

**CORTE MADERA PLANNING COMMISSION  
STAFF REPORT**

**ITEM NO. 5A**      **REPORT DATE:**                      **February 19, 2010**  
                         **MEETING DATE:**                      **February 23, 2010**

**SUBJECT:**            **DESIGN REVIEW APPLICATION NO. 10-001, CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. 10-001, SIGN PERMIT NO. 10-001** - To allow a new bank and major interior and exterior remodel of the existing commercial building at Park Madera Center and amend the Master Sign Program for Park Madera Center.

**SITE:**                      504-506 Tamalpais Drive

**BUSINESS/  
OWNER:**                Bank of Marin

**ARCHITECT:**            Daniel Macdonald, AIA

**APPROVAL  
DEADLINE:**            This application was deemed complete on **February 4, 2010**. Final action must be taken by the **March 23, 2010** Planning Commission public hearing or application may be deemed approved.

**CEQA  
STATUS:**                This project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act under Categorical Exemption Class 3 (CEQA. Article 19. Section 15303(c))

**PROCEDURE:**        The Planning Commission's decision is final unless appealed to or called up by the Town Council within ten calendar days.

**SITE  
INFORMATION:** Zoning:                      C-1 (Local Shopping District)

Existing  
Development:            Three Commercial Uses: Tamalpais Travel, Computer Solutions and Westgate Therapeutics (2,387 sq.ft.)

Lot Size:                      Park Madera Center = 70,000 sq.ft.

<u>Surrounding Properties:</u>	<u>Zoning</u>	<u>Land Use</u>
North:	POS	Town Park
South:	R-1	Residential
East:	O	Office
West:	POS	Rec Center

**SUMMARY:** The Bank of Marin is requesting Major Design Review, Conditional Use Permit and Sign Permit approval for a major interior and exterior remodel of three existing commercial spaces at Park Madera Center. Bank of Marin will take over 2,387 sq.ft. of commercial space currently occupied by Tamalpais Travel, Computer Solutions and Westgate Therapeutics. No additions to the building are proposed. A new exterior façade and extensive new landscaping are proposed. The on-site parking immediately adjacent to the building will be reconfigured to provide a new Accessible Parking Space required by the California Building Code with safe path of travel to the bank. The secondary driveway closest to the building will be closed off because of the reconfigured parking. Three 13 sq.ft. Bank of Marin wall-mounted, illuminated signs are proposed for the Front, Side and Rear of the building. The free-standing Tamalpais Travel sign and structure will not be used and will be removed. An ATM machine is proposed in the front of the building facing the new landscape area. The Corte Madera branch of the Bank of Marin is presently located at 50 Madera Boulevard, directly across from the Corte Madera Town Center. That 6,000 sq.ft. branch will be closed in favor of this new smaller location at Park Madera Center.

**BACKGROUND:**

Below is a chronological listing of events pertaining to this application:

**January 29, 2010**

Design Review, Conditional Use Permit and Sign Permit Applications were filed for a new bank and major interior/exterior remodeling.

**February 2, 2010**

A Parking Plan and Parking Survey for the Park Madera Center were filed.

**February 4, 2010**

The Planning Department determined that the application was complete and recommends that the Planning Commission determine that the project qualifies for categorical exemption under Section 15303 (c) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines.

**February 12, 2010**

Public hearing notices were mailed to property owners and commercial tenants within 300 feet of the subject property and the area Home Owners Association.

**February 23, 2010**

Planning Commission holds a public hearing.

**ANALYSIS:** DESIGN REVIEW FOR BUILDING AND SITE

The project includes major interior and exterior renovations to the existing commercial building currently occupied by Tamalpais Travel, Computer Solutions and Westgate Therapeutics. The existing building is quite dated in its design and does not have an attractive appearance on Tamalpais Drive, a major

thoroughfare in Corte Madera. The building footprint will not increase. The new façade is stylish in its simplicity. The façade will be slightly taller than the existing building, but the added height will not pose any negative view or shadow impacts. The proposed exterior building materials and painting scheme will use earth tones that are compatible with all surrounding buildings and the varied architecture in the immediate vicinity.

The adjoining commercial space immediately to the left of the future bank is not included in this renovation project. The façade of the adjoining space will be painted out to be more compatible with the appearance of the renovated bank. The bank building will have some subtle, down-lit, accent lighting on the front and side of the building wall and more prominent security lighting at the rear of the building. The security lighting at the rear of the building will not spill out toward the residences across Tamalpais Drive.

#### PARKING LOT AND ACCESSIBLE PARKING SPACE DESIGN

The Park Madera Center is striped for 97 parking spaces. Of these 97 spaces, four spaces immediately surrounding the future bank building do not meet current standards to allow adequate backup area and two spaces are improperly located within the 20' front yard setback. Therefore, there are actually 91 parking spaces within the Center that meet current locational standards. The Center has approximately 25,000 sq.ft. of commercial space. Today's parking regulations would require 100 on-site parking spaces. The Center was built many years ago before the current standard and there is no requirement to provide 100 spaces. The project architect conducted a mid-day parking study for the week of January 25 through January 31. The survey showed that there are ample parking spaces in the lot. The parking lot was never more than 60% full (see Attachment 2). The bank has eight employees. To ensure that close-in parking is available to customers of the bank and other businesses in the Center, staff is recommending that the bank employees park in the more remote spaces at the north end of the Center.

