

## Planning Commission Staff Report

December 9, 2015  
Item 6. a.

- SUBJECT:** PUD-109
- APPLICANT/  
PROPERTY OWNER:** H. James Knuppe
- PURPOSE:** Applications at 273 Spring Street for: (1) a certificate of appropriateness to demolish the existing 910-square-foot single-story commercial building; and (2) a Planned Unit Development (PUD) Rezoning and Development Plan to rezone the site from the C-C (Central Commercial), Downtown Revitalization, Core Area Overlay District to PUD-C-C (Planned Unit Development-Central Commercial), Downtown Revitalization, Core Area Overlay District, and to construct an approximately 4,074-square-foot, two-story commercial/office building with an attached approximately 1,225-square-foot second-floor apartment unit, and four, approximately 2,015-square-foot, three-story multi-family residential units
- LOCATION:** 273 Spring Street
- GENERAL PLAN:** Retail, Highway, and Service Commercial; Business and Professional Offices
- SPECIFIC PLAN:** Downtown Specific Plan – Downtown Commercial
- ZONING:** Central Commercial (C-C), Downtown Revitalization, Core Area Overlay District
- EXHIBITS:**
- A. [Draft Conditions of Approval](#)
  - B. [Project plans, color and materials palette dated "Received November 3, 2015"](#)
  - C. [Preliminary Comment Letters dated June 4, 2014 and August 1, 2014](#)
  - D. [Planning Commission Work Session plans \(selected sheets\)](#)
  - E. [Arborist report prepared by HortScience dated "Received November 3, 2015"](#)
  - F. [GreenPoint Rated new multi-family checklist](#)
  - G. [Letter from Pleasanton Downtown Association dated November 18, 2015](#)
  - H. [Location and Noticing Maps](#)

## **BACKGROUND**

On May 5, 2014, the applicant submitted a Preliminary Review application to solicit staff comments on a proposal to construct a two-story commercial building and five detached townhomes on the subject parcel. This initial submittal included a smaller commercial building than currently proposed (approximately 1,200 square feet) and four detached homes along the eastern property line with one detached home along the northern property line, facing south toward Spring Street. After reviewing the application, staff provided the applicant with two letters discussing concerns related to land use compatibility, aesthetics, architectural styling and consistency with the Downtown Specific Plan. Specifically, staff was concerned that the relatively small size of the commercial/office building would be contrary to the intent of the Downtown Specific Plan, which requires “pedestrian-oriented commercial” uses in this district. Additionally, staff believed the proposed townhomes were out of character in terms of height and scale with the surrounding area. Please see staff’s preliminary comment letters in Exhibit C for additional information.

Over the next several months, staff and the applicant met several times to discuss alternative design concepts for the subject parcel that addressed staff’s concerns from the preliminary review process. After these meetings, on April 6, 2015, the applicant submitted a Planned Unit Development Rezoning and Development Plan application to construct an approximately 2,204-square-foot, two-story commercial/office building and five approximately 2,104-square-foot, three-story attached townhouses. Staff made additional design suggestions to the applicant over the next two months, and the applicant submitted revised plans on July 2, 2015.

A Planning Commission work session was held for the project on August 26, 2015. The Commission provided staff and the applicant with direction on the project design as detailed in the Work Session section below. In response to that direction, the applicant revised the project plans to include an approximately 4,074-square-foot, two-story commercial/office building with an attached, approximately 1,225-square-foot second-floor apartment unit, and four, approximately 2,015-square-foot, three-story multi-family residential units. The primary changes included: (1) reducing the size of one residential unit; (2) a reduction in parking, but parking was allocated to the commercial/office building; and (3) a larger commercial space and second office space was created. The current proposal is now before the Planning Commission for review and recommendation to the City Council, which will review and take final action on the applications.

## **WORK SESSION**

The Commission was asked 12 questions regarding the proposed project at the August 26, 2015, Planning Commission Work Session. A summary of that discussion broken down into primary discussion topics is below. The applicant’s responses to the Planning Commission’s comments are discussed in the appropriate analysis sections of this report. Additionally, staff has attached several sheets from the Work Session plans (site plan, elevations, and landscape plan) as Exhibit D for comparison purposes with the current proposal.

### Commercial Versus Residential Uses

Generally speaking, the Commission was not opposed to the residential units on the site; however, the Commission expressed concerns that the commercial space was not large enough to support a viable retail use and was also concerned with the building massing and its effect on the surrounding properties, and recommended setting the commercial building back from Spring Street. The majority of Commissioners believed that some level of residential development was appropriate for the site, but not at the expense of the size of the commercial space or providing adequate on-site parking for all proposed uses.

### Building Design

The majority of the Commissioners expressed support for developing the site with a project that would introduce interest and vitality to the area. However, concerns were expressed about massing and the three-story concept. The Commission was split on whether the project as a whole was too large for the site, especially with a three-story component, while some Commissioners also recognized the majority of the ground floor was garage and not living area and felt the project was in keeping with the Specific Plan. Some Commissioners also expressed concerns as to whether the project would be visible from Main Street. The Commission was also split on the white building color, with some supportive of it, while others were not. All of the Commissioners supported setting the building back farther from Spring Street. Commissioner Allen also opined that the proposed architecture was out of character with the surrounding area.

### Parking

The Commission was not supportive of granting a parking credit for the existing building to be demolished or the in-lieu proposal and wanted adequate on-site parking provided for all proposed uses per the Pleasanton Municipal Code (PMC). The Commission agreed that adequate parking was not provided for the commercial use. The use of the residential driveways for parking was supported.

### Landscaping and Tree Removal

The Commission was supportive of the landscape, tree removal and replacement plan. The Commission also indicated support for the applicant to contribute to the City's Urban Forestry Fund to mitigate for the loss of nine Heritage Trees.

### Additional Information Requests

The Commission requested story poles be constructed on the site prior to the next meeting. The story poles will be installed by the applicant and available for viewing by December 4, 2015. The Commission also requested that formal written feedback from the Pleasanton Downtown Association be provided. That feedback is attached as Exhibit G.

