



**TOWN OF LOS GATOS  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
REPORT**

MEETING DATE: 09/11/2019

ITEM NO: 3

DATE: September 5, 2019

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Joel Paulson, Community Development Director

SUBJECT: Architecture and Site Application S-19-032. Project Location: **400 Carlton Avenue**. Applicant: Gary Kohlsaas. Property Owner: T&M Properties. Requesting approval of a modification to an approved Architecture and Site application for demolition of two existing medical office buildings and construction of a new medical office building on property zoned O. APN 424-12-098.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Approval, subject to the recommended conditions of approval.

**PROJECT DATA:**

General Plan Designation: Office Professional

Zoning: O, Office

Applicable Plans & Standards: Commercial Design Guidelines

Parcel Size: 19,466 square feet (0.45 acres)

Surrounding Area:

	Existing Land Use	General Plan Land Use Designation	Zoning
North	Residential and Office	Low Density Residential and Office Professional	R-1:8 and O
South	Office	Office Professional	O
East	Office	Office Professional	O
West	Residential	Medium Density Residential and Low Density Residential	RD and R-1:8

**PREPARED BY:** Sean Mullin, AICP  
Associate Planner

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Reviewed by: Planning Manager and Community Development Director

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CEQA:

The project is Categorically Exempt pursuant to the adopted Guidelines for the Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act, Section 15303: New Construction of Small Structures.

FINDINGS:

- That the proposed project is Categorically Exempt pursuant to the adopted Guidelines for the Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act, Section 15303: New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures.
- As required by Section 29.10.09030(e) of the Town Code for demolition of existing structures.
- That the proposed project is consistent with the Commercial Design Guidelines.

CONSIDERATIONS:

- As required by Section 29.20.150 of the Town Code for granting approval of an Architecture and Site application.

ACTION:

The decision of the Planning Commission is final unless appealed within ten days.

BACKGROUND:

The project site is approximately 19,466 square feet (0.45 acres) currently developed with two medical office buildings totaling 3,160 square feet.

On January 10, 2018, the Planning Commission approved Architecture and Site application S-17-002 for demolition of the two existing medical office buildings and construction of a new two-story medical office building with below-grade and at-grade parking. On June 4, 2019, the applicant submitted Architecture and Site application S-19-032 for modification to the approved application, eliminating the below-grade parking and reducing the size of the two-story medical office building by approximately 1,500 square feet.

As noted in the table above, the surrounding area contains a mix of uses that are consistent with either the General Plan land use designation or Zone, or both. Single-family residential, and office uses are located to the north of the project site across Carlton Avenue. Office uses are located south and east of the project site; and single-family and two-family residential uses are located to the west, across Jo Drive.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

A. Location and Surrounding Neighborhood

The project site is located on the southeast corner of Carlton Avenue and Jo Drive. Access to the project site is provided on Carlton Avenue and Jo Drive.

B. Project Summary

The applicant is requesting approval of a modification to an Architecture and Site application for demolition of the two existing office buildings and construction of a new two-story medical office building.

C. Zoning Compliance

A medical office use is a permitted use in the O zone.

DISCUSSION:

A. Architecture and Site Analysis

The applicant proposes demolition of the two existing medical office buildings and construction of a new two-story medical office building. Specifically, the project would consist of a 6,500 square foot, two-story Spanish Mediterranean style building. The ground floor would include 866 square feet of medical office space; two stairways and an elevator totaling 612 square feet; and a trash enclosure. The second floor would include 5,022 square feet of medical office space. Eight covered surface parking spaces would be adjacent to the ground floor lobby of the building, and 18 surface parking spaces would be located in the rear and south side uncovered parking lots, for a total of 26 parking spaces.

The proposed 6,500-square foot, Spanish-style medical office building would have a maximum height of 31 feet, seven inches. Materials would consist of smooth stucco siding painted white and beige, terra cotta tile roof, wood trellises, tile accents, and metal railings. A color and materials board will be available at the public hearing.

B. Zoning

The existing and proposed medical office use on the property is an allowed use in the O zone. Permitted uses in the O zone include offices, professional, medical, dental, and optical laboratories associated with a professional use, real estate, insurance, stocks and bonds; and other similar offices characterized by absence of retail sales. The proposed

DISCUSSION (continued):

project would meet the required setbacks, lot coverage, and height requirements for the O zone.

The proposed building coverage would be 30 percent of the site and the maximum height would be 31 feet, seven inches, both of which are consistent with the zoning designation for the site that allows up to 40 percent building coverage and has a 35-foot height limit.

