



Planning Commission Staff Report

July 12, 2006
Item 6.a.

- SUBJECT:** PDR-458/PV-152
- APPLICANT:** Norman Cornett/Peak Property Main Street, LLC
- PROPERTY OWNER:** Norman Cornett/Peak Property Main Street, LLC
- PURPOSE:** Application for: 1) design review approval to construct an approximately 3,896-square-foot, two-story addition to the existing Kolln Hardware building and to relocate and restore the two easterly one-story structures; and 2) a variance from the Municipal Code to reduce the number of required parking spaces for this project by four spaces.
- GENERAL PLAN:** Retail, Highway, and Service Commercial; Business and Professional Offices
- ZONING:** The subject property is zoned Central Commercial (C-C), Downtown Revitalization, Core Area Overlay District.
- LOCATION:** 600 Main Street
- ATTACHMENTS:**
1. Exhibit "A," Proposed Plans and Variance Written Narrative
 2. Exhibit "B," Staff Recommended Conditions of Approval
 3. Location Map
 4. Email from Susan Morris, dated June 22, 2006
 5. Email from Larry McColm, dated June 26, 2006
 6. Letter from the Pleasanton Downtown Association, dated July 5, 2006
 7. Aerial Photograph of the Project Area
 8. Photographs of the Existing Buildings and Property
 9. Draft Negative Declaration
 10. Historical Resource Evaluation by the City's Consultant Architectural Resources Group
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I. BACKGROUND

Building History

The Kolln Hardware building, built around 1900, is one of the most well known buildings in Downtown Pleasanton. It housed one of the longest running businesses in Pleasanton: a hardware and paint store. The two single-story buildings located east of the Kolln Hardware building and fronting Division Street were built circa 1888 and were originally located on the western end of the site, fronting Main Street. These buildings were relocated to their present location when the Kolln Hardware building was constructed. The Kolln Hardware building, while needing some weatherproofing, maintenance, and structural/seismic repair, has retained most of its original exterior ornamentation and detailing. The two one-story buildings have been modified more substantially over time than the Kolln Hardware building: the exterior drop wood siding on the rear and sides of the buildings was replaced and/or covered up with plywood panels; the front doors and windows were boarded up; the front awning was removed from one of the buildings; corrugated metal roofing was added over the original wood shingle roofing; and a shed addition behind the buildings and corridor addition between the buildings were added several decades later with later era design and materials.

Project History

The applicant, Norman Cornett, purchased the property in 2004, with a goal of repairing and restoring the existing Kolln Hardware building and adding new building area. The original scope of the project has been separated into two phases: Phase 1 is the repair and restoration of the existing Kolln Hardware building; and Phase 2 is the addition. In September 2005, the applicant received design review approval by the Zoning Administrator for the first phase of his project: weatherproofing, structural/seismic repair, and restoration of the Kolln Hardware building. Building permits for this work were issued several months ago and Mr. Cornett recently selected a contractor. It is anticipated that the phase one work will begin within three to four weeks.

The Phase 2 proposal included demolishing the two, one-story buildings and increasing the square footage on the site from 8,432 square feet to approximately 10,772 square feet by constructing an approximately 4,600-square-foot two-story addition to the Kolln Hardware building. The request to demolish the existing structures, c.1888, is considered sensitive. The proposed project was analyzed by Architectural Resources Group (ARG), which specializes in cultural resource preservation, to provide the City with a review of the project-related cultural resources.

In its report (which staff has included for information purposes, see attachment #10), ARG determined that the two buildings were eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources and that demolishing them would create a substantial adverse change in the

significance of a historical resource as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). ARG addressed several options that would be able to mitigate the impacts of the proposed expansion by relocating and preserving the original structures, therefore, avoiding a significant impact. Staff, the applicant, and ARG worked collaboratively to find a design alternative which addressed the concerns raised.

The applicant revised the plans to follow one of the design alternatives in the ARG report:

- Relocation of and restoration of the two one-story buildings and construction of a two-story infill addition between the existing Kolln Hardware building and the relocated one-story buildings.
- The shed and corridor additions at the rear of and between the one-story buildings would be demolished.
- The applicant has also requested a variance from the Municipal Code to reduce the number of required parking spaces for this project by four spaces. The applicant would pay for the remainder of the required parking through an in-lieu parking agreement.