## **SITE AND AREA DESCRIPTION**

The 0.39-acre subject parcel is generally rectangular in shape and gradually up-slopes from Spring Street in a northerly direction. Due to the grade differential with the surrounding parcels, there are existing retaining walls ranging in height from approximately one to five feet along the entire perimeter of the subject parcel. There is also an approximately six-foot-tall wood fence along the northern half of the eastern property line and the entire northern property line, as well

as an approximately six-foot-tall chain link fence along the northern half of the western property line. There is an approximately 910-square-foot single-story vacant building constructed at the far northern end of the subject parcel, as well as approximately 20 paved parking spaces throughout the remainder of the subject parcel. There are nine trees, all of which are Heritage Trees, of various species, sizes and health conditions. The subject parcel is accessible from a single driveway off Spring Street.

The properties adjacent to and within the immediate vicinity of the subject parcel on Spring Street and Main Street include several small commercial buildings occupied by a home inspection business to the east, meat/seafood market to the west, and a mix of small retail/restaurant and office uses, as well as single-family residences. Residential uses are located to the north. Figure 1a below shows an aerial view of the subject parcel, existing building and surrounding uses. Figure 1b below shows a pedestrian-level view of the subject parcel looking north from Spring Street. Figures 1c through 1d show various adjacent and/or nearby structures and uses along Spring Street.

**Figure 1a: Aerial Photograph**



## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant proposes to demolish and remove all existing site improvements, including the 910-square-foot single-story commercial building, all paved parking spaces, fences along the northern and western property lines, landscaping and trees. The site would be developed with an approximately 4,074-square-foot, two-story commercial/office building with an attached approximately 1,225-square-foot second-floor apartment unit, and four, approximately 2,015-square-foot, three-story multi-family residential rental units (Figure 2).



**Figure 1b: View North Into Subject Site**



**Figures 1c and 1d: Buildings to East and West of the Subject Site**

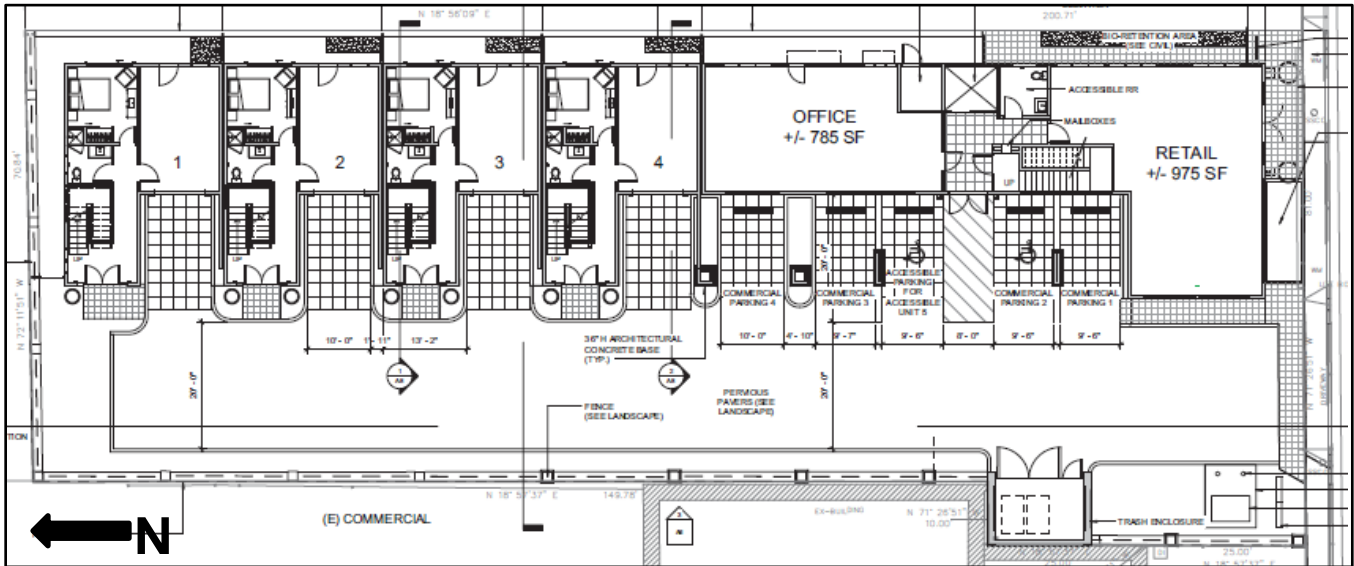


**Commercial/Office Building**

The proposed two-story commercial/office building would be designed for a maximum of three occupants including one retail space on the ground floor and fronting onto Spring Street, a ground floor office, and a second-floor office space. The ground floor would be approximately 2,274 square feet in area including an approximately 975-square-foot retail space, 785-square-foot office space, and a 514-square-foot lobby, restroom, and elevator common area. The second floor office space would be approximately 1,800 square feet in area and includes two decks/balconies facing west toward Main Street totaling approximately 102 square feet in area. Ground floor entrances to the building would be available from both Spring Street (retail space entrance) and on the parking lot side of the building (common area entrance). With the exception of a restroom on each floor, and elevator, and stairs, no other interior tenant improvements are proposed at this time. Four on-site parking spaces are proposed for the

commercial portion of the building; the applicant intends to pay an in-lieu fee for the remaining required on-site parking spaces (see the parking analysis section below for more details).

**Figure 2: Proposed Site Plan**



The proposed commercial/office building is designed to include some architectural features found in other existing buildings along Spring Street (Figures 3 and 3a). Most noticeably, along the parapet and roofline, architectural elements prominent in the Mission Revival architectural styling are proposed and include a mix of flat and gabled parapet lines, round tile gable vents, and smooth cement plaster wall finishes. More contemporary architectural elements are also proposed and include striped canvas awnings, a mix of rectangular and curved window shapes and mullion stylings, and modern light fixtures.

**Figure 3: Proposed Commercial/office Building Perspective Looking East Down Spring Street**





**Figure 3a: Proposed Commercial/office Building Perspective Looking West Down Spring Street**



### Residential Units

Each of the four proposed three-story multi-family residential units would be approximately 2,015 square feet in living area and include three bedrooms. The first floor of each unit would be approximately 415 square feet in area, the second floor would be approximately 762 square feet in area, and the third floor would be approximately 838 square feet in area. The first floor of each unit also includes an approximately 10-foot wide by 20-foot deep one-car garage, as well as a 10-foot-wide by 20-foot-deep driveway, which is intended to serve as a second tandem (in front of the one-car garage) parking space for each unit. Additionally, each unit would have two second-story decks/balconies and one third-story deck/balcony totaling approximately 120 square feet in area. Each unit would also have approximately 125 square feet of private outdoor space at the rear.

