

## Planning Commission Staff Report

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April 25, 2012  
Item 5.a.

**SUBJECT:** P12-0017

**APPLICANT:** Gina Marie Lambeth/Spira Institute of Healing Arts

**PROPERTY OWNERS:** C&H Development Company

**PURPOSE:** Application for a Conditional Use Permit to operate a massage school and wellness center from an existing building

**GENERAL PLAN:** Business Park (Industrial/Commercial and Office)

**ZONING:** PUD-I/C-O (Planned Unit Development-Industrial/Commercial-Office) District

**LOCATION:** 6654 Koll Center Parkway, Suites 160 and 170

**EXHIBITS:**

- A. Draft Conditions of Approval
- B. Written Narrative, Site Plan, Floor Plan, Dated "Received, April 2, 2012"
- C. Approval Letter from Parkway Properties
- D. Location and Notification Maps

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### BACKGROUND

Spira Institute of Healing Arts is proposing to operate a massage and holistic wellness school within the existing building at 6654 Koll Center Parkway, Suites 160 and 170, in the Bernal Plaza. The subject site is located within the Bernal Corporate Park Planned Unit Development (PUD-80-2). In January 2008, a PUD minor modification (Case No. PUD-80-02-06D-06M) was approved to permit educational facilities with 20 students or less and to conditionally permit educational facilities with over 20 students.

The proposed Spira Institute of Healing Arts is a massage school. It also offers wellness education classes and workshops. The proposed facility would have more than 20 students at one time; thus, a conditional use permit approval is required prior to operation.

## SITE DESCRIPTION

The subject site, known as Bernal Plaza, is an approximately 182,148 square-foot parcel located at 6654 Koll Center Parkway. The Plaza is one story, multi-tenant/multi-business building, approximately 38,802 square feet in building area. The parcel to the subject site's immediate north is a two-story multi-tenant office building (22,668 sq.ft.); and the parcel to the southwest is a restaurant (Mexico Lindo, 7,096 sq.ft.). The three parcels share a 371-space parking lot. Together, they occupy the northwest corner of the Valley Avenue and Bernal Avenue intersection.



Bernal Plaza- 6654 Koll Center Parkway

Properties adjacent to Bernal Plaza include the County Fairgrounds to the east, Pleasanton Gateway Shopping Center to the south, and Koll Center Business Park to the north and west. There are three shared vehicle entrances to the site from the adjacent streets, one on Valley Avenue and two on Koll Center Parkway.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Spira Institute of Healing Arts proposes to occupy Suites 160 and 170, totaling approximately 3,608 square-feet. The tenant suites are located in the back of the building facing north. Each tenant space has restroom facilities located within the unit and each tenant space has access to the exterior covered walkway at the front of the spaces and the shared exit corridor within the building.

### Business Operations

Spira consists of two components: a massage school and a wellness center.

1. **Massage School:** The proposed massage school is open Monday through Friday and it offers two class sessions:

Morning class session: 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Evening class session: 6:50 p.m. - 9:50 p.m.

The school expects to have a total of 48 students a year; 24 students in each class session.

The school's curriculum includes a student hands-on session, i.e. where students are paired up to practice on each other. This hands-on session does not extend to the public. Students/instructor in the clinic session will be professionally draped and will never be exposed. Students will learn proper draping during the class.

