

CITY OF CALISTOGA

STAFF REPORT

TO: CHAIRMAN MANFREDI AND MEMBERS OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION

FROM: ERIK V. LUNDQUIST, SENIOR PLANNER

MEETING DATE: SEPTEMBER 14, 2011

SUBJECT: HOTEL VERANDA - CONCEPTUAL DESIGN REVIEW (CDR 2011-03) – 1522 LINCOLN AVENUE

REQUEST

Review of conceptual development plans for the development of the *Hotel Veranda*. The Conceptual Plan proposes the following improvements: 162 new guest rooms; a new 3,000 square foot event barn; new swimming pools; new parking areas; and other related site and landscaping improvements. The project site is the former “gliderport” located 1522 Lincoln Avenue (APN 011-340-002, -003, -004, -005, -013, -016 & -018).

PROPERTY BACKGROUND

The subject properties total approximately 50 acres, see Figure 1. John and Patricia Merchant currently own the properties within two different limited liability companies. Throughout history the properties have generally remained underdeveloped whilst the adjoining resorts and the town of Calistoga developed during the late 1800s and early 1900s around the properties.

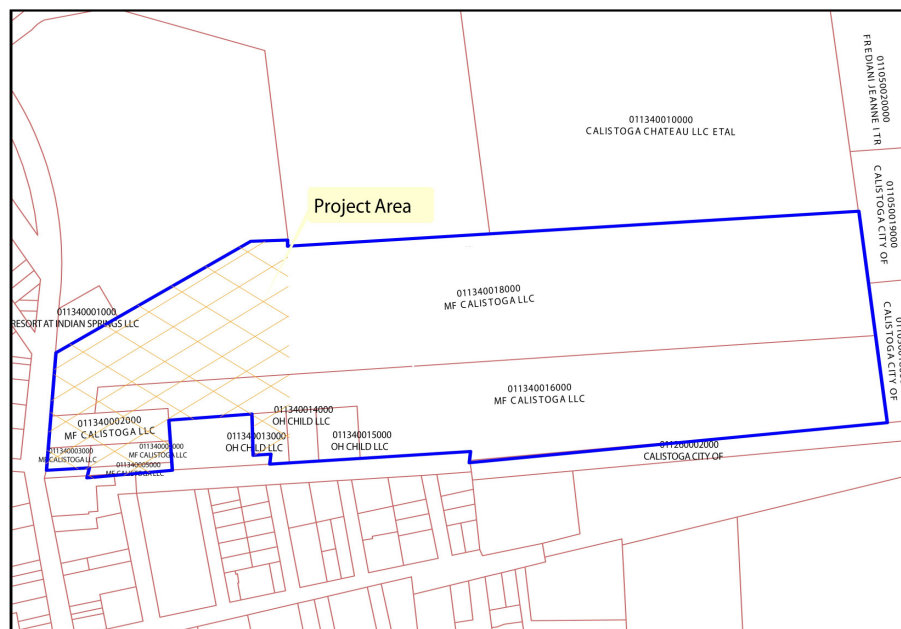


Figure 1, Ownership and Project Areas

31 Just after WW II, the Calistoga Airpark / Calistoga Gliderport was built by Dave
32 Compton. Records from the 1948 and 1948 Sacramento Sectional Charts
33 depicted a 2,200' unpaved runway. The runway was paved some time prior to
34 1957 and was extended to 2,800 feet. The runway was listed as Calistoga
35 Airpark in the 1962 AOPA Airport Directory, with a single 2,800' asphalt Runway
36 9/27, and the operator was listed as Dave Compton.

37
38 Gliders became a regular occurrence beginning in 1968, when Jim Indrebo
39 leased the primitive field & began offering glider rides, lessons, rentals & tows.
40 Indrebo operated the Calistoga Soaring Center for the next 21 years. Though the
41 field's 2 narrow runways were used mostly by tow planes & gliders, Calistoga
42 was open to other aircraft as a privately owned, public-use airport.



52 Figure 2, USGS 1993, when the field was still open.



55 Figure 3, May 1990 photo by Ken Mercer at Calistoga
56 Gliderport,

57 In 1989, Jim & Pat Merchant acquired the airfield. After making some business
58 changes the Merchant's reopened a new business, Calistoga Gliders, on the
59 Calistoga airfield catering to just tourists.

