

Planning Commission Agenda Report

March 14, 2018
Item 5.a.

- SUBJECT:** P17-0827
- APPLICANT/
PROPERTY OWNER:** Bob and Jean Blocka, Blocka Construction Inc.
- PURPOSE:** Application for Design Review approval to construct an approximately 22,367-square-foot, two-story industrial building with outdoor equipment storage and related site improvements.
- LOCATION:** 445 Boulder Court
- GENERAL PLAN:** General and Limited Industrial
- ZONING:** I-G-40,000 (General Industrial) District
- EXHIBITS:**
- A. [Draft Planning Commission Resolution with Conditions of Approval](#)
 - B. [Project Plans dated "Received February 7, 2018"](#)
 - C. [Location and Notification Map](#)
 - D. [Public Comment](#)

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Planning Commission adopt the attached resolution approving Case No. P17-0827, subject to the conditions of approval listed as Attachment 1 in Exhibit A.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Bob and Jean Blocka are requesting Design Review approval to construct an approximately 22,367-square-foot, two-story industrial building with outdoor equipment storage and related site improvements on an approximately 1.98 acre site at 445 Boulder Ct. Blocka Construction would be the sole occupant of the new building. To ensure the project is suitably designed, various City staff analyzed the project for compatibility with applicable polices, regulations and guidelines and staff is recommending support of the project, as conditioned. The application is before the Planning Commission for consideration.

BACKGROUND/HISTORY

In 2007, a parcel map (PM 9014) was recorded subdividing an existing 6.61 acre site located at the southwest corner of Boulder Street and Boulder Court into three lots (Lots 1, 2, and 3). In 2008, the Planning Commission approved a Design Review application (PDR-645) for Lots 1 and 2 for the four multiple-tenant buildings located at 405-435 Boulder Ct., referred to as Vision West Commerce Center. The subject site, Lot 3, was intended to be the second phase of Vision West Commerce Center.

In 2008, the Planning Commission approved a Design Review application (PDR-772) for the construction of two, two-story buildings, measuring 18,855 square feet and 15,128 square feet respectively on Lot 3 (the subject site) which would have completed the development of the project area and become part of the Vision West Commerce Center. However, building permits were not obtained and Design Review extensions were not requested. Therefore, the Design Review approval expired in 2009.

The current Design Review application (P17-0827) is not going to be associated with Vision West Commerce Center and is the first development application for the site since 2008.

SITE AND AREA DESCRIPTION

The subject site is an approximately 1.98-acre vacant parcel located on the southwest side of Boulder Court (please refer to the location map in Exhibit C, and Images 1 and 2 in this report). The relatively flat, rectangular-shaped site has a 25-foot wide recorded access easement overlaying the common property line between the subject site and the southern adjoining property at 575 Boulder Ct. (Micom Labs). As such, one half of the access easement is located on the project site and the other half is located on the adjoining parcel. A 10-foot wide temporary landscape easement is located to the immediate north of the access easement on the project site (see Image 2). The subject site can currently be accessed from the existing driveway at the end of Boulder Court via the access easement within the southern parcel. The shared driveway and bordering trees on the subject parcel were proposed, constructed, and installed when the adjacent parcel was developed, as shown in Image 2. The agreement forming the easement allows the property owner of the subject parcel to remove the landscaping and abandon the landscape easement when development of the subject parcel is proposed, approved, and constructed.

