

**EL DORADO COUNTY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
ZONING ADMINISTRATOR
STAFF REPORT**



Agenda of:	September 2, 2009
Item No.:	5.a.
Staff:	Jonathan Fong

SPECIAL USE PERMIT REVISION

FILE NUMBER: S03-0035-R-2/ Rolling Hills Christian Church

APPLICANT: Rolling Hills Christian Church

AGENT: Young Electric Sign Company, Clint Zufelt

REQUEST: Revision to an approved Special Use Permit to allow approval of a double-sided internally illuminated reader board sign for the Rolling Hills Christian Church.

LOCATION: On the south side of White Rock Road, ¼ mile southwest of the intersection with Windplay Drive in the El Dorado Hills area. Supervisorial District II (Exhibit A).

APN: 117-010-03 (Exhibit B)

PARCEL SIZE: 11.32 acres

GENERAL PLAN: Adopted Plan (AP) Carson Creek Specific Plan (Exhibit C)

ZONING: Carson Creek- Single Family 6,000 square feet (R-6K) (Exhibit D)

RECOMMENDATION: Planning Services recommends the Planning Commission take the following action:

- 1) Certify the project is Categorical Exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15311(a) of the CEQA Guidelines; and
- 2) Approve Special Use Permit Revision S03-0035-R-2 subject to the conditions in Attachment 1 subject to the Findings in Attachment 2.

BACKGROUND: The Rolling Hills Church was approved as part of Design Review DR00-0016 by the Planning Commission on December 14, 2000. The site was designated for Residential land use upon adoption of the Carson Creek Specific Plan on September 24, 1996. This approval provided for a range of residential densities. The specific residential “zoning” (density) would be established upon approval of a tentative map. The church site (APN 117-010-03) is located within Phase 1 of the Euer Ranch subdivision (TM96-1317) which established the area as residential Single Family lots (6,000 sq. ft. min.).

Subsequent to the Tentative Map, a phasing map (P99-0012) was filed on the northern portion of the Euer Ranch creating the subject 12.86 acre lot (Parcel 1). Parcel 1 had a notice of restriction placed upon it which required approval of a Special Use Permit, Design Review, or Site Plan Review by the Planning Commission for development of the site in accordance with the Specific Plan. The unlit monument signage was approved as part of the Design Review application for the initial establishment of this church (Exhibit E).

Special Use Permit S03-0035 approved on May 13, 2004 authorized an expansion of the church to include educational uses and events, and construction of an additional building and parking area. Subsequently, a revision to the special use permit (S03-0035-R) was approved on November 29, 2005, which removed Condition 18, eliminating the requirement for sidewalks on Winfield Way. The revision modified portions of the conditions of approval but did not affect the approved signage authorized under Design Review DR00-0016.

The applicant submitted a revised sign package for review by Planning Services staff. Planning Services reviewed the proposed signage and administratively approved the signage on January 28, 2009 as substantially consistent with the approved Special Use Permit (Exhibit F). The approved signage included unlit an monument, directional signage, and an internally illuminated wall sign.

The sign package included an LED readerboard sign along White Rock Road. The proposed LED readerboard sign was excluded from the sign package based on inconsistency with County Code. The applicant revised the proposed monument sign to remove the LED readerboard portion and replace with an internally illuminated readerboard sign with ‘prono track’ to allow manually changeable sign copy (Exhibit G).

The monument sign along White Rock Road approved as part of DR00-0016 allowed an approximately nine square-foot non-illuminated readerboard sign. The approved sign would allow for two lines of manually changeable copy (Exhibit E). The proposed monument sign would be internally illuminated and would be approximately 38 square feet. The new signage would not be substantially consistent with the approved church signage and would require a revision to the approved Special Use Permit.

STAFF ANALYSIS: Staff has reviewed the project for compliance with the County’s regulations and requirements. An analysis of the Special Use Permit Revision request and issues for Planning Commission consideration are provided in the following sections.

