San Diego Planning Commission Meeting

(7354 Romero Dr – Project No. PRJ-1101825)

PHONE-IN TESTIMONY INFORMATION

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Development Services Department

7354 Romero Drive APPEAL
Project No. PRJ-1101825

Item 1

Planning Commission

November 5, 2026

The City of SAN DIEGO

Project Site Information and Approvals

Location:	7354 Romero Drive, La Jolla Community Plan, RS-1-4 zone
Parcel Size:	0.297 acres
Approvals:	Process Three
	Variance
	Coastal Development Permit

Vicinity Map

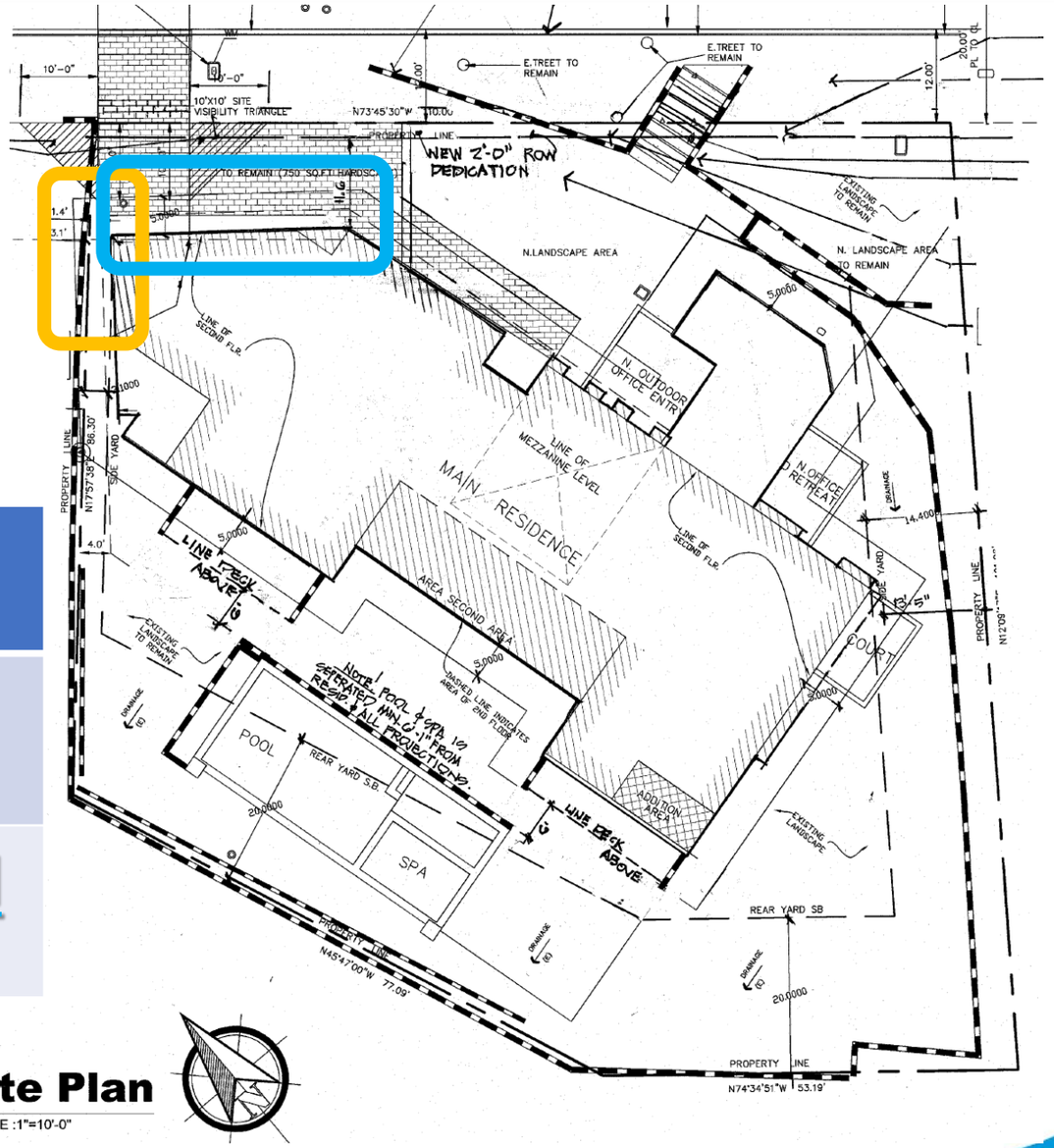


Project Scope

- 6,667 sf Single Dwelling Unit remodel
- 495 sf Accessory Dwelling Unit at First Floor