Image 1: Aerial Photo

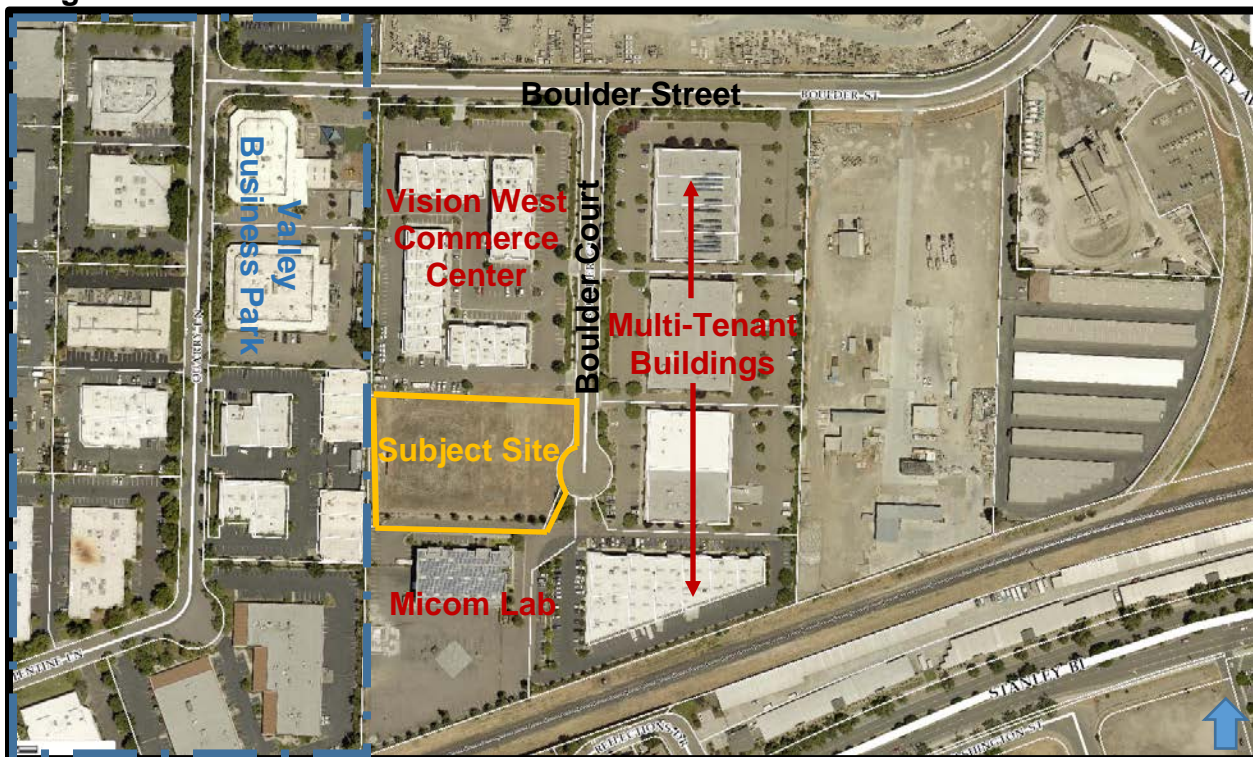


Image 2: Focused Aerial View



Note: A secondary address, 455 Boulder Ct., was assigned to the same vacant lot in 2008 in anticipation of the previously approved development. The second address will be removed if the industrial building is approved and constructed.

The uses on Boulder Court include industrial uses, office uses, and indoor recreation facilities (e.g., Pump-It-Up). The subject property is bordered on the north by Vision West Commerce Center; on the east (across Boulder Court) by multi-tenant buildings; on the south by Micom Lab; and on the west by multi-tenant buildings within Valley Business Park.

PROPOSED PROJECT

The applicant is proposing to construct an approximately 22,367-square-foot two-story industrial building with outdoor equipment storage. The first floor is approximately 15,000 square feet in area (10,000 square feet of warehouse space and 5,000 square feet of office area) and the second floor is approximately 7,367 square feet in area (2,500 square feet of warehouse space and 4,867 square feet of office area). The building and site will be utilized by a single-tenant, Blocka Construction. Vehicular access to the site would be provided from three access points: two new driveways at Boulder Court (the new northernmost driveway would be for employee vehicles and company trucks and the new center driveway would be for vendors/building visitors); and the existing shared southern driveway on Boulder Court would be for employees/visitors of the subject site and 575 Boulder Ct. A total of 34 parking spaces are proposed, nine gated employee parking spaces on the northern portion of the site, five visitor/vendor spaces on the eastern (front) portion, and 20 employee/visitor spaces on the southern portion. The southern and northern parking stall areas would be asphalt; pervious concrete pavers are proposed in the front pathways leading to the building and within the front parking lot area. The remainder of the site, where materials/truck storage would occur, would

be loose gravel. Please refer to Figure 1 for the proposed site layout landscape plan and Image 3 for a plan overlay of the site. In addition to the installation of low-water use landscaping, the applicant intends to retain or relocate the ten, non-heritage sized, evergreen trees in the temporary landscape easement elsewhere on-site and plant 12 new trees throughout the site.