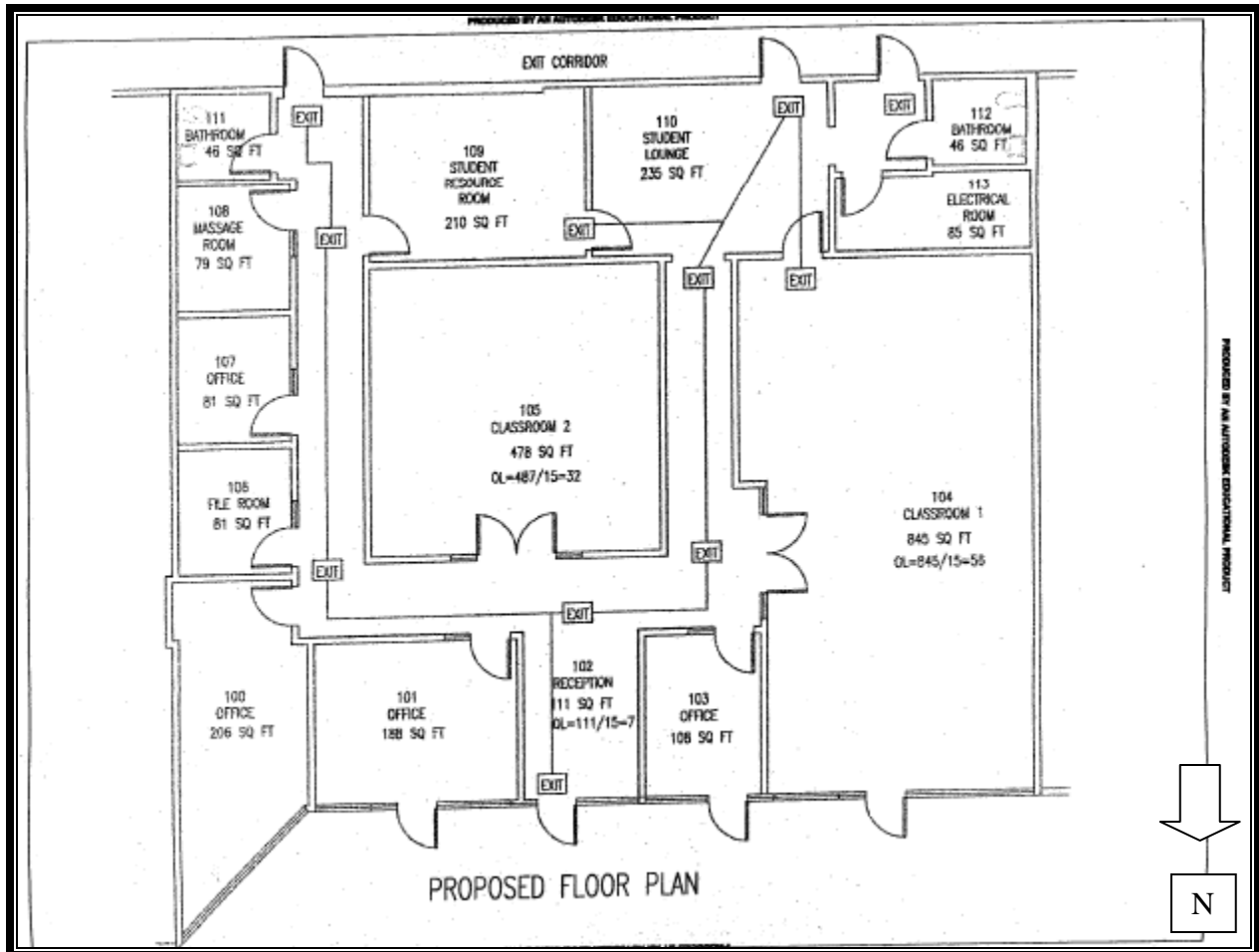
The school would include a massage room for student training purposes. It is a mock-up room to train students in setting up a personal massage room, including room appearance and cleanliness, room temperature, sheets and dressing the table for clients, client intake mock sessions, the use of space around a massage table, and spa training. Students will be able to use this massage room to do supervised mock therapy upon other students to further their didactic (hands on) practice.

2. **Wellness Center:** The Wellness Center offers CPR, meditation, yoga, holistic lifestyles, nutrition, public safety, and senior wellness classes/workshops to the public. Each class/workshop will have 10-20 people. Workshops will range from 2-16 hours in length and will be held on Saturdays and Sundays. Ongoing classes, such as yoga and meditation, will be 1-2 hours in length, and will be held Monday through Friday between 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. The Wellness Center is open on Saturday and Sunday from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

All classes/workshops require pre-registration. No walk-ins would be allowed.

