

Agenda of: August 25, 2005

Item No.: 7.b.

Staff: Jason R. Hade

STAFF REPORT - DESIGN REVIEW

FILE NUMBER: DR05-0017/Diamond Springs-El Dorado Fire Department Office Building

APPLICANT: Diamond Springs/El Dorado Firefighters Association

AGENT: Todd Cunningham

REQUEST: Design review for the construction of an 884 square foot Diamond Springs Fire Department office building.

LOCATION: On the north side of Main Street, at the intersection with China Garden Road, in the Diamond Springs area of El Dorado County. (Exhibit A)

APN: 054-372-04 (Exhibit B)

ACREAGE: 10,890 square feet

GENERAL PLAN: Commercial (C) (Exhibit C)

ZONING: Planned Commercial (CP) (Exhibit D)

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT: Categorically Exempt pursuant to Section 15303(c) of the CEQA Guidelines

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION: Conditional Approval

STAFF ANALYSIS

Project Description: A design review request to allow the construction of an 884 square foot Diamond Springs - El Dorado Fire Department office building by the Diamond Springs/El Dorado Firefighters Association, a non-profit organization. The project is to include one employee with hours of operation from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Three parking spaces are proposed.

Site Description: The project area lies at an elevation of approximately 1,000 feet above mean sea level. Two residential structures constructed in the early 1900s were previously located on the property and demolished in 2004 after sustaining major fire and structural damage. The site is relatively flat and contains no vegetative cover or trees. Proposed access to the site is from a driveway linking to Locust Road and China Garden Road. The project site abuts Highway 49 along the southern property boundary.

Adjacent Land Uses:

	Zoning	General Plan	Land Use/Improvements
Site	CP	C	Undeveloped
North	R1	MFR	Single family residence
South	C-DC	C	Commercial/Retail
East	CP	C	Commercial/Retail
West	CP	C	Cemetery

General Plan: The 1996 and 2004 General Plans designate the subject site as Commercial (C). This designation permits a wide range of commercial uses. The following General Plan policies also apply to this project:

Policy 7.4.5.2: The County shall require, as a condition of development approval for Commercial, industrial, and multifamily residential uses, that at a minimum 50 percent of the proposed landscaping is consistent with the predominant plant community and fits the natural vegetation native to the area. Exotic or introduced plant species not consistent with the plant community in which proposed development is located shall be discouraged.

Discussion: No landscaping is proposed at the subject site at this time. Landscaping will be installed in a planter in front of the proposed office building and in other areas of the site as additional volunteer labor time and funding becomes available. Any proposed landscaping shall feature at least 50 percent natural vegetation native to the area.

Policy 2.2.5.21: Development projects shall be located and designed in a manner that avoids incompatibility with adjoining land uses that are permitted by the policies in effect at the time the development project is proposed. Development projects that are potentially incompatible with existing adjoining uses shall be designed in a manner that avoids any incompatibility or shall be located on a different site.

Discussion: The proposed office building use and design is consistent with the surrounding commercial uses within the Diamond Springs area. Staff finds the project is consistent with General Plan Policy 2.2.5.21.

Conclusion: Because of the nature of the proposed 884 square foot office building use to be constructed with minimal earth disturbances anticipated at a site previously developed, the project complies with all applicable General Plan policies concerning floor area ratio, impervious surface requirements, soil conservation, forest and woodland resources and preservation of cultural resources. As discussed above, staff finds that the project, as proposed/conditioned, conforms to the 1996 and 2004 General Plans.

General Plan Lawsuit: On February 5, 1999, Judge Cecily Bond of the Sacramento Superior Court acted to invalidate the Environmental Impact Report adopted for the 1996 General Plan. This invalidation restricted the County from acting on any discretionary project pending issuance of a Writ from the Court. On July 19, 1999, Judge Bond issued the Final Writ of Mandate.