60 The Merchants' glider operation was hurt by the harsh, wet winter & spring of
61 1997-98. Having a poor year financially and faced with a requirement to replace
62 buried single-wall gasoline storage tank(s) with double-wall tank(s), the
63 Merchants chose to shut down the Gliderport in 1998.

64 Since closing operations, the existing structures have been used and continue to
65 be used by a variety of resident and visitor serving businesses. For sometime
66 the Merchants' have contemplated a vibrant mixed use development on the
67 property. In 2005 the City reviewed conceptual plans for the 'Calistoga Square'.
68 With the passage of time and additional planning efforts the Merchants' have
69 refined the project scope and on June 24, 2011 submitted this conceptual design
70 review for the Hotel Veranda.

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72 **PURPOSE OF REVIEW**

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74 The Conceptual Design Review process provides an opportunity for a property
75 owner or developer to receive feedback on a development concept prior to
76 submitting a formal development application. The scope of Conceptual Design

77 Review encompasses all aspects of a project and allows for identification and
78 discussion of potential issues at the earliest stage in the development process. It
79 is the City's expectation that the property owner will use the feedback received
80 through this process as guidance when preparing the formal development
81 application.

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83 **DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT**

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85 Project Area: The project site is located at the northern end of the core
86 commercial area in downtown Calistoga. The project area encompasses a little
87 more than 5 acres of the total acreage associated with these key landholdings.
88 The properties have approximately 337 feet of frontage along Lincoln Avenue
89 (State Route 29) and are bound by the Resort at Indian Springs, Calistoga
90 Springs Mobile Home Park and Chateau Calistoga Mobile Home Park to the
91 north. The south is bound by an unimproved City owned right-of-way, formerly a
92 Southern Pacific Railroad right-of-way, now commonly referred to as Fair Way
93 extension. The western property boundary is shared with two City owned
94 properties that are currently used association with the City's wastewater
95 treatment facilities.

96

97 Development Plan: The conceptual plan for the Hotel Veranda involves the
98 construction of up to 162 new guest units, a new 3,000 square foot event barn;
99 new swimming pools; new parking areas; and other related site and landscaping
100 improvements. The development concept is to take advantage of the
101 picturesque down valley views and predominance of Lincoln Avenue. The
102 principal structure would create a pedestrian friendly atmosphere along Lincoln
103 Avenue with shops and sitting areas and will be internally oriented to allow for
104 exposure to scenic views and to give guests the sensation of remoteness.

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106 A more detailed description of the individual features presented in the concept
107 plan is provided below and within the Applicant's narrative, see Attachment No. 2

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Figure 4, Hotel Veranda rendering by Robert Steele

123 *Guest Rooms, Amenities and Services*

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125 Up to 162 new guest units will be housed in the proposed 3-story 150,000 square
126 foot structure. There will be 15 suites and the remainder of the rooms will either
127 include one king bed or two queens beds plus all of the amenities necessary to
128 achieve up to a 4-star standard.

129

130 Other services will include a 20 room spa, ballroom, a restaurant, retail stores,
131 market, deli, café, conference rooms and screening room for films and
132 presentations.

133

134 *Event Barn*

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136 A separate 3,000 square foot event barn is proposed just of the northeastern leg
137 of the hotel. No architectural details on the design of the event barn have been
138 provided. The event barn will accommodate events (retreats, weddings,
139 conferences, charitable, etc.) for groups ranging in size up to 150 people.

140

141 *Pools and Gardens*

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143 Approximately 3 acres of the project area will be landscaped with pools and
144 gardens that will be accessible and inviting year-round. There will be 2 pools,
145 one for adults and 1 for everyone. There will be six distinct gardens; the large
146 Trellis Courtyard, Game Garden, Scented Garden, Palm Garden, Cyprus Garden
147 and Water Garden each having unique characteristics.

148

149 *Parking*

150

151 On site parking for Hotel Veranda and its supporting uses will be accessed from
152 Lincoln Avenue from an existing driveway apron that currently serves the Lodge
153 at Indian Springs. It also appears that parking will be accessed from Fair Way
154 extension. Parking areas are generally located at the northeastern perimeter of
155 the facility. It is unknown at this time the exact number of parking spaces
156 planned. Additionally, it was expressed to staff that valet parking may be
157 accommodated on one or more of the hanger properties,

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159 **STAFF ANALYSIS**

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161 The following is a preliminary analysis of the project related to findings and
162 entitlements that will be required for project approval.

