



**DEVELOPMENT REVIEW  
COMMITTEE  
STAFF REPORT  
June 28, 2022**

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**Prepared by:** Lance E. Lowe, AICP, Principal Planner  
**Reviewed by:** Thomas Last, Community Development Director

**DATA SUMMARY:**

**Application Number:** 22PLN-21  
**Subject:** Development Review and Use Permit for an existing ±6,200 sq. ft. hotel building remodel and new ±6,400 sq. ft. hotel with related site improvements.  
**Location/APN:** 1012 Sutton Way/035-400-026  
**Applicant/Owner:** Christopher Gage, Siteline Architecture  
**Zoning/General Plan:** Office Professional (O-P) Zone/Office Professional  
**Entitlement:** Development Review & Use Permit  
**Environmental Status:** Categorical Exemption

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

The Development Review Committee recommend that the Planning Commission approve the Best Western Hotel project as presented, or as modified by the Development Review Committee, which includes the following actions:

1. Determine the project Categorical Exempt as the appropriate level of environmental review in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and Guidelines;
2. Adoption of Findings of Fact for approval of the Best Western Hotel project as presented in the Staff Report; and,
3. Approval of the project in accordance with the Conditions of Approval as presented in the Staff Report.

**BACKGROUND:**

The Best Western Conference Center, located at 1012 Sutton Way, appears to have been constructed circa 1970's consisting of a ±6,200 sq. ft. building with related parking and landscaping on an approximate 1-acre triangular site. The majority of the site is undeveloped with large expanses of asphalt paving. The building lacks architectural interest consisting of single plane walls; T-111 siding painted in an earth tone color; and mansard roof with slate roofing.

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

The applicant is requesting a Development Review and Use Permit for the remodel of the existing ±6,200 sq. ft. Best Western Conference Center building and new ±6,400 sq. ft. hotel for Best Western, including site and landscaping improvements in the Office Professional (OP) Zone. The remodeled and new hotel buildings include 13 and 14 rooms respectively for a total of 27 rooms. The O-P Zone permits hotel buildings contingent upon Development Review Permit (i.e., Design Review) approval for site plan and architectural building design in accordance with the City's Design Guidelines and Development Code Standards. A Use Permit is required for Hotels in the OP Zone per Table 2 – 10 of the Development Code.

The project plans include the following details:

*Site Plan* – The ±6,200 remodeled Best Western Conference Center building is located at the south end of the property ±20 feet from the south property line adjoining the existing Best Western Hotel. The building is setback ±60 feet from the front property line; ±100 feet from Highway 20/49; and ±36 feet from the proposed new hotel building.

The new ±6,400 Best Western Hotel building is located ±40 feet from the front property line; ±40 feet from Highway 20/49; and ±120 feet from the north property line.

*Access, Parking & Circulation* – Access to the site is via an existing, centrally located, ±33-foot-wide driveway connecting with Sutton Way. The driveway connects to a 12-foot-wide one-way ingress/egress drive isle connecting with a 15-stall parking lot and landscaping at the north end of the site.

An existing 24-foot access isle is proposed between the buildings serving the 9-stall parking lot in the rear of the property. The existing 24-foot drive isle serves the existing 7-stall parking lot in the front of the property. A total of thirty-one parking spaces are provided consisting of 2 compact spaces; 2 van accessible spaces; and 2 accessible spaces.

*Landscaping* – A landscaping plan has been submitted with the project plans (Sheet L1). The landscaping consists of a combination of grasses/shrubs/perennials and ornamental trees including Sage, California Lilac, Oregon Grape, Trident Maple, Golden Rain Tree, and existing trees. Total landscaped area represents ±6,105 square feet or 14% of the ±1-acre site.

*Architectural Design* – Architectural plans and detailing for the remodeled and new buildings include the following design components:

- Manufactured stone veneer – Eldorado Stone (Dry Creek);
- Shed awnings with metal standing seam roof (Accluvium);
- Perpendicular awnings with T&G ceiling and recessed lighting (Smokewood);
- Horizontal wood siding 12-inch rough sawn wood (Island Mist);

- Horizontal fiber cement lap siding with 6-inch lap on second story (Old World Romance);
- Board and Batt siding under canopies (Old World Romance);
- Metal roofing awnings, horizontal awnings (Dark Bronze);
- Doors and windows (Espresso);
- Existing roofing tile (Medium Brown)

A color materials board is provided on Sheet A.5.5.

*Lighting* – Lighting consists of a combination of pole site lighting, wall sconce lighting and under canopy lighting. Goose neck lighting is proposed to illuminate the proposed signage on the west elevation. A photometric plan has been prepared together with the building plans to show the type of fixture and foot-candle in accordance with City of Grass Valley Standards.

