

**CITY OF PLACERVILLE  
CITY COUNCIL  
STAFF REPORT**

**APPLICATION NO.:** Site Plan Review 06-01 TOAD HALL

**DATE:** October 16, 2006

**REQUEST:** An appeal filed by the citizens group, "50 Plus Residents surrounding the Savage project", requesting the City Council overturn the Planning Commission's review and approval of the following project issues that were remanded by the City Council to the Planning Commission: Toad Hall's building mass, the project's consistency with the neighborhood and project pedestrian and vehicle safety along Spring and Pleasant Streets.

Toad Hall is a 10,130 square foot three story mixed use professional office building/residential building on approximately 0.56 acres. The proposed mixed use consists of: three non-medical first floor business professional offices; one non-medical business professional office and two residential spaces on the second floor; and, two residence spaces on the third floor.

**APPELLANTS:** "50 Plus Residents surrounding the Savage project" (Robyn Rawers, Jackie Ravera, Joyce Bahnsen, Casey Carlton-Mercado, Frances Kilday, Dorothy P. Theurer, Fred Carnet, Judy Muetz, Virginia F. Bauske, Linda Emery, Kathy Durrett, Juanita P. Will, Rosa Naranjo, Russell R Grant, Margareta Hernandez, Maria Naranjo, Sylvia Hernandez, Theresa Naranjo, Barbara Protteau, Hilda Luna, Kathy Kobe, Merrilee Hifteenan, Michelle McCann, M. Rolosn, Jeffrey & Jan Dean, Ethel Forsyth, Jhama Ruthven, Adrienne Henderson, Jack Ruthven, Doreen Ames, M. David Morris, Cynthia Blazius, Alicia Donhardt, Carol Beverly, Sandy Stanfield, Cheri Wadle, Sue Hegarty, Julia Whelan, Pat McIntyre, Jamie Langford, Arnie Sanchez, Angelo Battaglia, Mary Jane Battaglia, Emmett Hord, Russell Grant, Nancy Stone, Dann Lealos, Lewis & Elizabeth Zacharias, Bonnie Barrett, Rajiv Pathak)

**PROJECT OWNER/  
PROPONENT:**

Cynthia Savage  
3050 Lewis Street  
Placerville, CA 95667

**LOCATION:**

971 Spring Street, northwest corner of the intersection of  
Spring Street and Pleasant Street.

**ASSESSOR'S  
PARCEL NO.:**

001:072:03

**GENERAL PLAN  
DESIGNATION:**

Business and Professional (BP)

**ZONING:**

BP (Business and Professional)

**CURRENT USE:**

Vacant

**SURROUNDING  
USES:**

West and north: Single-family residential.  
East: Church, single- and multi-family residential, bed and  
breakfast, community organization/club.  
South: Single-family residential.

**SURROUNDING  
ZONING:**

North and west: BP  
East and south: R1-6,000 and R2

**ENVIRONMENTAL  
DOCUMENT:**

Categorical Exemption, §15332 (In-fill Development Project)  
of the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines

**RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends the City Council deny the appeal, make findings in support of their decision and uphold the Commission's conditional approval.

**BACKGROUND**

Toad Hall is a conditionally approved, approximately 10,000 square foot three story mixed use structure. The proposed mixed use building consists of three for lease non-medical first floor business professional office spaces, one leased non-medical business professional space and two for lease residential spaces on the second floor, and two loft residence spaces on the third floor. Parking, preliminary landscape and building identification was included in the Site Plan Review request.