Project Description: The Special Use Permit Revision request would allow an internally illuminated, manually changeable reader board sign. The overall sign would be seven feet high and five and a half feet wide. The reader board portion of the sign would be approximately nine and a half square feet in area (Exhibit H). The readerboard sign would include a ‘prono track’ which would allow the sign copy to be manually changed utilizing interchangeable letter panels. The readerboard portion of the sign would allow for two lines of copy with four inch tall letters. The signage would be internally illuminated via fluorescent lamps within the sign cabinet. The sign would be installed at the church main entrance along White Rock Road (Exhibit H).

Site Description: The Rolling Hills Christian Church is comprised of two parcels. The primary parcel (APN 117-010-03) is located within the Carson Creek Specific Plan and contains the church sanctuary, auditorium and accessory buildings. The second parcel (APN 117-180-03) is located within the El Dorado Hills Business Park and has been improved with overflow parking. The main church site fronts White Rock Road with limited frontage for the secondary parcel on Winfield Drive.

Adjacent Land Uses:

	Zoning	General Plan	Land Use/Improvements
Site	CC-6K	Carson Creek Specific Plan	Existing Rolling Hills Church
North	R1A	MDR	Existing residential development
South	CC-SP	Carson Creek Specific Plan	Existing residential development
East	R&D	R&D	Existing office/ warehouse
West	R1	HDR	Existing residential development

The church site is bounded by existing residential development to the north and west and by existing office uses within the El Dorado Hills Business Park. The church was determined to be a compatible use in the project area upon incorporation of design features such as glare reduction measures for outdoor lighting and screening of roof mounted equipment.

The proposed revision would allow for an illuminated readerboard sign. The church site is located along White Rock Road which is a major thoroughfare between Sacramento County and the El Dorado Hills area. The church site is bounded to the North and South by residential land uses. The proposed reader board sign would have the potential to negatively impact motorists and residents in the project area. The proposed sign would limit the potential for nighttime glare through the use of internal illumination. Conditions of Approval have been included as part of the project to require an annual review by Planning Services to correct illumination issues in the event the signage poses a hazard to traveling motorists in the area or a nuisance to adjoining residences.

General Plan: The Rolling Hills Church site is designated Adopted Plan (AP) due to the site location within the Carson Creek Specific Plan area. The following General Plan policies are applicable to the project:

Policy 2.8.1.1 requires that development including signage be designed to reduce excessive nighttime light. The project would be internally illuminated via fluorescent lamps. The sign would utilize internal illumination to display sign copy and to illuminate the Rolling Hills Christian Church Logo (Exhibit G). The portion of the sign displaying the church logo would be halo illuminated and would not be a significant nighttime light source. The sign copy would be black with opaque copy and would not create significant nighttime glare. The sign would not utilize exposed LEDs or unshielded external lighting which would propose a significant source of nighttime light. The fluorescent lamps would be installed with dimmable ballast controls. The ballast controls would have the ability to adjust the intensity of the sign light in the event the sign results in significant nighttime light or glare.

Policy 2.2.5.21 requires that all development projects be designed to avoid incompatibility with the surrounding uses. The church site is bordered to the north, west and south by existing residences. The proposed sign would be internally illuminated which could result in potential incompatibilities with the surrounding residential land uses and motorists along White Rock Road if the sign utilized exposed LED's or other signage details with potentially significant light sources. White Rock Road along the church site currently does not have street lights or signalized intersections. The primary source of nighttime light is the parking lot lighting installed in the church parking lots. As discussed above, the proposed sign would utilize halo lighting for the church logo portion of the sign and opaque copy with internal fluorescent lamps. Additionally, the installation of the ballast controls would allow adjustment of the intensity of the lamps to further reduce the impact of the sign in the project area.

Therefore staff finds the proposed sign would be consistent with the General Plan.