Design review applications of this nature are subject to review and approval by the Planning Commission. In addition, a certificate of appropriateness must also be approved by the Planning Commission to relocate the two one-story buildings on the site, demolish the shed and corridor additions, and construct an addition to and slightly alter the Kolln Hardware building. The in-lieu parking agreement will be subject to City Council approval.

Variance applications are normally subject to review by the Zoning Administrator. However, the Zoning Administrator may refer applications to the Planning Commission for review at a public hearing. In this case, the parking variance application has been taken directly to the Planning Commission for a decision with the rest of the applicant's proposal.

II. SITE DESCRIPTION

The subject site is an approximately 0.17-acre (7,500 square foot) parcel on the northeast corner of Main Street and Division Street. The subject site currently contains the main corner building (known as the "Kolln Hardware Building"), two smaller, one-story buildings east of the main building, and shed and corridor additions at the rear of and between the one-story buildings. All of the buildings are currently vacant. An existing driveway off Division Street provides access to a four-space paved parking lot on the east side of the one-story buildings. There are no trees or other forms of vegetation on the subject site. The site topography is generally flat.



Main Street Frontage



Division Street Frontage

Adjacent Properties

Properties adjacent to this site include: a commercial building and private parking lot to the north (608 Main Street); a dentist's office to the east (215 Division Street); commercial buildings to the south (550/560 Main Street), on the opposite side of Division Street; and the City Museum and the Washington Mutual Bank to the west, on the opposite side of Main Street.

III. PROPOSED PROJECT

The applicant wishes to relocate and restore the two existing one-story buildings and to construct an approximately 3,896-square-foot addition to the existing two-story, approximately 6,172-square-foot Kolln Hardware building. The shed and corridor additions at the rear of and between the one-story buildings, totaling approximately 844 square feet, would be demolished, resulting in a total floor area of 11,484 square feet on the site, which is a net increase of approximately 3,052 square feet. Related on- and off-site improvements are proposed. The applicant has also requested a variance from the Municipal Code to reduce the number of required parking spaces for this project by four spaces.

Relocation and Restoration of the One-Story Buildings

The existing one-story buildings would be relocated approximately 36 feet to the east and two feet to the north and would maintain their Division Street orientation and street frontage. These buildings would generally be located where the four-space parking lot is currently located. The shed and corridor additions at the rear of and between the two buildings would be demolished and the buildings would be placed adjacent to each other. The applicant proposes extensive repairs and renovation to the buildings to bring them back to a useable state and meet either the State Historic Building Code and/or the California Building Code. New foundations and

framing would be required for both buildings. The front façades would be preserved to the extent possible, but the doors and windows are either missing or in such poor condition that they would need to be replaced with new ones that would match the architecture and time period of the buildings. An awning would be installed on the front of the larger building (“Building 2”), replicating the original awning on the building. The sides and rear of the buildings would be refurbished by removing the newer materials, alterations, and additions and replacing them with new materials matching the original materials on the building. Conceptual sign locations have been shown on the front elevations. The applicant has indicated that HVAC equipment would not be located on the roof.

The one-story buildings are currently painted white. Although the colored building elevation shows that the one-story buildings would be painted to match the Kolln Hardware building’s white body and green accent/trim colors, the applicant indicated that he intends to repaint the buildings with colors that are different, but complementary to the Kolln Hardware building’s colors.

Kolln Hardware Addition

An approximately 3,896-square-foot, two-story addition would be constructed on the eastern side of the Kolln Hardware building. The walls of the addition would be separated six inches from the walls of the Kolln Hardware building and the westernmost one-story building (Building 2). The addition’s roof would tie into the roof of the Kolln Hardware building. The exterior of the addition would replicate the architecture, materials, and colors of the Kolln Hardware building. The front (Division Street) elevation would feature storefront windows and doors, matching the design and materials of the existing building. The building addition would measure a maximum of 40-feet tall, as measured from grade to the top of the roof, and would match the height of the existing building [*staff notes that the elevations incorrectly state at some locations that the roof is 41-feet 8-inches tall, which is actually the height of the existing turret*]. Although not shown on the plans, the applicant indicated that the storefront doors of the addition would be recessed a few feet. A bay window with gable pediment would be located on the second floor above the storefront entries. Mechanical equipment would be hidden from view in an equipment well in the roof of the addition.