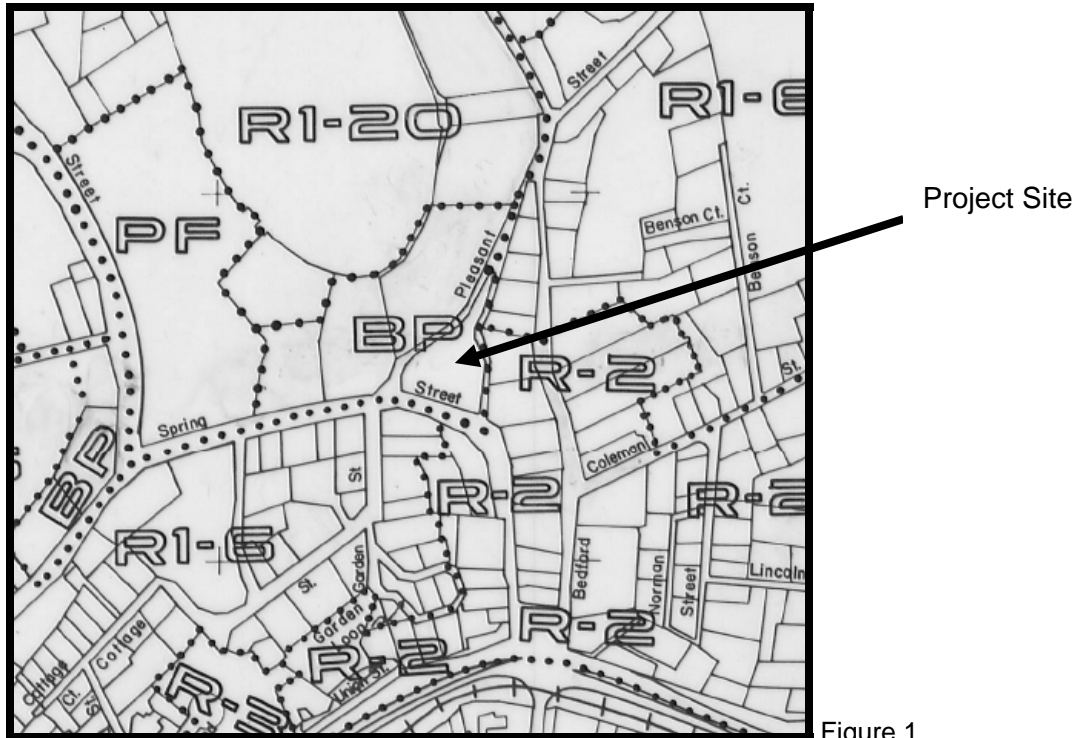


Figure 1

The following is a summary of the public hearing process for Site Plan Review 06-01:

- On July 18, 2006 the Planning Commission made findings and approved with conditions Site Plan Review 06-01 (**Appendix 'A'**).
- On August 22, 2006 the City Council heard an appeal of this project. The City Council denied the appeal and upheld the Planning Commission's findings and conditional approval, adding seven conditions (**Appendix 'B'**).
- On September 19, 2006, the Planning Commission conducted a public hearing for the project where they:
  - Received public comment,
  - Received the following new information brought forward by the project proponent:
    - Artist's renditions from the public perspective along Pleasant Street and at lower Spring Street that depict the Toad Hall's stepped design and the introduction of landscaping that breaks up building mass, and
    - An inventory of neighborhood architectural character that shows the variable styles, exterior materials, textures and colors that exist along Bedford Avenue and Spring Street,
  - Made findings and unanimously approved the previously submitted Toad Hall building elevations, building materials and building mass, and
  - The Commission added new conditions requiring a new crosswalk across Pleasant Street at its intersection with Spring Street. It also amended an existing condition by revising Spring Street striping to accommodate bicycle and vehicle circulation along the project frontage. The approved

September 19, 2006 Planning Commission Minutes for this request are provided as **Appendix 'C'**.

- On September 28, 2006, a Notice of Appeal (**Appendix 'D'**) was received by the City from the citizens group, "50 Plus Residents surrounding the Savage project".

### **NOTICE OF APPEAL**

The filed Notice of Appeal of the Planning Commission's Decision includes a seven page attachment to the appeal, a photo image, a six page petition and a September 12, 2006 letter from Robyn Rawers that was provided previously to the Planning Commission prior to their action on Toad Hall, September 19, 2006.

Appellants' grounds for appeal include the Commission's failure to address the following project components:

- Project building mass and height (project is too large and also Spring Street striping);
- Spring Street traffic hazards (volume of project traffic onto Spring Street);
- Project consistency with the community (assertion that the Planning Commission was "non-responsive to the majority of issues brought by citizens);
- Project noise generation;
- Project parking, parking on Bedford Ave., illegal trespass and illegal parking on private lots;
- Spring Street congestion / Bedford Ave. high speed traffic
- Site signage detract drivers;
- Pedestrian safety due to traffic volume along Spring Street.
- Additional issues were raised on page seven of the attachment to the appeal.

