

Planning Commission Staff Report

February 8, 2017
Item 6.a.

SUBJECT: P16-1771

**APPLICANT/
PROPERTY OWNER:** Larry McColm, McColm Commercial Real Estate

PURPOSE: Application for Design Review approval to remodel an existing, partially demolished commercial building and construct related site improvements.

LOCATION: 30 West Angela Street

GENERAL PLAN: Retail, Highway, and Service Commercial; Business and Professional Offices

SPECIFIC PLAN: Downtown Commercial, Downtown Specific Plan

ZONING: Central Commercial (C-C), Downtown Revitalization, Core Area Overlay District

EXHIBITS:

- A. [Draft Conditions of Approval for P16-1771](#)
- B. [Plans dated "Received January 13, 2017"](#)
- C. [Location and Notification Map](#)

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve Case P16-1771 subject to the conditions listed in "Exhibit A."

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The applicant is proposing to remodel an existing, partially demolished commercial building, formerly used as a restaurant, for use as a new restaurant. Staff believes the proposed design is consistent with the Downtown Specific Plan, Downtown Design Guidelines and other requirements applicable to remodeling the existing building, and recommends approval of this Design Review application.

BACKGROUND

The subject building was constructed in 1968 and originally functioned as an Alameda County Justice Court. Over the years, the building has been occupied by a variety of uses including City Council Chambers in the 1970's and most recently a restaurant. On August 11, 2015, the City Code Enforcement Division received a complaint regarding property maintenance and demolition within the subject building. Upon review, it was determined that the applicant had not

submitted an application for or obtained any building permits, and the property owner was contacted by the Senior Code Enforcement Officer. On August 25, 2015, a building permit was issued to allow interior non-structural demolition and reroof of the existing building. However, non-structural exterior walls not included within the permit scope of work were also removed.

On January 22, 2016, the property owner submitted a preliminary application to construct a three-story, mixed use building with a restaurant on the first floor, offices on the second floor, and apartment units on the third floor. Staff was generally supportive of the mixed-use concept, however, given other Downtown Specific Plan goals, policies, and programs, and the Downtown Design Guidelines, staff was not supportive of the design of the proposed building, which did not reflect the architectural character of the Downtown as a whole. The property owner has diligently worked with staff to bring forth a proposal that is consistent with the Downtown Design Guidelines and that would revitalize the property.

SITE AND AREA DESCRIPTION

Project Site

The project site is an approximately 15,389 square-foot parcel located on the south side of West Angela Street, between Main Street and First Street. The former railroad right-of-way, now used for public parking, abuts the southeast side of the parcel. A vacant, single-story, 3,120 square-foot commercial building occupies the northeast corner of the property. The building is partially demolished (see Figure 1 below); a majority of the western wall facing the parking lot has been removed, the interior has been gutted, and portions of the roof have been removed. The existing building has a tan colored slump-block wall facing the street and a low gable roof with exposed rafters. The roof material has been removed and a rectangular opening in the roof remains where mechanical equipment was once located. A driveway on West Angela Street accesses the 26 on-site parking spaces. Landscaped planters are located around the parking lot along the perimeter of the site. A Crape Myrtle tree and shrubs occupy a planter between the driveway and building adjacent to the sidewalk. A small wooden trellis structure is located next to the sidewalk in the planter on the west side of the driveway. Mature Monterey Pine trees are located in the adjacent planter to the east. Landscape planters located adjacent to the building are now largely devoid of vegetation.

Figure 1: Existing Building



Figure 2: Existing Parking Lot



Adjacent Properties

Properties adjacent to this site include a parking lot shared by Heritage Bank (300 Main Street) and a commercial building at 310 Main Street, beyond which is a two-story multi-tenant commercial building to the west (350 Main Street); a two-story multi-tenant commercial building across the street to the north (55 West Angela Street); and a City-owned parking lot on the former railroad right-of-way to the east; and to the west,. Figure 3 is an aerial photo showing the project site and surroundings.