*Trash Enclosure* – A roofed trash enclosure exists at the north end of the site. The trash enclosure materials consist of corrugated metal siding with corrugated metal roofing. A new trash enclosure is proposed at the west end of the site. No trash enclosure details are provided. Landscaping is proposed on all non-accessible sides.

*Signage* – An existing ±40-foot pylon sign is proposed to be demolished at the center of the site. An existing monument sign fronts the existing Conference Center building. A new channel lettered wall sign is proposed at the gable on the west elevation fronting Highway 20/49.

*Drainage* – The property drains from west to east onto Sutton Way with drainage inlets are located south of the project site.

#### **SITE DESCRIPTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING:**

The ±1-acre triangular site is bordered by Sutton Way to the east and State Route 20/49 to the west. Mature landscaping and trees exist in the Caltrans right-of-way screening much of the site from the freeway views. Commercial uses are located to the north, south and east of the project site (**Attachment 3 – Site Photographs**).

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:**

The project qualifies for a Class 32 Categorical Exemption. A Class 32 consists of projects characterized as in-fill development meeting the following conditions: (a) the project is consistent with the applicable general plan designation and all applicable general plan policies as well as with applicable zoning designation and regulations; (b) the proposed development occurs within city limits on a project site of no more than five acres substantially surrounded by urban uses; (c) the project site has no value as habitat for endangered, rare or threatened species; (d) approval of the project would not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality; (e) the site is adequately served by all required utilities and public services.

## **GENERAL PLAN AND ZONING:**

**General Plan:** The project area has a land use designation of Office Professional according to the City of Grass Valley 2020 General Plan. The Office Professional designation provides for concentrations of free-standing offices and large office complexes.

**Zoning:** The property is within the Office Professional (O-P) Zone District. Per Table 2-10, hotels are permitted uses with approval of a Use Permit.

## **ANALYSIS:**

In review of the project with respect to compliance with the City's Community Design Guidelines and Development Code, staff offers the following for Development Review Committee consideration:

*Parking* – A total of 31 on-site parking spaces are provided, including 4 ADA accessible parking spaces and 2 compact spaces. The parking space dimensions are 9 feet by 18 feet with backing distances of 24 feet in compliance with City Parking Standards. Table 3-3 of the City's Development Code requires 1 space for each unit, plus 2 spaces for the manager or owner for the hotel requiring a total of 29 parking spaces.

Condition of Approval No. A – 3 requires that if needed to accommodate additional landscaping as noted below, two parking spaces may be eliminated for a total of 27 parking spaces.

*Landscaping* – Landscape planters of ±5 feet are proposed along the Sutton Way frontage with limited planters along fronting State Highway 20/49. The City's Development Code requires 10-foot and 6-foot planters in front and rear yards respectively. Although tight due to the shape of the lot, the preference is to increase the landscaping along the frontage considering mature trees and landscaping exists along the Caltrans right-of-way as seen from the freeway. Increasing the landscape planter in the front yard may be accomplished by reducing the landscaping planter in the rear yard of the new building and shifting the building west. Moreover, additional landscaping should be added to the front entryway of the remodeled conference center.

Condition of Approval No. A – 4 requires the planter fronting Sutton Way to be 10-feet or as wide as practicable. An additional planter shall be installed at the entryway of the remodeled conference center.

Conditions of Approval E1 – 4 also requires the final landscaping to comply with the State's Model Water Efficiency Landscape Ordinance.

*Architectural Design* – The proposed building design contains architectural components similar to buildings in the area, with compatible materials and architectural features. Staff is recommending two minor modifications. Condition of Approval No. A – 5 requires the following architectural modifications for DRC consideration:

- Remodeled Building - The canopy should be extended to the south over the door thereby eliminating the perpendicular awning.
- Remodeled and New Buildings - Gooseneck lighting shall replace the wall sconce lighting on the east elevations and at the doorways.

*Fencing* – No new fencing is proposed with the project. An existing chain link fence exists along the Cal-Trans right-of-way. Condition of Approval No. A – 6 requires that, if approved by Caltrans, new black metal fencing or equivalent shall be installed along the Caltrans right-of-way for the entirety of the property replacing the existing chain link fencing. The new fencing shall be shown on the improvement plans and constructed to the satisfaction of the Community Development Director and Caltrans.