### **CITY COUNCIL APPEAL REVIEW**

As stated above, at the appeal of the Planning Commission's project approval the Council denied the appeal and approved the project with additional conditions on August 22, 2006. See Appendix B. Based on the adopted Council minutes of that meeting, the Planning Commission's review on September 19, 2006 was focused upon only those conditional items remanded to them:

- The project's east façade,
- Its building mass,
- Building materials,
- Driveway encroachment to Spring Street, and
- Pedestrian safety on Pleasant and Spring Streets.

However, the following issues were therefore not part of the Commission's review and decision:

- Project traffic volume, noise, and drainage,
- On site parking,
- Project signage,
- Off site concerns such as Shakespeare Club patrons crossing Spring Street from their offsite parking lot, and

- Bedford Avenue width, traffic speed, sidewalks and trespass.

The Planning Commission had no vested authority to consider issues or concerns that did not correspond to the conditions remanded to them by City Council. Therefore, the Council's review of this appeal is not de novo but is focused to consider only the appellants' grounds for appeal that pertains to the items remanded to and approved by the Planning Commission.

### **STAFF ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION**

Toad Hall would encompass a small fraction of the 60% maximum allowable building coverage within the BP Zone. The first floor area plus detached garage for Toad Hall totals approximately 16%. Also, when the project is examined in profile, the three storied design is clearly stepped to conform to the sloped site. Instead of three vertical floors the proposed design breaks up this mass into two components with a building height of approximately 36'. Maximum allowed building height within the BP Zone is 40'.

The project proponent considered the comments and conditions of the City Council and provided a detailed response that was approved by the Planning Commission on September 19, 2006. The proponent's response is provided as **Exhibit A**. Staff supports the proponent's findings and her artist's renditions show that from the public perspective along Pleasant Street and at lower Spring Street, Toad Hall's stepped design and the introduction of landscaping breaks up building mass. The rendition shows the portion of the third floor that is visible from these public perspectives is approximately the top 5' to 9'. Secondly, her inventory of neighborhood architectural character shows the variable styles, exterior materials, textures and colors that exist along Bedford Avenue and Spring Street. She concludes and the Planning Commission and Staff concurs that the materials, textures, colors proposed for Toad Hall are similar to those used in the neighborhood and therefore compatible with the varying architectural nature and finish materials found on development along Bedford Avenue and Spring Street. Additionally, Ms. Savage provides two alternative color palettes that would be acceptable to her for Toad Hall.

The Engineering Division reviewed the proposed project Spring Street driveway and the pedestrian safety issues on Pleasant and Spring Street that were conditions imposed by the City Council. The following is the analysis by the Engineering Division:

#### **Issues Pertaining to the Driveway onto Spring Street**

Per the Traffic Manual, we are tasked to find and apply the least restrictive measures first. This does not mean that we do nothing, but we look for ways to allow for full operations until either traffic volumes or accident history requires further restrictions or mitigations. Because sight distance is available, but limited, Staff determined that the best approach would be to create a refuge for left turning traffic out of the project site. Due to the

close proximity of Garden Street, the refuge was extended to that intersection.

Typically, Staff reviews accident history for a three year period. Based upon a cursory Staff review of all relevant accident reports, there is no accident pattern developing at the subject intersection of Garden and Spring that requires a consideration for further mitigations.

It is important to note that historically, citizens will feel that there are many more accidents than actually are shown on the official reports. That is true as we cannot account for unreported accidents as there is no record of the accident. However, staff takes this into consideration and adjustments have been made to statistical analysis accordingly to take that under reporting into account, and so, therefore, it is our belief at Staff level that this is a full and complete reporting of the accident history at this location.

As part of the project, modifications are proposed to the existing striping on Spring Street to provide a refuge area for turning traffic. Upon completion of the restriping, there will be two 14' travel lanes and a 12' wide refuge area. Based on further discussions with Council and the Planning Commission, and observation of other surrounding projects, it is the recommendation of Staff to reduce the westbound travel lane to 10' and include a 4' striped shoulder. This 4' striped shoulder could serve several purposes such as reduce westbound speeds, and provide a sheltered area for bicyclist to use. Note, to provide this sheltered area, a new parking restriction from 60' west of Garden Street to Pleasant Street will be required. This will remove parking in front of 958 Spring Street, and there will be parking restrictions on the north side of Spring Street adjacent to the Toad Hall project.