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164 **Land Use**

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166 General Plan: The project properties have several General Plan land use
167 designations including Downtown Commercial, Community Commercial and
168 Airport Commercial. The +/- 5 acre project area would be developed in only those

169 areas currently designated Downtown Commercial and Community Commercial
 170 with the exception of one of the hanger properties (i.e. 1512 Lincoln Avenue)
 171 which may be used for valet parking and storage.
 172

173 The Downtown Commercial designation
 174 applies to properties located on the
 175 central portion of Lincoln Avenue. This
 176 area provides retail and other business
 177 uses for visitors and residents, but may
 178 also include public uses. The principal
 179 uses are to be stores and other retail
 180 facilities, offices, restaurants, bars and
 181 visitor accommodations. Development in
 182 the Downtown Commercial areas is
 183 subject to a wider array of policies and
 184 development requirements as discussed
 185 in the General Plan Community Identity
 186 Element.
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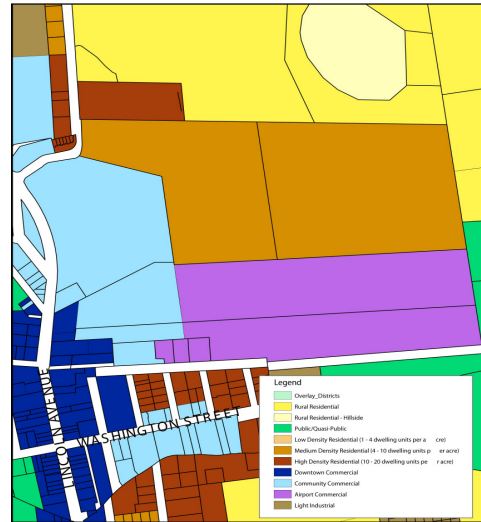


Figure 5, Existing General Plan Land Use Map

188 The Community Commercial land use designation is applied to areas at the edge
 189 of downtown and along entry-corridors into town. For areas adjacent to
 190 downtown, application of the Community Commercial land use designation is
 191 intended to serve as a transition between the more intensive commercial uses in
 192 downtown and less intense uses in the surrounding residential neighborhoods.
 193 Visitor accommodations are identified as a permissible use in this land use
 194 designation, subject to conformance with applicable General Plan policies.
 195

196 The project, as designed, is consistent with the existing General Plan land use
 197 designations with the exception of the proposed valet and storage use on that
 198 property currently designated Airport Commercial. A General Plan Amendment
 199 would be necessary to allow any ancillary or support use for the hotel.
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FIGURE 6 – Gliderport Character Area



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215 In accordance with directives contained in the Community Identity Element of the
216 General Plan, the City prepared an Urban Design Plan (UDP) that sets forth
217 ideas and suggestions for development within six distinctive areas of the City.
218 Although not a yet formal policy document, the Urban Design Plan does offer
219 ideas and suggestions for the type and form of development that should be
220 considered in these areas. The Hotel Veranda is located within an area identified
221 by the UDP as the “Gliderport Character Area” (see Figure 6 above).

222
223 As currently designed, the Hotel Veranda is a use considered to be appropriate
224 within the Gliderport Character Area provided the development participates in
225 appropriate mitigation to accommodate improved access, circulation and parking
226 as discussed in the circulation and traffic section of this report.

227
228 Zoning: The subject property is located within the “DC-DD” (Downtown
229 Commercial-Design District), “CC-DD” (Community Commercial-Design District)
230 and “C-A”, (Commercial Airport) Zoning District. These Zoning Districts are
231 established to implement the General Plan land use designations. Resorts,
232 spas, restaurants and places of public assembly are conditionally permitted uses
233 within the Downtown and Community Commercial districts. The “C-A” District
234 would need to be rezoned in order to allow the suggested uses. The Urban
235 Design Plan suggests that all or portions of the properties be rezoned to a “PD”,
236 Planned Development Zoning District to accomplish the development objectives
237 within this character area.

238
239 Since the development scheme is still evolving it is difficult to demonstrate
240 conformance with each of the applicable development standards (e.g. setbacks,
241 lot coverage, heights etc.) The contemplated development plan identifies just
242 over a hundred parking spaces, which may be deficient depending upon the
243 ultimate design. A parking study will be required to demonstrate that the parking
244 supply is adequate and does not impact adjoining uses or on street parking.

245 246 **Circulation and Traffic**

247
248 The conceptual site plan indicates that the existing ingress and egress on Lincoln
249 Avenue currently serving the Lodge at Indian Springs will be retained and also
250 used to serve as the main entrance to the Hotel Veranda. Caltrans has
251 historically had concerns regarding the alignment of this particular driveway. The
252 realignment may be necessary as a result of this project.