Paragraph 5, sub-paragraph 3 within the Final Writ establishes that “*The Court permits the County to issue any approvals, permits, or entitlements whether or not discretionary, for **non-residential development**; provided that such approvals, permits or entitlements comply with sub-paragraph (8) below...*” Sub-paragraph 8 within the Writ establishes that the “*County cannot approve or undertake any such project unless it finds, on substantial evidence, that:*

- a. *The approval or project will not significantly impair the County’s ability to adopt and implement a new General Plan after complying with CEQA.*

Discussion: As non-residential development, the County is permitted by the Court to approve the Design Review application under Paragraph 5, sub-paragraph 3 of the Final Writ. The project was reviewed and determined to be consistent with the *El Dorado County Zoning Ordinance*, Public Review Draft and 1996 General Plan. Additionally, none of the issues identified in the February 5, 1999, Court ruling will be affected by this project. As proposed, the project is also consistent with the County’s 2004 adopted General Plan.

- b. *The approval or project complies with all other requirements of law.*

Discussion: The project will comply in all instances with the provisions of County Code.

- c. *The approval or project is consistent with the text and maps of the 1996 General Plan as amended through February 4, 1999.”*

Discussion: The project site is identified as being Commercial (C) on both the Public Review Draft and 1996 and 2004 General Plan Land Use Maps. The Commercial General Plan land use designation establishes areas for commercial uses. The project will not affect the use of the property for commercial uses.

Zoning: The subject site is zoned Planned Commercial (CP) which permits the proposed use subject to site plan approval (Sections 17.32.130 through 17.32.160 of County Code). The project requires design review for consideration by the Planning Commission pursuant to Section 17.14.130 due to the proximity to Highway 49.

Design Review and Design Guidelines: The subject property is within a defined Design Review district. As such, Section 17.74.040 (C) of County Code requires compliance with the design guidelines contained in the *Community Design Guide*. The *Community Design Guide* contains the following guidelines which are applicable to the proposed project:

Site Planning (*Community Design Guide, Page 6*):

Suitability – A project should be designed to fit the existing site, rather than alter the site to accommodate a stock plan.

Discussion: In this case, the site was previously developed with two residential structures that have since been demolished because of major structural problems and extensive fire damage. Minimal grading is anticipated for the construction of the proposed office building.

Open Space – Natural features and views should be maintained and protected through use of adequate open space.

Discussion: No trees or vegetative cover are currently present at the site.

Parking Areas – Screen parking areas from public ways and divide them up with landscaping, walls, fences, berms and other means.

Discussion: No landscaping is proposed at this time but will be added in the near future as additional volunteer labor time and funding becomes available. As shown on the site plan, a planter is to be constructed adjacent to the building and concrete walkway to provide screening of the structure.

Lighting – Exterior lighting shall be subdued and avoid creating glare for occupants or neighboring properties. Lighting should enhance the building design and landscaping as well as provide for safety and security.

Discussion: All proposed exterior building-mounted lighting must conform to the provisions of Section 17.14.170 of County Code.

Trash and other service areas – Locate trash enclosures and loading docks away from public streets and store entrances and screen them. Screens should be durable and an integral part of the overall structural design.

Discussion: One standard 32-gallon trash receptacle stored in the garage will provide adequate project waste disposal service.

Building Design (*Community Design Guide, Page 7*):

Harmony – Different structures and parts of structures should harmonize with each other and the neighborhood.

Discussion: The proposed building will be utilizing materials and colors that are consistent with the existing fire station and association hall within the project vicinity. As indicated in the building elevations, the proposal will fit within the context of the surrounding parcels.

Materials – *Use materials honestly. Simulated wood or masonry, for example, generally is not acceptable.*

Discussion: The office building will be constructed with three coat stucco and the garage will include a metal roll-up sectional door. Class A composition shingles are to be utilized for the structure's roof.