The applicant would also make a few minor changes to the Kolln Hardware building. In order to comply with Building Code requirements, the double doors at the two Main Street entrances may need to be replaced or recessed further into the building. The double doors on the Division Street side would be removed and replaced with a recessed entry with single door and side window. The new doors and windows would match the design and materials of the existing storefront windows and doors. The turret currently has a flagpole that would be replaced with a new weathervane. Although not shown on the plans, the applicant indicated that the existing metal louvered awning on the front of the Kolln Hardware building, not original to the building,

would be removed and replaced with a retractable canvas awning similar to the original awning on the building. Other original, but currently missing, ornamentation on the existing Kolln Hardware building would be replaced, such as the garland detailing along the Division Street frontage and the detailing in the upper panels of the turret.

On- and Off-Site Improvements

The existing parking lot and driveway off Division Street would be removed to accommodate the relocated one-story buildings. The removal of the existing Division Street driveway would allow one new off-street parking space to be created for public use. New concrete paving would be installed at the rear and eastern side of the one-story buildings. A new transformer, gas meter manifold, and roofed trash enclosure with trash compactor would be located in this paved area. A narrow curb cut on Division Street would allow tenants to roll the trash bin out to the street for garbage pick up. A two-foot wide, paved area would be located in front of the buildings, which would be used for potted plants and outdoor merchandise display.

The applicant is proposing to remove the existing sidewalk paving along the Division Street frontage and replace it with stamped, colored concrete and concrete pavers matching the Main Street sidewalk. Two new streetlights would be installed along the Division Street frontage, matching the design of the existing Downtown street lights along side streets. Conditions have been added reflecting the above.

The existing sidewalk paving and other site improvements along the site's Main Street frontage would not be modified.

Parking Variance

The applicant is requesting a parking variance to reduce the number of parking spaces by four since the retention and relocation of the historic one-story buildings requires that the existing four-space parking lot be removed. If granted, the project would be required to provide ten parking spaces. As allowed by the Municipal Code, the applicant is requesting an in-lieu parking agreement for the ten parking spaces.

IV. ANALYSIS

General and Downtown Specific Plan Land Use Conformity

The project site is designated by the Land Use Element of the Pleasanton General Plan for "Retail/Highway/Service Commercial; Business and Professional Offices" land uses, which allows commercial and office uses. The proposed project, which is anticipated to contain commercial and office uses, is consistent with this land use designation and, additionally, would provide approximately 3,052 additional square feet of new commercial space to serve residents

and businesses of Pleasanton and its market area, implementing Policy 4 of the General Plan's Land Use Element:

“Ensure that neighborhood, community, and commercial centers provide goods and services needed by residents and businesses of Pleasanton and its market area.”

The Floor Area Ratio (FAR) would increase from 112% to 153% with the proposed project, which complies with the General Plan's 200% FAR limit for Downtown commercial properties.

The subject property is located within the Downtown Specific Plan area. The Downtown Specific Plan land use designation for the subject property is “Downtown Commercial” which allows pedestrian-oriented commercial on the ground floor and commercial, office, and residential uses on the second floor. The proposed project is consistent with this land use designation.

Zoning and Uses

Zoning for the property is C-C (Central Commercial), Downtown Revitalization, Core Area Overlay District. No rezoning or other land use modifications to the property are necessary to allow the proposed commercial development. The proposed 153% FAR would be consistent with the maximum 300% FAR set forth for this property by the C-C District.

Development Plan Conformity with Downtown Regulations

New construction in the Downtown must be sensitive to the character of the historic downtown and, to accomplish this goal, must conform to the specialized design policies contained in the Downtown Specific Plan and Downtown Pleasanton Design Guidelines. The proposed project conforms to the applicable Downtown policies and regulations as follows:

Historic Preservation and Certificate of Appropriateness

As proposed, the existing one-story buildings would be relocated to the east side of the subject site and restored. The shed and corridor additions at the rear of and between the one-story buildings would be demolished. Furthermore, an addition and minor alterations are proposed for the Kolln Hardware building.