The required and proposed setbacks in the O zone are described in the following table:

Setback	Required	Proposed
Front	25 feet	25 feet
Side	10 feet	30 feet
Street Side	15 feet	15 feet
Rear	20 feet	31 feet

C. Design and Compatibility

The Town's Architectural Consultant reviewed the project and provided recommendations regarding the architecture and neighborhood compatibility (Exhibit 5) listed in *italics* below with analysis following. The Consultant acknowledged that the revised project presents a more cohesive design than the original. The Consultant recommended several areas requiring refinement:

1. *Ground floor plan organization of lobby courtyard and trash.*

The project includes a ground-floor trash enclosure with a minimal passageway for service access. The trash bins are fenced and gated, screening them from view. The main power transformer and electrical panels are located adjacent to the trash enclosure. This area is not intended for the general public and does not include a pathway from the parking lot or the sidewalk along Jo Drive. The applicant has incorporated additional landscape screening to reduce the visual impact of the utility boxes along Jo Drive.

2. *Better ground floor visual separation of the under-structure parking area from the lobby courtyard and the pedestrian entries from the street and rear parking lot including more screening at the arched opening into the parking area.*

The covered parking area is adjacent to the lobby courtyard. The covered parking area includes accessible parking and the required path-of-travel into the lobby courtyard area, which constrains the use of visual separations between these areas. Additionally, introducing walls between the two areas would decrease natural light into the lobby

DISCUSSION (continued):

courtyard area. To better visually separate the pedestrian entries from the street and rear parking lot, the applicant has incorporated additional landscape screening in the arched openings that do not provide pedestrian access into the lobby courtyard, further delineating the access paths.

3. *Adding additional landscaping, if possible, along the rear parking lot facade. Possibilities include trees in the interface between parking spaces and climbing vine planting against the rear of the structure.*

Given the constraints of the site, introducing additional landscaping along the rear façade of the building is challenging. The applicant has incorporated landscaping, including new trees, on all sides of the proposed building. The configuration of the rear parking lot is consistent with Town Code parking lot requirements for dimensions and landscaping.

4. *Adding additional medical office windows at the building corner facing the Carlton Avenue/Jo Drive intersection.*

The walls in this location enclose two bathrooms in the ground floor office; therefore, introducing windows in this location may create other issues. The applicant responded to this recommendation by increasing the visual interest at the building corner facing Carlton Avenue by introducing a decorative niche with metal rail accents, in addition to the previously proposed wood trellis (Exhibit 7, Sheet A-6).

5. *Improved delineation of the building's sense of entry at the entry arches on the front and rear facades.*

Three arched openings are included on the front façade, with one providing pedestrian access to the covered parking and lobby courtyard (Exhibit 7, Sheet A-6). The applicant has included additional landscape screening at the eastern arched openings, clearly delineating the pedestrian access point from the other arched openings leading to the parking area. Similarly, additional landscaping has been added to the two arched openings on the rear elevation. Additionally, the applicant shifted some parking spaces to create a wider space between spaces #7 and #8 to ease pedestrian passage through the parked cars toward the entry arch.

Story poles have been placed on the site to aid in the review of the project. The poles and netting have been in place since August 28, 2019.

DISCUSSION (continued):

D. Tree Impacts

The revised project would be sited in the same footprint as the previously approved project and the tree impacts would be similar. The Town's Consulting Arborist reviewed the previous project and provided recommendations in a report dated February 10, 2017 (Exhibit 6).

The previously approved project included the removal of seven protected Olive trees to accommodate the proposed office building. The revised design reduces the number of trees proposed for removal to five. The trees range in size from 10 inches to 32 inches and have condition ratings from fair to poor. The applicant is required by Town Code to replace the protected trees proposed for removal at a rate determined by the canopy size of the tree to be removed. In this case, each of the five trees requires that three 24-inch box trees be planted to mitigate their removal for a total of 15 trees. Due to site constraints, 15 trees cannot be planted on site to offset the proposed tree removal. The applicant proposes to plant eight 24-inch box trees on site and pay in-lieu fees to offset the removal of the trees, as indicated in Condition 10 of Exhibit 3.

The Arborist Report provides recommendations for protecting the trees that are to remain. The recommendations are contained in Exhibit 6, and Condition 7 of Exhibit 3 has been added requiring implementation of these recommendations.

E. Parking and Traffic

The parking standards for medical offices in the Town Code require one parking space for each 250 square feet of office space, or six parking spaces for each doctor; whichever is more restrictive. Based on the square footage parking requirement, the proposed 6,500-square foot medical office building requires 26 parking spaces on site to meet the Town Code parking regulations. The applicant proposes 26 at-grade parking spaces, meeting Town Code requirements. Given the 26 parking spaces required for the 6,500-square foot building, the parking would allow for a maximum of four doctors on site at any given time. Staff has included this limitation as Condition 3 of Exhibit 3.

