

**ELDORADO COUNTY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
STAFF REPORT**



Agenda of: February 23, 2006
Item No.: 9.a.
Staff: Jonathan Fong

STAFF REPORT - DESIGN REVIEW

FILE NUMBER: DR05-0025

APPLICANT: Amy and Moon Shim

AGENT: Hubbard Sign Company

REQUEST: Design review for a new freestanding double face internally illuminated sign. The dimensions of the pole sign are proposed to be a total of 18 feet tall with the sign face eight feet wide by six feet tall.

LOCATION: Pole sign to be constructed in the Diamond Springs Hotel parking lot, on the south side of Pleasant Valley Road, approximately 100 feet west of the intersection with Diamond Meadows Way, in the Diamond Springs area (Exhibit A).

APN: 054-387-18

ACREAGE: 0.22 acres (9583.2 square feet)

GENERAL PLAN: Commercial (C) (Exhibit B)

ZONING: Planned Commercial (CP) (Exhibit C)

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT: Categorical Exemption pursuant to Section 15311 of the CEQA Guidelines

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION: Conditional Approval

BACKGROUND: Built in the early 1900's, the Diamond Springs Hotel was one of the many hotels serving travelers in the Diamond Springs area at the time. The hotel is the lone survivor of

the boarding houses and hotels of the era. Since its use as a hotel, it has served as a bar in addition to being many different restaurants. The hotel currently functions as a restaurant featuring country style cuisine.

STAFF ANALYSIS

Project Description: The design review application is for a new free standing internally illuminated double face sign. The proposed sign is an overall height of 18 feet. The sign face is to be 48 square feet (eight feet wide by six feet high.) The sign is to be 16 inches thick. The pole sign is to sit atop a 12 foot high steel wall pipe. Lettering and pole color are to match the existing building colors (see Exhibit F).

The proposed sign will require a trench dug to allow installation of a 120 volt 20 amp circuit. Following installation of electrical equipment, the trench will be covered with stained black concrete.

Site Description: The Diamond Springs Hotel is located in the Diamond Springs business district on Pleasant Valley Road. Pleasant Valley Road, a major thoroughfare, provides heavy traffic flow in both directions.

Three signs currently exist on the site. A 21-square foot (three feet high by seven feet wide) flag sign is mounted on the front face of the building. The sign reads “Diamond Springs Hotel Good Eats.” A 28-square foot (four feet high by seven feet wide) banner sign is mounted to the stairway inside the parking lot. The sign displays the working hours of the restaurant and food specials. The third sign is mounted to support beams at the front of the restaurant. The sign is the same design as the sign in the parking lot (see Exhibit I).

Adjacent Land Uses:

	Zoning	General Plan	Land Use/Improvements
Site	CP	C	Restaurant
North	CP	C	Vacant commercial land
South	R1	MFR	Empty residential land
East	CP	C	Commercial office spaces
West	CP	C	Small retail shops

Discussion: There appears to be no conflict with the project and the surrounding uses.

General Plan: The General Plan designates the subject site as Commercial (C). This designation permits a full range of commercial, retail, office, and service uses to serve the residents, businesses, and visitors of El Dorado County.

Additionally, the following General Plan policies also apply to this project:

Policy 2.6.1.1: A Scenic Corridor Ordinance shall be prepared and adopted for the purpose of establishing standards for the protection of identified science local roads and State highways.

Policy 2.6.1.2: Until such time as the Scenic Corridor Ordinance is adopted, the County shall review all projects within designated State Scenic Highway corridors for compliance with State criteria.

Policy 2.6.1.8: In addition to items referenced in Policy 2.6.1.1, the Scenic Corridor Ordinance shall consider those portions of Highway 49 through El Dorado County that are appropriate for scenic highway designation and pursue nomination for designation as such by Caltrans.

Discussion: The project is located on the south side of Pleasant Valley Road (State Route 49). Although State Route 49 through El Dorado County is eligible for listing as a State Scenic Highway; it has not been designated as one by Cal Trans. The project site and vicinity is not identified by the County as a scenic view or resource as determined in the 2004 General Plan EIR.

Conclusion: As discussed above, staff finds that the project, as proposed, conforms to the General Plan.

Design Issues: The Community Design Guide prepared by the El Dorado County Planning Department offers design guidelines in an effort to promote good architecture in the County.

In the Design Review chapter of the guide, the intent of the ordinance is stated:

To promote good architecture, the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors has adopted a design review ordinance that regulates design within designated districts judged to be of a special natural beauty or contributing to the County's character and tourist economy.

The same ordinance provides design review for sites and structures of special historical interest for development in the visually sensitive mountain areas of El Dorado County. This ordinance is also intended to help in situations where there are buffer zones between residential and commercial development or special uses which may be desirable, but are attended by problems like noise and traffic congestion.

The "Signs" chapter of the design guide highlights key elements of sign design: compatibility, consistency, restraint, types of signs, simplicity, and lighting.

Signs are a necessary aid to commercial enterprise but need as careful handling as the building and site.

An excess of signs or wrong placing confuses a potential customer and destroys the sign's purpose.

Design Compatibility

Signs, their materials, size, color, lettering, location, and arrangement, should be an integral part of the site and building design and compatible with the surroundings.

Discussion: The abundance of different styles of signs in the Diamond Springs Business District reflects the character of the area. The design of the sign is compatible with the existing signage in the area (see Exhibits G and H).

Restraint

Signing should be simple, restrained and subordinate to the overall project design. A sign ought to attract and identify, but not dominate the site.

Discussion: The proposed sign is to be a total of 48 square feet (six feet tall by eight feet wide.) The restaurant is in a building approximately 5,000 square feet situated on a 10,000 square foot lot. As dimensioned, the sign would not dominate the site.

