

## Planning Commission Staff Report

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May 28, 2014  
Item 6.a.

**SUBJECT:** P14-0029

**APPLICANT/  
PROPERTY OWNER:** SLP Properties II LLC

**PURPOSE:** Applications for a certificate of appropriateness to demolish the existing 2,340 square foot single story building at 511 Main Street (Pastime Pool) and for Design Review approval to construct an approximately 8,659 square foot two story commercial building with an approximately 667 square foot public mini-plaza.

**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:** 511 Main Street

**EXHIBITS:**

- A. [Draft Conditions of Approval for P14-0029](#)
- B. [Proposed Plans](#)
- C. [Location and Notification Map](#)

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### BACKGROUND

#### Building History

The subject building was built in 1910 by J.P. Rosa, and originally served as one of the City's first theaters, The Gem Theatre (picture in Figure 1). In 1917 the theater became known as the Lincoln Theater. The building was later remodeled and is currently Pastime Pool. The building while needing maintenance and structural repair has maintained little, if any, of its original exterior ornamentation and detailing. The original storefront and siding were removed sometime in the 1960's or 70's and replaced and/or covered up with a stucco storefront and mission style arched pediment and later with an aluminum storefront awning.



**Figure 1: The Gem Theatre, circa 1912**

### **Project History - Parking Agreement**

In 2012, SLP Properties II expressed interest in purchasing and renovating the site and began speaking with staff about the type of project that would be a good fit within the downtown, considering the kinds of prospective tenants the City would like to attract as well as preservation of the historic character of the building. In particular, staff indicated a desire for a public plaza to serve as a place for downtown patrons to gather and socialize.

On December 2, 2012, the City Council reviewed a request by the applicant to provide an on-site amenity open to the general public on the subject site in exchange for paying required in-lieu parking fees. The City Council reviewed a preliminary project proposal and authorized the City Manager to negotiate an agreement to exchange in-lieu parking fees for a public plaza.

### **SITE DESCRIPTION**

The subject site is an approximately 5,600 square foot parcel on the northwest corner of Main Street and Rose Avenue. The subject site currently maintains the 2,340 square-foot Pastime Pool building along the north property line. An existing driveway off Rose Avenue provides access to a ten-space paved parking lot on the south side of the building. An existing chain link fence separates the parking lot and a rear patio area that is no longer used. One heritage-sized Blackwood Acacia Tree is located on the adjacent property along the rear west property line which has been approved for removal due to hazardous growing conditions. The site topography is generally flat. Figure 2 shows photographs of the current site.



**Figure 2: Photographs of the Project Site**

### **Adjacent Properties**

The properties adjacent to this site include a small commercial building occupied by Pleasanton Jewelers to the north (515 Main Street); two single family homes to the west (233 & 245 Rose Avenue); the Johnston commercial building including Valley Community Bank to the south (465 Main Street), on the opposite side of Rose Avenue; and various commercial buildings to the east including Bacci's Restaurant (500 Main Street), on the opposite side of Main Street.



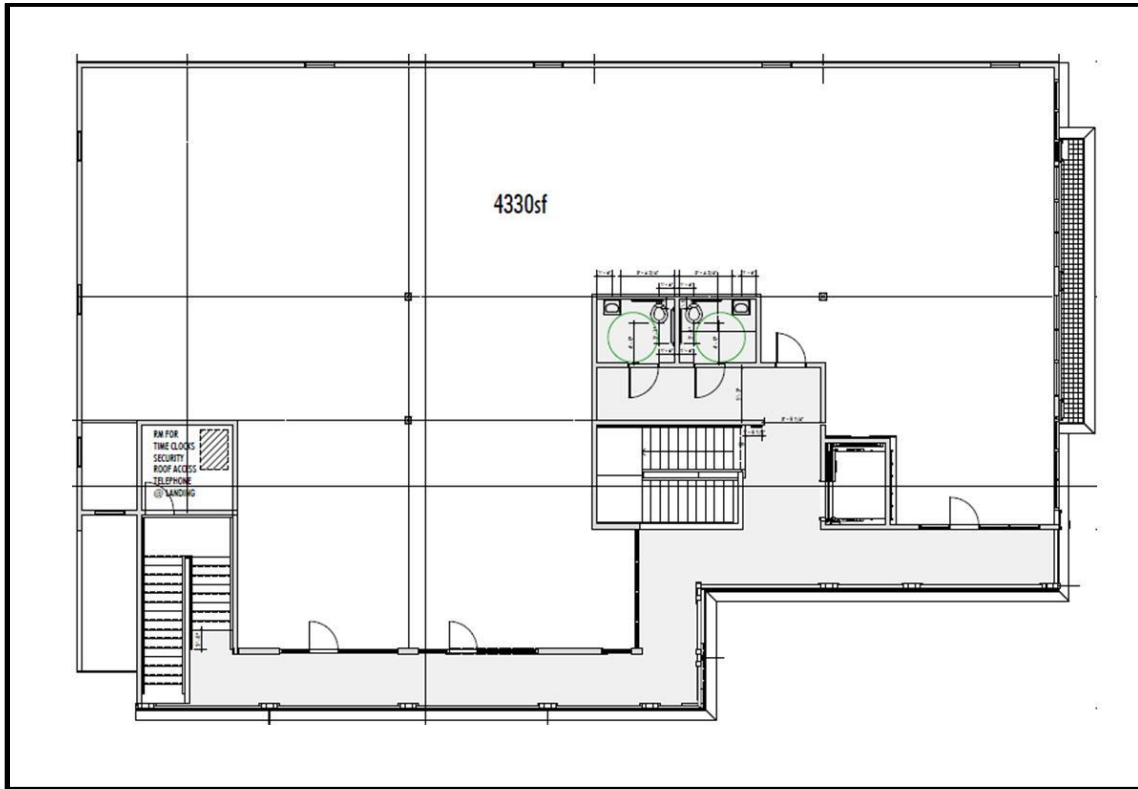
**Figure 3: Project Site and Surrounding Location**