Figure 3: Project Site and Vicinity



PROPOSED PROJECT AND ANALYSIS

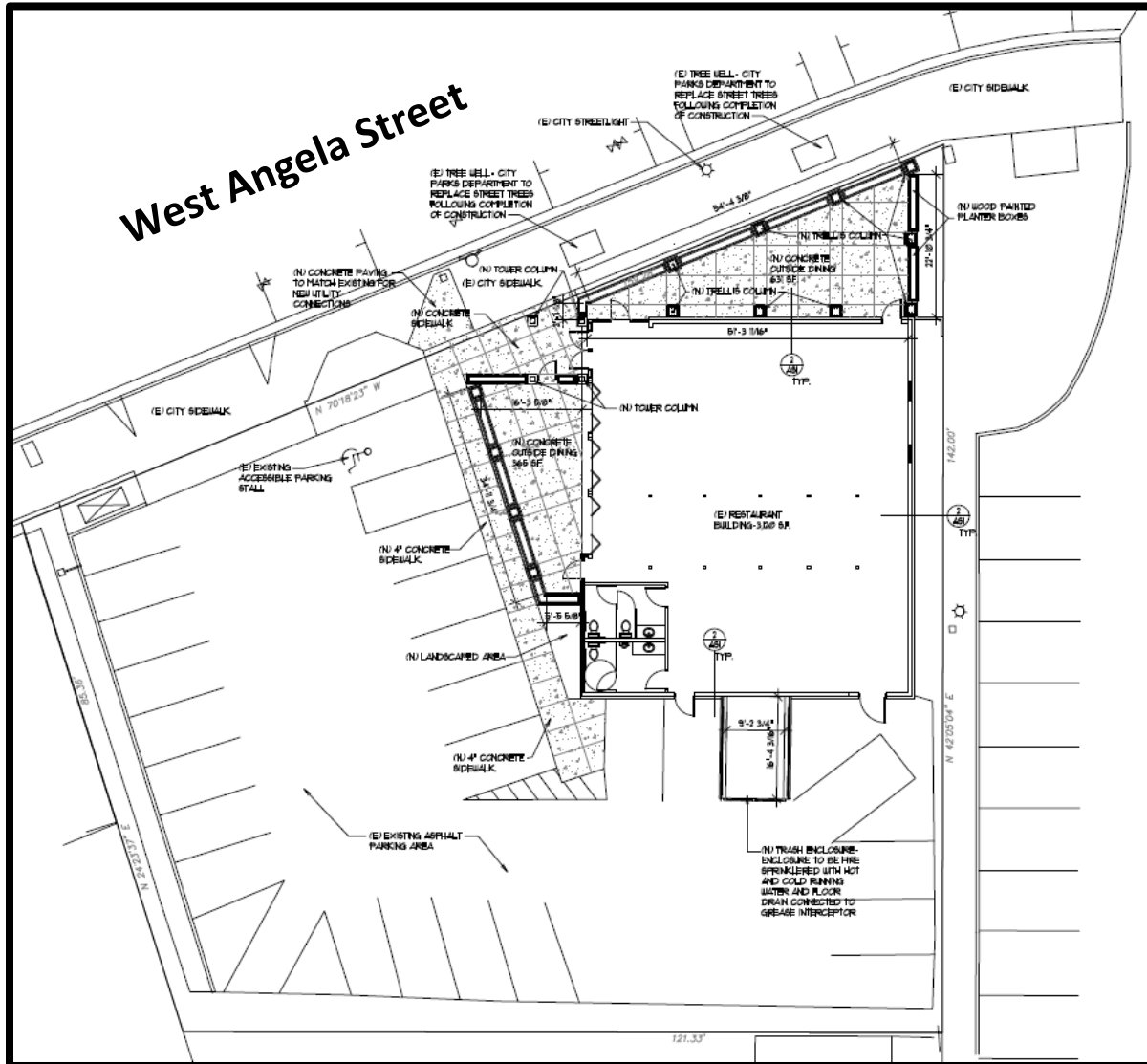
Project Summary

The applicant has requested approval to remodel the existing 3,120 square-foot building for future use as a restaurant. While the owner has a restaurant tenant in mind, no lease has been signed. The building floor area would not increase with the remodeling project, but two new outdoor dining areas totaling approximately 996 square feet would be created adjacent to the building along the street frontage and adjacent to the parking lot. The patio areas would be covered by a decorative wood trellis. Planter boxes would be stationed between the columns supporting the overhead trellis to define the perimeter of the outdoor eating areas. A new brick-clad tower would be constructed at the front corner of the building to add architectural interest and define the front entry.

