City of Hermosa Beach
Community Development Department | Planning Division
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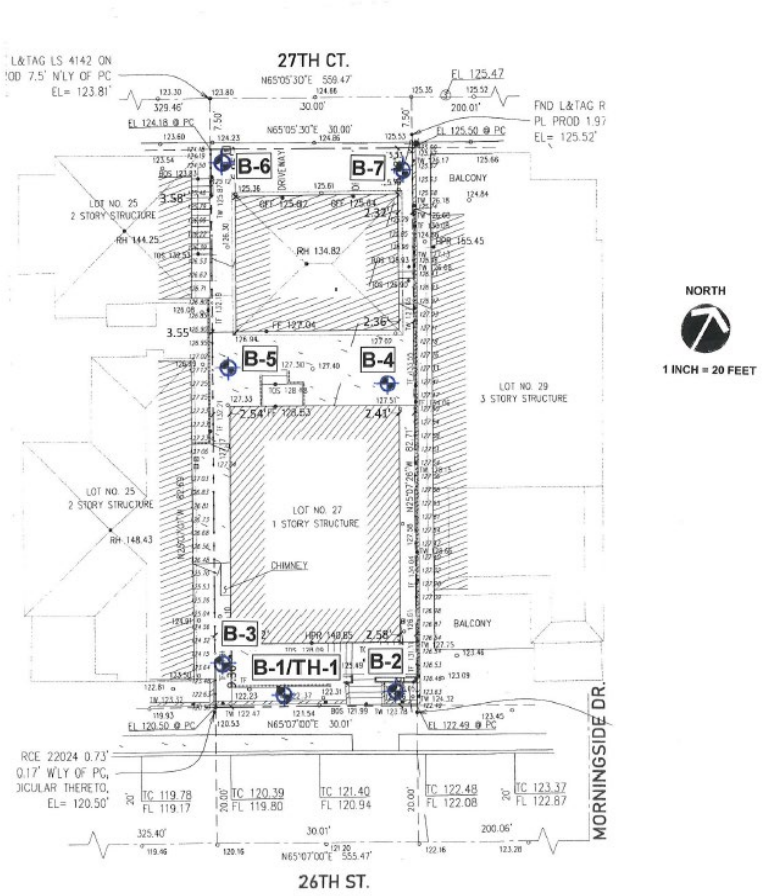
Office Hours: Monday – Thursday 7:00 AM – 6:00 PM

Convex Slope Determination

DATE: January 28, 2026
TO: Brandon Straus, Applicant
FROM: Alison Becker, AICP, Community Development Director
PREPARED BY: DeDe Tran, Assistant Planner
SUBJECT: 333 26th Street- Convex Slope Determination, Findings Not Met

BACKGROUND

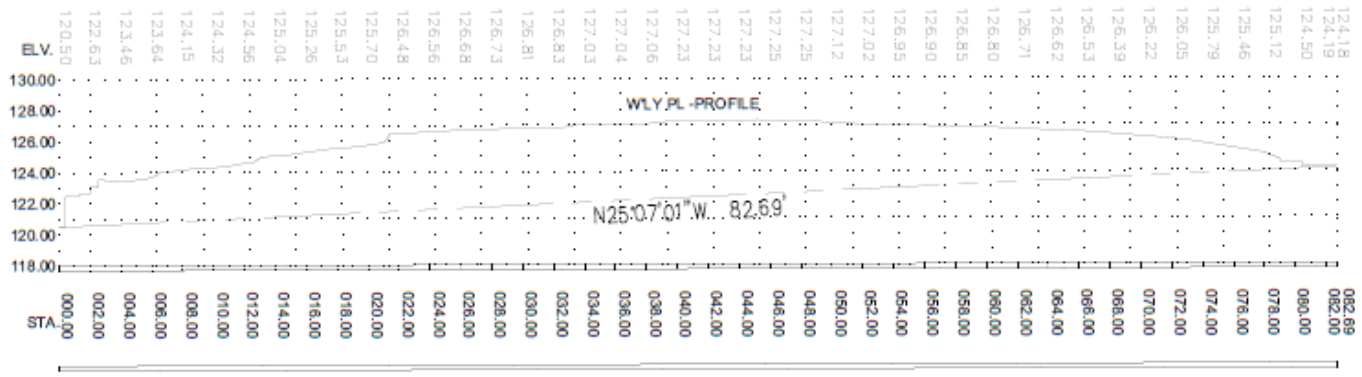
An application for a Convex Slope Determination (CSD25-04) at 333 26th Street was submitted on December 2, 2025, by the applicant. The application included a survey with two-foot intervals, and a Soils Report with seven boring samples located across the property. The first three borings are at the southern portion of the lot along 26th street at the property corners and about one-third across the lot, closer to the northwest property corner. There are an additional two borings in approximately the middle of the lot along the property lines, with the final two borings located at the rear of the lot, close to the property corners, as shown in the submitted geotechnical site plan below. The fill depth was noted in the table alongside the site plan.