Required Variance:

Side Setback	Front Setback
4 feet required	20 feet required
3.1 feet requested	13.6 feet requested



Variance - 1974

West Side Setback	Front Setback
3.5 feet granted	14 feet granted
3.1 feet measured	13.6 feet measured

- **Current project requests the same setbacks at second story**

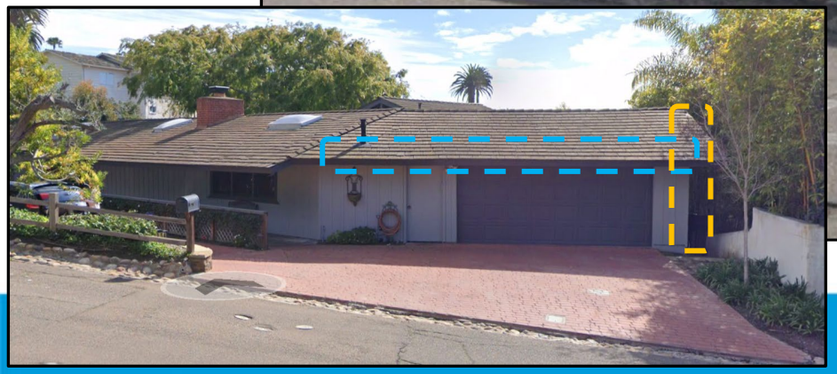




Current Structure

1974 Variance: 14-foot front yard, 3.5-foot west side
1975 Construction: 13.6-foot front yard, 3.1-foot west side
Current Variance request: 13.6-foot front yard, 3.1-foot west side





Legal Standard for Appeal

- Factual Error
- New Information
- Findings Not Supported
- Conflicts

Appeal Filed August 5, 2026

Cited grounds were

- Factual Error
- Findings Not Supported

Appeal Issue 1

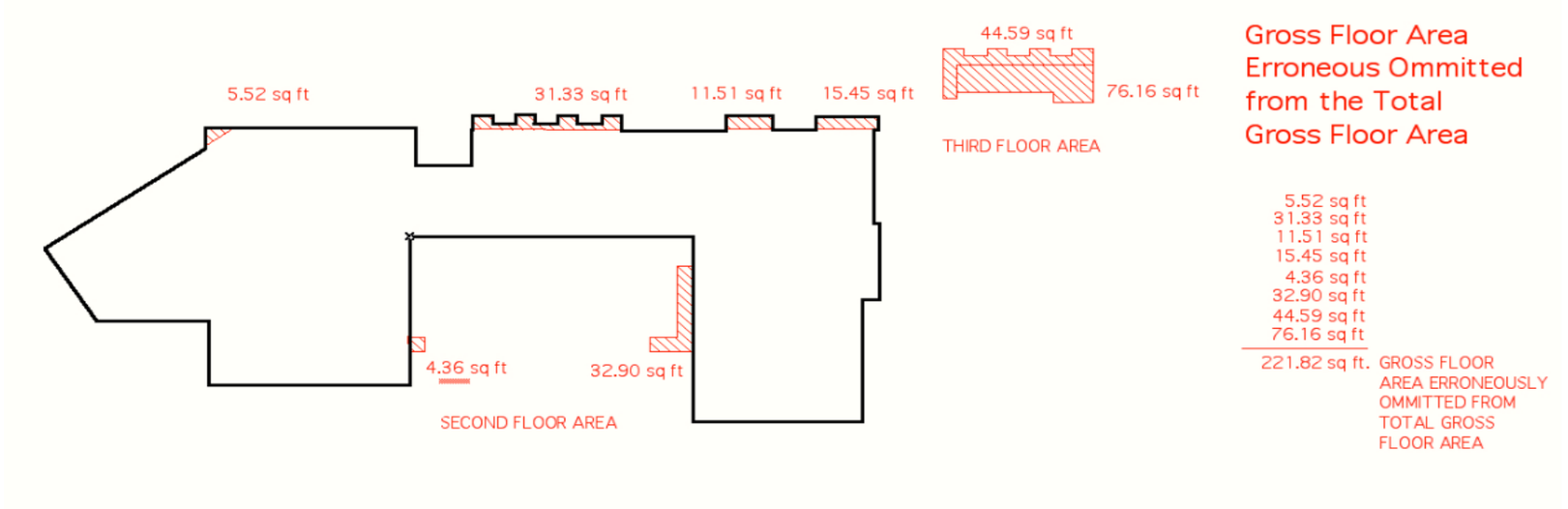
- Project scope is inaccurate due to demolition
- Applications should be consolidated
- Swimming pool should be part of current application

