



**COUNTY OF PLACER**  
**Community Development/Resource Agency**

Michael J. Johnson, AICP  
Agency Director

**PLANNING**

**TO:** Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** Michael J. Johnson, Planning Director

**DATE:** July 13, 2010

**SUBJECT:** APPLICANT APPEAL – PLANNING COMMISSION APPROVAL OF A VARIANCE (PVAA 20090261) “QUARRY PONDS SIGN VARIANCE”

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**ACTION REQUESTED**

The Board is being asked to consider an appeal from Lisa Powers, the owner of the Quarry Ponds Center, of the Planning Commission's approval of a Variance for Quarry Ponds Center in Granite Bay. It is staff's recommendation that the Board upholds the decision of the Planning Commission and deny the appeal.

**BACKGROUND:**

The Variance application was initially heard by the Zoning Administrator on January 21, 2010. At that hearing, the appellant was requesting approval of a Variance to allow for eight tenant names to be placed on the monument sign where only the center name is permitted. After receiving public testimony the Zoning Administrator took action to approve a Variance to allow for two tenant names on the three monument signs, with a requirement that the same two tenant names be displayed on each sign. The Zoning Administrator's action was based on his determination that there are no special circumstances on the parcel that would warrant eight tenant signs. The Zoning Administrator also cited concerns with the potential for any more than two tenant signs to cause a distraction and create a public safety hazard based on the rate of speed of vehicle traffic along Douglas Boulevard, and the fact that the Zoning Ordinance, Design Guidelines, Granite Bay Community Plan, and Quarry Pond Signage Criteria were clear on the requirement that monument signs identify the center only, as reasons for his approval of a limited number of signs.

The project applicant submitted an appeal of the Zoning Administrator's decision on January 28, 2010 and the item was heard by the Planning Commission on April 22, 2010. At that hearing, the Commission considered reports from the Development Review Committee staff and received written and oral testimony from the appellant, tenants in the Quarry Ponds Center, and members of the community.

The comments from the appellant and the tenants in the Center focused on the need for additional signage to attract more business to the Center, while the comments from community members focused on public safety concerns and the need for consistency with the Zoning Ordinance, the Granite Bay Community Plan, the Placer County Design Guidelines, and the Quarry Pond Signage Criteria.

The Planning Commission voted 3-2 to uphold the decision of the Zoning Administrator, with revisions to the conditions of approval that removed the requirement that the same two tenant names be displayed on each of the three existing monument signs and added a condition that requires the

applicant to obtain Development Review Committee approval of any new colors for the sign. Commissioners Crabb and Denio were absent. The dissenting votes were cast by Commissioners Brentnall and Gray, both of whom stated that there were no grounds to support any Variance to the Sign Ordinance, and that they believed the applicant should not be permitted to display any tenant names on the monument signs.

**APPEAL:**

The project applicant, Lisa Powers, the owner of the Quarry Ponds Center, submitted an Appeal of the Planning Commission's decision on May 3, 2010. The appeal states; 1) that the "Decision was not sufficient to address the chronic problem of anchor tenant names needing to be on the monument sign in order to mitigate site plan of tenants more than 400 feet from the roadway; proper signage will mitigate this condition."

**DISCUSSION OF ISSUES:**

The applicant states that the Planning Commission's decision to allow for two tenant names to be displayed on each of the three monument signs at Quarry Ponds Center is not sufficient to address the lack of visibility that tenants in the Center experience given the location and configuration of the Center, which places some tenants more than 400 feet from Douglas Boulevard. It is the applicant's position that proper signage, which includes additional tenant names on the monument signs, will correct this situation, and benefit the Center and its tenants by increasing traffic to the site, thus increasing overall business in the Center.

Staff Response:

Although the appellant states that two tenant signs are not adequate, it was the determination of the Planning Commission that the appellant has not illustrated that there are special circumstances, based on size, shape, topography, or any other physical or environmental characteristic that would warrant the approval of a Variance to allow for eight tenant names on the monument sign. Per the Sign Ordinance the Quarry Pond Center would typically be permitted one monument sign, however the Sign Criteria approved for the Center allowed for three monument signs in an effort to improve visibility of the site. These Criteria were created and proposed by the applicant and approved by the Planning Commission. Accordingly, it was the determination of the Planning Commission that the County has already allowed for more monument signs than are allowed on other similarly-signed properties.