A fifth residential unit is proposed on the second-story level of the proposed commercial/office building, above the ground-floor retail and office space, that would be approximately 1,225 square feet in living area, and would be a one bedroom unit. This unit would be accessed using the common area elevator or stairs. A small deck/balcony is proposed for this unit facing west toward Main Street and is approximately 37 square feet in area. A standard-sized, ground-level parking space would be designated within the commercial/office building parking lot solely for this unit (shown as an accessible space to demonstrate only that adequate area is present should this be required in the future; the space could be used by vehicles without a disabled person placard or license plate).

It should be noted that all five of the residential units would be rental units and would be priced at market rates.

The proposed three-story, multi-family residential units are designed to replicate many of the same architectural features proposed for the commercial/office building, including both flat and gabled roof parapet lines, smooth cement plaster walls painted off-white, a significant amount of glazing, and metal deck/balcony railings (Figures 4 and 4a). However, the units also include wood and glass front and garage roll-up doors, and solid colored awnings.

**Figure 4: Perspective of Project Looking East**



**Figure 4a: Perspective of Project Looking Southeast**



The landscape plan (Figure 5) includes a tree/plant palette of native and non-native species that are primarily drought tolerant, as well as some hardscape features, including a pervious concrete paver driveway and patios.

An ornamental decorative wall with metal panels and stucco columns is proposed along the western property line (Figure 6), while a six-foot tall wood fence is proposed along the northern and eastern property lines.

A joint-use (commercial/office and residential units) trash enclosure is also proposed along the western property line, generally at the southwest corner of the subject site, set back approximately 33 feet from Spring Street. The enclosure would be designed in an architectural style similar to the proposed commercial/office building.

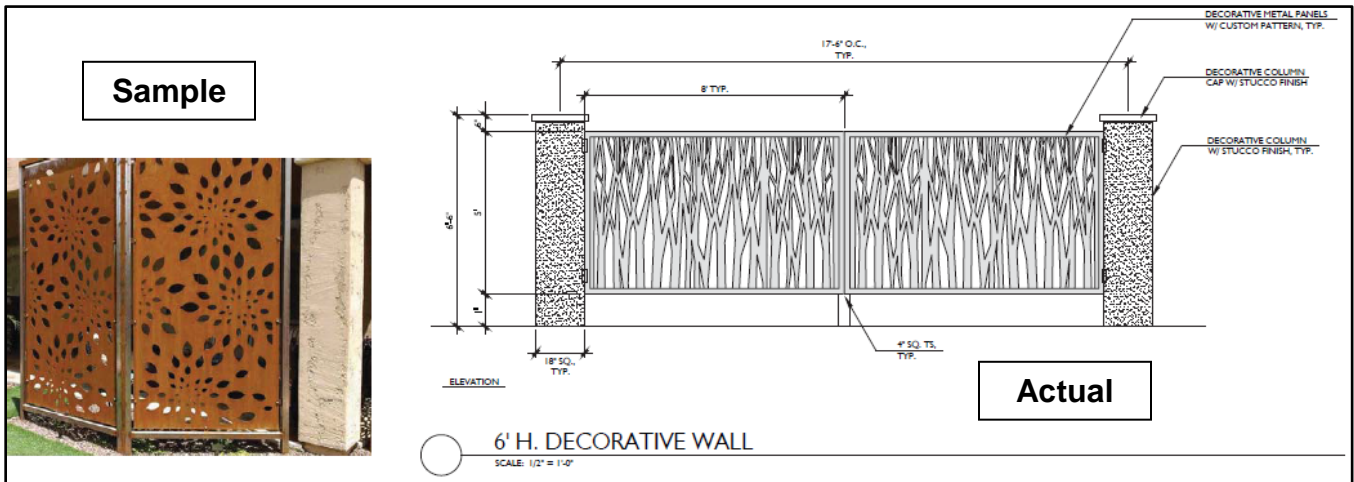
As proposed, a single 25-foot-wide standard commercial driveway off Spring Street that tapers down into a 20-foot wide driveway on-site would continue to serve as the sole vehicular access point for the proposed project. This driveway is approximately five feet wider than the existing driveway; however, it is located generally in the same area. As a result, one on-street parking space would need to be removed to accommodate the new driveway width.



**Figure 5: Proposed Landscape Plan**



**Figure 6: Proposed Ornamental Decorative Wall with Metal Panels**

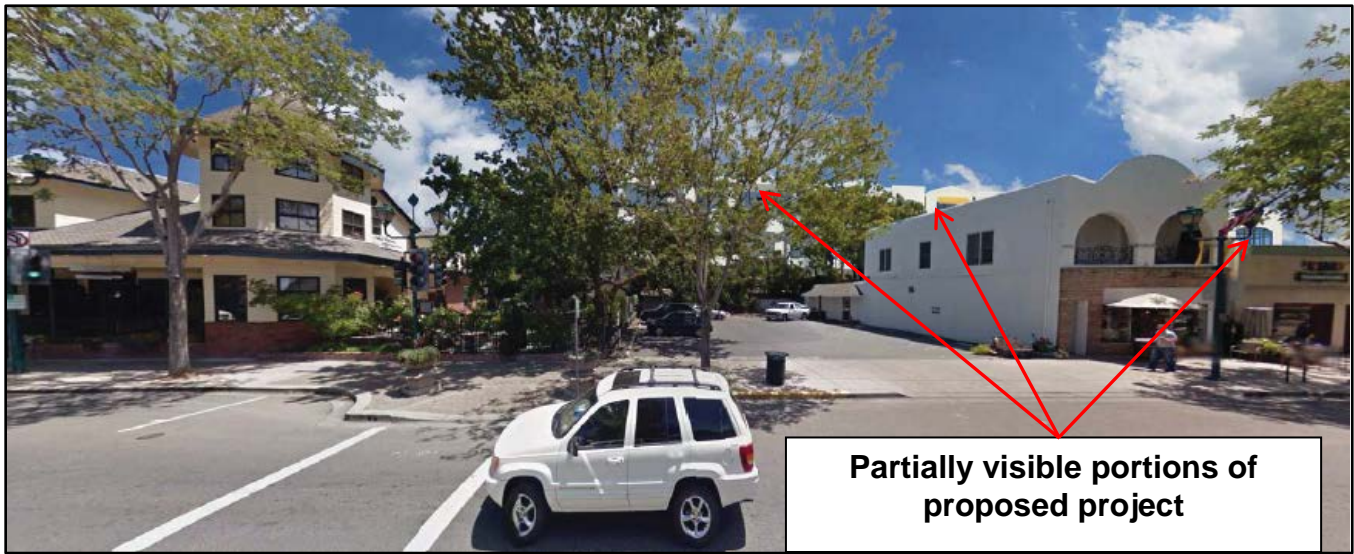


Please see the attached project plans (Exhibit B) for additional information on the subject proposal, including proposed signage criteria for the proposed commercial/office building and an entrance monument sign for the residential units.

