

Town of Tiburon

STAFF REPORT



AGENDA ITEM _____

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TO: **PLANNING COMMISSION**

FROM: **DANIEL M. WATROUS, PLANNING MANAGER**

SUBJECT: **CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT #10408;
REQUEST TO EXPAND AN EXISTING HOTEL AND RESTAURANT
(TIBURON LODGE); 1647/1651 TIBURON BOULEVARD; LARKSPUR
HOTELS, LLC, OWNERS; ASSESSOR PARCEL NO. 58-171-87**

MEETING DATE: **DECEMBER 8, 2004** REVIEWED BY: SA

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PROJECT DATA

Address:	1651 Tiburon Boulevard
Assessor Parcel Number:	58-171-87
File Number:	10408
Lot Size:	2.36 acres
General Plan:	Neighborhood Commercial
Zoning:	NC (Neighborhood Commercial)
Current Use:	Hotel and Restaurant
Owner:	Larkspur Hotels, LLC
Applicant:	James Bradley, Architect
Date Complete:	November 19, 2004
Preliminary CEQA Determination:	December 3, 2004

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project is the proposed upgrade and expansion of an existing hotel and restaurant (the Tiburon Lodge) located at 1647 & 1651 Tiburon Boulevard. The property has recently been purchased by the current owners who wish to make modifications to the existing building and premises, and legalize several hotel rooms that were added by prior owners without obtaining approvals from the Town. The application includes the following improvements:

- Increase the approved number of hotel rooms from 99 to 106;
- Construction of several small additions to the lower floor of the main building, along with the demolition of several small building extensions;
- Modifications to the parking and circulation patterns;
- Interior remodeling of the existing ground floor restaurant, office and public spaces, including the reestablishment of a bar with the restaurant; and



Town of Tiburon

STAFF REPORT

- Installation of increased landscaping and public improvements to the center of the site.

EXISTING FACILITIES AND SURROUNDINGS

The subject property is a trapezoidal-shaped 2.36 acre parcel fronting onto the north side of Tiburon Boulevard between Beach Road and Main Street. The main building contains the lobby, offices and restaurant on the ground floor, with hotel rooms above. A two-story building containing more units extends diagonally along the rear property line. A two-story annex building, with a lounge on the ground floor and units above, sits adjacent to the main building toward the front of the site. A one-story maintenance building is situated in the northwest corner of the property. A swimming pool occupies much of the center of the site.

The property currently has a somewhat complex circulation pattern. The vehicular entrance in front of the main building provides one-way circulation in two directions; traffic going to the left will follow a curving path to the main parking lot, while traffic going to the right must exit back onto Tiburon Boulevard. A two-way driveway provides access to the main parking lot on the west side of the property. Another driveway leads from the rear of that parking lot through parking spaces beneath the building along the rear property line, through a series of parking spaces along the eastern side of the site, and out a one-way exit at the southeast corner of the property.

The site is bordered by the Tiburon Fire Protection station to the east and the Bank of America building and the Beach Road parking lot to the west. The Lagoon units of the Point Tiburon condominium complex are situated to the rear of the property.

PERMIT HISTORY

A conditional use permit (File #16515) was approved in 1965 for the development of this property with a 61-unit hotel, restaurant and coffee shop, cocktail lounge, and an office building (now the annex building located at 1647 Tiburon Boulevard). Construction of the hotel was completed in 1966, with a total of 60 rooms built at that time.

Beginning in 1968, a variety of different planning applications were requested and approved for expansions or modifications to the existing facilities on this site, although not all of the approved projects were ever constructed. The Town Council approved a master plan (File # 46805) in 1968 to expand the hotel to up to 104 rooms. A 34-unit addition (File #77011) and a single manager's unit (File # 77003) were approved for construction in 1970. A master plan (File #47803) approved the construction of four additional units in 1978, bringing the approved total to 99 units.

In 1997, a conditional use permit (File #19708) was granted to convert the ground floor of the annex building from a delicatessen to a hotel lounge, with the upper floor to remain as offices. Sometime between then and when the property was purchased by the current owners in 2004, eight sleeping rooms were apparently put into use at the hotel without obtaining required



Town of Tiburon

STAFF REPORT

permits from the Town. The hotel currently contains a total of 107 rooms, 99 of which have been approved by the Town.