Carson Creek Specific Plan: The Carson Creek Specific Plan (the Plan) designated the church site as Single Family 6,000 square feet (CC-6K). Section 4.4 of the Plan established that churches and other places of worship are accessory uses, allowed by right without a Special Use Permit.

The Plan does not include comprehensive signage development standards. In accordance with "Purpose and Authority" Section 2.1 of the Specific Plan, the El Dorado County Zoning Ordinance shall have affect in areas not covered by the Carson Creek Specific Plan.

Since the regulation of signs is not addressed by the Carson Creek Specific Plan, sign regulation would be deferred to the applicable sections of the Zoning Ordinance. The Carson Creek Residential designation of Single Family 6,000 square foot is subject to the requirements of the One-Family Residential District. Being a residential zone, only one unlighted sign six square feet in area advertising authorized activities on the premises is allowed by right (17.28.020.G). Other sign sizes are allowed by Special Use Permit (17.28.030).

Zoning/ Special Use Permit: As referenced above, the Carson Creek Specific Plan defers to the County Zoning Ordinance for signage requirements. The Zoning Ordinance allows approval of signage not meeting the criteria of the specific Zone District through approval of a Special Use Permit. Pursuant to Section 17.22.540 of the Zoning Ordinance, prior to approval of any Special

Use Permit, the Planning Commission must make specific findings of approval. The required findings have been included in Attachment 2 of the Staff Report.

As discussed, Staff has determined the proposed sign would be consistent with the County Code.

AGENCY/ PUBLIC COMMENTS: During the initial consultation, the following comments were received:

El Dorado County Department of Transportation: The Department has requested that the project be conditioned to avoid the placement of signage within the County right-of-way and placed so that the signage would not restrict sight distance along White Rock Road.

El Dorado Hills Area Planning Advisory Committee (APAC): APAC had initially rendered a split decision on the proposed LED readerboard sign. Following review of the re-designed monument sign, APAC voiced their concerns that the current El Dorado County Code should be updated to include standards regarding digital signage. APAC comment letters have been included as Exhibit I of the Staff Report.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW: Pursuant to Section 15311(b) of the CEQA Guidelines on-site signs are Categorical Exempt from CEQA and that no further environmental review is required. The proposed sign would not require additional CEQA review. Pursuant to Resolution No. 240-93, a \$50.00 proceeding fee is required by the County Recorder to file the Notice of Exemption.

SUPPORT INFORMATION

Attachments to Staff Report:

Attachment 1	Conditions of Approval
Attachment 2	Findings for Approval
Exhibit A	Vicinity Map
Exhibit B	Assessor's Parcel Map
Exhibit C	General Plan Land Use Map
Exhibit D	Zoning Map
Exhibit E	Approved Signage (DR00-0016)
Exhibit F	Administratively Approved Signage
Exhibit G	Proposed Sign Elevations
Exhibit H	Site Plan
Exhibit I	El Dorado APAC Comments

ATTACHMENT 1

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

**S03-0035-R-2/ Rolling Hills Christian Church
Zoning Administrator
September 2, 2009**

1. The project, as approved, consists of the following:

This Special Use Permit Revision is based upon and limited to compliance with the project description, the Staff Report hearing exhibits marked Exhibits G-H (Special Use Permit) 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.

Project Description:

This Special Use Permit Revision shall permit the installation of one monument sign. The signage shall meet the following requirements:

The monument sign shall be internally illuminated with a ‘prono track’ manually changeable readerboard sign. The sign shall be located at the main entrance of the Rolling Hills Christian Church as shown on the Site Plan Exhibit H. The sign shall utilize internal florescent lamps with adjustable ballast controls. The sign shall conform to the following specifications:

Dimensions: The sign shall have an overall height of seven feet and five and one half feet length. The sign width shall be one and a half feet wide.

Sign Copy: The sign shall display the Rolling Hills Christian Logo. The copy shall include internal halo illumination and shall be one foot, six inches tall and four feet nine inches in length.

