

CITY OF CALISTOGA

STAFF REPORT

**TO: CHAIRMAN MANFREDI AND MEMBERS OF THE
PLANNING COMMISSION**

FROM: ERIK V. LUNDQUIST, SENIOR PLANNER

MEETING DATE: AUGUST 24, 2011

**SUBJECT: CARMEL ART GALLERY
1329 LINCOLN AVENUE – APN 011-221-023**

REQUEST

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3 Consideration of a Design Review application proposing the development of a
4 new 2,668 square foot 2-story infill structure on the property located at 1329
5 Lincoln Avenue (APN 011-221-023) within the “DC-DD”, Downtown Commercial-
6 Design District Overlay Zoning District. The front portion of the property is
7 currently leased by the City for passive public use (pocket park).
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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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11 The Property Owner’s, Olof and Elizabeth Carmel are proposing to construct a
12 2,668 square foot 2-story infill structure that will initially be used as an art gallery.
13 The Carmel’s have meet with Staff and have consulted with an Architect, Craig
14 Threshie in an effort to develop a good design that will preserve the unique
15 character and ambiance of Calistoga.
16

17 The Carmels initially presented two architectural approaches to the design of the
18 building for staff feedback (i.e. mission revival and western façade). The Carmels
19 decided to proceed with a Spanish Revival style façade. The building footprint
20 will be 46 feet long and 29 feet wide across the Lincoln Avenue frontage. The
21 structure will be built up to the front property line, 0-foot along the northern side
22 property line, approximately 1-foot off the southern side property line and 63-feet
23 from the rear property line. The design incorporates a small balcony (6’x’22’) and
24 architectural ascents (i.e. rafters, beams, corbels & outlookers) that extend into
25 the City owned public right-of-way¹.

¹ In the event that the architectural projects including the balcony are supported by the Planning Commission, a non-routine encroachment permit will need to be authorized by the City Council allowing the placement of these structures within the right-of-way prior to the issuance of a building permit.

26 The two 3-foot by 8 foot front doors are centered on the ground floor. On either
27 side is a large 6-foot by 7-foot window to showcase the retail storefront. Directly
28 above the windows and doors will be a balcony approximately 6 feet wide by 22
29 feet long constructed of wood with a rod iron guard rail. The balcony would be
30 accessed via the two 2'-6" doors similar to and directly above the ground floor
31 doors.

32
33 The building face will have a hand trowled stucco finish consisting of La Habra
34 Allegro cement coating having "oatmeal" color #81, base 200. The north and
35 south elevations will be similarly finished with no openings except for the
36 necessary crawl space venting.

37
38 The rear elevation will have two 2-story windows and a ground floor access. The
39 rear building face presents a different architectural style that features ship lap
40 siding and wood trim at the corners and around the doors and windows. A rear
41 light and the HVAC unit would complete the rear elevation. The proposed roofing
42 material is a "beachwood sand" composition roof. The proposed structure would
43 be 29'-0" to the ridge and 24'-9" to the mid point.
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Proposed Front Elevation along Lincoln Avenue

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48 **BACKGROUND & SETTING**
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50 The subject property is located at 1329 Lincoln Avenue. The property is currently
51 vacant with the exception to a small pocket park and its supporting improvements
52 (i.e. benches, planters, bike rack etc). The property was previously the site of
53 Ding's Market, which was a grocery store and soda fountain. Ding's apparently
54 was demolished in 1981 according to the Assessor's records.
55

56 The site is located in the historic downtown area. The area is distinguished by a
57 variety of architectural styles including Mission Revival, Spanish Colonial Revival,
58 Neoclassical and Moderne. The mixture of architectural styles, building scales
59 and independent business operators is at the essence of the City's unique small
60 town character and has a significant role in defining the visitor experience within
61 the downtown corridor. In this context, it is staff's position that any new building
62 in the downtown area must respect (but not replicate) the historic and unique
63 qualities of area and not shy away from making its own contribution to the
64 eclectic architectural mix that makes Calistoga's downtown unique and inviting.
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66 **STAFF DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS**
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68 Design Review Approach: The property is within the Downtown Commercial
69 "DC" Zoning District and the "DD", Design Combination District. The DC Zoning
70 District requires a conditional use permit prior to developing a new structure
71 subject to the review and approval of the Planning Commission. Additionally,
72 since a new commercial structure is being considered Design Review is also
73 required subject to the review and approval of the Planning Commission. Since
74 often through the Design Review process design modification occur that
75 potentially affect the project's scope, Staff has scheduled this matter to receive
76 the Planning Commission's initial input and feedback from the Commission
77 regarding the current design. In the event that the Planning Commission finds
78 that the design is in compliance with the applicable General Plan policies and
79 design review guidelines contained in the Zoning Ordinance Staff will re-notice
80 and return to the Planning Commission with a formal design review
81 recommendation along with the proper conditional use permit recommendation.
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83 With that said, since this matter has been properly noticed and scheduled for
84 the Planning Commission's consideration tonight, it is the Commission's
85 discretion to either deny, approve or conditional approve the design review as
86 submitted.
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88 Staff's Initial Design Review Findings: Prior to a formal submittal, the Carmel's
89 provided conceptual elevations to Staff for comment. These comments are
90 found in a letter dated May 5, 2011, which is included on Page 13 of Attachment
91 No. 1. The more recent and formal submittal that proposes a building façade
92 containing Spanish Colonial revival styles and features considered some of staff

93 comments but not all. However, staff still has a number of design concerns
94 expressed in an interdepartmental memorandum dated June 27, 2011, as
95 summarized below.

