Clarification Regarding the Definition of an “Open Stairway”

Greetings Hermosa Beach Development Community!

The Community Development Department would like to clarify that the definition of an “open stairway”.

Chapter 17.04 of the Hermosa Beach Municipal Code (HBMC) provides the definition of a “dwelling unit” and “open stairway” which states “All rooms comprising a dwelling unit shall have interior access through an interior doorway not containing a deadbolt lock to other parts of the dwelling unit with the exception of accessory living quarters, provided that where a dwelling unit occupies two stories, interior access shall be provided between stories by an open unenclosed stairway. For the purpose of this section, "open stairway" means a stairway which has a minimum of one wall which is not more than forty-two (42) inches high opening into at least one room from which the stairway connects each floor."[1] In this section, where the phrase "open wall" is used, it does not allow part of a wall to be open; it means the entire wall must be open.

As such, designs which propose partial open stairways where the first few stairway treads are open or where there is a partial gap between a room and the stairway do not meet the definition of an “open stairway.” See scenarios below.

We look forward to your cooperation and ask that you please contact a City Planner with any questions you may have regarding the definition of an “open stairway.”

Sincerely,

Ken Robertson
Director of Community Development