Facility Layout:

The proposed massage school and wellness center include two large classrooms and one “mock up” massage room. The classrooms will be used for both instructional sessions and hands-on sessions. In addition, the facility would have offices, a student lounge room, a student resource room, a reception area, and restrooms. No shower or locker rooms will be in the facility.



Floor Plan

The classrooms would be used by the wellness programs when the massage school is not in session.

## ANALYSIS

Conditional uses are uses that, by their nature, require individual review to ensure that impacts associated with their use will be minimal. Conditional use permits may be subject to appropriate conditions to ensure that any potential adverse impacts associated with the use will be mitigated. The following is staff's analysis of the proposed massage school and wellness center use and its impacts, if any.

### Land Use

The Land Use Element of the General Plan designates the subject property as "Business Park (Industrial/Commercial and Office)". The subject site is zoned PUD-I/C-O (Planned Unit Development – Industrial/Commercial-Office) where the PUD development plan specifies the uses that are permitted or conditionally permitted for this site. With the approved modification allowing an education facility as a conditionally permitted use, the massage school and wellness center would be consistent with the PUD regulations.

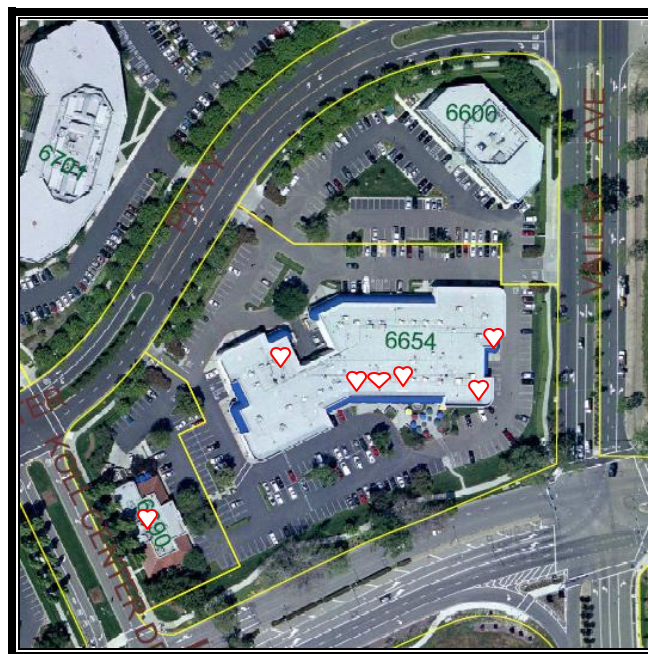
Other uses in the Bernal Plaza include office, retail, food services, and personal care services. Staff believes that the proposed use would be similar to these uses and therefore compatible with existing uses within Bernal Plaza. One of the primary concerns in reviewing a conditional use permit application is the effect of the proposed use on surrounding uses. The tenant space adjacent to the proposed massage school and wellness center on the east side is an afterschool tutorial facility. The proposed massage school and wellness center and the tutorial facility are both educational facilities serving the community. Staff believes they are compatible uses. Additionally, in the past, the Planning Commission has approved several similar educational uses, whether in the musical field or focusing on academics, located in similar commercial areas. Staff is not aware of land use issues associated with any of those businesses.

### Parking

*Massage School:* A total of 371 shared parking spaces are currently available for the three buildings totaling approximately 68,566 square feet. Based on a square-footage ratio the two subject tenant spaces would be "allotted" 20 parking spaces, however, there is no assigned parking spaces in this development. Per the Pleasanton Municipal Code (PMC), this type of trade school use would require one parking space for each employee, including teachers and administrators, and one space for each two students age 16 or older. As proposed, the facility would have six full-time employees and 24 students at one time. Based on the PMC parking requirement, a total of 18 parking spaces would be needed for the facility (six parking spaces for six employees, and twelve parking spaces for 24 students). Thus, the "allocated" 20 parking spaces would sufficiently meet the projected demand.