The City designated all three buildings as buildings of “primary” historical and design significance. Demolition (partial or whole) or alteration of buildings of “primary” historical significance in the Downtown requires that a certificate of appropriateness be approved by the Planning Commission. Furthermore, the Kolln Hardware building is designated as an historic building in the City's General Plan. The General Plan indicates that cultural and historic resources that are significant to Pleasanton because of their age, appearance, or history should be

preserved and rehabilitated. In addition, the Downtown Specific Plan contains policies encouraging the preservation of buildings over 50 years old, especially those considered heritage buildings or buildings of historical importance. The Specific Plan prohibits the demolition of buildings of historical significance unless those buildings are considered to be unsafe or dangerous and if no other means of rehabilitation can be achieved. The Downtown Design Guidelines generally echo the Specific Plan's policies regarding demolishing buildings over 50 years old. The Guidelines state that remodeling is encouraged over replacement. The Guidelines also state that relocation of an existing building of heritage value within Downtown should meet the following criteria: 1) the relocated building is compatible with the new area in terms of scale and architectural style; and 2) moving the original building does not jeopardize its historic status.

The one-story buildings would be relocated approximately 36 feet to the east and two feet to the north, but they would remain on the site and would maintain their Division Street orientation and street frontage. Therefore, their historical status would not be jeopardized or diminished. The relocated buildings would also be compatible with the new area in terms of scale and architectural style. Furthermore, the one-story buildings would be refurbished and restored by removing the newer materials, alterations, and additions and replacing them with new materials matching the original materials on the building. The applicant has spent (and will be spending) considerable time, money, and effort to retain, relocate, and restore the existing one-story buildings.

The existing shed and corridor additions, added after the one-story buildings were relocated to their present location, are constructed with materials that are incompatible with the one-story buildings. Furthermore, the additions lack architectural style or merit. Staff also believes that removing the additions would improve the appearance of the historic one-story buildings.

The two-story Kolln Hardware building addition would match the architecture, materials, and colors of the Kolln Hardware building. Staff believes that the minor alterations to the Kolln Hardware building (e.g., removing and replacing the metal awning with a retractable canvas awning, replacing the missing original detailing, replacing or recessing the front entry doors, etc.) would not impair the historic nature of the existing building.

Therefore, staff recommends the Planning Commission grant a certificate of appropriateness to relocate the two one-story buildings on the site, demolish the shed and corridor additions, and construct an addition to and slightly alter the Kolln Hardware building in that these modifications are appropriate for this site, meet the historic preservation goals in the General Plan, Downtown Specific Plan, and Downtown Design Guidelines, and enhance the historic Downtown resource.

Building Design

Some of the Specific Plan Policies and Design Guidelines applicable to building design include:

- Additions and other modifications to the exteriors of buildings exceeding 50 years in age should match the original building exterior in terms of architectural style and all other exterior design elements.
- Protect and enhance the pedestrian-friendly scale of the Downtown by continuing its mixture of one-to-two-story facades at the sidewalk, at-grade entrances, and display windows every 25-30 feet.
- Maintain the existing architectural variety of the Downtown by encouraging that original facade materials and storefront elements, such as transom windows, are uncovered, rehabilitated, and maintained, where appropriate.
- Where covered or painted over, original façade materials should be repaired and restored.
- Repair rather than replace deteriorated architectural features if feasible.
- Replace or restore missing original materials or details. Match the size, design, and placement of the original feature.

The proposed building addition would match the architectural style and detailing of the Kolln Hardware building. The proposed addition and restored one-story buildings would be located at or very near the sidewalk, would provide at-grade entrances, and provide display windows every 25-30 feet. The original façades of the one-story buildings would be repaired and restored. Any deteriorated features or materials that cannot be restored will be replaced with new materials/features matching the existing building. Missing original detailing would be replaced on the buildings.

Therefore, staff finds that the Downtown Specific Plan's and Design Guidelines' design goals and policies have been met, as proposed and conditioned.

Storefronts and Windows

Some of the applicable Design Guidelines include:

- Space storefronts in a repeated rhythm along the sidewalk to maintain pedestrian continuity and interest. Minimize wall space (pier width) between storefront windows.
- Storefront display windows should be large and of clear transparent glass.

- Storefront entry doors to street level should be more than 50% glass or open.
- Recess entries from the façade; use recessed areas for window displays.
- Storefront bases should be no more than 24 inches high from the sidewalk.
- In wood storefronts (19th century Victorian or Western), smooth-finished, recessed wood panels are an appropriate base material.
- Façades with two or three storefronts should have consistent storefront design and materials. This includes the size and type of display windows, doorway locations, the design of transom windows, and storefront base height and materials.
- Use pier or columns to separate windows between and within storefronts. Provide an accent decoration or capital atop the column.
- Upper story windows should create a rhythm, either symmetrical or equally spaced, across the façade related to the openings below.
- Upper floor windows should be smaller than ground floor windows.
- Vertical, rectangular windows are preferred. Recess windows in from the building wall. Use window trim to highlight windows. Use projecting sills.
- Separate upper windows by sufficient wall area to set them apart from each other.
- Consider using special window trim, bay windows, or flower boxes to increase attractiveness of upper level windows.