In addition to the planter boxes, new landscaping would be added to a small in-ground planter at the southwest corner of the building. Other on-site landscaping would remain and no trees would be removed. After construction of the project, the two vacant tree wells in the sidewalk adjacent to the building would be replanted with new street trees by the City Parks Department. To comply with current health department requirements, a new trash enclosure would be constructed in the existing parking lot on the southwest side of the building. Although the plans indicate that one existing parking space would be eliminated to accommodate the trash enclosure, staff believes that the parking space to the left of the new enclosure will also need to be removed due to access and circulation concerns. A condition of approval has been included

to allow for the applicant to work with staff to explore alternative locations for the trash enclosure in order to minimize the removal of parking spaces. If both parking spaces are removed, the site would still have 24 parking spaces, which exceeds the parking requirement for the restaurant use (1 space per 300 square feet = 10 spaces required). No other on- or off-site improvements are planned. Figure 4 shows the proposed site plan and first floor plan. Note that the floor plan only shows the restroom location within the building. A specific floor plan for the restaurant tenant improvements would be designed once the building is leased to a specific tenant.

Figure 4: Site Plan and First Floor Plan



While the existing building is a nondescript mid-century structure, the applicant has sought to give the building a more traditional appearance with the remodel. The design and materials were selected for compatibility with the Downtown Design Guidelines which state: “It is encouraged that existing non-historic buildings be remodeled to traditional design styles.”(General Criteria/Design, p.13). Building materials include: brick wainscot with a precast concrete cap, which will be replicated around the bases of the wood columns supporting the

outdoor dining trellis and on the entry tower; smooth lap siding for the building walls with wood trim around windows and doors; and a standing seam metal roof. Along the west elevation of the building facing the patio area, new metal-clad bi-folding doors would be installed to allow the restaurant to open to the street during favorable weather conditions. New rooftop mechanical equipment required for the restaurant would be screened by a matching screen wall on the east side of the roof. Figures 5 and 6 show the proposed building elevations as seen from West Angela Street and the parking lot. Please refer to Exhibit B for a complete set of project plans.

Figure 5: West Elevation (facing parking lot)

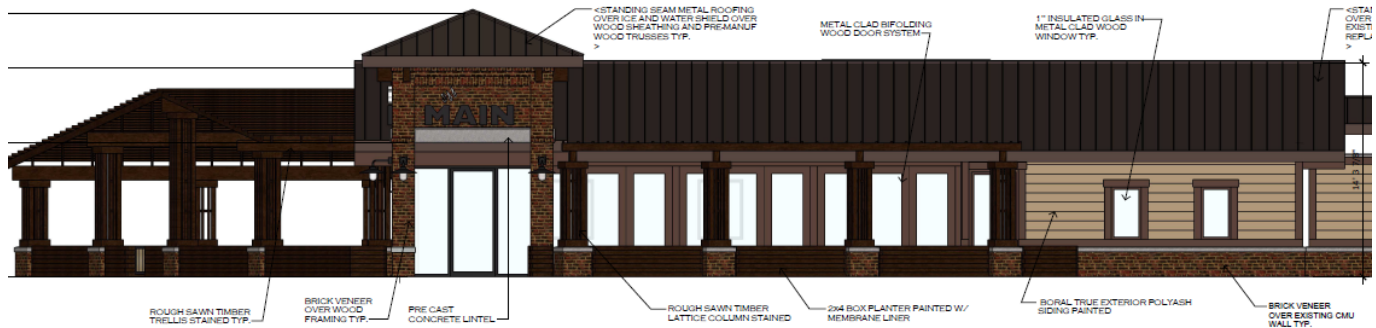


Figure 6: North Elevation (facing West Angela Street)



General and Downtown Specific Plan Land Use Conformity

The General Plan Land Use Element designates the project site for "Retail/Highway/Service Commercial; Business and Professional Offices" land uses, which allows commercial and office uses. The proposed project, which would renovate the existing building for occupancy by a future restaurant tenant, is consistent with this land use designation. In addition, the project would result in the renovation of a commercial building 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."

