

**EL DORADO COUNTY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES  
STAFF REPORT**



**Agenda of:** September 14, 2006  
**Item No.:** 8.a.  
**Staff:** Tom Dougherty

**STAFF REPORT - DESIGN REVIEW**

**FILE NUMBER:** DR05-0009

**APPLICANT:** Daniel Jacuzzi

**AGENT:** Joe Reid

**REQUEST:** Design review for the existing 32 square-foot monument sign and an existing 23 feet square-foot freestanding pole sign attached to the roof of the building.

**LOCATION:** On the south side of Ridgeway Drive, on the southeast corner of the intersection with Sly Park Road, in the Pollock Pines area. (Exhibit A)

**APN:** 009-193-19

**ACREAGE:** 0.27 acre

**GENERAL PLAN:** Commercial (C) (Exhibit B)

**ZONING:** Commercial (C) (Exhibit C)

**ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT:** Categorically Exempt pursuant to Section 15301 of the CEQA Guidelines

**SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION:** Conditional Approval

**BACKGROUND:** The existing 1,476 square-foot building was built in 1969. The property owner’s business license for a real estate office was first approved in July 1999. The monument sign subject to this permit was constructed in December 2005 during the processing of this permit. The 23 square-foot pole sign located on the roof existed prior to the submittal of the subject application. Neither sign was constructed with a building permit.

### STAFF ANALYSIS

**Project Description:** Design review for the existing eight foot wide by seven foot three inch tall monument sign at the northwest corner of the parcel. The sign façade includes a concrete and river rock (half rock) laden base measuring 40 inches tall above ground level and 100 inches wide, and 14 inches thick. Attached atop the base is a four foot tall by eight foot wide aluminum, internally illuminated sign cabinet framework. The framework supports 3/16 inch thick white face Plexiglas on which sign copy is painted. The monument sign copy surface reads “ERA Realty Center.”

The sign attached to the roof by two poles measures 14 feet 4 inches in length and 18 inches in height, or 22.93 square feet (23). The copy surface also reads “ERA Realty Center.”

**Site Description:** The corner lot is currently developed with the existing office building and asphalted parking area. The driveway encroachment is onto Ridgeway Drive and passes over a drainage ditch that passes parallel to that road. The office and asphalt areas are surrounded by mature ponderosa pines (*Pinus ponderosa*), incense cedars (*Calocedrus decurrens*), and annual grasses. There is a stop sign at Ridgeway Drive where it abuts Sly Park Road but none stopping Sly Park Road traffic.

### Adjacent Land Uses:

	Zoning	General Plan	Land Use/Improvements
Site	C-DC	C	Commercial office building
North	TC	C	U.S. Highway 50
South	R1	HDR	Single-family residence
East	R1	HDR	Single-family residence
West	C-DC	C	Vacant

**General Plan:** The General Plan designates the subject site as Commercial (C). The purpose of this land use category is to provide a full range of commercial retail, office, and service uses to serve the residents, businesses, and visitors of El Dorado County. The following General Plan policies also apply to this project:

Policy 2.7.1.1: “The Sign Ordinance shall include design review for signs within the foreground and background of the designated scenic corridors commensurate with the goal of scenic corridor viewshed protection.”

**Discussion:** When you are standing on the freeway next to the guard rail, or if you were a passenger in a truck, you can see the sign from this section of U.S. Highway which is a State Designated Scenic Highway. However, for the most part, the sign is obstructed from view by the conifers growing in the vicinity.

Policy 2.8.1.1: “Development shall limit excess nighttime light and glare from parking area lighting, signage, and buildings. Consideration will be given to design features, namely directional shielding for street lighting, parking lot lighting, sport field lighting, and other significant light sources, that could reduce effects from nighttime lighting. In addition, consideration will be given to the use of automatic shutoffs or motion sensors for lighting features in rural areas to further reduce excess nighttime light.”

**Discussion:** A nighttime site visit revealed that the monument sign was emitting light that was not in compliance with the El Dorado County Zoning Ordinance. The project will be conditioned so that all outdoor lighting shall conform to § 17.14.170 and be fully shielded pursuant to the Illumination Engineering Society of North America’s (IESNA) full cut-off designation. Should final, installed lighting be non-compliant with full shielding requirements, the applicant shall be responsible for the replacement and/or modification of said lighting to the satisfaction of the Development Services.

Conclusion: As discussed above, staff finds that the project, as proposed/conditioned, conforms to the General Plan.