253
254 The conceptual plans do not clearly indicate if Fair way extension will be used for
255 access. The General Plan suggests certain improvements to Fair Way extension
256 and the potential for signalization at the intersection of Lincoln Avenue and Fair
257 Way. Moreover, the Urban Design Plan expresses that Fair Way extension
258 should be designed to accommodate surface parking and include generous
259 canopy tree landscaping, appropriate lighting, pedestrian amenities and a Class I

260 bike path. The Urban Design Plan suggests that this development should
261 participate in these improvements.

262
263 Additionally, the City's General Plan identifies Lincoln Avenue as an Arterial
264 street. Arterial streets in the downtown typically have sidewalks, curbs and
265 gutters, two travel lanes, left turn pockets and limitations on on-street parking to
266 facilitate traffic flow and a Class II, bike lane. The Planning Commission should
267 discuss their desired improvements for Lincoln Avenue and Fair Way while
268 understanding that project-related increases in traffic or changes in circulation
269 patterns will also be evaluated by a professional traffic engineer as part a Traffic
270 Impact Study that will be required for the project. Staff will work with the property
271 owner, the owner's representative and CalTrans in setting an appropriate scope
272 for the study.

273
274 As expressed above, staff will be seeking improvements to Fair Way extension to
275 public street standards. Should a 2-way access road be warranted the roadway
276 must shift north to align with the existing Fair Way, west across Lincoln Avenue.
277 A dedication of property would need to occur in order to accommodate this
278 design impacting the current design of the project. As an alternative, a 1-way
279 right turn only roadway may reduce the need for realignment.

280
281 As the project continues to evolve the Applicant will also need to consider that all
282 internal circulation roads and parking areas must be designed so that a minimum
283 clear/unobstructed width of 20 feet can be maintained for emergency vehicle
284 access and be designed to structurally support a 75,000 pound emergency
285 vehicle load.

286 287 **Public Utilities**

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289 This project will result in increased demands on public utility systems, including
290 water, sewer and storm drainage facilities. Preliminary comments from the
291 Public Works Departments indicate the need to prepare a comprehensive water
292 and wastewater use study and a potential need for off-site improvements. These
293 comments are summarized below.

294
295 Water: The on-site (private) water distribution system should be designed to
296 meet fire flow and all other needs. A looped system around the proposed
297 surrounding driveways should be considered, and a separate connection to the
298 City water main on Lincoln Avenue and Fair Way should also be considered to
299 enhance on-site water capacity and reliability.

300
301 Fire Flows for this project are anticipated to be substantial. There are no existing
302 public water mains along the project's Lincoln Avenue frontage. There is a 6 inch
303 line behind the sidewalk on the opposite side of the street. A 12 inch main
304 crosses Lincoln Avenue to the north in front of the Lodge property. A 6 inch water
305 main across Lincoln Avenue heads west on Fair Way, and a 6 inch main is at the

306 end of Gerard Street. The 12 inch main should be extended across the project
307 frontage and tied into all these 6 inch lines at Fair Way.

308
309 Sewer: The on-site sewer collection system to serve project needs to be carefully
310 planned and designed. It appears that not all sewer flow from the site will be
311 able to flow by gravity to the existing public sewer main on Lincoln Avenue. This
312 should be confirmed, and alternative means to handle sewage (if necessary)
313 should be proposed to meet future project needs.

314
315 Sewer flows from various project uses shall be separated and measurable in a
316 manner approved by the City. While this property has no geothermal discharge
317 entitlements, the City would be open to discussions of efficient geothermal
318 heating use in a closed-loop, heat exchange system. Heating the pools with solar
319 energy is ideal.

320
321 Storm Water Drainage: Staff is concerned about the stormwater capacity of the
322 downstream receiving system. Stormwater collection and disposal should be the
323 subject of an engineering study to determine the quantity of stormwater flows and
324 the means to discharge the stormwater. Post-development peak stormwater run-
325 off discharge rates and velocities shall be controlled to maintain or reduce pre-
326 development downstream erosion and to ensure that post-development runoff
327 does not contain pollutant loads which have not been reduced to the maximum
328 extent practicable.