The proposed addition would be consistent with these guidelines. The one-story buildings would be restored to their original appearance, which, in some cases, does not conform to the guidelines (such as recessing the entry doors). However, staff feels that it is more important to maintain the historic design of the one-story buildings rather than modifying them to conform to the guidelines.

Transom Windows and Awnings

Some of the applicable Design Guidelines include:

- Existing transom windows should be uncovered and repaired.

- Transom windows are encouraged in new construction if appropriate to the architectural style of the building.
- Awnings should not obscure architectural details on the façade or cover existing transom windows.
- Open sided awnings are encouraged; consider retractable awnings.

The applicant would remove the existing metal louvered awning that currently covers the transom windows on the Kolln Hardware building and replace it with either the original retractable canvas awning or one similar to that. While the applicant understands and supports the City’s desire to not obscure the transom windows, he also wants to be able to provide some afternoon sun and glare protection for the storefront windows. Staff believes that the applicant’s solution to use retractable awnings, which would be open during the afternoon, but retracted at other times to allow unobstructed views of the transom windows, is supportable and meets the spirit of the Guidelines.

Site Plan

As noted in the table below, the proposed project would meet the site development standards of the C-C District with respect to building setbacks, FAR, and height limits.

SITE DEVELOPMENT STANDARD:	REQUIREMENTS:	PLAN PROPOSES:
Floor Area Ratio	300% max.	153%
Building Height	40 ft. max.	40 ft.
Setbacks:		
Front (west) -	None required	0 ft. min.
North Side -	None required	0 ft. min.
South Side -	None required	0 ft. min.
Rear (east) -	None required	5 ft. 2 in. min.

With respect to building placement, staff believes that relocating the existing buildings to the east and constructing the two-story addition between the existing Kolln Hardware building and the relocated one-story buildings, as proposed, is preferable to an alternative plan that would maintain the one-story buildings at their present location, with minor adjustments after removal of the shed and corridor additions, and build a stand-alone, two-story building at the eastern end

of the site. Staff believes that the current plan, with the addition integrated into the Kolln Hardware building, improves the design of the Kolln Hardware building and also creates a more attractive streetscape along Division Street. The current plan also allows the building height/mass to step down towards the rear (east) of the site, minimizing impacts on the adjacent property to the east, 215 Division Street, which contains an historic building.

The applicant proposes to remove the existing sidewalk paving along the Division Street frontage and replace it with stamped, colored concrete and concrete pavers matching the Main Street sidewalk. While staff believes the proposed materials are attractive, the Downtown Specific Plan indicates that uncolored concrete in a 24-inch square, stacked bond pattern should be used along the site streets to provide a traditional appearance that differs from Main Street and staff recommends that this project follow the Specific Plan standard and the established pattern used on other side streets. The applicant has agreed to make this change and a condition of approval addresses this item.

Overall, staff believes that the proposed site plan, positioning of the relocated buildings and building addition, height, and FAR are appropriate for the subject property.

Building Design

Staff believes that the proposed building addition is attractive and well done. Staff also believes that the building addition has an appropriate scale and mass for Downtown Pleasanton. The proposed bay window and gabled pediment adds interest and helps to draw one's eye along the side elevation. The addition's colors and materials will match the existing Kolln Hardware building's Queen Anne Victorian (with Italianate influences) architecture and would be compatible with other buildings in the Downtown. The simple parapeted commercial façades of the one-story buildings, once restored, will be compatible with other buildings in the Downtown. Since not all of the building details have been provided (e.g., retractable awnings, recessed entries on the addition, roof color, one-story building colors, etc.), staff has added conditions of approval requiring that these details be submitted for review and approval by the Planning Director prior to issuance of a building permit for the project. The Planning Director would ensure that the design and materials are compatible with the building architecture and Downtown.