Additionally, at the August 26, 2015 Work Session, the Commission requested photo simulations of the proposed project as it would be viewed from Main Street and the surrounding areas. Those requested simulations are below as Figures 7 and 8.



**Figure 7: Simulated View of Proposed Project from West Side of Main Street Across from 728 Main Street**



**Figure 8: Birds-eye Simulated View of Proposed Project Looking Northeast**



## **COMPARISON OF WORK SESSION PROPOSAL VERSUS CURRENT PROPOSAL**

At the August 26, 2015 Work Session, some members of the Planning Commission suggested re-designing the project to allow for more commercial space and more parking, and fewer residential units. Other members supported a proposal that works financially and facilitates the development of the subject parcel with a quality mixed-use project for the Downtown that is

substantially compliant with the intent of the PMC, Downtown Specific Plan, and Downtown Design Guidelines.

The applicant modified the Work Session plans as follows:

- The total gross commercial/office building square footage fronting on Spring Street has increased from approximately 2,200 square feet to 4,074 square feet in area.
- The four, three-story, multi-family residential units have decreased in area from approximately 2,104 square feet to approximately 2,015 square feet in area, while the fifth apartment unit will be approximately 1,225 square feet in area and has been moved to the second floor of the commercial/office building.
- There are now four dedicated on-site parking spaces for the commercial/office uses (before there were no dedicated on-site parking spaces for the commercial/office building), although this has come at the expense of the proposed residential parking supply as each of the four, three-story, multi-family residential units has only two parking spaces (one garage space and one tandem driveway space) and the apartment unit above the commercial/office space has only one surface parking space. The prior plan had provided four spaces for each of the five units (two garage spaces and two tandem driveway spaces). The prior plan had a total of 20 parking spaces (none for the commercial plus 20 residential) and the current proposal would provide a total of 13 parking spaces (nine residential plus four commercial/office).
- The mixed-use commercial/office building has been set back approximately six feet from the property line along Spring Street (it was two feet, 11 inches in the Work Session plans), allowing for planters and landscaping to be proposed.
- The architecture for the mixed-use commercial/office building and the four, three-story, multi-family residential units has been refined to improve the connectivity of the two project components, while still including subtle architectural elements to provide each of the four, three-story, multi-family residential units unit with distinct identifying characteristics (different awning colors and decorative pots adjacent to the front doors).
- The landscape plan has been revised to replace the proposed Italian Cypress trees with Crape Myrtle and European Hornbeam trees.
- The green screen concept intended to soften the visual appearance of the rear of the adjacent building to the west has been replaced with a decorative metal panel fence and stucco columns as described above. Bamboo will be planted in the areas immediately in front of the wall to further obscure the visibility of the rear of the adjacent building.
- The building color has been revised from bright white to off-white. Vertical striped black and tan awnings would continue to be used on the commercial/office building, while the multi-family residential units would each have their own solid-colored awnings to provide each unit with some differentiation from one another. The proposed awning colors are shown in Exhibit B, Sheets A6 and M1.



## ANALYSIS

### General Plan Land Use Consistency

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 allow commercial and office uses. The proposed project, which is anticipated to contain commercial and office uses, is consistent with this land use designation as it would provide approximately 4,074 additional square feet of new commercial/office space to serve residents and businesses of Pleasanton and its market area.

Staff believes the proposed project is also consistent with the General Plan Land Use Policies and Programs listed below, as the proposal will: (1) introduce more activity to the subject parcel with new commercial/office uses; and (2) introduce a mixed-use project in the Downtown that would create a transition between the commercial and residential parts of Downtown; and activate the Spring Street corridor.

### *Sustainability*

Program 2.2: Encourage the reuse of vacant and underutilized parcels and buildings within existing urban areas.

### *Residential*

Policy 8: Preserve and enhance the character of existing residential neighborhoods.

### *Industrial, Commercial and Office*

Policy 12: Preserve the character of Downtown while improving its retail and residential viability and preserving the traditions of its small-town character.

Program 12.3: In the Downtown, implement mixed-use development which incorporates higher density residential units consistent with the Downtown Specific Plan.

Program 12.4: Encourage second-floor apartments above first-floor commercial uses and live-work units in the Downtown. Also allow mixed-use development in the Downtown where residences are located behind commercial uses.

The Floor Area Ratio (FAR) is 91 percent with the proposed project, which complies with the General Plan's 300 percent FAR limit for properties within the Downtown Specific Plan Area.

### Downtown Specific Plan Consistency and Land Uses

The Downtown Specific Plan land use designation for the subject parcel is "Downtown Commercial," which allows pedestrian-oriented commercial and upperfloor office and residential uses consistent with the permitted and conditional uses allowed in the Central

Commercial Zoning District. Ground floor residential uses are generally not permitted. However, staff believes the proposed four ground floor, three-story, multi-family residential units are permissible provided the Planning Commission finds that the proposed commercial/office building space is large enough to accommodate viable commercial/office uses and generates the level of street activity that is desired in the Downtown Commercial designation. With the decrease in the overall amount of residential square footage within the proposed project and the increase of commercial/office square footage from approximately 2,200 square feet to approximately 4,074 square feet in area, staff believes adequate commercial/office space is proposed to justify the four ground floor, three-story, multi-family residential units and that the proposed project is consistent with the intent of the Downtown Specific Plan. The proposed apartment unit on the upperfloor of the proposed commercial/office building would also be compliant with the current land use designation.

Zoning and Uses

The subject parcel is zoned C-C (Central Commercial), Downtown Revitalization, Core Area Overlay District. The proposal seeks to rezone the property to PUD-C-C, Downtown Revitalization, Core Area Overlay District. While no changes are proposed in the allowed uses for the site, the rezoning is proposed to allow flexibility in the application of the City’s site development standards. Specifically, the PMC does not allow for tandem parking for residential uses as proposed. As such, the applicant seeks to rezone the subject site to PUD, which would allow for flexibility in this standard; thus, if supported, allowing the project to meet the required parking standards for the proposed multi-family residential units. Please see the parking analysis section below for more detail.