- 96
- 97 1. The proposed building features Spanish Colonial Revival style
98 architecture. This architectural style is similar to that of a number of other
99 nearby buildings and, when considered in this collective context, may
100 convey a false sense of historic origin. “[C]reating a false sense of history,”
101 is a practice that is discouraged by the Secretary of Interior’s Standards
102 for the Treatment of Historic Properties.
103
 - 104 2. Consistent architectural treatment is needed on all sides of the building:
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 - Use of spanish roof tiles should be continued on the gabled-roof area.
 - 106 • Plaster/stucco exterior treatment should be used on all facades.
 - 107 • Use of projections, timber beams, outlookers and/or corbels should
108 be considered on west (rear) façade.
 - 109 • Rear door material should be same as front door (wood).
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 - 111 3. The south elevation needs additional architectural treatment to add visual
112 interest to this expansive wall (even if partially screened by existing trees).
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 - 114 4. The proposed ground floor plate height of 10 ft. 6 in. does not provide
115 enough flexibility for future/longer-term use of the ground floor commercial
116 space. Additional plate height should be encouraged.
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 - 118 5. Additional information (material/color) on the decorative element above
119 the balcony roof projection on the east façade is needed.
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 - 121 6. Detail is needed on all proposed exterior lighting fixtures.
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 - 123 7. The HVAC unit at the rear of the building should be screened or placed in
124 the attic.
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 - 126 8. Will there be a trash enclosure? If so, design details are needed.
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128 Staff’s Conclusions: It is Staff’s impression that a simpler design or one that is
129 less resembling of other buildings nearby would be more appropriate for infill in
130 the downtown. This type of design would neither detract from nearby historic
131 buildings nor attempt to mimic them. However, should the Planning Commission
132 disagree and find that the design is appropriate; staff would urge the Planning
133 Commission to at least consider the other suggested modifications prior to its
134 approval.

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138 **SUMMARY OF APPLICANT'S POSITION AND FINDINGS**

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140 The Carmel's agree with the approach to consider the design review and the
141 conditional use permit separately. With that said the Carmel's find that Mr.
142 Threshie has developed an outstanding design for their new commercial building
143 that will be a wonderful addition to the downtown streetscape and contribute to
144 the unique architectural heritage of the community.

145
146 As indicated in the Carmel's written narrative dated June 5, 2011, the Carmel's
147 have reviewed the relevant General Plan policies and design review guidelines
148 found in Chapter 17.06 of the Calistoga Municipal Code. Additionally, the have
149 reviewed the ideas and suggestions brought forward in the Urban Design Plan.
150 In short, they find that their proposal is compatible with all of the applicable
151 standards. To support their findings their Architect has prepared an
152 "Architectural Narrative" that provides a more detailed description of the project
153 design evolution and a written response to each of the required design review
154 guidelines contained in Section 17.06.040 of the Calistoga Municipal Code.

155
156 As noted above, staff provided comments to the Applicant in a memorandum
157 dated June 27, 2011. The Carmel's responded to these comments in a letter
158 dated August 3, 2011. In summary, the Carmel's maintain that the design is
159 appropriate since the "*proposed design is unique from the others within view of*
160 *our site and is also consistent with the Spanish Colonial Revival style.*"
161 Additionally, with the exception of agreeing to screening the HVAC unit, the
162 Carmel's find that issues raised by Staff do not consider particular site conditions
163 and future expansion plans, therefore, the suggested design modifications were
164 not addressed.

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166 In closing, the Carmel's hope that the Commissioner's will find that their
167 proposed structure is of a "*high design standard that utilizes quality materials*
168 *compatible with the surrounding development consistent with and appropriate for*
169 *the nature of this proposed use (17.06.040(K) CMC).*"

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171 **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

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173 Under the provisions of Section 15332, In-Fill Development, of the State
174 Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act
175 (CEQA) as stated below, this project is found to be exempt from the
176 environmental review requirements of Chapter 19.10 of the Calistoga Municipal
177 Code, implementing the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970, as
178 amended in that; 1) the proposal is consistent with the General Plan and Zoning
179 District, 2) the subject site is less than five acres and is surrounding by urban
180 uses, 3) approval of the project would not result in any significant effects relating
181 to traffic, noise, air quality or water quality, and 4) the site can be adequately
182 served by all required utilities and public services.

183 **PUBLIC COMMENT**

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185 To date, staff has not received any public comments.

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187 **RECOMMENDATION**

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189 Staff recommends that the Planning Commission review the project, consider
190 staff's and the applicant's analysis of the project and take public comment on the
191 project. Following the public hearing, staff recommends the Planning Commission
192 provide feedback directing that certain design modifications be made prior to
193 rescheduling the necessary design review and conditional use permit for the
194 Planning Commission's consideration.

195

196 **ATTACHMENTS**

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- 198 1. Arial Vicinity Map
- 199 2. Project Description prepared by Olof & Elizabeth Carmel dated June 5,
200 2011
- 201 3. Moonshine Ink Article April 2008 Regarding Carmel's Art Gallery in
202 Truckee
- 203 4. Response to Completeness Letter dated August 3, 2011
- 204 5. Materials and Colors Board
- 205 6. Project Plans received June 7, 2011

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