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant has requested approval to demolish the existing 2,340 square foot commercial building with ten (10) on-site parking spaces that has been used as a bar, and replace it with a new 8,659 square foot two-story building comprised of: an approximately 4,329 square foot first floor of retail and restaurant uses with 448 square feet of private outdoor dining, and a second floor of approximately 4,330 square feet of retail and office uses resulting in a net increase of approximately 6,319 square feet. The project will also include a 667 square foot public mini-plaza to include a decorative corner brick planter/seating wall with decorative shade trellis at the corner of Main Street and Rose Avenue. Figure 4 shows the proposed site plan and first floor plan and Figure 5 shows the second floor plan. The first floor will consist of two tenant spaces to be occupied by restaurant or commercial/retail uses. The second floor will be occupied by commercial/retail or office uses. No specific tenants have been named at this time.



Figure 4: Site Plan and First Floor Plan



**Figure 5: Second Floor Plan**

The proposed building will incorporate several different materials, including: composite hardboard lap siding, smooth Santa Barbara style stucco, brick veneer, composition shingles, steel accent canopies, as well as a variety of window treatments. The first floor Main Street and Rose Avenue elevations will feature areas of recessed full motion foldable storefront windows that will allow each tenant space to open-up to the outside for potential outdoor dining. The second story storefronts will feature traditional storefront windows and doors, matching the design of the first floor. The east elevation along Main Street has been designed to reflect the historical Gem Theater frontage as shown below, Figure 6. The north and west elevations of the building will maintain lap siding with decorative cornice treatment and bellyband as well as faux windows with decorative sill and trim.



**Figure 6: Theater and Main Street Elevation**

The building will measure approximately 34 feet tall at the highest peak and 32 feet to the top of the equipment parapet which will feature decorative cornice treatment along all four sides of the building. The building's elevator shaft and equipment will be disguised within a clock tower element and all roof-top mechanical equipment will be hidden from view behind the decorative parapet enclosure.

### On- and Off-Site Improvements

The existing driveway along Rose Avenue will be removed and the entire sidewalk and right-of-way along Rose Avenue will be replaced with new 24-inch square, stacked bond, uncolored concrete per the Downtown Specific Plan. Additionally, a narrow curb cut on Rose Avenue would allow tenants to roll the trash bin out to the street for garbage pick-up. Improvements along Main Street will include the replacement of the existing twelve inch concrete band at the base of the building and along the edge of the public right-of-way to match the existing Main Street sidewalk improvements.

### Public Mini-plaza

The proposed mini-plaza will create approximately 667 square-feet of usable area to be open to the public frontage as shown in the sketch below, Figure 7. The mini-plaza will include a new "L" shaped planter with seating wall and decorative trellis feature at the corner of the property adjacent to the public right-of-way. Additional seating will be provided adjacent to the building facing Rose Avenue along a new brick planter and seating wall. The applicant is proposing to install a decorative public art display on the building wall within the public plaza representing the City and County history surrounding the Alameda County horse racing track and decorative tiles reflecting important historical events or locations within the City.



**Figure 7: Plaza Elevation**

## **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 restaurants, commercial and office uses, is consistent with this land use designation and, additionally, would provide approximately 6,319 additional square feet of new commercial space (8,659 square-foot total) 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 40% to 160% with the proposed project, which complies with 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. The proposed project is consistent with this land use designation.