Traffic

The City's Baseline 2003 Traffic Report indicates that existing traffic flow conditions at the Main Street/Rose Avenue/Neal Street intersection, the closest monitored intersection, are Level of Service (LOS--a description of intersection delay) "B" in the A.M. peak hour and LOS "A" in the P.M. peak hour. Approval of this project would not significantly change the intersection conditions in the short term.

At buildout of the General Plan, future traffic levels at the Main Street/Rose Avenue/Neal Street intersection will remain LOS “B” in the A.M. peak hour and LOS “A” in the PM peak hour. The proposed project would add only a small incremental contribution to the buildout traffic levels.

Other intersections on Main Street currently exceed LOS “D” or will exceed LOS “D” at buildout of the General Plan (e.g., Main Street/St. Mary Street and Main Street/St. John Street/Ray Street). The Pleasanton General Plan generally requires that intersections meet LOS “D” or better to meet traffic circulation and safety needs. Exceptions are made for the Downtown area where the standards may be exceeded since the streets were built prior to modern road standards and lack the necessary right-of-way for major roadway improvements. Furthermore, the types of traffic improvements required (e.g., removal of all on-street parking and adding a second travel lane in each direction, reduction of sidewalk width, etc.) would be inconsistent with the desired pedestrian character for Downtown and with the goal of maintaining Main Street as a traditional shopping street. Therefore, consistent with General Plan policy, no traffic mitigations are required for the subject project.

Parking

The site currently contains a four-space parking lot. The existing buildings total approximately 8,432 square feet in area. The applicant is proposing to demolish the shed and corridor additions, totaling 844 square feet, and construct a 3,896-square-foot addition, resulting in a total floor area of 11,484 square feet on the site, which is a net increase of approximately 3,052 square feet.

The Municipal Code requires that the applicant provide parking for the new building area in addition to the four existing parking spaces that are being removed. Although the proposed project creates a new public on-street parking space, the applicant does not receive credit for this space. However, the subject project would receive a parking credit for the 844 square feet of floor area of the demolished corridor and shed additions if one of the following is met: a) the Planning Commission determines that the replacement structure would have the same architectural style as the original structure in terms of design, materials, massing, and detailing, or b) the Planning Commission determines that the replacement structure will be an architectural improvement compared to the existing structure and will preserve or enhance the overall character of the area. Staff believes that the proposed Kolln Hardware addition meets the criteria in “b” above, and recommends that the applicant receive a parking credit for the demolished area.

Therefore, based on the Municipal Code parking requirement of one space per 300 square feet, 10 parking spaces are required for the 3,052 square feet of expanded building area (if credit is given for the demolished floor area as discussed above) and four existing spaces are being removed, resulting in a parking requirement of 14 spaces for the project. The applicant is

requesting a parking variance to reduce the number of parking spaces by four since the retention and relocation of the historic one-story buildings requires that the existing four-space parking lot be removed. Staff believes that the parking variance is supportable due to the physical limitations placed on the site by the three existing historic buildings, which creates a hardship for the applicant. If the variance were granted, the project would be required to provide 10 parking spaces. As allowed by the Municipal Code, the applicant is requesting an in-lieu parking agreement for the deficient parking spaces. The applicant would be required to pay in-lieu parking fees totaling \$140,000 (\$14,000 per space). The in-lieu parking fees would be used to construct public parking lots in the Downtown.

The Downtown Specific Plan has an objective of creating 400 new parking spaces in the Downtown by build-out, consisting of both public and private parking. The cornerstone of the City's public parking lot strategy is the acquisition and improvement of the Alameda County Transportation Corridor (ACTC), which is owned by Alameda County. Staff is presently negotiating with the County to purchase the ACTC Downtown, which would be used to construct public parking. This parking project is one of the City's "highest" priorities as determined by the City Council.

Staff notes that the four angled parking spaces that would be removed are unsafe and non-conforming with respect to back-up/circulation, as they require users to back up out of the parking lot, across the sidewalk, and onto Division Street. Removing the on-site parking spaces would improve vehicular safety on the property and along Division Street.

Landscaping/Fencing

Being a Downtown project site where maximum building coverage is encouraged, only minimal landscaping would be included with the project. Staff believes that the proposed planter areas in front of the one-story buildings are acceptable and would be an attractive accent to the buildings. Since the design of the planter pots has not been provided, a condition requires that they be submitted for final review and approval by the Planning Director.

A City street tree is located along the Main Street frontage. This tree would be retained with the proposed development. The applicant would install one or more street trees along the Division Street frontage, as space allows. A condition requires that cast iron tree grates, matching the existing tree grates on Main Street, be installed around the new street tree(s).