Staff believes the rezoning is appropriate and the retention of the permitted and conditionally permitted uses of the C-C District would continue to encourage the extension of commercial/office uses typically found on Main Street onto the side streets within the Downtown, a goal of both the City and the Pleasanton Downtown Association. Additionally, pursuant to the parking analysis below, staff believes the rezoning is appropriate to allow tandem parking for the proposed multi-family residential units.

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, etc.

<b>Site Development Standard:</b>	<b>Required:</b>	<b>Proposed:</b>
Floor Area Ratio	300 percent maximum	91 percent
Building Height	40 feet maximum	30 feet
Setbacks		
Front (Spring Street)	None Required	6 feet
Rear (north side)	None Required	5 feet
East Side	None Required	2.5 to 3 feet
West Side	None Required	30 feet
Site Area per Dwelling Unit	1,000 sq. ft. minimum per unit	3,397 sq. ft. per unit
Parking		
Commercial/Office Building	11 spaces with parking credit (see discussion below)	4 on-site spaces and in-lieu agreement for 7 spaces
Apartment Units	9 spaces	9 spaces

Overall, staff believes that the proposed site plan, positioning of the new commercial/office building and four, three-story, multi-family residential units, height, and FAR are appropriate for the subject property.

### Traffic and Circulation

The Traffic Engineering Division has reviewed the project plan. Based on this review, a Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) report was not required for the proposed project as the level of development was not determined to generate a significant amount of peak hour trips and would not have a significant impact to existing traffic levels. Accordingly, the Traffic Engineering Division concludes all streets and intersections would continue to operate at their current and acceptable level of service and, therefore, no mitigation is required. Staff is recommending a condition of approval requiring the applicant to revise the project plans to reduce the width of the site entrance driveway from 25 feet wide to 20 feet wide, matching the on-site drive aisle width and allowing the driveway apron to be removed from the pedestrian path of travel from Spring Street onto the subject site. Additionally, this will preserve the on-street parking space that would need to be removed to accommodate the 25-foot wide driveway.

### Parking

The existing building totals approximately 910 square feet in area. The applicant is proposing to demolish the existing 910 square-foot building on-site and construct a new 4,074-square-foot two-story commercial/office building, resulting in a net increase of approximately 3,164 square feet of commercial/office uses on the subject parcel.

The PMC requires that the applicant provide 14 parking spaces for the proposed commercial/office building area (based on a 1 space/300 sq. ft. ratio). However, pursuant to PMC Section 18.88.020 (D2) the subject project could receive a parking credit for the existing, demolished building area 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 building meets the criteria in "b" above, and recommends that the applicant receive a parking credit for the 910 square feet of demolished area (equal to three spaces). Therefore, if the Planning Commission grants the parking credit, the applicant would only be required to provide 11 on-site parking spaces for the proposed commercial/office building.

The applicant is proposing four dedicated on-site parking spaces for the proposed commercial/office building. As a result, including the parking credit described above and the four dedicated on-site parking spaces, the applicant would be requesting an in-lieu parking agreement, as permitted by the PMC, for seven spaces for the proposed commercial/office building. PMC Section 18.88.120.A.1.b. states that new construction which provides less than 85 percent of its required on-site parking may satisfy its deficit parking through in lieu parking agreements. Such agreements shall be subject to the approval of the City Council. In this case, the proposal is providing 56.5 percent of its required on-site parking; therefore, the City Council must approve the requested in-lieu agreement. Moreover, PMC Section



18.88.120.A.4. states that any development for which an in-lieu parking agreement is approved where the number of in-lieu spaces is less than or equal to 30 percent of its on-site parking requirement shall pay the standard surface parking lot in-lieu fee for each deficient parking space. In this case, the applicant is requesting 30 percent of its parking requirement be satisfied with in-lieu spaces; therefore, if approved, the proposal would be subject to the surface rate per space in effect at the time a building permit is granted (currently \$19,117.69 per space).

Although the applicant is proposing to rezone the subject site to a PUD District, the Core Area Overlay District is proposed to be retained. The Core Overlay District was established in 1981 for the purpose of facilitating the development of smaller (10 units or less) multi-family rental housing or mixed-use multi-family rental housing/commercial and office projects in the Downtown area. The Core Area Overlay District has modified standards which relax the standard parking requirements for multi-family or mixed multi-family/commercial and office projects containing 10 or less multi-family rental dwelling units. Therefore, as long as the proposed multi-family residential units are rentals, the residential component of the proposal would be subject to the reduced parking standards allowed by the Overlay District.

Accordingly, for the proposed multi-family residential rental units, the following would apply: (1) PMC Section 18.80.070.E. would require one on-site parking space for the one bedroom second-story apartment unit above the commercial space; and (2) PMC Section 18.80.070.C. would require two on-site parking spaces for each of the four, three-story multi-family apartment units. Additionally, PMC Section 18.80.070.D. does not require that visitor parking be provided. In addition, PMC Section 18.80.070.F. permits all parking to be uncovered. Pursuant to these requirements, the second-story apartment unit would require one dedicated space and the four, three-story, multi-family residential rental units would require eight dedicated spaces, for a total of nine spaces for the residential component. The applicant is providing one dedicated and covered space within the commercial/office building parking lot for the second-story apartment unit and two dedicated spaces for each of the four, three-story, multi-family residential units.

The Work Session proposal included a total of four parking spaces for each of the four, three-story, multi-family residential units; two within a garage and two within a driveway. Based on the direction provided by the Commission, the applicant elected to reduce the square footage of the four, three-story, multi-family residential units, which includes providing only a one-car garage and a tandem space in the driveway, in order to expand the size of the commercial/office building and provide four on-site spaces dedicated to this component of the project. Staff notes that the square footage reduction did not reduce the bedroom count for each of the four, three-story, multi-family residential units, as they would all still include three bedrooms. Thus, while four dedicated parking spaces have been created for the commercial/office building, each of the four, three-story, multi-family residential units have lost two parking spaces from the Work Session proposal and would rely on tandem parking to meet the minimum code requirement of two spaces for each of the four, three-story, multi-family residential units.