Readerboard: The ‘prono track’ manually changeable readerboard shall be two feet in height and four feet nine inches in length. One line of copy shall display the Rolling Hills Christian Church logo and the text “Connecting people to Jesus Christ and to each other.” The two lines of changeable copy shall be each four inches in height. The copy panels shall be opaque with black panels.

Design: The color and design features of the monument shall correspond to Exhibit G of the staff report and shall match the existing signage on-site.

Planning Services

2. **Site Improvements:** All site improvements shall conform to Exhibits F-H.
3. **Temporary Signage:** All temporary signage shall be removed from the church site. Planning Services shall verify the removal prior to issuance of a building permit.
4. **Maintenance and review:** The applicant shall adjust the internal lighting of the sign to reduce the nighttime intensity. The applicant shall correct any lighting issues within 30 days of any written complaint to Planning Services regarding the nighttime light intensity of the sign.
5. **Hold Harmless:** In the event of any legal action instituted by a third party challenging the validity of any provision of this approval, the developer and landowner agree to be responsible for the costs of defending such suit and shall hold County harmless from any legal fees or costs County may incur as a result of such action.

The developer and land owner shall defend, indemnify, and hold harmless El Dorado County and its agents, officers, and employees from any claim, action, or proceeding against El Dorado County or its agents, officers, or employees to attack, set aside, void, or annul an approval of El Dorado County concerning a Special Use Permit.

The County shall notify the applicant of any claim, action, or proceeding, and the County shall cooperate fully in the defense.

6. **Processing Fees:** Prior to issuance of any permits, the applicant shall pay all Development Service fees and noticing fees.
7. **Condition Compliance:** Prior to issuance of a building permit or commencement of any use authorized by this permit, the applicant shall provide a written description, together with appropriate documentation, showing conformance of the project with each condition imposed as part of the project approval. The applicant shall also schedule an inspection by Planning Services prior to issuance of a building permit for verification of compliance with applicable conditions of approval.

Department of Transportation:

8. **Sign Placement:** The placement of this proposed signs shall not be within the existing right of way of White Rock Road. In addition, this proposed sign shall not be placed in a location that will restrict sight distance as determined by the DOT.

ATTACHMENT 2

FINDINGS for APPROVAL

**S03-0035-R-2/ Rolling Hills Christian Church
Zoning Administrator
September 2, 2009**

The special use permit is approved based on the following findings:

1.0 CEQA FINDING

- 1.1** The project is Categorically Exempt pursuant to Section 15311(a) of the CEQA Guidelines which exempts on-site signage from the provisions of CEQA.

2.0 SPECIAL USE PERMIT FINDINGS

- 2.1 The issuance of the permit is consistent with the Carson Creek Specific Plan or El Dorado County General Plan;**

The Carson Creek Specific Plan defers signage requirements to applicable sections of the County Code. Relevant General Plan policies relate to the minimization of nighttime lighting impacts and the avoidance of new incompatible land uses. The proposed monument sign would be internally illuminated using fluorescent lamps. No exposed neon tubes or LED's would be used or other features that would create a significant source of nighttime light. The church site is located in the vicinity of existing residences and along a major roadway which may be negatively impacted from additional light sources. However, the proposed sign includes adjustable ballast controls which could reduce the light intensity of the signage in the event significant hazards are created by the signage operation during nighttime hours.

- 2.2 The proposed use would not be detrimental to the public health, safety and welfare, or injurious to the neighborhood;**

The sign would not utilize exposed lighting sources or other design features that would result in significant hazards to adjoining residences or to motorists along White Rock Road. The sign would include florescent lamps which include adjustable ballast controls which can limit the light intensity to reduce the impact of the sign.

- 2.3 The proposed use is specifically permitted by a special use permit pursuant to this Title.**

The Rolling Hills Church was originally permitted through a Special Use Permit based on the site location within a residential zone district. The El Dorado County Code limits the size of signs within residential zone districts, but permits sizes exceeding those requirements through approval of a Special Use Permit.