**Zoning:** The subject site is zoned Commercial (C) which permits the proposed use on a minimum parcel size of 5,000 square feet. Therefore, the existing 0.27-acre parcel conforms to existing zoning.

**Discussion:** All signs shall comply with Chapters 17.16, (Signs), Section 17.32.020 (D), (Commercial Districts), and in this case, Chapter 17.74 (Design Review Districts) of the El Dorado County Zoning Ordinance. The sign location is outside the required setbacks of the Commercial Zone District. The submitted site plan is not drawn in the manner required by the Building Services “Plan Review Submittal” and “Improvement Site Plan” requirements. It appears the sign is not located within an easement or a County right-of-way, but the applicant will be required to submit a site and plot map drawn using the above said guidelines prior to issuance of a building permit.

**Other Design Issues:**

Design Review and Design Guidelines: The subject property is within a defined Community Design Review District. As such, Section 17.74.040 (C) of County Code requires compliance with the design guidelines contained in the Sierra Design Guide which state “the architectural styling for new construction permitted in the Sierra Design and the Community Design Districts (except structures and sites within the research and development district) shall be that which is exemplified and meets the intent of the Community Design Guide or the Sierra Design Guide which shall be adopted by the Board of Supervisors. These design guides shall provide guidelines and examples for architectural styles and site design permitted in the subject districts. (Ord. 4228, 1992).”

The Sierra Design Guide contains the following guidelines for signs which are applicable to the proposed project:

*Signs are a necessary aid to commercial enterprise but need to be handled as carefully as the building and site.*

*Design Capability: Signs, their materials, size, color, lettering, location and arrangement should be an integral part of the site and building design and compatible with the surroundings.*

*Consistency: Keep signing consistent in location and design throughout the development.*

*Restraint: Signing should be simple, restrained and subordinate to the overall project design. A sign should attract and identify, but not dominate the site.*

*Types: Wall signs, graphic symbol signs and low profile, free-standing signs are encouraged. Flashing, moving and rotating signs are prohibited by County ordinance.*

*Simplicity: Signs should use minimum copy, suitable lettering and avoid garish colors, materials and shapes.*

*Lighting: Subtle lighting and landscaping can enhance a sign's setting and draw attention to it. The light source should be screened. Plastic, neon or other non-rustic signs should be discouraged. An excess of signs or wrong placing confuses a potential customer and destroys the sign's purpose.*

Discussion: It can be found that the design and the lettering and colors are typical of other signs within the Pollock Pines commercial core area, most of which also have the plastic component. The rock components give it a rustic look typical of the area, and the location meets setback requirements and does not dominate the site. The backlighting currently shines offsite. The project will be conditioned to meet the requirements of Section 17.14.170 (Outdoor Lighting) of the Zoning Ordinance. The applicant may choose to either change the internal illumination to a lesser voltage or replace the white background to a more subtle and rustic color that blocks most of the glare as desired by the approved Sierra Design Guidelines. One other option is to remove the internal illumination and use a small flood light shining back onto the sign from the ground or reaches over from above, that only shines on the copy face and does not shine anywhere off of it.

Conclusion: The Commercial (C) Zone District allows two signs not exceeding 50 square feet in total area of any one display surface or one sign not exceeding 80 square feet in area advertising authorized activities on the premises without a special use permit. The monument sign, as proposed, is 32 square and the roof mounted pole sign measures 23 square feet, and thus both meet the requirements of these sections of the Zoning Ordinance since two signs less than 50 square feet each are permitted.

There is one other existing sign attached to the chain link fence at the entrance gate that reads, "ERA Realty Center Now Open." Wall signs are permitted with a building permit and without design review if they meet the requirements of Zoning Code Chapter 17.16. The above mentioned sign is not a wall sign and is subject to removal because the maximum number of non-wall signs has been

reached. The project will be conditioned so the sign be removed prior to issuance of a building permit.

### **Environmental Review**

This project has been found to be Categorical Exempt from the requirements of CEQA pursuant to Section 15311 (a) of the CEQA Guidelines which consists of construction, or placement of minor structures accessory to (appurtenant to) existing commercial, industrial, or institutional facilities, including but not limited to on-premise signs.

Pursuant to Resolution No. 240-93, a \$35.00 processing fee is required by the County Recorder to file the Notice of Exemption

### **Recommendation:**

Planning Services recommends the Planning Commission take the following actions:

1. Find that the project is Categorical Exempt from further CEQA review pursuant to Section 15311 (a) of the State CEQA Guidelines; and
2. Approve Design Review DR05-0009 as the required findings can be made as noted in Attachment 2, based on the analysis in the staff report and the modification of the project to include conditions of approval in Attachment 1.