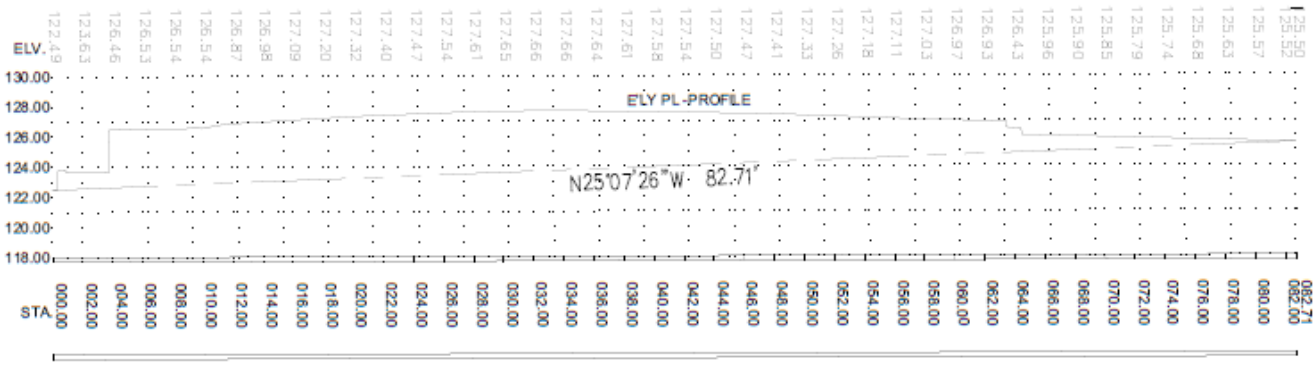


The property corners have the following elevations per the applicant's submitted survey:

Southwest: 120.50 Northwest: 124.18
Southeast: 122.49 Northeast: 125.50

The survey below reflects the elevations at two-foot intervals.





Staff reviewed the application and wrote a comment letter to the applicant on December 29, 2025. Staff requested (among other comments) the following:

> *Provide an interpolated line diagram on both sets of elevations and on the survey (please distinguish lines clearly with a legend). Please include all the following in the diagram, provided without the proposed building. If desired, you can also include a second diagram with the proposed building and critical points:*
>
> *a. Natural Grade Line (excluding fill soils)*

b. *Interpolated Line without convex slope determination using existing property corners established in the provided survey.*
c. *The Proposed Interpolated line if granted convex slope determination as you have requested above (CSD), making sure to exclude fill soils and indicate how much fill is being excluded at which points*
    i. *The difference (measured in feet) between the minimum and maximum difference in the interpolated line without CSD and with CSD*

Consequently, on January 8, 2026, staff (Assistant Planner DeDe Tran and Director Alison Becker) met with the applicant.

DISCUSSION

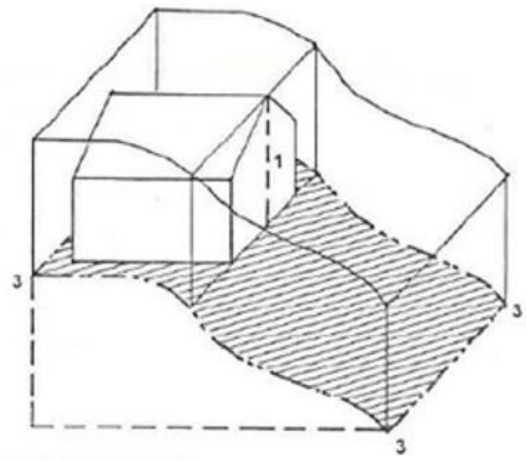
At the January 8, 2026, meeting between staff and the applicant, staff reviewed the evidence and clarified additional questions.

The relevant section of code is HBMC Section 17.04.040 "General Definitions – Grade" which prescribes the determination of grade to the Community Development Director, based on all available evidence.