The Municipal Code does not allow tandem parking to be used for meeting the prescribed parking requirements of the PMC. However, PUD zoning allows for flexibility in the prescribed development standards of the PMC. Therefore, if the Planning Commission accepts the tandem parking proposal for the four, three-story, multi-family residential units, the proposed project would meet the minimum code requirements prescribed for parking for the residential component of the project.

Although not allowed by Code, tandem parking is not unusual Downtown since many of the older homes have tandem parking (typically with a detached, one-car garage towards the rear of the lot with a long driveway). In addition, the City has approved tandem parking in some newer residential projects. The Kimberly Commons project, owned by the applicant since 2007 and located at the north end of Peters Avenue, was approved with tandem parking for the four single-family detached homes. These houses all have three tandem spaces (a one-car carport at the rear of the site and two uncovered parking spaces within the driveway). Staff is unaware of any reported issues related to this design. Similar to Kimberly Commons, the subject proposal is located on a constrained site given its long and narrow configuration. Staff feels that this constraint, coupled with the fact that a number of Downtown homes currently have tandem parking, make the tandem parking acceptable for this site.

Lastly, staff notes that the proposal includes only 20 feet of backup for all parking spaces, where 25 feet is normally required for a standard-sized parking space. Again, PUD zoning allows for flexibility in the prescribed development standards of the PMC. Staff has reviewed this proposal and has determined it to be acceptable based on the fact this is a narrow in-fill site within the Downtown.

### Architecture and Design

Staff initially had concerns that the building massing of the proposed four, three-story, multi-family residential units was incompatible with the neighborhood, which primarily comprises one-story commercial and single-family detached homes. The applicant revised the plans multiple times to improve the finish material quality (smooth cement plaster, awnings, etc.) of the overall proposal and to also add architectural interest (storefront windows at the street level, decorative and varying roofline parapets, etc.), wall plane articulation (variable second floor wall planes, dormer elements, etc.) and movement on the front and rear elevations of the proposed commercial/office building, as well as the proposed four, three-story, multi-family residential units, increasing the proposal's consistency with the Downtown Design Guidelines. Additionally, the applicant reduced the height of the proposed multi-family units to 30 feet, which is considered acceptable in most residential zones within the City. Staff believes these revisions make the plan more consistent with the Downtown Specific Plan Land Use Policy No. 1 that states: "In order to preserve the historic character of the Downtown, new or remodeled buildings within the Downtown Commercial area should be limited to two stories, except three-story buildings may be allowed on a case-by-case basis provided: (1) the buildings are pedestrian in scale, and include features such as first-story storefront windows, recessed entries, building details, and awnings; (2) buildings are designed to minimize their three-story appearances through use of techniques such as dormer windows, stepping back upper floors, and using design features between building levels to assist in maintaining an overall horizontal design character to the building; and (3) buildings must conform with the City Municipal Code height limits."

Staff believes that the proposed commercial/office building and four, three-story, multi-family residential units are attractive and well designed. Staff also believes that the proposed buildings have an appropriate scale and mass for Downtown Pleasanton. The proposed windows and gabled roof parapet elements add interest and reduce perceived mass. The buildings' colors and materials will be compatible and complementary with other buildings in the Downtown.

### Downtown Regulation Consistency

New construction in the Downtown must be sensitive to the character of the historic downtown, and to accomplish this goal, must conform to the 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:

#### *Building Design*

Some of the Downtown Specific Plan Policies and Downtown Design Guidelines applicable to building design for both commercial/office and residential uses include:

- Protect and enhance the pedestrian-friendly scale of the Downtown by continuing its mixture of one-to-two-story facades at the sidewalk and at-grade entrances (secondary entrances are encouraged). Three-story buildings may be allowed on a case-by-case basis subject to special design criteria.
- Special consideration will be given to conditions where existing adjacent buildings are set back from the sidewalk
- 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.
- Provide detailing of the roofline, upper façade, and storefront areas of the building consistent with the building's architectural style.
- Use the highest quality materials for the façade wall consistent with the architectural style of the building, such as natural brick, stucco, and smooth finished horizontal wood siding.
- Select colors appropriate to the architectural style of the building. Mission Revival style buildings should have an earth-tone wall color with complementing trim colors and roof tiles.

The proposed commercial/office building and four, three-story, multi-family residential units would reference some of the architectural elements found in the Mission Revival style, utilizing a mix of flat and gabled parapet lines, round tile gable vents, and smooth cement plaster wall finishes. More contemporary architectural elements are also proposed and include striped canvas awnings, a mix of rectangular and curved window shapes and mullion stylings, and modern light fixtures. The proposed commercial/office building would be setback six feet from



the property line along Spring Street, would provide two at-grade entrances (one on Spring Street and a secondary entrance from the parking lot), and provide a significant bank of fixed display windows. While the building is proposed to be off-white in color and not an earthtone as prescribed by the Guidelines, staff believes the color is complementary to the architectural style and the surrounding uses. 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 for the commercial/office building 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.
- Upper story windows should create a rhythm, either symmetrical or equally spaced, across the facade related to the openings below.
- Vertical, rectangular windows are preferred. Recess windows in from the building wall. Use window trim to highlight windows.

The proposed commercial/office building would be consistent with these guidelines. The first-floor tenant storefront would utilize a recessed storefront consisting primarily of glass and the storefront base is no more than 24 inches high from the sidewalk. The upper story windows would be equally spaced creating symmetry and rhythm. All window glass is clear and transparent and window trim is proposed on upper story windows to highlight those features.

### Certificate of Appropriateness

Demolition of a building in the Downtown Revitalization District requires that a certificate of appropriateness be approved by the Planning Commission. The Downtown Specific Plan prohibits the demolition of a commercial building of historical significance unless the building is considered to be unsafe or dangerous and if no other means of rehabilitation can be achieved. The Downtown Design Guidelines indicate that demolition of buildings over 50 years of age is generally discouraged.

The building is 49-years old (built in 1966). The building is not identified as an “historic building” in the General Plan. In addition, the City did not designate the building as a building of “primary” or “secondary” historical and design significance. Staff does not believe that the existing building is exceptional in terms of architecture or historical interest and recommends that the applicant be allowed to demolish it, particularly since a well-designed building will replace it. Therefore, staff believes that granting a certificate of appropriateness to demolish the building is appropriate for this site.