*Trash Enclosure* – The trash enclosure at the north end of the site should be upgraded to current design standards consistent with the proposed trash enclosure at the southwest corner of the property. Condition of Approval A – 7 requires the trash enclosures to be constructed of six-foot high masonry walls with solid metal gates. Enclosure finishes shall match the building in color and texture and should natural materials. Landscaping shall be installed on all non-accessible sides.

*Signage* – The wall signage on the west elevation is inconsistent with the City's Design Standards and Development Code in that it is a freeway-oriented sign and is located above the eve or parapet of the building. It should be noted that a similar sign exists on the Best Western Hotel building adjoining the project site to the south. An identical sign at this location is therefore redundant.

Condition of Approval A – 8 requires the wall signage to be removed as being inconsistent with the City's Design Guidelines and Development Code. The existing pylon sign shall be demolished as proposed. Prior to the modification of the monument, the applicant shall obtain a sign permit from the Community Development Department.

Fire Department Conditions of Approval F 3 & 4 require fire apparatus access due to the height of the building. Landscaping shall not obstruct fire apparatus access to the drive aisles and or building.

#### **ATTACHMENTS:**

- Attachment 1** – Vicinity Map
- Attachment 2** – Aerial Photograph
- Attachment 3** – Site Photographs
- Attachment 4** – Findings and Conditions of Approval
- Attachment 5** – Best Western Project Plans



# ATTACHMENTS

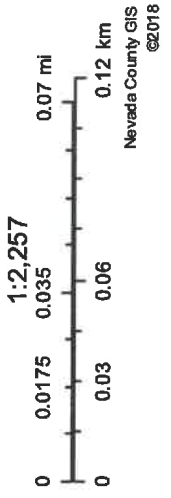


ATTACHMENT 1





ATTACHMENT 2







ATTACHMENT 3

**FINDINGS & CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL  
BEST WESTERN HOTEL DEVELOPMENT REVIEW AND USE PERMIT  
(22PLN-21)**

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**FINDINGS:**

In accordance with Sections 17.81.060 and 17.72.030 of the Development Code the Planning Commission is required to make specific findings before it approves a Development Review and Use Permit.

1. The City received a complete application for Development Review Application 22PLN-21.
2. The Community Development Department determined the project is Categorically Exempt as the appropriate environmental review in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).
3. The Grass Valley Development Review Committee reviewed the application at its regularly scheduled meeting on June 28, 2022.
4. The Planning Commission has considered the recommendations of the Development Review Committee, including the proposed Categorical Exemption at its regularly scheduled meeting on July 19, 2022.
5. The project is consistent with the applicable sections and development standards in the Development Code.
6. The project, as conditioned, complies with the City of Grass Valley Community Design Guidelines.
7. The proposed use is allowed within the applicable zone and complies with all other applicable provisions of this Development Code and the Municipal Code.
8. The design, location, size, and operating characteristics of the proposed activity are compatible with the existing and future land uses in the vicinity.

**A. GENERAL CONDITIONS:**

1. The approval date for this project is July 19, 2022. The Development Review and Use Permit are approved for a period of 1 year and shall expire on July 19, 2023, unless the project has been effectuated (i.e. building permit has been obtained) or the applicant requests a time extension that is approved by the Grass Valley Planning Commission pursuant to the Development Code.
2. The project shall be constructed in accordance with the plans approved by the Planning Commission for Development Review Permit 22PLN-21 unless changes are approved by the Planning Commission prior to commencing such changes. Minor design changes may be approved by the Community Development Department as determined appropriate by the Community Development Director.

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Major changes, as determined by the Community Development Director, shall be approved by the Planning Commission.

3. If needed to accommodate additional landscaping, two parking spaces may be eliminated for a total of 27 parking spaces. The revised site plan shall be to the satisfaction of the Community Development Director and City Engineer.
4. The landscape planter along the property frontage of the new building shall be increased to ten (10) feet or as wide as practicable. This will require the landscape planter in the rear to be reduced and the building moved to the west. Also, landscaping shall be provided in the front of the remodeled Conference Center. The final design shall be to the satisfaction of the Community Development Director.
5. The following architectural modifications shall be incorporated:
  - a. Remodeled Building - The canopy shall be extended to the south over the door thereby eliminating the perpendicular awning.
  - b. Remodeled and New Buildings - Gooseneck lighting shall replace the wall sconce lighting on the east elevation and at the doorways.
6. If approved by Caltrans, new black metal fencing or equivalent shall be installed along the Caltrans right-of-way for the entirety of the property replacing the existing chain link fencing. The new fencing shall be shown on the improvement plans and constructed to the satisfaction of the Community Development Director and Caltrans.
7. The trash enclosures shall be constructed of six-foot high masonry walls with solid metal gates. Enclosure finishes shall match the building in color and texture and should include natural materials. Landscaping shall be installed on all non-accessible sides.
8. The existing pylon sign shall be demolished as proposed. The proposed wall signage shall be removed from the plans as being inconsistent with the City's Design Guidelines and Sign Ordinance. Prior to the modification of the monument, the applicant shall obtain a sign permit from the Community Development Department.
9. All trash and storage areas, mechanical equipment, and all other building appurtenances (i.e. utility meters, electrical boxes, air conditioners, fire sprinkler backflow valves, etc.) shall be screened from public view and adjacent properties. Details shall be shown on the final construction and/or improvement plans. All screening materials shall be consistent with the main building materials and colors. Roof-mounted screens and vents shall be compatible with the final roof materials and colors.
10. Energy efficient LED lighting and high efficiency HVAC and appliances shall be used for the project.

