

**RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION
OF THE COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT**

Resolution Number: 23-

Record Number: PLN-2022-18014

Assessor's Parcel Number: 205-432-005

Resolution by the Planning Commission of the County of Humboldt certifying compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act and conditionally approving the Gage & Amy Duran Conditional Use Permit request.

WHEREAS, Gage and Amy Duran submitted an application and evidence in support of approving a Conditional Use Permit to allow operation of a hotel establishment with up to nine (9) units on the upper floors of the former Scotia Hospital building, to allow flexibility in leasing these units as monthly rentals as well as on a less-than-monthly basis as short-term lodging; and

WHEREAS, the County Planning Division, the lead agency, determined the project is Categorically exempt from CEQA review per Section 15301 of the CEQA guidelines which permits alteration and permitting of existing structures involving negligible expansion of the former use; and

WHEREAS, the Humboldt County Planning Commission held a duly-noticed public hearing on November 2, 2023, and reviewed, considered, and discussed the application for the Conditional Use Permit and reviewed and considered all evidence and testimony presented at the hearing.

Now, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Planning Commission makes all the following findings:

- 1. FINDING:** **Project Description:** A Conditional Use Permit is being requested to allow the upper floors of the former Scotia Hospital building to be adapted for use as a Hotel with up to nine (9) units. The owners/operators are currently in the process of completing interior alterations to the second-floor rooms to create seven (7) self-contained residential apartment-type units (BLD-2023-58510). The Use Permit is sought to allow flexibility in leasing these units as monthly rentals as well as on a less-than-monthly basis as short-term lodging. Transient Habitation includes Hotels, which are a conditionally permitted use in the Community Commercial (C-2) zone in which the property is located. Design Review is not required as no exterior alterations to the building or site are proposed at this time.

EVIDENCE: a) Project File: PLN-2022-18014

- 2. FINDING:** **CEQA.** The requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act have been complied with.

EVIDENCE: a) The project has been determined to be categorically exempt pursuant to section 15301 of the CEQA guidelines which permits alteration and permitting of existing structures involving negligible expansion of the former use. Conversion to a transient habitation will not introduce new environmental impacts or worsen existing impacts. The property has historically been used as a hospital and clinic. These historic uses are comparable in environmental effects to the proposed transient habitation uses.

FINDINGS FOR CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT

3. FINDING: The proposed development is in conformance with the County General Plan, Open Space Plan, and Open Space Action Program.

EVIDENCE: a) The proposed development is consistent with the purposes of the existing Commercial General (CG) plan designation applied to the area in which the site is located. The Commercial General designation is applied to lands where location, access, and availability of services are suitable for commercial development, including retail trade services that are accessible and geared toward local neighborhood or regional needs.

The proposed project is consistent with the County open Space Plan and Open `Space Action program because it involves use of existing structures on a parcel with a history of commercial and institutional uses. The upstairs portions of the building targeted for use are already being set up for redevelopment under a residential occupancy. The proposed hotel use will provide the owners greater flexibility and recapturing their investment in the renovation and rehabilitation of the structure. No new structures or ground disturbance will result from the proposal.

4. FINDING: The proposed development is consistent with the Guiding Principles of the Plan, including Guiding Principle #1 “Ensure that public policy is reflective of the needs of the citizenry of a democratic society as expressed by the citizens themselves.”

EVIDENCE: a) The proposed hotel use will complement the assemblage of uses in the vicinity. Adaptive reuse of the former hospital building is a cost-effective means of improving commercial use of the structure and incentivizing rehabilitation and enhancement of local historical structures. By requiring a discretionary permit, public notice is performed providing an outlet for feedback and address of localized issues.

5. FINDING: The proposed development is consistent with the Guiding Principles of the Plan, including Guiding Principle #2 “Preserve and enhance the diverse character of Humboldt County and the quality of life it offers.”