Finishes, Textures and Colors – *Exterior treatment should be subdued and restrained. Treatment should aim at durability and ease of maintenance as well as initial beauty. Large building masses should be broken with architectural details, varied roof-lines, and different windows and window treatments.*

Discussion: The proposed office building is 884 square feet. Located on a 10,890 square foot parcel, the structure will be of a similar size or smaller than nearby businesses and residences. As proposed, the office building will be smaller in size than the previous residences at the subject site that were destroyed. Proposed building color is to be flake blue to match the project colors of the nearby fire station and association hall.

Mechanical Equipment and Utilities – *Design service equipment, including meter boxes as part of the structure, and provide screening for them.*

Discussion: All utilities, including the proposed air conditioning unit, are to be roof-mounted and hidden from ground view.

Access and Parking: Section 17.18.060 of the Zoning Ordinance lists the parking requirements by use. A general office use requires one parking space per 250 square feet of gross floor area. Thus, three parking spaces are required, one of which must be handicapped accessible, for the 884 square foot office building pursuant to the standard discussed above. As proposed, the project meets the minimum parking requirements. Adequate site access will be provided by the proposed driveway linking the subject site to Locust Road and China Garden Road.

Landscaping: No landscaping is proposed at this time but will be added in the near future as additional volunteer labor time and funding becomes available. As shown on the site plan, a planter is to be constructed adjacent to the building and concrete walkway to provide screening of the structure. Several fences surrounding the property have existing landscaping in place as well.

Signs: A small building sign, consistent with the applicable development standards within the Planned Commercial Zone District, is proposed.

Agency and Public Comments: Agency comments were requested but not received at the drafting of this staff report. Based on discussions with the applicant, Planning does not anticipate any significant comments from agencies, and therefore scheduled this project to the next available

Planning Commission hearing. Any comments that are received will be proved to the Planning Commission by staff.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This project has been found to be Categorical Exempt from the requirements of CEQA pursuant to Section 15303(c) of the CEQA Guidelines stating that “a store, motel, office, restaurant or similar structure not involving the use of significant amounts of hazardous substances, and not exceeding 2500 square feet” in size is Categorical Exempt. Pursuant to Resolution No. 240-93, a \$35.⁰⁰ processing fee is required by the County Recorder to file the Notice of Exemption

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Planning Commission take the following actions:

1. Certify that the project is Categorical Exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15303(c); and
2. Approve Design Review DR05-0017 as the required findings can be made as noted in Attachment 2, based on the analysis in the staff report and the conditions in Attachment 1.

SUPPORT INFORMATION

Attachments to Staff Report:

Attachment 1Conditions of Approval
Attachment 2Findings

Exhibit AVicinity Map
Exhibit BAssessor’s Parcel Map Page
Exhibit CGeneral Plan Land Use Map
Exhibit DZoning Map
Exhibit ESite Plan
Exhibit FBuilding Elevations
Exhibit GApplicant’s Project Description

ATTACHMENT 1
CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

FILE NUMBER DR05-0017
August 25, 2005

Planning Services

1. This design review approval is based upon and limited to compliance with the project description, an 884 square foot office building, dated August 25, 2005, and Conditions of Approval set forth below. Any deviations from the project description, exhibits, or conditions must be reviewed and approved by the County for conformity with this approval. Deviations may require approved changes to the permit and/or further environmental review. Deviations without the above-described approval will constitute a violation of permit approval.
2. All site improvements, building location, building orientation, and materials shall comply with the approved site plan. The approved plans shall consist of Exhibits E and F, as attached. Changes not to exceed 10 percent of the square footage of buildings, minor location changes, and architectural feature changes may be approved by the Deputy Director of Planning or designee. Major changes in building sizes or features will require an amendment to the approved Design Review application.
3. The applicant shall provide a minimum of three on-site parking spaces prior to project implementation and at all times during project operation. The submitted site plan shows three parking spaces one of which is shown as handicapped only parking. All on-site parking shall meet the parking lot design standards contained in Section 17.18.030 of the County Code.
4. All outdoor lighting shall conform to Section 17.14.170 of the County Code and be fully shielded pursuant to the Illumination Engineering Society of North America (IESNA) full cut-off designation.
5. The Parking Lot Landscaping and Buffering Standards (Section 17.18.090, El Dorado County Zoning Ordinance) shall be incorporated into any proposed landscaping. All landscape plans must be consistent with El Dorado County water conservation concept statement standards.
6. All utilities, including proposed air conditioning units, shall to be roof-mounted and hidden from ground view at all times.
7. The applicant shall comply with all El Dorado County Air Pollution Control District Rules and Regulations available at: www.co.el-dorado.ca.us/emd.