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11. Prior to construction, the applicant shall obtain the requisite building, plumbing, mechanical and electrical permits from the building division, in compliance with the California Codes.
12. The applicant shall pay all City impact fees prior to issuance of a grading and/or building permit or issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy, as applicable.
13. With five (5) days of approval of the project, the applicant shall record the Notice of Exemption (NOE) with the Nevada County Clerk/Recorder.
14. The applicant agrees to defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the City of Grass Valley in any action or proceeding brought against the City of Grass Valley to void or annul this discretionary land use approval.

**B. PRIOR TO ISSUANCE OF GRADING PERMIT, THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS SHALL BE SATISFIED:**

1. The applicant shall submit to the City Engineer for review and approval, an improvements and grading plan prepared by a Registered Civil Engineer; shall obtain a Grading Permit; and shall pay all appropriate fees for plan check and inspection. The grading and improvement plans shall include but not be limited to roadway/driveway/parking lot slopes and elevations, curb, gutters, sidewalks, striping and signing, paving, water and sewer pipelines, storm drains, street/parking lot lights, accessible access from the sidewalk to the building and from the accessible parking spaces to the building, retaining walls, any necessary alteration of existing utilities, and all easements, in accordance with City Improvement Standards.
2. The applicant shall submit to the City Engineer for review and acceptance two copies of a detailed Soils Engineering Report and Engineering Geology Report certified by a Civil Engineer registered in the State of California. In addition to the California Building Code requirements, the report shall specify the pavement structural sections for the proposed roadways in relation to the proposed traffic indexes. The improvements and grading plans shall incorporate the recommendations of the approved Soils Engineering Report and Engineering Geology Report. The project developer shall retain a civil engineer, soils engineer, and engineering geologist to provide professional inspection of the grading operations. If work is observed as not being in compliance with the California Building Code and the approved improvements and grading plans, the discrepancies shall be reported immediately in writing to the permittee, the building official, and the Engineering Division.
3. The applicant shall submit to the City Engineer for review and approval, drainage plans and hydrologic and hydraulic calculations in accordance with the City of Grass Valley Improvement Standards and Storm Drainage Master Plan & Criteria. All on-site drainage shall be treated prior to discharge to the City drainage system to eliminate the potential for any toxins to reach local waterways.



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4. If the project creates and/or replaces 5,000 sf. or more of impervious surfaces, measures must be implemented for site design, source control, runoff reduction, storm water treatment and baseline hydro modification management measures per the City of Grass Valley Design Standards.
5. If more than 50 cubic yards of soil is disturbed with the project, a detailed grading, permanent erosion control and landscaping plan shall be submitted for review and approval by the Engineering Division prior to commencing grading. Erosion control measures shall be implemented in accordance with the approved plans. Any expenses made by the City to enforce the required erosion control measures will be paid by deposit.
6. The improvements and grading plans shall be signed by all other jurisdictional agencies involved (i.e. NID), prior to receiving City Engineer approval.
7. Per the Development Code, the Grading Permit shall expire one (1) year from the effective date of the permit unless an extension is granted by the City Engineer (for up to 180 days).
8. Further development of the site shall require the installation of sidewalk along the entire frontage of the parcel. The current asphalt driveway shall be replaced with ADA compliant concrete driveways per City Standard Detail ST – 9. All sidewalk fronting the property with cracks greater than ¼ inch in width and ½ or more vertical displacement shall be replaced.
9. The applicant shall submit final landscape and irrigation plans, prepared by a licensed landscape architect, for review and approval by the Planning and Engineering Divisions. Landscaping design shall comply with all provisions of the City's Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance.
10. A sewer backflow prevention device and pressure relief valve shall be required.