Figure 1: Proposed Site Layout Landscape Plan

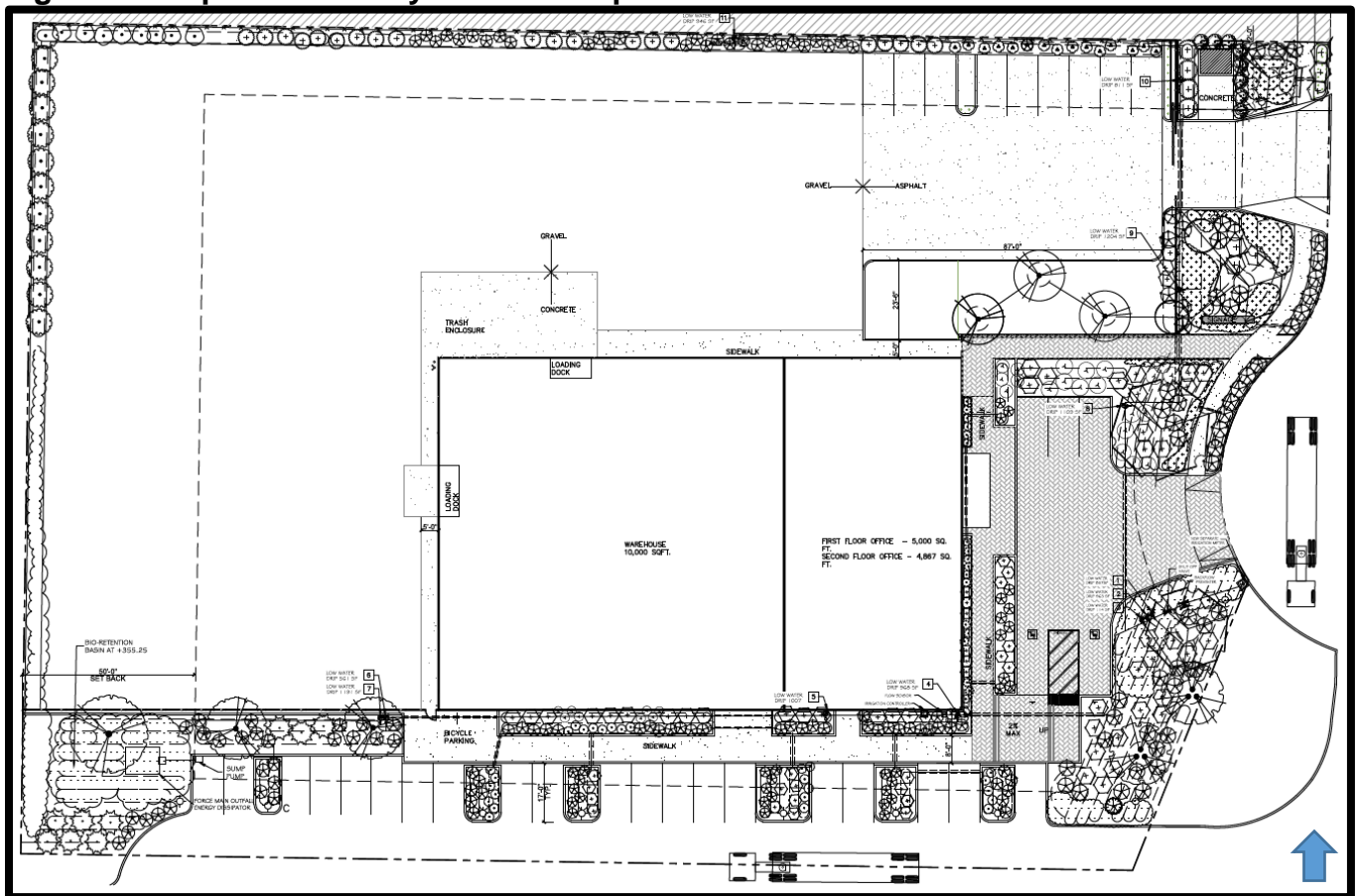
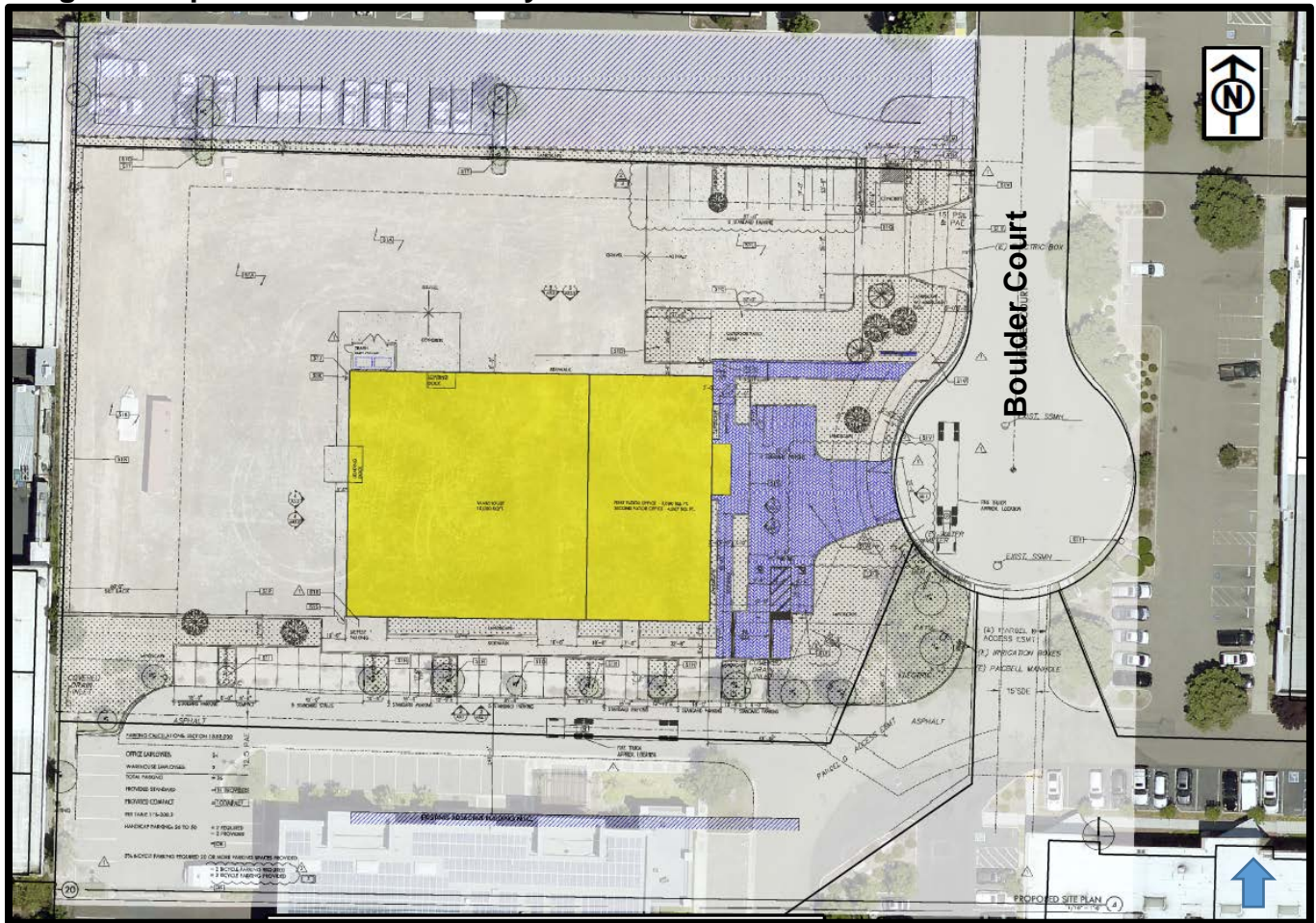