The plans show that an approximately 4-foot tall, wood fence would be installed along side and rear property lines adjacent to the one-story buildings. The existing chain link fence between the subject site and 215 Division Street would be removed. The applicant recently indicated that he would like to install a decorative wrought iron or wood picket fence on the side property line between the subject site and 215 Division Street. Staff believes either option is acceptable and has included a condition to address this item. The condition also requires the applicant to obtain

written permission from the adjacent property owner prior to removing and replacing the property line fence.

Signage

As indicated earlier, the applicant has provided conceptual sign locations for wall-mounted signs on the front of the one-story buildings. In general, the proposed sign locations comply with the Downtown Design Guidelines. No signage information has been provided for the existing Kolln Hardware building or addition. A condition has been included that requires the applicant to submit a comprehensive sign program for the entire site prior to installation of any signs.

V. FINDINGS

The Planning Commission needs to make the following findings prior to the granting of a variance:

California State Mandated Findings

A variance is reviewed in light of the three specific findings required by California state law. The variance is granted based on the specific facts and site conditions which support the findings. The applicant must demonstrate that:

- 1. Because of special circumstances applicable to the property, including size, shape, topography, location or surroundings, the strict application of the provisions of this chapter deprives the property of privileges enjoyed by other properties in the vicinity and under identical zoning classification.**

At approximately 50 feet in width, 150 feet in depth, and 7,500 square feet in area, the subject lot is comparable in size and shape with other lots in the Downtown under the same zoning district. However, the subject property is unique in that it contains three historic structures that are over 100 years old. Due to City regulations that generally prohibit the demolition of historic buildings, the applicant is unable to preserve the existing historic buildings and add building area to the property without removing the existing four-space parking lot. Staff believes this constitutes a special circumstance unique to the property. Therefore, staff feels that the first finding can be made.

- 2. Granting the variance will not constitute a grant of special privilege inconsistent with the limitation on other properties classified in the same zoning district.**

In order for this finding to be made, there must be a relationship between the unique site and the variance in question. As stated above, staff believes that the applicant's site is unique due to the three existing, over 100-year-old historic buildings, which prevent the

applicant from adding building area without removing the existing four-space parking lot. Additionally, staff does not feel that granting of the variance would be precedent setting as there are probably few other lots Downtown that have similar characteristics to the subject lot. Therefore, there is direct relationship between the uniqueness of the property and the variance in question and that by granting the subject parking variance, staff does not feel that the Planning Commission will be granting a special privilege to the applicant that is inconsistent with other properties in the same zoning district.

3. Granting the variance will not be detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare, or materially injurious to properties or improvements in the vicinity.

Granting the applicant a four-space parking variance would reduce the number of in-lieu parking spaces for this project from 14 to 10. This reduction would not have a significant impact on Downtown parking such that it would be detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare or be materially injurious to properties in the vicinity. The proposed project would create a new public parking space on Division Street without receiving credit for this new space. Furthermore, the existing on-site angled parking is unsafe and non-conforming with respect to back-up/circulation, as it requires users to back up out of the parking lot, across the sidewalk, and onto Division Street. The existing off-street parking spaces would be removed with the proposed project, thereby improving vehicular and pedestrian safety on the property and along Division Street. Therefore, staff feels that the granting of the variance would not be detrimental to the public health, safety, or general welfare or materially injurious to properties in the area, and staff is able to make the third finding for the parking variance.

City Mandated Findings

In addition to the California state mandated findings, Section 18.132.110 (Findings – Parking and Loading) of the Pleasanton Municipal Code requires that three additional findings must be made in order to grant a variance for parking or loading facilities. The applicant must demonstrate that:

1. That neither present nor anticipated future traffic volumes generated by the use of the site or the uses of sites in the vicinity reasonably require strict or literal interpretation and enforcement of the specified regulation.

The Downtown is unique compared to other commercial areas in the City in that many properties lack private parking lots and on-street public parking is largely used to satisfy parking demand. Granting the parking variance would result in the project's use of four additional public parking spaces Downtown. Users of these four spaces will add traffic to Downtown streets looking for available spaces, but this traffic increase would be

insignificant. Furthermore, this project would contribute in-lieu parking fees to construct future Downtown parking spaces and the City has also budgeted monies to construct parking Downtown. Once constructed, these parking lots will ease users' ability to find parking Downtown and, in turn, slightly reduce traffic created by users' searching for available parking. Therefore, staff believes that the present and anticipated future traffic volumes of the site and uses of the sites in the vicinity do not reasonably require the strict or literal interpretation and enforcement of the parking requirements for this project, and staff feels that the first finding can be made.