**Figure 9: Existing Building to be Demolished**



**Landscaping**

Preliminary landscaping plans were submitted showing planting details for the subject parcel. Although the landscape plans are conceptual, staff feels that the amount and species type of the proposed landscaping is adequate. Staff is recommending conditions of approval requiring that a final and more detailed landscape plan be submitted prior to the issuance of a building permit, and that a letter from a Certified Landscape Architect be submitted both prior to building permit issuance and post landscaping installation, ensuring the landscaping is in compliance with the City’s Climate Action Plan (CAP), the Bay-Friendly Landscape Guidelines, and the State’s Model Water Efficiency Landscape Ordinance.

**Tree Removal and Replacement Plan**

Pursuant to the updated arborist report dated October 12, 2015 (Exhibit E), the applicant’s consulting arborist indicated that there were nine existing trees on-site, all of which are Heritage Trees. As the project design evolved, the applicant worked with staff on various tree preservation scenarios; however, ultimately staff agreed that a commercial presence along Spring Street and improved site access and circulation were higher priorities than maintaining the remaining on-site trees. Accordingly, the applicant is proposing to remove all nine existing on-site trees. Most of the trees are ornamental in nature/species and are either in fair to good health but have a limited chance of survival prior to or after construction, or are located directly within the footprint of the newly planned site construction and improvements. The applicant is proposing to plant 12 new trees (two Crape Myrtle and 10 European Hornbeam) throughout the site, all of which have low to moderate water requirements and are drought tolerant. The predominant species are European Hornbeam, which thrive in small spaces, and also have the ability to provide the same canopy/shade cover as the trees to be removed at full maturity. The

Crape Myrtle are also an excellent species for small spaces. Accordingly, staff supports the proposed tree removal plan. Additionally, staff is recommending a condition of approval requiring the applicant to contribute to the City's Urban Forestry Fund to help off-set the loss of all nine existing Heritage Trees (Tree Nos. 1 through 7, 9 and 13 as identified by Exhibit E). This contribution is normally determined by the value of the trees to be removed, which is \$18,600.

### Signage

The applicant has provided design criteria, lighting, and mounting details for two building mounted sign locations for the proposed commercial/office building tenants. Both locations are on the lower portions of the upperfloor fascia, with one location facing Spring Street and one location facing the parking lot. Both signs would be high density urethane panels with raised aluminum letters measuring approximately 11 feet, 10 inches in length by 1-foot, 10 inches in height. Both building sign locations would be illuminated with three gooseneck down lights per sign location. Staff is recommending a condition of approval requiring the applicant to revise the plans submitted for building permit to show the location of a third building mounted sign for the potential third tenant of the commercial/office building. Additionally, an eight-foot-wide by five-foot-tall monument sign intended to identify the project as a mixed use commercial and executive home project is proposed at the southwest corner of the subject parcel. The proposed monument sign is designed to complement the proposed building architecture and would be finished with stucco and painted to match the proposed commercial/office building. The proposed building mounted signage for the commercial/office building complies with the Downtown Design Guidelines; therefore, staff supports that component of the signage proposal as designed. However, the monument sign component is not allowed by the Downtown Revitalization District and Design Guidelines and should be deleted from the plans. Staff is recommending a condition of approval requiring this action.

## **PUD CONSIDERATIONS**

The Pleasanton Municipal Code sets forth purposes of the Planned Unit Development District and "considerations" to be addressed in reviewing a PUD development plan. Staff has provided those considerations with staff's analysis below.

### **1. Whether the plan is in the best interests of the public health, safety, and general welfare:**

The proposed project is conditioned to meet all applicable City standards concerning public health, safety, and welfare. The proposed project would include the installation of all required on-site utilities with connections to municipal systems in order to serve the project. As proposed, the project will not generate volumes of traffic that cannot be accommodated or mitigated by the existing City streets and intersections. The structures will be designed to meet the requirements of the California Building Code, Fire Code, and other applicable City codes. The project also would provide five multi-family residential units to help increase the City's housing stock and provide a new commercial building in the Downtown consistent with the goals of the General Plan and the Downtown Specific Plan.



Therefore, staff believes that the proposed PUD development plan is in the best interest of the public health, safety, and general welfare, and that this finding could be made.

**2. Whether the plan is consistent with the City's General Plan and any applicable specific plan:**

The subject parcel is designated by the Land Use Element of the Pleasanton General Plan for Retail/Highway/Service Commercial; Business and Professional Offices land uses, which allow for commercial and office uses. The project includes construction of a new commercial/office building that would support uses typically associated with this type of development; thus the project would be in full compliance with the General Plan and would further several General Plan Programs and Policies encouraging commercial and mixed use development. The proposed project is located near public transportation, within proximity to the services and amenities of the Downtown area, and is located in an area already developed with adequately-sized infrastructure. Additionally, the subject parcel is designated by the Downtown Specific Plan as Downtown Commercial, which encourages pedestrian-oriented commercial and upperfloor office and residential uses. This is a mixed use project that includes construction of a commercial/office building that is designed for a commercial tenant on the ground floor along Spring Street, and also includes upperfloor space for an office and an apartment unit. A ground floor office and four, approximately three-story multi-family residential units are also proposed behind the ground floor commercial space. Although the proposal includes no affordable housing (a key objective of the Specific Plan's housing policies and programs), the proposal would generally comply with the intent of the Downtown Specific Plan as it will: (1) introduce more activity to the subject parcel with a new commercial/office use; and (2) introduce a mixed-use project in the Downtown that would create a transition between the commercial and residential parts of Downtown, and create more activity along the Spring Street corridor.

Therefore, staff concludes that the proposed project will be consistent with the City's General Plan and Downtown Specific Plan, and staff believes that this finding could be made.

**3. Whether the plan is compatible with previously developed properties in the vicinity and the natural, topographic features of the site:**

The subject parcel is an infill site adjacent to existing commercial/office and residential developments. The building massing and heights would be compatible with buildings and/or single-family residential uses within the Downtown or immediate vicinity. The building has been attractively designed and would be compatible with the design of the surrounding structures. The building contains many architectural elements/treatments to help break up the building mass and height. New landscaping would be installed throughout the site and perimeter to soften the building from off-site viewpoints. The subject parcel has a slight up slope from south to north, but is generally flat, minimizing the need for grading. Grading conducted on the site will be subject to engineering and building standards prior to any development.

Therefore, staff feels that the PUD development plans are compatible with the previously developed properties and the natural, topographic features of the site, and therefore, staff believes that this finding could be made.