Image 3: Proposed Site Plan Overlay



Building Design

The building would have concrete tilt-up walls with two-tone earthtone colors and score lines intended to provide visual relief, an arched aluminum powder coated awning, and a darker-colored building band over the main building entrance on the east elevation. The proposed colors are shown on the elevation drawings in Exhibit B and Images 4 and 5. The maximum height of the building would be 31 feet, measured from finished grade to the top of the parapet. The northernmost parking lot would have a black wrought iron style fence with gate for employee and company truck use only. New wrought iron style fencing is proposed from the rear property line to the southwestern corner of the building and new cyclone fencing is proposed along the northern property line. Rollup doors are proposed on the north and west elevations of the building and landscape trellises are proposed on the south and north elevations. A covered trash enclosure, matching the architectural style and colors of the building, would be located at the northwestern corner of the building.

SCOPE OF PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION

Design Review Process

The design review process is intended to preserve and enhance the city's aesthetic values and to ensure the preservation of the public health, safety, and general welfare. New commercial buildings are required to obtain design review approval from the Planning Commission.

Pleasanton Municipal Code (PMC) Section 18.20.030 outlines the scope of design review, indicating that the reviewing body shall review “site plans, landscape plans, building architecture, and other such plans as may be required to preserve and enhance the city’s aesthetic values and to ensure the preservation of the public health, safety, and general welfare.” Note that, even though a proposed project may comply with applicable zoning standards (e.g. setbacks, height limits) the design review process allows the reviewing body to approve conditions which may be more restrictive than normal Code standards, to ensure that the above objectives are met. As outlined in Section 18.20.030, the reviewing body’s scope of review shall include (but not be limited to) the following design criteria:

1. Preservation of the natural beauty of the city and the project site’s relationship to it.
2. Appropriate relationship of the proposed building to its site, including transition with streetscape, public views of the buildings, and scale of buildings within its site and adjoining buildings.
3. Appropriate relationship of the proposed building and its site to adjoining areas, including compatibility of architectural styles, harmony in adjoining buildings, attractive landscape transitions, and consistency with neighborhood character.
4. Preservation of views enjoyed by residents, workers within the city, and passersby through the community.
5. Landscaping designed to enhance architectural features, strengthen vistas, provide shade, and conform to established streetscape.
6. Relationship of exterior lighting to its surroundings and to the building and adjoining landscape.
7. Architectural style, as a function of its quality of design and relationship to its surroundings; the relationship of building components to one another/the building’s colors and materials.

ANALYSIS

General Plan Land Use and Zoning

The subject property has a General Plan Land Use designation of General and Limited Industrial and the zoning designation is I-G-40,000 (General Industrial), which allows for a variety of permitted and conditionally permitted industrial uses. Blocka Construction specializes in industrial mechanical and electrical public works projects with an emphasis on water/wastewater infrastructure. There is no on-site manufacturing and the construction materials stored within the warehouse are used off-site. The “storage yard” will be used for overnight construction vehicle parking, similar to a parking lot, with occasional and limited ancillary small material storage for loading job site trucks (low-profile irrigation containers, pipes, and infrastructure related materials). The proposed use is considered a light industrial use, which is a permitted use and consistent with the General Plan and zoning land use designations.

The General Plan allows a density range of 0-50 percent floor area ratio (FAR) for the General and Limited Industrial land use designation with an average density of 31 percent FAR. Projects proposing FARs above the average density require sufficient amenities and mitigations to justify the increased density. The subject site is proposing a 25.9 percent FAR, consistent with the allowable density range and below the average density.

The project is also consistent with the following General Plan Land Use policy and program:

Policy 4: Allow development consistent with the General Plan Land Use Map.

Policy 15: Encourage industrial, commercial, and office development which is compatible with environmental constraints in Pleasanton.

Development Standards

The project has been reviewed with respect to the I-G-40,000 development standards. Table 1 summarizes these standards and compares them to the proposed project.

Table 1: Site Development Standards

Development Standard	Required	Proposed
<i>Setbacks</i>		
Front	25 ft.	75 ft.
North Side	10 ft.	94 ft.
South Side	10 ft.	45 ft.
Rear	15 ft.	120 ft.
<i>Height</i>		
	40 ft. max.	31 ft.
<i>Floor area ratio</i>		
	100% max.	25.9%
<i>Parking</i>		
Number of spaces: One parking space for each employee on the max. shift <u>or</u> one space for each 300 square feet of gross floor area.	26 Based on 26 employees on a max. shift 75 Based on one space for each 300 square feet of gross floor area	34

The proposed layout provides setbacks well in excess of those required, and the project complies with all of the other I-G-40,000 zoning district development standards. Staff believes that the proposed building, drive aisles, and parking areas are acceptably located on the property.

