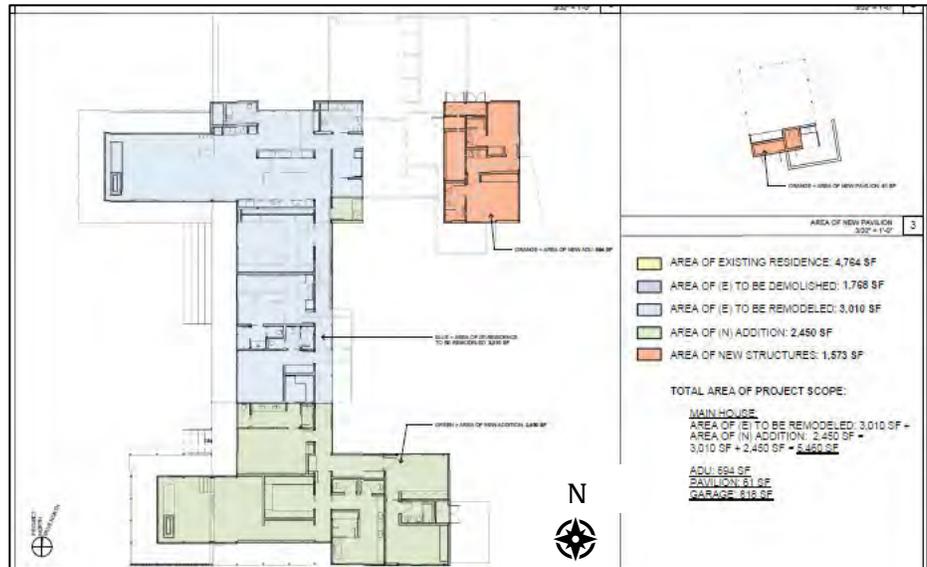


Figure 2

ATTACHMENT 3

■ PROJECT RENDERINGS



RENDERING #1 - Front image showing breakup of massing, varied material palette and use of offsetting planes



RENDERING #2 - Front image view showing massing, materials and landscape to meet the street



RENDERING #3 - Front image showing entryway, material palette and landscape features as well as oversized front setback



RENDERING #4 - Front image showing setback of second story - Note entry and stair feature is approximately a 48 foot front setback



RENDERING #5 - Front Aerial image showing breakup of massing, varied material palette and use of offsetting planes and angled siting of the house to the street to significantly increase front setback area



RENDERING #6 - Rear Aerial image showing breakup of massing, varied material palette and use of offsetting planes in the rear of the design



RENDERING #7 - Rear image showing breakup of massing, varied material palette and use of offsetting planes as well as private entertaining areas



RENDERING #8 - Rear image showing breakup of massing, varied material palette and use of offsetting planes and private entertaining areas as well as rear ADU (*attached*)



RENDERING #9 - Rear image showing privacy of rear yard and entertaining spaces as well as from existing neighboring homes



RENDERING #10 - Rear image showing privacy of rear yard and entertaining spaces as well as from existing neighboring homes

ATTACHMENT 4

■ NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT PHOTOS























March 23, 2025

To: Hearing Officer and Hector Rios, Development Project Manager

Subject: Opposition to Site Development Permit Request for PRJ-1134889-Woodford Residence Construction of an ~7,500 sq ft home (2-story primary residence with a 2-story ADU) on Parcel 346-741-31-00 (proposed address 2955 Woodford Drive)

Dear Hearing Officer and Mr. Rios,

We are writing to express our concern regarding the site development permit application for the construction of an approximately 7,500 sq. ft. home (2-story primary residence with a 2-story ADU) on a property adjacent to ours. We urge the Board to consider the long-term implications of approving a project of this scale and nature within our established and historically consistent neighborhood.

We would like to note for the record that we have not been contacted about the proposed project by the property owner or their representatives.

Impact to Privacy, Visual Character and Neighborhood Incompatibility

The proposed residence is surrounded by lots with 1-story homes. Two of these adjacent properties (including ours) are on lots that are substantially lower than the lot for the proposed project (by approximately 1 story). As such, a 2-story structure of this bulk and scale would loom over all the adjacent properties, including the single story home on the original double-lot property (2975 Woodford Drive) that recently sold. We fear that this would have an irreversible impact on privacy, view corridors, and the overall sense of space. We are concerned that approval of the proposed project would fundamentally alter the character of our residential enclave, which is historically defined by modest, predominantly single-story building profiles and harmonious spacing. Furthermore, we fear that with the by far largest gross square-footage and floor-area-ratio (FAR) in the neighborhood, approval of the project would be precedent-setting and pave the way for even larger developments in the future.

We would like to especially emphasize our concerns about the height and positioning of the proposed Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU), which would be closest to our property. While there are a few other two-story homes in our neighborhood, none are as imposing relative to adjacent, single-story homes situated on significantly lower lots. This raises serious concerns about privacy, sunlight obstruction, and visual intrusion. While there are a limited number of two-story homes in the neighborhood, none seem to be as over-scaled or positioned in a way that tower over or overwhelm adjacent properties.

Loss of Traditional Oversight

Historically, our neighborhood (La Jolla Heights Estates) had CC&Rs and an architectural committee that reviewed and approved all construction plans to maintain the integrity of the community. Although this is no longer in place, we believe the standards it upheld for decades reflected a shared commitment to responsible, compatible development. We cannot imagine that the current proposal would ever have passed under their guidance, and we believe those long-standing community values should still carry weight in this process. When we purchased our home in 2012, we made modest updates, and even for those changes, we brought our plans to the architectural committee for review, a step we took out of respect for the traditions and character of the La Jolla Heights Estates community. At the time, Sara Moser, the prior owner of the proposed building lot, was herself a long-standing member of the architectural committee as well as the La Jolla Shores Planned District Advisory Board. We believe this underscores the historical expectation that any changes in the neighborhood should conform with community standards.

Request for Topographic and Visual Impact Analysis

Given the substantial difference in elevation between the proposed project site and adjacent properties (including ours on 7867 La Jolla Vista Drive) we consider it critical that the applicant provide a detailed analysis of the proposed home's vertical impact and view corridors to the Hearing Officer and to adjoining property owners as well as other directly impacted homeowners, preferably with use of story poles. Without such information, it does not seem possible to fully evaluate how the proposed second story will affect privacy, view corridors, natural light, and neighborhood compatibility.

We understand and respect the rights of property owners to improve their land. However, development should be conducted in a transparent manner that respects the rights of existing residents and preserves the unique character of our coastal neighborhood. A project of this scale, height, and proximity to neighboring homes is out of proportion and precedent, and we respectfully ask that the Hearing Officer not approve the proposal in its current form and until a detailed vertical impact analysis/report is provided.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our concerns.

Sincerely,

Miriam and Christian Weyer