ANALYSIS

New Hotel Rooms

The current owners became aware of the existence of eight hotel rooms that had been constructed without first obtaining Town approvals during a review of the property's permit history prior to their purchase of the hotel. The applicants have cooperated with Town officials in determining the location of these additional units and the appropriate steps necessary to legalize this unpermitted construction, including all required zoning and building permits.

Five of the eight unpermitted units (Rooms 325, 326, 327, 328 & 329) are located on the top floor of the two-story annex building. The other three rooms (113, 213 & 245) are situated toward the rear of the site. The applicant is requesting that all of these rooms remain, and that one previously approved unit (Room 114) be removed.

As noted above, it appears that most if not all of these rooms were placed into use some time in the last 7 years, as five of the rooms were still occupied by office uses when the lounge area was approved in 1997. The unpermitted rooms occupy space that was previously approved for other uses on the site; as a result, the change in use of these spaces has not been visually noticeable. Further, the increased number of hotel rooms has not resulted in any observed problems in terms of parking demand or intensity of use on the site.

Exterior Changes

Proposed building additions include three small bay projections along the south façade of the main building facing Tiburon Boulevard. A 166 square foot addition would be made to the area of the bar adjacent to the restaurant. A 96 square foot entry expansion and a 99 square foot addition to the office area are also proposed. A covered *porte cochere* would be added in front of the entry, and an elevator would be installed to the east of the lobby entry. A bridged walkway would connect the upper floors of the main building and the annex building.

A number of small building areas are also proposed to be demolished. Several small storage rooms, an extension to the restaurant dining area, and an area at the entrance to one of the meeting rooms would be eliminated. Several stairways would either be removed or modified after the bridge connection is constructed.

The landscaping area around the swimming pool would be increased. Additional space would be provided for pool cabanas, a spa and an herb garden. The interior courtyard would also include a fire pit and barbecue area.

The proposed exterior modifications would not substantially alter the exterior appearance of the hotel. The ground floor additions to the main building would not extend beyond the footprint of the existing building overhang. The *porte cochere* would make the entrance to the hotel more



Town of Tiburon

STAFF REPORT

easily identifiable and provide better weather protection for guests entering the building. The improvements to the interior courtyard would provide a significant visual upgrade to the central portion of the property.

Interior changes

A portion of the main building that had previously been used as a cocktail lounge has been converted into office space. This area would be converted back to a bar that would operate in conjunction with the restaurant. Other minor interior improvements would be made that would not affect the general functions of the hotel.

The restaurant is currently used primarily to serve breakfast, lunch and dinner to hotel guests. The applicants have indicated that they wish to upgrade the restaurant operation to attract other diners. The restaurant would still serve hotel guests all day, but would be a destination restaurant for lunch and dinner.

Parking and Circulation

Several changes are proposed to the on-site vehicular circulation patterns. Most notably, the one-way driveway on the eastern side and rear of the property would be turned around to provide access from the front to the rear; this would allow direct entry from Tiburon Boulevard to this driveway, and would allow vehicles that approach the main entrance to drive to parking areas without first exiting onto Tiburon Boulevard. The driveway that currently runs from the front of the site between the main building and the annex building would be eliminated; this area would be landscaped. The entrance to the main parking lot from Tiburon Boulevard would be slightly modified.

The configuration of the parking spaces on the site would also be reorganized to create a more efficient traffic flow. More 90 degree parking spaces and fewer angled spaces would be provided in the main parking lot. The parking spaces along the east side and rear of the property would be reoriented in connection with the reversed traffic direction for this driveway. The number of parking spaces on the site would not change, with 121 spaces still provided once the modifications have been completed.

The Tiburon Zoning Ordinance requires that a hotel provide one parking space for each unit, and that restaurants provide one parking space for every 60 square feet of seating area. The hotel would need to provide 106 parking spaces to accommodate the needs of its guests. If the restaurant is reviewed as a stand-alone use, approximately 33 spaces would need to be provided, resulting in an overall parking requirement of 139 spaces, or 18 spaces more than provided on the site. However, a restaurant within a hotel results in certain automatic parking efficiencies, arising from the use of the restaurant by hotel guests, which effectively reduces the amount of parking needed for this combination of uses.