Traffic and Parking

The City’s Traffic Engineer determined that a traffic analysis was not necessary due to the low volume of trips (26 employees and minimal truck deliveries) and further determined the proposed site layout is not anticipated to create any circulation problems. The northernmost drive aisle would be used for material deliveries (typically on large trucks) and accessing employee and construction vehicle parking. For security reasons, the applicant is proposing to gate the northernmost drive aisle to prevent/discourage visitors from accessing an area that is not intended for public access. The applicant would be required to pay the City- and Tri-Valley-required traffic fees as part of the project.

The PMC parking requirements for manufacturing plants and other industrial uses, warehouses, storage buildings, and storage facilities combined with commercial or industrial uses require one space for each employee on the maximum shift, or one space for each 300 square feet of gross floor area. The PMC does not specify which parking count has to be used. Blocka Construction: (1) is proposing more parking than is required for the number of employees on-site at any given time (26 spaces required and 34 spaces are proposed); (2) does not have walk-in/retail traffic; (3) is proposing to construct a building that has more warehousing space than office space, which would result in fewer employees; and (4) could add additional parking along the northern portion of the site, should it be necessary due to a change in operation or use in the future. Based on past experience with similar uses, staff believes the proposed number of parking spaces is adequate.

Architectural Design

The building would be visible from Boulder Court and staff believes that the applicant has made a good effort in designing a building that would be functional yet attractive, and including planting of additional street trees and landscaping to further enhance the site and building. As conditioned, staff believes the design is appropriate and would complement the other buildings within the existing Boulder Court commercial/industrial district.

Image 4: East Elevation Photo Simulation (Boulder Court)



Image 5: Northeast Elevation Photo Simulation



Grading and Drainage

Grading for the proposed project would be limited to preparation of the building pad, hardscape areas, and the installation of any below-ground utilities, such as electrical conduits, sewer, and water infrastructure. Landscaped bio-retention areas would treat the site's stormwater. As conditioned, the project would meet the city's grading, drainage and stormwater requirements.

Landscaping and Trees

The proposed landscape plan includes a variety of trees, shrubs, and groundcover for the site. The landscape plan would assist in screening and softening the appearance of the structure and provide an attractive streetscape. The applicant is also proposing to retain the majority of the existing trees in the temporary landscape easement and transplant one of the existing trees within the landscape easement elsewhere on-site. Cyclone fencing along the northern property line is shown on the landscape plans. The applicant has agreed to replace this fencing with wrought iron and install tall-growing evergreen shrubs along the north and south side property line fencing to soften the appearance and assist in screening the materials/trucks storage area. As conditioned, staff believes that the proposed landscape plan is appropriate for the area and the project location.

Signs

Signage is not proposed with this Design Review application. A comprehensive sign program for the project will be reviewed by staff as a Sign Design Review application at a future date.

ALTERNATIVES

As noted, it is staff's recommendation that the Planning Commission approve the Design Review, subject to conditions of approval. However, should the Planning Commission determine that the design criteria cannot be made, the Commission can pursue one of the following alternatives:

1. Direct further modifications to the project design, to be incorporated as further conditions of approval, or that would be brought back to the Planning Commission for review at a continued public hearing.; or
2. Deny the Design Review application. If the Planning Commission pursues this alternative, the applicant would be required to submit a new application, reflecting a substantially modified project design.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice of this application was sent to surrounding property owners and tenants within a 1,000-foot radius of the site. Staff has provided the location and notification map as Exhibit C for reference. At the time this report was published, staff received one public comment for support for the project, attached as Exhibit D.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Infill development projects on sites of five acres or less that have no habitat for endangered, rare, or threatened species, that can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services, that are consistent with the General Plan and zoning regulations, and would have no significant effects on traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality are categorically exempt (Infill Development: 15332) from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Therefore, no environmental document accompanies this report.

SUMMARY/CONCLUSION

Staff has reviewed the proposal and believes the subject proposal is consistent with the applicable City regulations and that the project is well designed with a building design and site layout that are appropriate for Boulder Court; therefore, staff has recommended approval of the project.

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