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Date: August 5, 2025

To:
City of Newport Beach Planning Commission
100 Civic Center Drive
Newport Beach, CA 92660

Subject: Opposition to Variance Requests for Zenk Residence – Brandon Architects Application

Project File No: PA2024-0057

Dear Planning Commission Members,

We are writing as concerned residents and homeowners on Goldenrod Avenue regarding the pending application by Brandon Architects for the Zenk Residence.

By way of introduction: Over the past decade, we have built two homes on adjacent lots in the 200 block of Goldenrod Avenue. In both cases, we complied fully with the City's setback requirements, despite the challenges they posed. At no point were we offered leniency or relief from these rules. In addition, we have spent over thirty years in the homebuilding industry and have built hundreds of homes in Newport Beach, primarily in Fashion Island (Meridian), Corona del Mar (Sail House) and Crystal Cove (Coral Crest, Coral Canyon, Nautilus, SeaCrest). Finally, I hold a master's degree in city and regional planning from Harvard University and have a deep respect for the necessity of clear, consistent zoning requirements. These regulations exist for a good reason: to preserve view corridors and protect the character and openness of our community for all surrounding neighbors.

We are alarmed by the scope of variances requested in this proposal, including an additional 1,675 square feet above the allowed gross floor area and significant encroachments into the required third-floor setbacks—19 feet into the mandated 25-foot rear and 15 feet into the 35-foot front setback. These requests far exceed what has been typically considered reasonable within our neighborhood.

The scale and bulk of the proposed Zenk Residence, as presented, would fundamentally alter the visual harmony and intimate scale that defines the charm of our flower streets. The proposed massing is out of proportion to the neighborhood context and threatens the architectural integrity of the area.

We respectfully urge the Planning Commission to apply the same standards to this application that have been consistently applied to us and many other neighbors. Granting such broad variances would set a concerning precedent and undermine the very guidelines that preserve the character of our community.

We implore you to reject these excessive variance requests and encourage the applicant to return with a more respectful and conforming design that aligns with the values, scale, and visual aesthetics of the neighborhood we have all worked so hard to preserve.

Thank you for your attention and for your continued efforts to protect the unique charm of Newport Beach.

Sincerely,

Larry & Joan Webb