The estimated cost of the proposed interior and exterior building improvements for the bank triggers a California Building Code requirement to provide an accessible parking space in immediate proximity to the bank. There are stringent criteria for properly locating an accessible parking space, which includes maximum slopes and minimum dimensions. The project architect has worked with the Town Building Official and has developed a plan to successfully provide an accessible space that meets these stringent criteria. The location of the accessible space does affect the configuration of the parking lot. There will be a net loss of one conforming parking space as a result of the mandate by the California Building Code. Section 18.20.050 of the Zoning Ordinance also outlines certain required parking standards. Condition #7 of this Section states that "Special provisions for access by the physically handicapped shall be included as required by the Uniform Building Code."

There will be an aesthetic benefit resulting from the new parking lot design. A substantial amount of new landscaping and decorative pedestrian pathway will be provided along the street frontage which will greatly enhance the appearance of the building and the Center. The secondary driveway immediately adjacent to the building will be removed which will eliminate the close proximity of two adjacent driveways and will increase short-term, on-street parking opportunities.

#### LANDSCAPE

The new street-side landscaping will also include decorative colored concrete pathways. These improvements will complement the remodeled exterior of the building and the Center as a whole. It will be a significant improvement over the current condition which has a stark appearance of concrete, asphalt and parking spaces located within the front setback. Decorative lighting bollards marking the pedestrian entrance to the bank will also provide a nice aesthetic improvement. The landscaping will be irrigated ground cover and shrubs designed in compliance with the Water District's standards for commercial properties.

#### DESIGN REVIEW FOR SIGNAGE

The Park Madera Center recently proposed and was granted an updated Master Sign Program. The Program replaces the larger outdated freestanding tenant identification sign. The Program also regulates the size and specifications of business signs on the property. The current Master Sign Program is somewhat proscriptive regarding number and sign specifications. The Master Sign Program did not anticipate a replacement use taking over more than one existing tenant space. The Master Sign Program, as currently written, allows just one internally illuminated sign for businesses with direct street frontage. The Bank of Marin is taking over the spaces of three existing tenants and has building frontage facing the street and the parking lot. The bank is proposing three, internally illuminated, wall-mounted signs. The existing freestanding Tamalpais Travel sign will not be used; it will be removed.

The Master Sign Program would have to be amended to allow Bank of Marin to install the three signs. The signs are tastefully designed. Staff recommends amending the Master Sign Program to allow the proposed Bank of Marin signs. The face of the individual letters and the Bank of Marin logo appear green in daylight. The sign faces are perforated, therefore the sign has a white illumination at night. The intensity of the night light can be controlled. A similar sign type can be observed at the Bank of Marin branch at Bon Air in Greenbrae.

The allowable sign area for the Bank of Marin tenant space is based on the width of building frontage facing Tamalpais Drive. Since the building frontage is 55', the maximum allowable sign area would be 55 sq.ft. The sign program proposed by Bank of Marin is comprised of three 13 sq.ft. internally illuminated wall-

mounted signs totaling 39 sq.ft., therefore the sign program clearly conforms to the sign area allowance.

As required by the Master Sign Program, all illuminated business identification signs shall be turned off at 9:00 pm nightly. There will be an ATM machine at the front of the building facing the new landscape area. The security lighting and task lighting will remain on all night, but the light is directed down and will not spill out toward the residences across Tamalpais Drive. The proposed Bank of Marin internally illuminated sign above the ATM machine is 5 sq.ft. in area with a white background. Staff suggests this sign not be illuminated if it is shown the security and task lighting provide ample illumination.

### CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT

The purpose of a Conditional Use Permit is to evaluate the operational characteristics of a proposed use and ensure that it is not incompatible or detrimental to adjacent uses. The proposed bank operation is small in scale with eight employees. The bank will likely generate more parking demand than the three commercial uses it is replacing, but a Parking Survey has shown that the parking lot has never exceeded 60% occupancy. The Park Madera Center will provide adequate parking spaces for the new bank and the existing uses throughout the Center, with the condition that bank employees utilize the more remote parking spaces at the north end of the Center.

The bank site is directly across the street from residences fronting Tamalpais Drive. The remodeled bank will be an improvement over the appearance of the existing commercial facade. The improved exterior façade, lighting and signage controls, increased street-front landscaping, closure of the secondary driveway and removal of the freestanding Tamalpais Travel sign will all contribute to improving the visual impact in the neighborhood.

### **CONCLUSION:**

Staff believes the proposed bank at this location, the proposed renovations to this commercial building and the new landscaping along Tamalpais Drive will provide welcomed improvements to this highly visible parcel. There will be a net loss of one conforming parking space as a result of a California Building Code mandate, but a parking survey of the property shows there will be ample on-site parking spaces for the new bank with the conditions that bank employees utilize the more remote parking spaces in the north end of the Center. The new accessible parking space will better serve the accessibility community and provide new, additional landscaping along Tamalpais Drive. An amendment to the Master Sign Program will be required to allow the three wall-mounted signs and the ATM sign. The bank signs are modest in size, tastefully designed and will be an improvement over the existing hodgepodge of signage that is