### **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 building would be demolished. The City has designated the building as a building with "secondary" historical and design significance and designated it as a historic building in the General Plan. A certificate of appropriateness must be approved by the Planning Commission to demolish the building. The Downtown Specific Plan contains a policy prohibiting the demolition of any commercial building found to be historically significant based on the California Register Criteria. Staff believes that the "improvements" throughout the years have diminished all cultural and historic resources of the building associated with the age, appearance, or history and would not be considered a historic resource per the California Register. Furthermore, the "improvements" throughout the years have compromised the historic integrity and lack architectural style or merit. Staff also believes that removing the

building and constructing a new building reflecting some of the aspects of the original architectural style would improve the appearance of the corner. The new two-story building would simulate the architecture and style of the original Gem Theater building along the Main Street elevation. Therefore, staff believes that granting a certificate of appropriateness to demolish the building is appropriate for this site.

### Building Design

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

- 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.
- Transom windows are encouraged in new construction if appropriate to the architectural style of the building.
- In new transom windows, a variety of glass types and patterns, and creativity in mullion spacing and design, is encouraged.
- A variety of entries is encouraged. The entry can be an almost invisible part of the display area (with bypass or folding glass doors), or Dutch doors whose top half is left open during business hours.
- 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.

The proposed building would simulate some of the architectural style and detailing of the original Gem Theater building utilizing areas of lap siding, recessed storefronts and transom windows. In addition to the historic style, the new building will maintain modern features such as folding storefront entries. The building would be located at or very near the sidewalk, would provide at-grade entrances, and provide display windows that have the ability to open up to provide pedestrian friendly storefront elements. The building would add to the architectural variety of the Downtown utilizing a variety of façade materials including stucco, brick and siding.

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 facade; use recessed areas for window displays.
- Storefront bases should be no more than 24 inches high from the sidewalk.
- Facades 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.
- 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. Use projecting sills.
- Consider using special window trim, bay windows, or flower boxes to increase attractiveness of upper level windows.

The proposed building would be consistent with these guidelines. The first-floor tenant storefronts would utilize recessed storefronts with transom windows as well as decorative brick storefront base no more that 24 inches high from the side walk. The upper story windows would be equally spaced creating symmetry and rhythm as well as decorative planter boxes along the east elevation facing Main Street.

## Mini-Plaza

Some of the applicable Design Guidelines include:

- Mini plazas are to be attractive and designed to encouraged public gatherings.
- Plazas should enhance and be compatible with the design elements of adjacent buildings and the streetscape.
- Plazas should have special paving, seating, lighting, landscaping, and accent features such as arbors, kiosks, fountains and public art.
- The plaza should be open and accessible, relate well to the public sidewalk, and not obscure the visibility and operation of neighboring uses.

The applicant is proposing to provide a 667 square foot mini public plaza that is open to the public right-of-way along both Main Street and Rose Avenue. The plaza area has been designed to include decorative permeable pavers throughout the plaza with the corner focal point to include a decorative shade trellis as well as outdoor seating which serve as the central gathering place within the plaza. Additional seating along landscaping seating walls will also be provided as well as a decorative public art piece representing Pleasanton's historical past.

## 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 Standards:	Requirements:	Plan Proposal
Floor Area Ratio	300% Max	160%
Building Height	40 ft. max	34 feet
Setbacks		
Front (Side) – East	None Required	0 feet
South Side -	None Required	0 feet
North Side -	None Required	6 inches
Rear (side) – West	None Required	6 inches

With respect to building placement, staff believes that the new building will enhance the pedestrian-friendly scale of the Downtown by continuing its mixture of one-to-two-story facades at the sidewalk with at-grade entrances. Staff believes that the current plan improves the Downtown walkability by creating a pedestrian plaza and also creates a more attractive streetscape along Rose Avenue. Additionally, placing the building approximately 6 inches from the north and west property lines allows for the installation of decorative cornice treatment along all building elevations as well as faux windows to break up the large elevation plane and adds architectural relief.

The applicant proposes to remove the existing sidewalk paving along Rose Avenue frontage and replace it with new 24-inch square, stacked bond, uncolored concrete per the Downtown Specific Plan to provide a traditional appearance that differs from Main Street. Additionally, a narrow curb cut on Rose Avenue would allow tenants to roll the trash bin out to the street for garbage pick-up. Staff has concerns regarding the appearance of trash cans on the street on pick-up days and the potential conflict with the trash cans encroaching into the traffic lane and has included a condition of approval requiring the applicant to submit a trash and waste plan to include the size and number of receptacles as well as the number of pick-ups per week to be reviewed and approved prior to issuance of building permits.