2. That the granting of the variance will not result in parking or loading of vehicles on public streets in such a manner as to interfere with the free flow of traffic on the streets.

Granting the parking variance would result in the project's use of four additional public parking spaces Downtown. Staff believes that the project's use of these spaces would not be unusual for the Downtown, would not create adverse parking impacts, nor interfere with the free flow of traffic on the streets. Furthermore, the proposed project would create one new on-street public parking space and the City is planning to construct a public parking lot in the ACTC that would help accommodate parking demand generated by existing businesses Downtown, the subject project, and future development. Furthermore, the applicant's proposed removal of the existing parking lot and driveway would improve the flow of traffic on Division Street. Therefore, staff feels that the second finding can be made.

3. The granting of the variance will not create a safety hazard or any other condition inconsistent with the objectives of this chapter.

Approval of the parking variance would result in the project's use of four public parking spaces Downtown. The Downtown public parking spaces are properly designed and arranged to provide safe ingress and egress. Furthermore, the existing angled parking spaces on the subject property are unsafe, as they require users to back up out of the parking lot, across the sidewalk, and onto Division Street. The parking lot would be removed with the proposed project, thereby improving vehicular and pedestrian safety on the property and along Division Street. Therefore, staff believes that the granting of the variance will not create a safety hazard or any other condition inconsistent with the objectives of this chapter, and staff is able to make the third finding.

VI. PLEASANTON DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION

The application was referred to the Pleasanton Downtown Association (PDA). The PDA's Board of Directors passed a motion supporting the proposed project, including the parking variance (please see attached letter).

VII. PUBLIC NOTICE

Notices regarding the proposed applications and related public hearing were mailed to property owners and tenants within 1,000 feet of the subject property. At the writing of this report, staff had received a phone call from Robin Barnes, owner of the Jeweler's Gallery at 614 Main Street, indicating that he doesn't object to the proposed building modifications, but opposes the four space parking variance. Staff also received an email from Susan Morris, owner of Calipso's Salon at 616 Main Street, who is concerned about the Downtown parking supply and opposes the four space parking variance. An email was also sent by Larry McColm, owner of 350 Main Street, indicating his support of the project.

VIII. CONCLUSION

In staff's opinion, the site and building modifications have been carried out with sensitivity to this important historic Downtown site. The applicant should be commended for deciding to retain and restore the two historic buildings rather than demolishing them. The proposed building addition is attractive, compatible with the Kolln Hardware building and one-story buildings, and meets all applicable requirements of the Pleasanton Municipal Code, Downtown Specific Plan, and Downtown Design Guidelines, as conditioned. The new storefronts along Division Street will add interest to the Division Street streetscape and encourage pedestrian activity from Main Street. Staff looks forward to seeing the buildings refurbished and in operation once again.

IX. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

A draft Negative Declaration has been prepared for the proposed project. Based on the Initial Study and Negative Declaration, the project would not have a significant effect on the environment. The proposed project plans have been revised to avoid significant effects or mitigated by design to a point where the effects are insignificant and there is no substantial evidence that the project may have a significant effect on the environment. Staff, therefore, believes that the Negative Declaration can be issued in conformance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). If the Planning Commission concurs with this environmental assessment, it must make the finding that the Negative Declaration is appropriate prior to approving the project.

The project site is an in-fill site that has been previously developed with commercial buildings and a paved parking lot. Staff feels that due to the previous development and existing conditions of the project site, the proposed development will have no potential for adverse impact on the site's wildlife and recommends that the Planning Commission make a finding of De Minimis impact for purposes of the Department of Fish and Game fee structure.

X. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission take the following actions:

1. Find that the proposed project would not have a significant impact on the environment with a finding of “de minimus impact” on the site’s wildlife and authorize staff to file a Notice of Determination for the project;
2. Adopt a resolution approving the attached draft Negative Declaration for the project;
3. Make the Variance Findings as listed in the staff report; and
4. Approve Cases PDR-458 and PV-152, subject to the conditions listed in Exhibit “B”.

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