Because the project would not add any new floor area, the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of the property would remain the same, 20%, which is substantially less than the General Plan's 300% 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 and upper floor office uses. The proposed project is consistent with this land use designation.

Development Plan Conformity with Downtown Regulations

New construction in the Downtown is required to be sensitive to the neighborhood's historic character, and to accomplish this goal, must conform to the design policies contained in the Downtown Specific Plan and Downtown Design Guidelines. The proposed project conforms to the applicable Downtown policies and regulations as follows:

Building Design

Key Specific Plan Policies and Design Guidelines applicable to building design include:

- It is encouraged that existing non-historic buildings be remodeled to traditional design styles.
- The design of all buildings and storefronts shall be unique, not corporate, chain or franchise.
- A variety of traditional architectural styles and shapes is encouraged.
- Buildings and storefront entrances are to be at the sidewalk level.
- Use piers or columns to separate windows between and within storefronts. Provide an accent decoration or capital atop the columns.
- Fully openable display windows are encouraged where appropriate.
- Appropriate storefront base materials are smooth or dimensioned stone, brick, marble, granite, and ceramic tile.

The existing one-story mid-century building would be substantially remodeled with traditional materials to complement existing buildings in the Downtown. The existing building is setback from the sidewalk and is oriented toward the parking lot. The proposed project would visually connect the building to the sidewalk by constructing a tower up to the sidewalk and by adding a trellis-covered outdoor dining area. An additional outdoor seating area and folding glass door system adjacent to the north elevation would also help to make the building more open to the street. The trellis would be supported by rough-sawn timber lattice columns that would create a rhythm along the sidewalk similar to an open storefront. The building would add to the architectural variety of the Downtown by utilizing a variety of traditional façade materials including a brick wainscot, smooth painted wood siding, and rough-sawn timber columns.

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

Storefronts and Windows

Key applicable Design Guidelines include:

- 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.
- Storefront bases should be no more than 24 inches high from the sidewalk.
- Vertical, rectangular windows are preferred. Recess windows in from the building wall. Use window trim to highlight windows. Use projecting sills.

The proposed building would be consistent with these guidelines. Large vertical windows in the folding door system are a primary element of the north elevation. The decorative brick storefront base is no more than 24 inches high from the sidewalk.

Existing Facades, Landscaping and Outdoor Areas

Key applicable Design Guidelines include:

- Lighting: Decorative fixtures are suggested for use on entry sides or from above, lighting entrances or wall signs.
- Facades with Setbacks: Trellises, patios, and potted plants can create a sidewalk presence and pull the storefront forward in cases where it is set back from the sidewalk.
- Landscape elements such as trellises, vines over blank walls or arcade posts, potted plants, and window boxes are encouraged.
- Outdoor dining areas should be open and visible. If barriers are required to separate the dining area from pedestrian passageways, flower boxes or potted plants are preferred. Plants are to be less than 4 feet high.
- Locate trash and delivery areas to the rear of the building. Trash areas are to be screened from view with fencing and landscaping. Separate service and delivery areas from public entrance areas.

The proposed building would be consistent with these guidelines. The design includes decorative projecting light fixtures at the building entrance as well as wall-mounted fixtures on the sides of the building to accent the entrance and building. Decorative trellises over new outdoor seating areas totaling almost 1,000 square feet are designed to encourage outdoor dining and sitting and would connect the building to the sidewalk and parking areas. Planter boxes with low shrubs would separate dining areas from the sidewalk and pedestrian passageways. A new roofed trash enclosure would be constructed at the rear of the building adjacent to the parking lot and service access door.