Types

Wall signs, graphic symbol signs and low profile free-standing signs are encouraged. Flashing, moving, and rotating signs are prohibited by County ordinance.

Discussion: The proposed sign is a free-standing pole sign which is permitted by County ordinance.

Simplicity

Signs should use minimum copy and suitable lettering and avoid garish materials and shape.

Discussion: The sign lettering and shape are consistent with those in the surrounding area.

Lighting

Subtle lighting and landscaping can enhance a sign's setting and draw attention to it. The light source should be screened.

Discussion: The sign is to be internally illuminated. The brightness of the sign is consistent with other signs in the County.

Other Design Issues: The lettering on the sign face is to read:

Diamond Springs Hotel
RESTAURANT
Country Cooking

The sign is to have an ivy green background outlined in dark red. The word "Restaurant," printed in large font, is the focal point of the sign. The color of the lettering is to be dark red outlined in black. In smaller lettering "Diamond Springs Hotel" is to be located at the top of the sign face printed in black. At the bottom of the sign face "Country Cooking" is printed in black lettering.

The purpose of establishing the Community Design Guide is to ensure that future signs are substantially compliant with the surrounding area. In reviewing the sign for consistency with the guidelines, the proposed sign meets the intent of establishing consistent design in the area.

Zoning: The subject site is zoned Planned Commercial (CP) which permits the proposed use on a minimum parcel size of 5,000 square feet. The site is 9,583 square feet which meets County zoning code.

The following zoning ordinances apply to this project:

Section 17.14.130 Architectural Supervision: In case an application is made for a permit for any structure where it faces a state highway, architectural drawings showing the elevations of the proposed building or structure shall accompany the application. The drawings or sketches shall be reviewed by the planning commission to provide the architectural and general appearance of the structure be in keeping with the character of the neighborhood.

Section 17.16.050 Location: Signs may be located in required yards or setbacks provided they do not constitute a hazard to pedestrians or vehicular traffic, do not conceal from view any public sign or traffic signal and are not located on extend onto or project over public right-of-way.

Discussion: The sign is proposed to be located inside the parking lot. The sign will be approximately five feet outside the unobstructed handicap access area. Although the location of the sign poses no hazard to vehicular traffic, the sign may be an obstruction to cars backing out of the handicap space.

Section 17.32.140 Uses requiring site plan approval: The following uses are allowed with special use permit or variance after receiving approval: two signs not exceeding 50 square feet in total area of any one display surface, or one sign not exceeding 80 square feet in area.

Discussion: Three signs exist on site. Pursuant to County code, the two existing banner signs must be removed prior to issuance of building permits for the proposed pole sign. The two banner signs are not permitted, because they were not previously approved through a design review application.

The banner signs are not exempt from the design review process because they are not wall signs. Section 17.74.040 E of the County zoning code establishes that wall signs are exempt from the review process. However, Section 17.16.030 of the County code defines wall signs as signs using the wall of a building. The banner signs on the project site are attached to a stairway lattice and covered sidewalk over hang, which are not integral parts of the building. Because the signs are not on integral parts of the building, they are not considered wall signs.

Staff recommends that the two banner signs be removed prior to issuance of a building permit for the new pole sign (reference Condition 2).

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This project has been found to be Categorical Exempt from the requirements of CEQA pursuant to Section 15311 “Accessory Structures” of the CEQA Guidelines.

Pursuant to Resolution No. 240-93, a \$35.⁰⁰ processing fee is required by the County Recorder to file the Notice of Exemption

RECOMMENDATION

1. Certify that the project is Categorical Exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15311; and
2. Approve Design Review DR05-0025 as the required findings can be made as noted in Attachment 2 based on the analysis in the staff report and the modification of the project to include conditions itemized in Attachment 1.

SUPPORT INFORMATION

Attachments to Staff Report:

Attachment 1	Conditions of Approval
Attachment 2	Findings
Exhibit A	Vicinity Map
Exhibit B	General Plan Land Use Map
Exhibit C	Zoning Map
Exhibit D	Parcelization Map
Exhibit E	Site Plan
Exhibit F	Sign Elevation
Exhibit G.....	Diamond Springs Business District Map
Exhibits H-1 through H-15.....	Photographs of signs in area
Exhibit I.....	Existing Signs on Site

ATTACHMENT 1 CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

FILE NUMBER DR05-0025

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

1. The project, as approved, shall conform to Exhibits E (site plan) and F (sign elevation).

El Dorado County Planning Services

2. The two existing banner signs must be removed prior to issuance of a building permit for the proposed pole sign.

El Dorado County Department of Transportation

3. No additional banner signs or free-standing signs shall be located in the public right-of-way or on the site.
4. This permit is valid for two years from the date of approval. If a building permit is not issued within two years, this permit will become null and void.

ATTACHMENT 2 FINDINGS

FILE NUMBER DR05-0025

Based on the review and analysis of this project by staff and affected agencies, and supported by discussion in the staff report and evidence in the record, the following findings can be made:

FINDINGS FOR APPROVAL

CEQA

1. The project has been found to be Categorical Exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15311 "Accessory Structures."

Administrative Findings

2. The proposed use and design conforms to the county General Plan policies

The General Plan designates the subject parcel as Commercial (C) which provides a full range of commercial, retail, office, and service uses to the residents, businesses, and visitors of El Dorado County.

3. The proposed use and design will not be detrimental to the public health, safety, and welfare, nor injurious to the neighborhood.

The sign complies with section 17.32.140 of the zoning restricting the number of signs on a parcel to two signs not exceeding fifty square feet in total area of any one display surface, or one sign not exceeding eighty square feet in area, advertising authorized activities on the premises.