Staff has also analyzed the possibility that each student and school employee commutes to and from the massage school separately. In this case, the proposed school would generate a parking demand of 30 parking spaces (24 students and six employees), which is 10 parking spaces more than the tenant space is “allocated” based on floor area. As it was previously mentioned, parking on the subject site is shared. The Bernal Plaza consists of businesses with various hours of operation. For instance, the adjoining tenant to the east is an after-school tutorial facility. The peak business hours are in the afternoon when students are dismissed from regular schools. Thus, there would be no conflict in parking demand between the afterschool tutoring use and the massage school’s morning session from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

The massage school’s evening session does not start until 6:50 p.m. At that time, the business with “regular” hours between 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., such as offices, banks, dry cleaners, etc. in the plaza have closed, but some other businesses are still open. For instance, the tutorial facility located to the east has its last weekday tutorial session end at 8:30 p.m. The tenants to the west are an insurance office and hair salons. The insurance office has “regular” 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. business hours, and the hair salon opens until 8:00 p.m. The hair salon has a low traffic volume during evening hours, and the tutorial center has staggered schedules so that not all the students are arriving and departing at the same time. Therefore, staff does not believe the proposed use would have a conflict in parking with either the hair salon or the tutorial facility.



♥ = restaurant

Staff has also evaluated potential parking conflicts with restaurants in the shopping center. The restaurants in the shopping center are located primarily on the south side of the building and staff believes most of their customers would park on this side of the building. Therefore, it is not anticipated there would be any parking conflicts between

the subject use and these restaurants. There is a restaurant located on the north side of the building, Suisha House, but is located several spaces to the west of the subject site and it is not anticipated there would be any parking conflicts between these businesses.

Wellness Center. The proposed wellness center is an ancillary program of the massage school. The wellness center would be open Monday through Friday from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. for wellness programs such as meditation and yoga classes. It also opens on weekends from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. for CPR, holistic lifestyles, nutrition, public safety, and senior wellness classes/workshops. The class/workshop would have up to 20 people attending. There would be two instructors teaching classes/workshops. As proposed, the wellness program would have less parking demand (20 students and two instructors) than the massage school (24 students and six employees), but, unlike the massage school, it would include weekday hours that coincide with the operation of “regular” 8:00 a.m. – 5:00p.m. business hours. However, the applicant has indicated that the students would be encouraged to carpool or take public transportation and that all students would receive reimbursement for using public transportation. Therefore, staff believes that the 20 “allocated” parking spaces should generally meet the parking demand for the wellness center given that some of the student enrolled in the wellness classes may carpool or take public transportation to and from the site.

Overall, staff believes there would be adequate parking to serve the use. However, should parking problem occurs in the future, staff has added a condition (No. 10) requiring that at the discretion of the Director of Community Development, this conditional use permit may be submitted to the Planning Commission for their subsequent review at a public hearing.

### Traffic and Circulation

Located on the northwest corner of Bernal Avenue and Valley Avenue, the site provides convenient vehicle access to enter/exit the site.

The City Traffic Engineer has reviewed the proposal and determined that the anticipated traffic from the massage school and wellness center would not require a traffic study to evaluate traffic and circulation. The Traffic Engineer has further determined that no traffic fees would be required as the proposed use would generate similar traffic during the peak hours compared to what was originally anticipated for the shopping center.

### Noise

The Pleasanton Municipal Code states that a proposed conditional use must be in accord with the objectives of the Zoning Ordinance. One of those objectives is to “promote the stability of existing land uses that conform with the General Plan and to protect them from inharmonious influences and harmful intrusions.” Based on the proposal, staff considers schools, such as the subject proposal, to be a quiet use as instruction would be provided at regular speaker’s voice level and that students would be focusing on academic exercises. Staff believes that noise from the massage school and wellness center would not negatively impact future or existing uses located

adjacent to the subject suites. To help ensure that noise would be contained indoors, a condition (No. 4) has been added requiring all doors and windows remain closed during business hours. Yoga and meditation classes are among those offered at the wellness center. To further limit potential noise impacts to surrounding tenants and properties, staff has added a condition (No.3) allowing soft background music to be played during wellness classes. Staff has also added a condition (No. 4) to not allow chanting in yoga or other classes in consideration of adjacent businesses. As proposed and conditioned, staff does not believe that noise from the proposed massage school and wellness center would be disruptive to existing or future neighboring businesses/tenants.