Overall, staff believes that the proposed site plan, positioning of the new building, height, and FAR are 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 windows and gabled pediment adds interest and helps to draw one's eye along both street elevations. The buildings colors and materials will be compatible with other buildings in the Downtown. The parapeted commercial facades of the building, will be compatible with other buildings in the Downtown and help to screen all mechanical equipment.

## **Traffic**

The City's General Plan indicates that existing traffic flow conditions at the Main Street/Rose Avenue intersection, are Level of Service (LOS--a description of intersection delay) "C" 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 build out of the General Plan, future traffic levels at the Main Street/Rose Avenue/Neal Street intersection will remain LOS "C" 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 build out traffic levels.

Other intersections on Main Street currently exceed LOS "D" or will exceed LOS "D" at build out 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 and In-lieu Agreement**

The existing building totals approximately 2,340 square feet in area. The applicant is proposing to demolish the existing 2,340 square-foot building on-site and construct a new 8,659 square-foot two-story commercial building resulting in a net increase of approximately 6,319 square-feet.

The Municipal Code requires that the applicant provide 29 parking spaces for the commercial building area (one space per 300 square feet). However, the subject project would 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 credit for 2,340 square feet of demolished area (equal to eight spaces.)

On December 2, 2012, the City Council reviewed a request by the applicant to provide an approximately 600 square foot on-site plaza open to the general public on the subject site in exchange for paying required in-lieu parking fees. The City Council reviewed a preliminary project proposal and authorized the City Manager to negotiate an agreement to exchange in-lieu parking fees for a public plaza.

This requested exchange stimulated a City Code Amendment to allow for the City to waive in-lieu parking fees in exchange for a public amenity such as a mini-plaza. The text Amendment was then heard by the Planning Commission on January 8, 2014, and approved by the City Council on February 4, 2014. While the subject parking in-lieu agreement is not subject to the new Code amendment, the proposed mini-plaza complies with the amendment with respect restrictions for the plaza that no portion shall be restricted to the exclusive use of on-site business customers only. The value of the on-site amenity also exceeds the amount of the in-lieu parking fees as set forth in the Master Fee Schedule, currently \$17,727.78 per surface space (\$372,283.38 total for 21 parking spaces), for parking not otherwise provided on-site or off-site on private property. The value of the on-site amenity is based on opportunity costs. Opportunity costs are calculated as follows:

Square footage of the proposed amenity multiplied by annual rent per square-foot divided by the capitalization rate percentage.

Example:

667 square-feet (the size of a proposed public mini-plaza) x \$3.75 (monthly rent per square-foot) x 12 (months) / .065 (a 6.5% capitalization rate) = \$ 461,769

Based on the calculations, the proposed plaza opportunity costs would exceed the required in-lieu parking fees. Staff has reviewed the provided amenities within the proposed plaza and feels that the plaza area contributes to Downtown's vitality as it is attractively designed and integrated into the design and style of the building and is consistent with City Council's December 2012 direction. The corner brick planter/seating wall will help draw in pedestrians while providing shade with the trellis's simple design that does not obscure the visibility and operations of the surrounding plaza tenants. Therefore, staff finds that the Downtown Specific Plan's and Design Guidelines' design goals and policies as well as the goals and policies associated with the parking in-lieu agreement have been met, as proposed and conditioned.

## **Landscaping**

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 within the corner planter seating area as well as in adjacent to the building by the public art display are acceptable and would be an attractive accent to the building. Additionally, pot shelves along the second-floor windows facing Main Street have also been included. The two City street trees located along the Main Street frontage will be retained with the proposed development. A complete landscape plan was not submitted with the application, but conditions of approval have been included to

require it be submitted and approved by the Director of Community Development prior to issuance of building permits.

## **Signage**

The applicant has provided conceptual sign locations with a variety of signage types on the frontages of the tenant spaces. In general, the proposed sign locations comply with the Downtown Design Guidelines. 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.

## **PLEASANTON DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION**

The application was referred to the Pleasanton Downtown Association (PDA). 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 1,000-feet of the site. Staff has provided the location and noticing maps as Exhibit C for the Commission's 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 15303, New Construction, Class 3. Therefore, no environmental document accompanies this report.

## **CONCLUSION**

In staff's opinion, the subject proposal would establish pedestrian-oriented restaurants and retail and upper floor offices 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 and plaza 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 storefronts along Rose Avenue will add interest to the Rose Avenue streetscape and encourage pedestrian activity from Main Street. Additionally, the new public plaza will provide public outdoor seating which will serve as the central gathering place along Main Street.

## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve Case P14-0029 subject to the conditions listed in "Exhibit A."

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