Site Plan and Landscaping

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

Site Development Standards:	Requirements:	Plan Proposal:
Floor Area Ratio	300% Max	20%
Building Height	40 ft. max	18 feet
Setbacks		
West (Front)	None Required	77 feet
South	None Required	54 feet
North (Street Side)	None Required	0 feet
East (Rear)	None Required	5 feet
Parking	1:300 sq.ft. (10 required)	24 or 25 spaces (see project summary section for details)

With respect to building placement, staff believes that the new building design will improve the pedestrian interest of Downtown by creating a more attractive streetscape along West Angela

Street through the addition of the entry tower, outdoor dining area and decorative trellis and planter boxes.

The addition of the covered trash enclosure at the rear of the building, which will match the building design, will contain and screen trash dumpsters at a location away from patrons and adjacent buildings. No other changes are anticipated to the existing parking lot or landscaping.

Overall, staff believes that the proposed site plan is appropriate for the subject property.

Building Design

Staff believes that the proposed building is attractive and well designed. Staff also believes that the building has an appropriate scale and mass for Downtown Pleasanton. The proposed entry tower adds interest and creates visual focus around the building entrance, while the decorative trellis and columns visually connect the building to the sidewalk. The traditional earth tones and building materials will be compatible with other buildings in the Downtown.

Signage

The building elevations show conceptual locations for building signs on the new entry tower. A separate sign design review application will be required when actual building signage is proposed by the future restaurant tenant.

ALTERNATIVES

The applicant seeks to revitalize the property by enhancing the existing building design and adding outdoor dining. Staff believes that the architecture and site design with outdoor dining is consistent with the Downtown Specific Plan and Downtown Design Guidelines. There are also other businesses within the Downtown area with similar outdoor dining areas. However, other alternatives could include:

1. The Planning Commission could deny the Design Review application, and the property owner could return the building and site to the originally approved condition; or
2. The applicant could apply for a separate application to intensify the use similar to the originally proposed three-story, mixed use building.

Alternative 1 would limit the applicant's ability to lease the building to future restaurant tenants who are looking for renovated locations with outdoor dining, and the lack of an outdoor dining area would not activate this stretch of West Angela Street to the extent of the project. Alternative 2 may be desirable, but would require careful design to ensure appropriate architecture while accommodating associated parking demand and vehicle egress/ingress. The proposed design conforms to the requirements and intent of the Downtown Specific Plan, Downtown Design Guidelines and underlying zoning district and is compatible with the surrounding uses and area. Therefore, staff believes the proposed use is appropriate for the site.

PROS/CONS

PROS	CONS
Project would increase vitality in the Downtown area and revitalize a vacant building	Because the project involves outdoor dining, it has slightly greater potential to generate nuisance complaints compared to another restaurant/retailers.
Project would increase tax revenue for the City	
Project is consistent with existing zoning regulations and Downtown Specific Plan and Downtown Design Guidelines, and the architecture is appropriate for the historic Downtown	

PLEASANTON DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION

The application and initial project design was referred to the Pleasanton Downtown Association (PDA) in October 2016. The PDA's Design and Historical Review Committee passed a motion supporting the proposed project.

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 noticing map as Exhibit C for reference. The public notice was also published in *The Valley Times*. At the time this report was prepared, staff has not received any comments or concerns.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

This project is categorically exempt from environmental review pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines, Section 15301, Existing Facilities, Class 1. Therefore, no environmental document accompanies this report.

CONCLUSION

The subject proposal would renovate an existing building and create pedestrian interest. The proposed building is intended to be leased by a future restaurant to better serve surrounding residents and businesses within the Downtown. The site and building have been designed with sensitivity to the historic Downtown. The proposed building is attractive, compatible with the surrounding development and buildings, and meets all applicable requirements of the Pleasanton Municipal Code, Downtown Specific Plan, and Downtown Design Guidelines, as conditioned. The new design will enhance the streetscape and encourage pedestrian activity and better connect the building to West Angela Street and nearby Main Street.

Primary Authors:

Steve Ross, Contract Planner
Jennifer Hagen, Associated Planner, 925-931-5607 or jhagen@cityofpleasantonca.gov

Reviewed/Approved By:

Steve Otto, Senior Planner
Adam Weinstein, Planning Manager
Gerry Beaudin, Community Development Director