Staff Response to Appeal Issue 1

- Project scope is remodel and addition to an existing single-dwelling unit.
- Building permit initially demolished more than 50% of exterior walls. Remedy was a Coastal Development Permit.
- Project discrepancies addressed through proposed variance
- Pool under a separate permit; not required to be consolidated with this action.

Appeal Issue 2

Staff erroneously measured gross floor area, resulting in an FAR of .532 where .52 is the maximum allowed.



Staff Response to Appeal Issue 2

- Gross Floor Area (GFA) on project plans is accurate.
- It does NOT include non-habitable architectural design elements.
- Portions of third level not included in GFA
- Stairs not counted twice for GFA

Appeal Issue 3

- Project plans are inaccurate

- Project details including walls and balconies are not accurately shown

Staff Response to Appeal Issue 3

- Project plans are accurate
- Sheet A1.1: Exact area of demolished walls is not needed for CDP
- Sheet A3.0:
  - Front elevation is from façade, not parallel to street
  - Rear elevation is shown accurately
  - Rear cantilever is in master bedroom and included in GFA
- Sheet 4.0:
  - Cantilevered area is shown
  - Cut sections intersect the floor plans at an angle

Appeal Issue 4

- A variance is required because the project does not comply with the Land Development Code

- Findings for a variance are not supported. Therefore, the findings for a Coastal Development Permit cannot be made.

- No assurance balconies will be reduced. If they are not, the pool wall is a retaining wall which makes the project over-height. Cannot be allowed with a Variance.

Staff Response to Appeal Issue 4

- Exhibit A will show balconies at least 6 feet from pool
- A new building permit will be required, compliance with Exhibit A will be required during review and inspection
- FAR/GFA will be limited to what is on approved plans

Appeal Issue 5

- Findings are not supported by evidence in the record.

- Findings do not discuss how these conditions are peculiar to this property and do not generally apply to the land or premises in the neighborhood.

Staff Response to Appeal Issue 5

- The dwelling was constructed to reflect the practical realities of the site.
- Driveway width must be reduced but it cannot be moved
- Building footprint represents reasonable and functional buildable area
- Existing site conditions are not the result of action by the applicant

Appeal Issue 6

- Variances should not be granted because the applicant wants a larger structure or finds the code inconvenient.

- The land development code allows expansion of a previously conforming structural envelope limited to the first story level. (SDMC §127.0106(b)(7).)

- Allowing a variance that expands the nonconformity to the second level of a house is not the minimum necessary to allow reasonable use of the premises

Staff Response to Appeal Issue 6

- 1974 variance was granted due to site-specific conditions that still exist today
- Original siting and orientation of the SDU were a necessary design response to the slope, chosen to reduce grading, preserve hillside stability, and comply with earlier approved setback variances.
- These constraints are inherent to the property and cannot be altered without substantial structural intervention.
- Without the requested variance, the property owner would be deprived of reasonable use of the land.
- Draft resolution now includes information on neighboring residences in Finding B.4.

Staff Recommendation

DENY THE APPEAL

APPROVE

Coastal Development Permit No. PMT-3243580

Variance No. PMT-3335393

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