329

330 **Site Plan and Architecture**

331

332 The conceptual development plan reflects thoughtful consideration to the guest
333 experience and to design compatibility with surrounding uses. The uses
334 envisioned in the concept plan have been arranged, oriented and placed in a
335 manner that helps to minimize impacts on adjacent uses. The proposed
336 architecture draws upon American resort architecture and integrating aspects of
337 Sam Brannan's grand vision for Calistoga. It appears that the owner is proposing
338 use of materials that are representative of the sense of place, which serving to
339 fostering a bit of innovation through a more modern design.

340

341 **Growth Management**

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343 It is anticipated that the City and the owner will enter into a Development
344 Agreement for the project. Pursuant to Section 19.02.050 (F) of the Calistoga
345 Municipal Code, projects for which a Development Agreement has been entered
346 into are allowed to proceed through the entitlement process without first obtaining
347 a Growth Management allocation.

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349

350 **Affordable Housing**

351 The contemplated project will generate new jobs and increase the demand for
352 housing in the City. The project will be required to participate in the provision of
353 affordable housing in the community through the City's Inclusionary Housing
354 ordinance. Participation can be achieved in a number of ways, including: on- or
355 off-site construction of affordable units, dedication of land suitable for
356 construction of affordable units, and payment of money into the City's Calistoga
357 Affordable Housing Trust Fund for future development of affordable units.

358 Adopted provisions also allow for consideration of alternative methods to satisfy
359 a project's affordable housing obligation provided that the alternative would
360 provide a comparable or superior benefit to the City's affordable housing supply.

361 **TIMING FOR CONSTRUCTION**

362 The applicant has indicated that the proposed expansion would be constructed in
363 a single-phase and take a few years to complete.

364 **AGREEMENTS AND ENTITLEMENTS**

365 The applicant has expressed an interested in entering into a Development
366 Agreement with the City for this project to address structuring of impact fees.
367 Projects seeking to enter into Development Agreement with the City must first be
368 presented to the City Council for consideration. With input from the Planning
369 Commission, the City Council will determine whether or not the project has merit
370 and warrants a Development Agreement. Should the City Council find that the
371 project has merit; a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) may be executed
372 reflecting Council's intention to enter into a Development Agreement and define
373 the process for the developer to seek formal approval.
374

375 The Development Agreement will be prepared and approved concurrently with
376 necessary project entitlements. Entitlements required for approval of the project
377 as presented may include; a General Plan Amendment, Rezone to a Planned
378 Development District, Preliminary and Final Development Plan, Lot Line
379 Adjustment, Conditional Use Permit and a Design Review approval.
380

381 **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

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383 Consideration of the Pre-Application Consultation and Conceptual Design
384 Review application is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act
385 (CEQA) as no approvals or entitlements are being requested or will be granted.
386

387 In the event that a formal application is submitted an Initial Study will be prepared
388 to determine whether the project will result in potentially significant environmental
389 impacts. To assist in this process several technical studies may be required to

390 assess the project's impacts. Technical studies anticipated to be required in
391 order to complete the environmental review process include the following: (1) a
392 cultural resources survey (archaeological and historic); (2) a drainage study; (3) a
393 fire flow analysis (4) a biological study; (5) a water and wastewater study, (6) a
394 noise study; and (7) a traffic impact study. Additional studies may be required
395 depending on the comments of other regulatory agencies.

396

397 **RECOMMENDATION:**

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399 The Hotel Veranda in the heart of our community has much potential, which
400 should be carefully discussed and evaluated. As such, staff recommends that the
401 Planning Commission review the conceptual site plan and renderings, receive
402 comments from the owner, the project team and the public, and provide
403 preliminary comments to the owner and staff on the following as well as other
404 issues of commission concern.

405

406 1. Should the project area be rezoned to a "PD", Planned Development
407 District?

408

409 2. Since Fair Way extension will be developed as a public street, what is the
410 desired geometric configuration to accommodate future connection to
411 Gerrard, Franklin and other streets located southeast of the project site?

412

413 It should be noted that the Planning Commission comments during conceptual
414 design review are advisory only and should not be considered by the applicant to
415 be requirements or an endorsement of the project until a complete application is
416 considered through the formal review process.

417

418 **ATTACHMENTS**

419

- 420 1. Vicinity Map
- 421 2. Hotel Veranda, "A Calistoga Classic in the Making" (Applicant's Written
422 Narrative)
- 423 3. Letter dated September 7, 2011 from Paul Coates Construction
- 424 4. Department of Public Works Memorandum dated July 20, 2011
- 425 5. Conceptual Site Plan prepared by Patrick Mervin and Associates