## **SUPPORT INFORMATION**

### **Attachments to Staff Report:**

Attachment 1 .....	Conditions of Approval
Attachment 2.....	Findings
Exhibit A .....	Vicinity Map/Assessor's Parcel map
Exhibit B .....	General Plan Land Use Map
Exhibit C .....	Zoning Map
Exhibit D.....	Site Plan
Exhibits E1, E2, E3.....	Elevation and Signage Specifications
Exhibits F1, F2, F3, F4 .....	Site Visit Photos
Exhibit G.....	Sierra Design Guide adopted by the El Dorado County Supervisors on October 26, 1982. ("Signs" page only).

# ATTACHMENT 1

## CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

FILE NUMBER DR05-0009

### CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

1. This design review approval is based upon and limited to compliance with the 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. The project, as approved, includes the existing 8 foot wide by 7 foot 3-inch tall, monument sign at the northwest corner of the parcel. The sign façade includes a concrete and river rock (half rock) laden base measuring 40 inches tall above ground level and, 100 inches wide, and 14 inches thick. Attached atop the base is a 4 foot tall by 8 foot wide aluminum, internally illuminated sign cabinet framework. The framework supports 3/16 inch thick white face Plexiglas on which sign copy is painted.

Also included is a 18 inch by 14 foot 4-inch sign mounted on two poles on the roof.

3. The project, as approved, shall conform to Exhibits D, E1, E2 and E3. Exhibit D shall be replaced by a site plan that accurately shows the parcel boundaries by its legal descriptions, all easements and setbacks accurately located by their legal description, all existing driveways, buildings, paved and parking areas and fencing with accurate setbacks shown to each of the two signs subject of this permit. The site plan shall be reviewed and approved by the Development Services Director or designee prior to issuance of a non-residential sign permit.
4. Subject to the issuance of a Non-Residential/Commercial Project “Signs” permit.
5. All other existing signs shall either be removed or be subject to a special use permit prior to issuance of a Non-Residential/Commercial Project “Signs” permit. Any new subsequent signs shall comply with Chapters 17.16, (Signs), Section 17.32.020 (D), (Commercial Districts), and this case, Chapter 17.74, (Design Review Districts), of the El Dorado County Zoning Ordinance.
6. The existing monument sign shall either have the internal illumination to a lesser voltage or replace the white background to a more subtle and rustic color that blocks most of the existing glare that currently does not comply with County Code because it shines up and outward outside of the parcel boundary. All outdoor lighting shall conform to § 17.14.170, and be fully shielded pursuant to the Illumination Engineering Society of North America’s

(IESNA) full cut-off designation. Should final, installed lighting be non-compliant with full shielding requirements, the applicant shall be responsible for the replacement and/or modification of said lighting to the satisfaction of the Development Services Director or designee.

7. Pursuant to Resolution No. 240-93, a \$35.<sup>00</sup> processing fee is required by the County Recorder to file the Notice of Exemption

## **ATTACHMENT 2 FINDINGS**

### **FILE NUMBER DR 05-0009**

Based on the review and analysis of this project by staff and affected agencies, and supported by discussion in the staff report and evidence in the record, the following findings can be made:

#### **FINDINGS FOR APPROVAL**

1. This project has been found to be Categorical Exempt from the requirements of CEQA pursuant to Section 15311 (a) of the CEQA Guidelines which consists of construction, or placement of minor structures accessory to (appurtenant to) existing commercial, industrial, or institutional facilities, including but not limited to on-premise signs.
2. The proposed use and design can be found to conform to the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance because the Commercial (C) Zone District allows two signs not exceeding 50 square feet in total area of any one display surface, or one sign not exceeding 80 square feet in area, advertising authorized activities on the premises without a special use permit. The two signs, as proposed, are each less than 50 square feet and thus meets the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance and the use the signs supports a commercial use that serves the residences which the General Plan lists as one of the purposes of the Commercial (C) land use designation.
3. It can be found that the proposed use and design, as conditioned above, will not be detrimental to the public health, safety, and welfare, nor injurious to the neighborhood. The proposed project, as conditioned, is found to have minimal, if any, public health, safety, and welfare impacts regarding traffic, noise, parking, lighting, and aesthetics issues, as discussed in the General Plan, Zoning, and Other Design Issues sections of the staff report.