EVIDENCE: a) The applicant has worked to address neighborhood compatibility issues through the Operations Plan and House Rules that have been created. Instituting the protocols and procedures found therein will help with tackling common concerns that may arise during operation.

6. FINDING: The proposed development is consistent with the Guiding Principles of the Plan, including Guiding Principle #3 “Promote and facilitate the creation of affordable housing opportunities to meet current and future demands for all income levels.”

EVIDENCE: a) The project involves the redevelopment and rehabilitation of an existing building that has historically hosted commercial and institutional uses. Investment in upgrades to the building will serve to develop potential new housing stock that can dual as transient habitation. These improvements help promote investment in historical preservation of a historical structure while upgrading it to suit modern use. Authorizing use of the upstairs rooms as part of the hotel use does not permanently preclude them from also being used for long-term rental on a monthly basis, especially during periods of the year where tourist visitation is limited.

7. FINDING: The proposed development is consistent with the purposes of the existing zone in which the site is located. Additionally, the proposed development conforms with all applicable standards and requirements of the zoning regulations.

EVIDENCE: a) The Community Commercial is intended to apply to areas where more complete commercial facilities are necessary for community convenience. Hotel and Motel uses are conditionally permitted. Commercial zones are ideal places for these sorts of uses as they are customary to this type of setting. The Historical Scotia Inn (now: Scotia Lodge) is located within the same zoning district as the subject property. Staff has performed an analysis of parking demand and determined that the number of spaces needed by the proposed Hotel use would not exceed the ceiling of non-conformance established during past occupancy and operation of the building as a Hospital. A variety of conditions have been included requiring that the

owner/operator implement and enforce parking and noise restrictions, and requirements that owner/operator contact information be provided to neighboring landowners and occupants and periodically updated as needed.

- b) Based on the number of beds and a conservative estimate of the employee count (48 beds, 6 employees at peak shift) during the hospital use, approximately 50 spaces would have been needed to comply with the applicable parking formulas for institutional uses found in the zoning regulations. Given the size of the first-floor clinic space and employee count (7000 square feet / 10 employees), approximately 34 additional spaces would be needed for that use. Collectively totaling a historical parking demand of approximately 84 spaces.

8. FINDING: The proposed development does not reduce the residential density for any parcel below that utilized by the Department of Housing and Community Development in determining compliance with housing element law.

EVIDENCE: a) As the site is commercially planned and zoned, it is not included in the County's currently adopted Housing Inventory. Therefore, no loss or underutilization of housing inventory should result.

9. FINDING: The proposed development and conditions under which it may be operated or maintained will not be detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare or materially injurious to properties or improvements in the vicinity.

EVIDENCE: a) A variety of ongoing conditions have been included requiring that the owner/operator implement and enforce parking and noise restrictions, requirements that owner/operator contact information be provided to neighboring landowners and occupants and periodically updated as needed. Staff believe that with the incorporation of these recommended conditions, the required findings for approval can be made. A Condition has been included (COA #6) requiring that the applicant establish and enforce standard protocols for guest conduct.

DECISION

NOW, THEREFORE, based on the above findings and evidence, the Humboldt County Planning Commission does hereby:

- Adopt the findings set forth in this resolution; and
- Conditionally approves the Conditional Use Permit for Gage & Amy Duran, based upon the Findings and Evidence and subject to the conditions of approval attached hereto as Attachment 1 and incorporated herein by reference,

Adopted after review and consideration of all the evidence on **November 2, 2023**.

The motion was made by Commissioner _____ and seconded by Commissioner _____ and the following ROLL CALL vote:

AYES: Commissioners:

NOES: Commissioners:

ABSTAIN: Commissioners:

ABSENT: Commissioners:

DECISION:

I, John H. Ford, Secretary to the Planning Commission of the County of Humboldt, do hereby certify the foregoing to be a true and correct record of the action taken on the above-entitled matter by said Commission at a meeting held on the date noted above.

John H. Ford, Director,
Planning and Building Department