The site would take access from two driveways located on Carlton Avenue and Jo Drive, consistent with the current access to the site. Both driveways would provide access to the parking areas.

The Town's Traffic Engineer reviewed the proposed project and determined that the new office building would generate 116 additional average daily trips over the traffic generated by the existing buildings. This increase in average daily trips will require payment of traffic

DISCUSSION (continued):

mitigation fees pursuant to the Traffic Impact Policy, as indicated in Condition 13 of Exhibit 3. A Traffic Study is not required.

F. General Plan

The 2020 General Plan land use designation for the site is Office Professional. The proposed project meets the Office Professional requirements for building coverage and height. This designation provides for professional and general business offices, including medical offices. This designation applies to various locations concentrated along the Town's commercial corridors, often in close proximity to neighborhood- or community-oriented commercial facilities, or as a buffer between commercial and residential uses. The intent of this designation is to satisfy the community's need for general business and professional services and local employment.

The proposed building is adjacent to residential and office uses. The proposed building design includes massing and materials consistent with the Spanish Mediterranean style. The single-family residential uses fronting the project site consist of one- and two-story homes, consistent with the proposed two-story office building. Additionally, the project meets or exceeds all required setbacks, shares no property lines with residential uses, and is located across Carlton Avenue and Jo Drive from the homes which allows for a larger buffer between the project and the adjacent residential uses.

In addition to maintaining neighborhood quality, the 2020 General Plan Land Use Element focuses on maintaining a "full-service" Town that provides a range of goods and services that support economic vitality, while limiting adverse impacts on the quality of life of all the residents.

Applicable goals and policies of the 2020 General Plan include, but are not limited to the following:

- Goal LU-4: To provide for well-planned, careful growth that reflects the Town's existing character and infrastructure.
- Policy: LU-6.3: Protect existing residential areas from adjacent non-residential uses by assuring that buffers are developed and maintained.
- Goal CD-1: Preserve and enhance Los Gatos's character through exceptional community design.
- Policy CD-1.4: Development on all elevations shall be of high-quality design and construction, a positive addition to and compatible with the Town's ambiance. Development shall enhance the character and unique identity of existing commercial and/or residential neighborhoods.

DISCUSSION (continued):

- Goal CD-2: To limit the intensity of new development to a level that is consistent with surrounding development and with the Town at large.
- Policy CD-3.9: Parking structures and facilities shall have a low profile, be screened from view and be aesthetically pleasing.

G. CEQA Determination

The project is Categorically Exempt pursuant to the adopted Guidelines for the Implementation of California Environmental Quality Act, Section 15303: New Construction of Small Structures.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Written comments received before 11:00 A.M. on Friday, September 6, 2019, are included as Exhibit 8.

CONCLUSION:

A. Summary

The applicant is requesting approval of an Architecture and Site application for demolition of two existing medical office buildings and construction of a new two-story medical office building. The project is well designed and sympathetic to the properties in the immediate area. The project is also consistent with the Zoning, General Plan, and applicable Commercial Design Guidelines.

B. Recommendation

Based on the analysis above, staff recommends approval of the Architecture and Site application subject to the recommended conditions of approval (Exhibit 3). If the Planning Commission finds merit with the proposed project, it should:

1. Find that the proposed project is Categorically Exempt, pursuant to the adopted Guidelines for the implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act, Section 15303: New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures (Exhibit 2);
2. Make the required findings as required by Section 29.10.09030 of the Town Code for granting approval for demolition of the existing structures (Exhibit 2);
3. Make the required finding that the project complies with the Commercial Design Guidelines (Exhibit 2);
4. Make the required considerations as required by Section 29.20.150 of the Town Code for granting approval of an Architecture and Site application (Exhibit 2); and



CONCLUSION (continued):

5. Approve Architecture and Site Application S-19-032 with the conditions contained in Exhibit 3 and the development plans in Exhibit 7.

C. Alternatives

Alternatively, the Commission can:

1. Continue the matter to a date certain with specific direction; or
2. Approve the application with additional and/or modified conditions; or
3. Deny the application.

EXHIBITS:

1. Location Map
2. Required Findings and Considerations
3. Recommended Conditions of Approval
4. Letter of Justification/Project Description, received May 30, 2019
5. Consulting Architect's Report, received June 17, 2019
6. Consulting Arborist Report, dated February 28, 2017
7. Development Plans
8. Public comments received by 11:00 a.m., Friday, September 6, 2019