The alternative to providing a refuge lane will be to restrict left turns out of the project's driveway. Because of the close proximity to Garden Street, left turns will also have to be restricted for this city street. As there are less restrictive measures that could be used first, Staff did not consider this as an appropriate restriction. If, in the future, it is determined that turning restrictions are necessary, those modifications will be implemented. A condition has been imposed on this project that advises of the potential for this future restriction.

### **Issues Pertaining to Pedestrians on Spring Street**

Council requested that Staff consider a pedestrian crossing for Pleasant Street at Spring Street. The following condition was approved by the Planning Commission on September 19, 2006.

**Construct an ADA compliant crosswalk crossing Pleasant Street at Spring Street. Crosswalk striping shall be thermoplastic.**

Staff remains enthusiastically supportive of this mixed use project. Both the project's building mass and building height is below the maximum allowed under the zoning. Project materials are similar to those found within the immediate project neighborhood and therefore compatible to the character of the neighborhood. The revised striping plan approved by the Planning Commission is expected to provide safe westbound bicycle travel along the project's Spring Street frontage by creating a 4' wide area where bicyclists can use to climb the hill. The striping will narrow the 14' lane to 10' that is expected to reduce westbound Spring Street traffic speed. Furthermore the Spring Street striping plan will provide an eastbound 14' travel lane and a 12' wide refuge area to accommodate vehicle left turn movements from the project onto Spring Street and off-project westbound turn movements out of Garden Street. The project is already conditioned to allow the City Engineer to revoke the Spring Street driveway encroachment should an operational issue arise and other in/out measures be deemed necessary. Finally the project is conditioned to have a crosswalk striped across Pleasant Street at its intersection with Spring Street, along with sidewalks along both the project's Spring Street and Pleasant Street frontages. These improvements provide pedestrian amenities where none existed prior to this project. Therefore, Staff recommends the Council take the following action:

1. Adopt the Staff Report as part of the public record.
2. Make the following findings for Site Plan Review 06-01:
  - A. Find that the project's building mass, exterior elevations, materials and colors are appropriate to the site and are suitable to the variable architecture, building mass, exterior finish and colors of adjacent buildings along Spring Street and Bedford Avenue in the vicinity of the project site.
  - B. Make the finding that the Staff recommended amendment to the condition of approval requiring the applicant to re-stripe along Spring Street to reduce the westbound travel lane to 10' and include a 4' striped shoulder, will accommodate project and neighborhood traffic in a safe and efficient manner, in that the 4' striped shoulder would serve several purposes such as to reduce westbound speeds, reduce the travel lane width, and provide a sheltered area for bicyclists to use.
  - C. Deny the appeal and uphold the Council's and the Commission's approval of the Toad Hall building mass, exterior colors and finishes, as well as the incorporate the additional Staff project condition contained herein; approve the Staff recommended amendment to the condition regarding roadway striping along and in the vicinity of the project's Spring Street frontage to accommodate vehicular and bicycle circulation.

Additional Condition of Approval

Construct an ADA compliant crosswalk crossing Pleasant Street at Spring Street. Crosswalk striping shall be thermoplastic.

Amended Condition of Approval

Roadway striping shall be revised for the Spring Street driveway to provide shelter for left turning vehicles and a 4' striped shoulder shall be provided on the north side of Spring Street adjacent to the project frontage as approved by the City Engineer.

Prepared by:

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Andrew Painter  
City Planner

Reviewed by:

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John Driscoll  
City Manager/City Attorney

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Steve Calfee  
Community Development Director



**Appendix 'A'**

City of Placerville Planning Commission July 18, 2006  
Approved Site Plan Review 06-01 Minutes

**Appendix 'B'**

City of Placerville City Council August 22, 2006  
Approved Site Plan Review 06-01 Minutes

**Appendix 'C'**

City of Placerville Planning Commission September 19, 2006  
Approved Site Plan Review 06-01 Minutes

**Appendix 'D'**

Notice of Appeal of Planning Commission Decision  
Received September 28, 2006

## **Appendix 'E'**

Public Comment Received During Appeal Comment Period