**C. PRIOR TO INITIATING GRADING AND/OR CONSTRUCTION OF THE SITE IMPROVEMENTS FOR THE PROJECT, THE DEVELOPER SHALL COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING:**

1. Prior to any work being conducted within the State, County or City right-of-way, the applicant shall obtain an Encroachment Permit from the appropriate Agency(s).
2. A minimum of forty-eight (48) hours prior to commencement of grading activities, the developer's contractor shall notify both the Community Development Department and Engineering Division of the intent to begin grading operations. Prior to notification, all grade stakes shall be in place identifying limits of all cut and fill activities. After notification, Community Development and Engineering staff shall be provided the opportunity to field review the grading limits to ensure conformity with

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the approved improvement and grading plans. If differences are noted in the field, grading activities shall be delayed until the issues are resolved.

3. The applicant shall submit two copies to the Engineering Division of the signed improvement/grading plans.

**D. DURING CONSTRUCTION, THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS SHALL APPLY:**

1. If prehistoric or historic-period archaeological resources or human remains are encountered during grading or excavation, work shall avoid altering the materials and their context until a qualified professional has evaluated, recorded, and determined appropriate treatment of the resource, in consultation with the City. Project personnel shall not collect cultural resources. Cultural resources shall be recorded on DPR 523 historic resource recordation forms. If it is determined that the proposed development could damage a unique archaeological resource, mitigation shall be implemented in accordance with Public Resources Code Section 21083.2 and Section 15126.4 of the CEQA Guidelines, with a preference for preservation in place. If human remains are discovered, mitigation shall be implemented in compliance with CEQA section 15064.5.
2. If any hazardous waste is encountered during the construction of this project, all work shall be immediately stopped and the Nevada County Environmental Health Department, the Fire Department, the Police Department, and the City Inspector shall be notified immediately. Work shall not proceed until clearance has been issued by all these agencies.
3. The developer shall keep adjoining public streets free and clean of project dirt, mud, materials, and debris during the construction period.
4. Where soil or geologic conditions encountered in grading operations are different from that anticipated in the soil and/or geologic investigation report, or where such conditions warrant changes to the recommendations contained in the original soil investigation, a revised soil or geologic report shall be submitted by the applicant, for approval by the City Engineer. It shall be accompanied by an engineering and geological opinion as to the safety of the site from hazards of land slippage, erosion, settlement, and seismic activity.
5. Where trucks may transport excavated material off-site unless the loads are adequately wetted and either covered with tarps or loaded such that the material does not touch the front, back or sides of the cargo compartment at any point less than six inches to the top of the cargo compartment. Also, all excavated material must be properly disposed of in accordance with the City's Standard Specifications.
6. The contractor shall comply with all Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) requirements.

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7. Construction and demolition waste recycling shall occur in accordance with Waste Management requirements.
8. For any public work, the contractor shall comply with all Department of Industrial relations (DIR) requirements including complying with prevailing wage requirements.

**E. PRIOR TO ISSUANCE OF A CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY:**

1. The applicant shall obtain final approval from the City of Grass Valley, fire, planning, engineering, and building divisions.
2. The applicant's landscape architect shall submit a letter specifying that the landscaping and irrigation has been installed in accordance with the approved landscape plans.
3. The applicant's landscape architect or landscape contractor shall submit to the City for approval the "certificate of completion" form as required by MWELo.
4. The applicant shall conduct an irrigation audit pursuant to the requirements of the MWELo. This shall be conducted by a third-party certified landscape irrigation auditor that did not install or design the landscape and irrigation. Prior to the audit City must confirm the selected auditor complies with MWELo requirements.

**F. FIRE DEPARTMENT:**

1. The conversion of the existing building from a Group A – 3 Occupancy to a Group R – 1 Occupancy will require a change of occupancy.
2. All existing fire protection systems shall be modified as necessary to provide proper coverage for the new Group R – 1 Occupancy building.
3. The proposed building height is 32-feet, 9-inches, which exceeds the maximum building height of 30-feet allowable for regular fire apparatus access. The project will require Aerial Fire Apparatus Access in accordance with 2019 CFC Appendix D, Section D105 and its sub-sections.
4. Landscape shall not obstruct fire apparatus access to the drive aisles and/or the building when planted and/or when it has reached mature growth heights. The proposed landscape plan appears to have issues with both.

**G. NEVADA IRRIGATION DISTRICT:**

1. NID will require sufficient Right-of-Way for any proposed facilities, if necessary.
2. Appropriate backflow prevention will be required on any and all connections to NID's system, at applicant's expense.