ATTACHMENT 2 FINDINGS

FILE NUMBER DR05-0017

1.0 CEQA FINDING

- 1.1 The Planning Commission has determined that the proposed project will have no significant impact on the environment and is exempt from CEQA pursuant to 15303(c) of the CEQA Guidelines.
- 1.2 The documents and other materials which constitute the record of proceedings upon which this decision is based are in the custody of the Planning Department at 1850 Fairlane Court, Placerville, CA.

2.0 ADMINISTRATIVE FINDINGS

- 2.1 Design Review DR05-0017 has been requested by the Diamond Springs/El Dorado Firefighters Association for the purpose of constructing an 884 square foot office building at the subject site. The Design Review shall only be approved or conditionally approved if all of the following findings are made:
 - 2.1.1 The proposed use is not considered detrimental to the public health, safety, and welfare, or injurious to the neighborhood.**

The use is found to be consistent with the uses permitted within the Planned Commercial zone district 17.32.130 and is not considered detrimental to the public health, safety, and welfare, or injurious to the neighborhood, based on the analysis and conclusions contained in the staff report. The proposed project is found to have minimal, if any, public health, safety, and welfare impacts regarding traffic, noise, parking, lighting, and aesthetics issues. No agency or community group objections or concerns were expressed during the project review process. The Planning Commission has determined this is an in-fill commercial project that will fit within the context of the surrounding parcels in the project area.

- 2.2.2 The proposed use is consistent with the policies in the El Dorado County General Plan, as amended through February 4, 1999.**

The proposed use is consistent with the policies in the 1996 El Dorado County General Plan, as amended through February 4, 1999, as well as the adopted 2004 General Plan, discussed in the General Plan section of this staff report. The 1996 and 2004 General Plans designate the parcel as Commercial (C) which permits a wide range of commercial uses, including the proposed commercial building. The subject site is zoned Planned Commercial (CP) which permits the proposed use under Section 17.32.140. As proposed, the project meets all applicable development standards contained within Section 17.32.160 of the *El Dorado County Zoning Ordinance*.

3.0 SUPERIOR COURT WRIT OF MANDATE FINDINGS

3.1 This project may be approved subject to the following findings established in Paragraph 5, Subparagraph 1, which permits the County to approve non-residential projects, and Subparagraph 8 in the Final Writ issued by the Court on July 19, 1999, as follows:

- a. The approval or project will not significantly impair the County's ability to adopt and implement a new General Plan after complying with CEQA.**

The project was determined to be Categorical Exempt pursuant to Section 15303(c) of the CEQA Guidelines and none of the issues identified in the February 5, 1999, Court ruling will be affected by this project. The 2004 General Plan was adopted on July 19, 2004, and designates the subject site as Commercial. Therefore, the approval of this project will not significantly impair the County's ability to implement the 2004 General Plan.

- b. The approval or project complies with all other requirements of law.**

The project will comply in all instances with the provisions of County Code.

- c. The project is consistent with the text and maps of the General Plan as of February 5, 1999, and there is no evidence that the development of the site would affect issues identified in the General Plan lawsuit that could impact the County's ability to adopt a new General Plan.**

The project site is identified as being Commercial (C) on both the 1996 and 2004 General Plan Land Use Maps. The Commercial General Plan land use designation establishes areas for commercial uses. The project will not affect the use of the property for commercial uses.