**4. Whether grading takes into account environmental characteristics and is designed and keeping with the best engineering practices to avoid erosion, slides, or flooding to have as minimal an effect upon the environment as possible:**

The subject site is a flat, in-fill site with no sensitive environmental features/characteristics (e.g. hillsides, wetlands, creeks). City building code requirements would ensure that building foundations and on-site driveways are constructed on properly prepared surfaces. The proposed project would provide adequate drainage to prevent flooding. Site and roof drainage would drain into biofiltration planters that would filter contaminants from the site and roof drainage before entering the City stormdrain system. Erosion control and dust suppression measures will be documented in the building permit plans and will be administered by the City's Building and Safety Division and Engineering Division. The site is not located within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone. The flood hazard maps of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) indicate that the subject property is not located in a flood hazard zone.

Therefore, staff believes that this finding could be made.

**5. Whether streets and buildings have been designed and located to complement the natural terrain and landscape:**

The subject parcel is in a developed area of the City, would not involve the extension of any new public streets, and would require minimal grading. The proposed buildings will be compatible in size and scale with surrounding structures. New landscaping and trees would be installed, and, as conditioned, the applicant would make a contribution to the City's Urban Forestry Fund to mitigate the loss of the existing trees.

Therefore, staff believes that this finding could be made.

**6. Whether adequate public safety measures have been incorporated into the design of the plan:**

The public improvements associated with this project would be consistent with City design standards. The driveway entrance is located and configured to provide adequate line-of-sight viewing distance in both directions, and to facilitate efficient ingress/egress to and from the subject parcel. Adequate access is provided to all structures for police, fire, and other emergency vehicles. The building is designed to meet the requirements of the California Building Code and other applicable City codes and all new buildings would be equipped with automatic fire suppression systems (sprinklers).

Although the site is not located within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone, it would be subject to seismic shaking during an earthquake. The State of California provides minimum standards for building design through the California Building Standards Code.

The California Uniform Building Code (UBC) is based on the UBC and has been modified for California conditions with numerous more detailed and/or stringent regulations. Specific seismic safety requirements are set forth in Chapter 23 of the UBC. The State earthquake protection law requires that buildings be designed to resist stresses produced by lateral forces caused by earthquakes. The City implements the requirements of the California Building Code through its building permit process. The proposed project will be required to comply with the applicable codes and standards to provide earthquake resistant design to meet or exceed the current seismic requirements.

Therefore, staff believes that the plan has been designed to incorporate adequate public safety measures and this finding could be made.

#### **7. Whether the plan conforms to the purposes of the PUD district:**

The proposed PUD development plan conforms to the purposes of the PUD district. One of these purposes is to ensure that the desires of the developer and the community are understood and approved prior to commencement of construction. Another is to provide a mechanism whereby the City can designate parcels and areas requiring special consideration regarding the manner in which development occurs. Staff believes that the proposed project implements the purposes of the PUD ordinance in this case by providing an infill, high-density residential and commercial/office development that is well-designed and sited on the subject site, and that meets the intent of the City's General Plan goals and policies, including those which promote infill, high-density housing and encourage the development and/or expansion of commercial/office uses within the Downtown. Opportunity for public comment will occur at the Planning Commission and City Council hearings.

Staff feels that through the PUD process the proposed project has provided residents, the developer, and the City with a development plan that optimizes the use of this infill site in a sensitive manner. Therefore, staff believes that this finding could be made.

#### **PLEASANTON DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION RECOMMENDATION**

Prior to the Work Session, the Pleasanton Downtown Association (PDA) was not opposed to the inclusion of residential units as part of the proposed project; however, the PDA suggested that the commercial/office building be increased in size and that the first residential unit be eliminated to make room for a larger commercial building. Additionally, the PDA recommended that retail uses be located on the first floor of the commercial/office building.

Subsequently, and based on their review of the revised plan, the PDA submitted a letter (Exhibit G) opposing the inclusion of residential units as part of the proposed project, stating that they would not be of benefit to the downtown given their proximity to Main Street, ultimately reducing vitality in the area. Additionally, the PDA indicated that most of the project should comprise retail space. Moreover, the PDA expressed concerns with the lack of on-site parking proposed with the project.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Notices of this application were sent to surrounding property owners and tenants within a 1,000-foot radius of the site. Staff has provided the location and noticing maps as Exhibit H for reference. At the time this report was published, staff had not received any public comments about the project.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

This project is categorically exempt from environmental review pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines, Section 15332, In-fill Development Projects, Class 32. Therefore, no environmental document accompanies this report.

## **CONCLUSION**

In staff's opinion, the proposed project would establish pedestrian-oriented retail on the ground-floor along Spring Street, ground-floor and upper floor offices, as well as five new multi-family residential units to introduce activity for the surrounding residents and businesses within the Downtown. The subject site has been undeveloped for many years, and currently offers little interest to the pedestrian, creating a gap in the Spring Street streetscape. The site and building have been designed with sensitivity to the historic Downtown. The proposed building architecture and site landscaping are attractive, compatible with the surrounding development and buildings, and meet all applicable requirements of the Pleasanton Municipal Code, Downtown Specific Plan, and Downtown Design Guidelines, as conditioned. The new storefront along Spring Street will add interest to the streetscape and encourage pedestrian activity from Main Street. Additionally, the new multi-family residential units will attract additional residents into the area who will frequent the Downtown amenities and businesses, enhancing the vitality of Downtown, while also increasing the City's supply of above-moderate level rental housing stock. While tandem parking may be of slight inconvenience to the residential occupants, staff believes tandem parking is acceptable for this application.

## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

1. Find that the project is categorically exempt from environmental review pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines, Section 15332, In-fill Development Projects, Class 32 and would not have a significant effect on the environment.
2. Make the PUD findings for the proposed development plan as listed in the staff report; and
3. Adopt a resolution recommending approval of PUD-109, applications at 273 Spring Street for: (1) a certificate of appropriateness to demolish the existing 910-square-foot single-story commercial building; and (2) a Planned Unit Development (PUD) Rezoning and Development Plan to rezone the site from the C-C (Central Commercial), Downtown Revitalization, Core Area Overlay District to PUD-C-C, Downtown Revitalization, Core Area Overlay District, and to construct an approximately 4,074-square-foot, two-story commercial/office building with an attached approximately 1,225-square-foot second-floor apartment unit, and four, approximately 2,015-square-foot, three-story multi-family

residential units, subject to the conditions of approval listed in Exhibit A, and forward the applications to the City Council for public hearing and review.

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