HBMC Section17.04.040 definition of "Grade" further states: "For lots with convex contours (where the ground level arches upward along a property line), the 'grade' of a lot may be based on a detailed topographical survey along the property line with spot elevations called out at a minimum of two (2) foot intervals."

The survey documents the property corners; the grade difference between the highest elevation (125.50 feet at the northeast corner) and lowest elevation (120 feet at the southwest corner) points is only a five-foot difference. The highest elevation documented on the two-foot topographical survey is 127.66 feet, near the middle of the property. The condition document does not reflect a qualifying convex-slope condition with an arch or rise along a property line. The figure below illustrates the kind of "arching" on an uneven, convex, variably sloping lot that is consistent with a convex lot. Additionally, the proposed redevelopment of this property would alter the existing grade conditions, eliminating the mid-lot slope.

UNEVEN/CONVEX OR VARIABLY SLOPING LOT

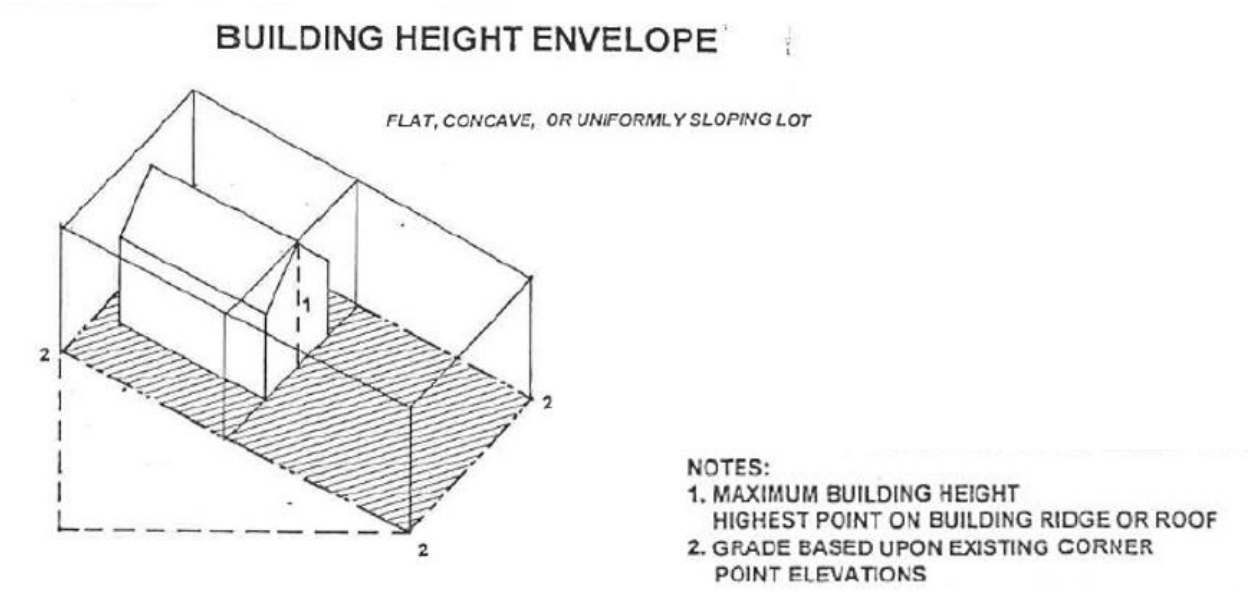


NOTES:
1. MAXIMUM BUILDING HEIGHT
   HIGHEST POINT ON BUILDING RIDGE OR ROOF
2. GRADE BASED UPON EXISTING CORNER
   POINT ELEVATIONS
3. GRADE BASED ON MULTIPLE SPOT ELEVATIONS

FINDINGS

The evidence does not support a convex slope determination. The lot condition does not meet the characteristics of a convex lot as defined in the code, "where the ground level arches upward along a property line," as in those cases where there is a more significant elevation change reflected across the property corners, and which can be found in some portions of the city's naturally hilly topography. Additionally, the applicant proposes to alter the grade, eliminating the mid-lot slope. Therefore, additional height through a convex slope determination is not warranted based on the lot's topography.

The lot, especially post grading, will more closely reflect the flat, concave or uniformly sloping lot as show below.



Therefore, since the lot most closely resembles a uniform sloping lot (with a small rise in the middle of the lot which will be eliminated during the grading of the lot), the City's process of using the interpolated property corners will accommodate the variation in elevation and a convex lot determination is not supported.