

**CALISTOGA PLANNING COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT**

To: Calistoga Planning Commission
From: Samantha Thomas, Associate Planner
Meeting Date: February 9, 2022
Subject: **Aurora Park Cottages Expansion – Renewal of Use Permit and Design Review
Use Permit UP 2022-1 and Design Review DR 2022-1
1807 Foothill Boulevard**

ITEM

Consideration of use permit and design review renewal application for a three-guest unit expansion project and associated on-site improvements at the Aurora Park Cottages located at 1807 Foothill Boulevard (APN 011-290-046), originally approved by Planning Commission on February 26, 2020.

Refer to Attachment 1 for Draft Resolution and Conditions of Approval.

KEY ISSUES

- A net gain of three guest units (for a total of ten) at an existing bed and breakfast inn in the R-1-10 Zoning District
- Conversion of existing two-bedroom guest cottage to front office and manager’s unit (relocating it from the adjacent property)
- Architectural compatibility with existing structures
- No change to project since its approval in 2020

BACKGROUND

The subject 1.44-acre property is located on the south side of Foothill Boulevard between High Street and Lerner Drive, and slopes gently towards the road. This side of Foothill Boulevard between Petrified Forest Road and Lincoln Avenue is predominantly developed with hillside residential uses and several bed and breakfast facilities of good architectural character, including The Chanric Inn next door. On the opposite side of Foothill Boulevard, the area



Aurora Park Cottages

30 consists primarily of single-family residential uses. The seven existing cottages are
31 accessed via a private drive that also serves several uphill single-family residences.
32 Refer to Attachment 2 for Vicinity Map.

33 The guest cottages on the property have been in use as visitor accommodations since
34 the 1950s. In 1998, a proposal to substantially alter the Aurora Park Cottages was
35 approved by the City, and included architectural changes, enlarged structures and
36 extensive landscaping. The project was ultimately abandoned by a subsequent owner,
37 and in 1999 a substantially less-comprehensive plan for exterior changes was
38 approved. Under new ownership, a use permit was approved in 2015 allowing for a
39 seventh guest unit and the elimination of the onsite owner/manager residence, which
40 was relocated to the adjoining parcel.

41 On February 26, 2020, after a duly noticed public hearing, the Planning Commission
42 adopted Resolution 2020-5 (see Attachment 3), approving a use permit and design
43 review application for a three-guest unit expansion project on the site. Use Permits and
44 Design Reviews are only good for one year under the municipal code and they can be
45 extended by one year by Staff. Staff granted the one-year extension in late 2020 (see
46 Attachment 4) when it became clear to the applicant that the COVID pandemic was not
47 a short-term situation.

48 The applicant expressed in their request letter (see Attachment 5) that the primary issue
49 moving forward with the proposed project was their inability to get financing as the
50 overall hotel industry is still in a recovery phase due to the COVID pandemic. However,
51 the project's land use entitlements will sunset at the beginning of March this year, and
52 the applicant has requested to come back to Planning Commission to renew the use
53 permit and design review application. If the attached draft resolution is approved, this
54 would effectively be a brand-new use permit and design review project entitlement.

55 **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

56 The use permit and design review application request approval for the construction of
57 four new guest cottages, one of which would be designated as an accessible unit. The
58 single-story structures would be located on either side of a large oak, which would be
59 preserved. One of the existing guest cottages would no longer be used as a visitor
60 accommodation, but instead be expanded and converted to use as a front office and
61 manager's residence. This would result in a net gain of three guest units, for a total of
62 10. Six new parking spaces, including one ADA space, would be added for a total of 14
63 parking spaces.

64 The proposed new structures would be somewhat larger than the existing cottages (600
65 square feet versus 400 square feet) but will otherwise feature very similar architectural
66 features (wood siding, peaked roofs, exposed rafters with knee-braces, and small front-
67 facing decks). The site arrangement of the new cottages would continue the linear
68 layout of the buildings on the property. Refer to Attachment 6 for the Project Description
69 and Project Plans.