Section 5.08.10 of the Tiburon Zoning Ordinance addresses multiple use parking requirements, and states that the Planning Commission may require fewer spaces than that required for both uses combined if the following findings are made:



Town of Tiburon

STAFF REPORT

- a. *That the uses or times for which overlapping parking is being requested do not have overlapping hours of operation sufficient to result in a deficiency of parking spaces. It is reasonable to assume that not all sleeping units will be occupied during the lunch and dinner peaks of the restaurant.*
- b. *That the parking lot in question is within a reasonable distance from the uses for which parking requirements are to be overlapped. The main parking lot is close to both the hotel rooms and the restaurant on the site.*

The applicant has conducted a series of parking counts over a three-week period to determine how much parking is actually used on the site. During that period, no more than 84 of the 121 parking spaces were occupied on any one date; this included dates on which up to 104 rooms were occupied. This would indicate that the parking provided on the site is adequate for the existing operations of the hotel, and should provide sufficient parking for those additional restaurant customers who are not already guests at the hotel..

Additional parking demand during the evening hours resulting from the modified restaurant operations would likely result in additional use of the western driveway entrance to the main parking lot, as diners would be less likely to take the more circuitous path around the outside driveway to the parking lot. Staff required the applicant to analyze the eastbound left-turn pocket opposite this driveway on Tiburon Boulevard to determine if the stacking capacity of the pocket would be adequate to support the additional traffic generated by the modified restaurant operations. The applicant has submitted a traffic study that indicates that the peak evening traffic levels along this portion of Tiburon Boulevard would not create significant delays for cars turning into this driveway.

General Plan/Zoning Consistency

The proposed project has been reviewed for consistency with the Tiburon General Plan and with the requirements of the Tiburon Zoning Ordinance regarding conditional use permits. The hotel and restaurant uses are consistent with the Neighborhood Commercial land use designation contained in the Land Use Element; such uses are not generally considered to be "tourist-oriented" uses that are discouraged in the downtown area.

Section 4.04.02 of the Tiburon Zoning Ordinance states that the purposes of the review of conditional use permit applications are to:

- (a) Determine whether the location proposed for the Conditional Use applied for is properly related to the development of the neighborhood as a whole;
- (b) Determine whether the location proposed for the particular Conditional Use applied for would be reasonably compatible with the types of uses normally permitted in the surrounding area;



Town of Tiburon

STAFF REPORT

- (c) Evaluate whether or not adequate facilities and services required for such use exist or can be provided;
- (d) Stipulate such conditions and requirements as would reasonably assure that the basic purposes of this Chapter and the objectives of the General Plan would be served; and
- (e) Determine whether the Town is adequately served by similar uses presently existing or recently approved by the Town.

The existing hotel and restaurant have been an integral part of Downtown Tiburon since 1966. These uses have historically been considered to be compatible with the neighboring commercial and residential areas. The changes proposed by this application would not substantially change the relationship of the improvements on the property to the surrounding area. It appears that parking on the site would be adequate to serve the proposed modifications to the hotel and restaurant. The use of this property for a hotel, restaurant and cocktail lounge has been approved by the Town since 1965; although some operational changes are proposed, the project would not result in “new” uses to be compared with other similar uses in the downtown area.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Staff has made a preliminary determination that the subject application is categorically exempt from the requirements of CEQA per Section 15301 (e) of the CEQA Guidelines. This exemption is available for additions to existing structures, provided that the addition will not result in an increase of more than 10,000 square feet if “the project is in an area where all public services and facilities are available to allow for maximum development permissible in the [Tiburon] General Plan, and [if] the area in which the project is located is not environmentally sensitive.” As the subject property is situated within a fully developed portion of Tiburon and adjacent to Tiburon Boulevard, Staff believes that this exemption would be appropriate.

CONCLUSION

The proposed improvements to the Tiburon Lodge would provide a needed upgrade to a property that has served the town for many years. The additional rooms have been in existence for several years without creating any impacts on neighboring properties, which indicates that the addition of 7 rooms to the hotel does not significantly intensify the level of activity on the site. Although the changes proposed to the restaurant operations could result in increased parking demand, it appears that the on-site parking provided will be more than adequate to handle any increased need for parking. The improvements to the exterior of the building, the interior courtyard and the on-site circulation and parking will help the economic viability of the hotel and restaurant, and strengthen their place as a vital part of Downtown Tiburon.

Town of Tiburon

STAFF REPORT



RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission take public testimony on this item, close the public hearing, deliberate upon the project merits, and adopt the draft resolution conditionally approving the project.

EXHIBITS

1. Application form and supplemental materials
2. Traffic study prepared by CHS Consulting Group, dated November 17, 2004
3. Draft resolution
4. Submitted plans