### Signage

If the applicant wishes to install any signage, the proposed signage would need to adhere to the Bernal Plaza sign program.

### **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 D for the Commission's reference. At the time this report was published, staff had not received any public comments.

### **FINDINGS**

The Planning Commission needs to make the following findings prior to granting the conditional use permit for the proposed business:

- 1. The proposed location of the conditional use is in accordance with the objectives of the zoning ordinance and the purpose of the district in which the site is located.**

Objectives of the Zoning Ordinance include: fostering a harmonious, convenient, workable relationship among land uses; protecting existing land use from inharmonious influences and harmful intrusions; and insuring that public and private lands ultimately are used for the purposes which are most appropriate and beneficial to the City as a whole. The proposed use would provide massage classes to students who have already graduated from a State recognized healing arts school. In addition, the wellness center offers fitness, nutrition and wellness classes/workshops to the community. The City has allowed similar uses to be located in office, industrial, and commercial areas. Staff is not aware that any of these teaching-oriented businesses have created any impacts on surrounding businesses. As conditioned, staff believes that the proposed use would be consistent with these objectives.

The subject site is zoned PUD-I/C-O (Planned Unit Development – Industrial/Commercial-Office) District, which permits a variety of commercial uses. Staff believes that establishing an education facility in this shopping center would be in accordance with the purposes of the Commercial zoning district to provide



locations to offer commodities and services to the residents of Pleasanton and surrounding areas. The proposed conditions of approval for the project give the City the appropriate controls to ensure that the use does not have any negative impacts on the surrounding businesses and properties. The use permit for the massage school and wellness center is, in staff's opinion, in accordance with the objectives of the zoning district.

Staff believes that this finding can be made.

**2. The proposed location of the conditional use and the conditions under which it would be operated or maintained will not be detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare, or materially injurious to the properties or improvements in the vicinity.**

Staff believes that the use, as conditioned, would not be detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare, or materially injurious to properties or improvements in the vicinity. The existing site has adequate parking to support the proposed use. The applicant would be required to receive all Building and Safety Division permits for any future tenant improvements. The massage school instruction would follow State codes required for a massage schools, class instruction would take place inside the tenant suite, and all doors/windows must remain closed when classes/sessions are in session. The use would not generate loud noise. In addition, staff has included a condition of approval requiring the applicant to mitigate any future nuisances as a result of the proposed use. Thus, staff does not believe that the proposed use would be disruptive to other businesses/tenants in the same building or on the same site.

Staff believes this finding can be made.

**3. The proposed conditional use will comply with each of the applicable provisions of the Zoning Ordinance.**

Chapter 18.124 of the Municipal Code states that, because of their unusual characteristics, conditional uses require special consideration so that they may be located properly with respect to their effects on surrounding properties. The PUD zoning of the subject building permits the establishment of "Educational Facilities" and similar uses subject to conditional use permit approval. Staff feels that the recommended conditions of approval will help to integrate the proposed use without detrimentally affecting the surrounding properties and the City in general. As with any use permit, this use can be suspended or revoked if the conditions are not met. As conditioned, the massage school and wellness center would comply with all applicable provisions of the Zoning Ordinance.

Staff believes this finding can be made.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

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

## **CONCLUSION**

Staff believes that the required use permit findings for the project can be met if the project is approved as conditioned. Conditions of approval have been included which will ensure that the safety and general welfare of the surrounding area is maintained. Staff is of the opinion that the proposed school and wellness center would provide a service to the community and that the proposed location is appropriate.

## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve Case P12-0017 by taking the following actions:

1. Make the required conditional use permit findings as listed in the staff report;  
and
2. Approve P12-0017 subject to the conditions listed in Exhibit A.

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