70 **ANALYSIS**

71 **A. General Plan Consistency**

72 Land Use Element: The General Plan designation for the property is Low-Density
 73 Residential, which allows bed and breakfast establishments. The Foothill Character
 74 Area overlay, which also applies to the property, supports a limited number of bed and
 75 breakfast uses. Although the number of guest units would be increasing on the property,
 76 the total number of establishments in the community would remain the same. Allowing
 77 three additional guest units would be an allowed use in the land use designation. The
 78 larger size of the planned guest cottages is in keeping with growing trends in the
 79 industry.

80 Economic Development: Allowing this bed and breakfast expansion would be consistent
 81 with General Plan Objective ED-1.1, which encourages the City to support the lodging
 82 industry.

83 **B. Zoning Compliance**

84 The property is located within the R-1-10: One-Family Residential Zoning District. Bed
 85 and breakfast inns and facilities are a conditionally-permitted use within this district.
 86 CMC Chapter 17.35 delineates the specific bed and breakfast regulations.

87 The applicant has requested an exception in order to add three guest units, for a total of
 88 10. Pursuant to CMC Section 17.35.040(C)(4) an exception may be granted to allow the
 89 establishment of up to 10 rental units. Prior to approval of the exception, the Planning
 90 Commission must consider the following special circumstances:

- 91 a. A bed and breakfast inn and facility or other visitor accommodation located on
 92 the property was authorized by the City on or before January 1, 2010; and
- 93 b. The property is located within an R-1-10 zone; and
- 94 c. The property is established with no more than 10 rental units; and
- 95 d. The lot size exceeds 10,000 square feet.

96 The Aurora Park Cottages were established prior to January 1, 2010 and the 1.44-acre
 97 property is located within the R-1-10 Zoning District. Upon approval of this permit, the
 98 property would have 10 guest units (the maximum allowed). The proposal to operate a
 99 10-unit bed and breakfast at this location meets the purpose and intent of the Ordinance
 100 and it can be found to meet the special circumstances to allow the expanded use.

101 As shown in the table below, the project is also consistent with all R-1-10 Zoning District
 102 development standards.

Applicable R-1-10 Development Standards		Proposed Development
Minimum Front Yard Setback	20 feet	20 feet
Minimum Side Yard Setback	5 feet	>5 feet
Minimum Rear Yard Setback	20 feet	>20 feet
Building Height	25 feet	approx. 15 feet

Parking	1 space per room, plus two for an onsite manager	14 spaces are provided
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103 **C. Aesthetics**

104 The proposed designs of the new cottages and the addition to create the guest
105 services/manager's residence mirror the architectural style, colors, and elements of the
106 existing buildings on the property. Wood siding, trim, and asphalt shingle roofing would
107 all be designed to match the current materials of the existing cottages. Similarly, the
108 new cottages would be painted with light yellow siding and white trim to match the
109 existing units. Each cottage would feature a deck on the front. The addition of the four
110 proposed structures would enhance the existing bed and breakfast inn. No trees will be
111 removed, and the project is designed around two large existing oak trees. The existing
112 landscape scheme would be continued to the new cottages.

113 **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

114 When the project went before Planning Commission in early 2020, Staff received four
115 letters of concern and opposition from neighbors. Those letters have been included in
116 Attachment 7.

117 **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

118 Staff has determined that the proposed project is Categorically Exempt from the
119 requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section
120 15303 (New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures) of the CEQA Guidelines.

121 **FINDINGS**

122 To reduce repetition, all the necessary findings to approve the subject application is
123 contained in the attached Resolution.

124 **RECOMMENDATION**

125 Based on the information provided, Staff recommends that the Planning Commission
126 adopt a resolution approving use permit application UP 2022-1 and design review
127 application DR 2022-1 renewing UP 2018-12 and DR 2018-9 for a three-guest unit
128 expansion project and associated on-site improvements located at 1807 Foothill
129 Boulevard, with conditions.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Draft Resolution and Conditions of Approval
2. Vicinity Map
3. PC Resolution 2020-5
4. Applicant Request Letter – January 31, 2022
5. Time Extension Approval – July 28, 2020
6. Project Description and Project Plans
7. Public Comments