The requirement that monument signs identify the name of the shopping center only is clearly stated in the Placer County Zoning Ordinance, Placer County Design Guidelines, Granite Bay Community Plan, and Quarry Pond Signage Criteria. The Planning Commission determined that approval of the Variance to allow for two tenant signs represents the minimum departure from the standards set forth in the Zoning Ordinance and other adopted documents that would permit the Quarry Pond Center to be compatible with the signage of several existing centers within its general vicinity, while not creating a potential traffic hazard along Douglas Boulevard. Additionally, the approval is based on the finding that special circumstances do exist that warrant the approval of not more than two tenant signs.

Although the current economic crisis is having an impact on local businesses, the decisions of the County's hearing bodies and the recommendations of Community Development Resources Agency staff are based on compliance with adopted land use ordinances and documents, and in the interest of public health and safety. In this case, the Zoning Administrator and the Planning Commission have determined that the appellant's request for eight tenant signs is not in the best interest of the public health and safety of the community.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Based on the analysis described above, staff recommends that the Board of Supervisors deny the appeal and uphold the Planning Commission's decision to approve the Variance (PVAA 20090261) to allow for the placement of no more than two individual tenant signs on the existing monument signs based on the findings listed below.

**RECOMMENDED FINDINGS:**

**CEQA Findings**

The project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA per section 15305 [Class 5(a)], Minor alterations in land use limitations, and section 18.36.070 [Class 5 (A)(1)], Minor alterations in land use limitations, of the Placer County Environmental Review Ordinance.

**Variance Findings**

1. There are special circumstances applicable to the subject property, including the location of the existing monument sign on Douglas Boulevard and the distance of some of the existing storefronts to Douglas Boulevard, and because of such circumstances, the strict application of the Zoning Ordinance has been found to deprive the subject property of privileges enjoyed by other properties in the vicinity and under identical zone classifications. The approval of two tenant signs will allow the property to enjoy privileges enjoyed by other properties in the vicinity and under identical zone classifications.
2. The granting of this Variance to allow for two tenant signs will not constitute a grant of special privileges inconsistent with the limitations upon other properties in the vicinity and in the same zone district.
3. The Variance does not authorize a use that is not otherwise allowed in the zone district.
4. The granting of this Variance to allow for two tenant signs does not, under the circumstances and conditions applied in this particular case, adversely affect public health or safety, is not materially detrimental to the public welfare, nor potentially injurious to nearby property or improvements.

Respectfully submitted,



MICHAEL J. JOHNSON, AICP  
Agency Director

**EXHIBITS:**

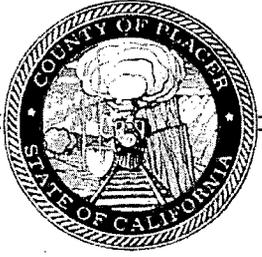
- Exhibit 1 – Conditions of Approval
- Exhibit 2 – Vicinity Map
- Exhibit 3 – Site Plan
- Exhibit 4 – Appeal to Board of Supervisors
- Exhibit 5 – Planning Commission Staff Report

cc: Lisa Powers – Appellant

**Copies Sent by Planning:**

- Michael Johnson – Community Development Resource Agency Director
- Paul Thompson – Deputy Planning Director
- Karin Schwab – County Counsel

Phil Frantz – Engineering and Surveying Division  
Laura Rath – Environmental Health Services  
Project file



**COUNTY OF PLACER**  
**Community Development Resource Agency**

Michael J. Johnson, AICP  
Agency Director

**PLANNING**

**FINAL CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL**  
**VARIANCE (PVAA 20090261) QUARRY PONDS**

**CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL:**

1. Approval of this Variance (PVAA 20090261) allows for the placement of two tenant names on the three existing monument signs.
2. Prior to the construction or modification of any of the existing monument signs the applicant shall obtain a building permit from the Placer County Building Department.
3. None of the monument signs shall exceed the maximum allowable square-footage allowed by section 17.54.180 (A)(b) of the Placer County Zoning Ordinance.
4. The proposed sign and foundation shall be located in the same location as the existing monument sign and foundation.
5. There shall be no modification to the colors of any component of the existing sign without prior approval of the Development Review Committee.
6. Prior to Building Permit issuance and/or approval of the sign permit, the applicant shall remove the existing Real Estate sign from within the Douglas Blvd. right-of-way. If the sign is relocated on the site, then it shall meet the Zoning Ordinance requirements. If the sign is reconstructed within the Douglas Blvd. right-of-way in the future, the sign shall be removed by the County at the applicant's expense.
7. This Variance (PVAA 20090261) is approved for twenty-four months from the date of approval, unless previously exercised by issuance of a building permit.

July 2010 Board of Supervisors

# VICINITY MAP

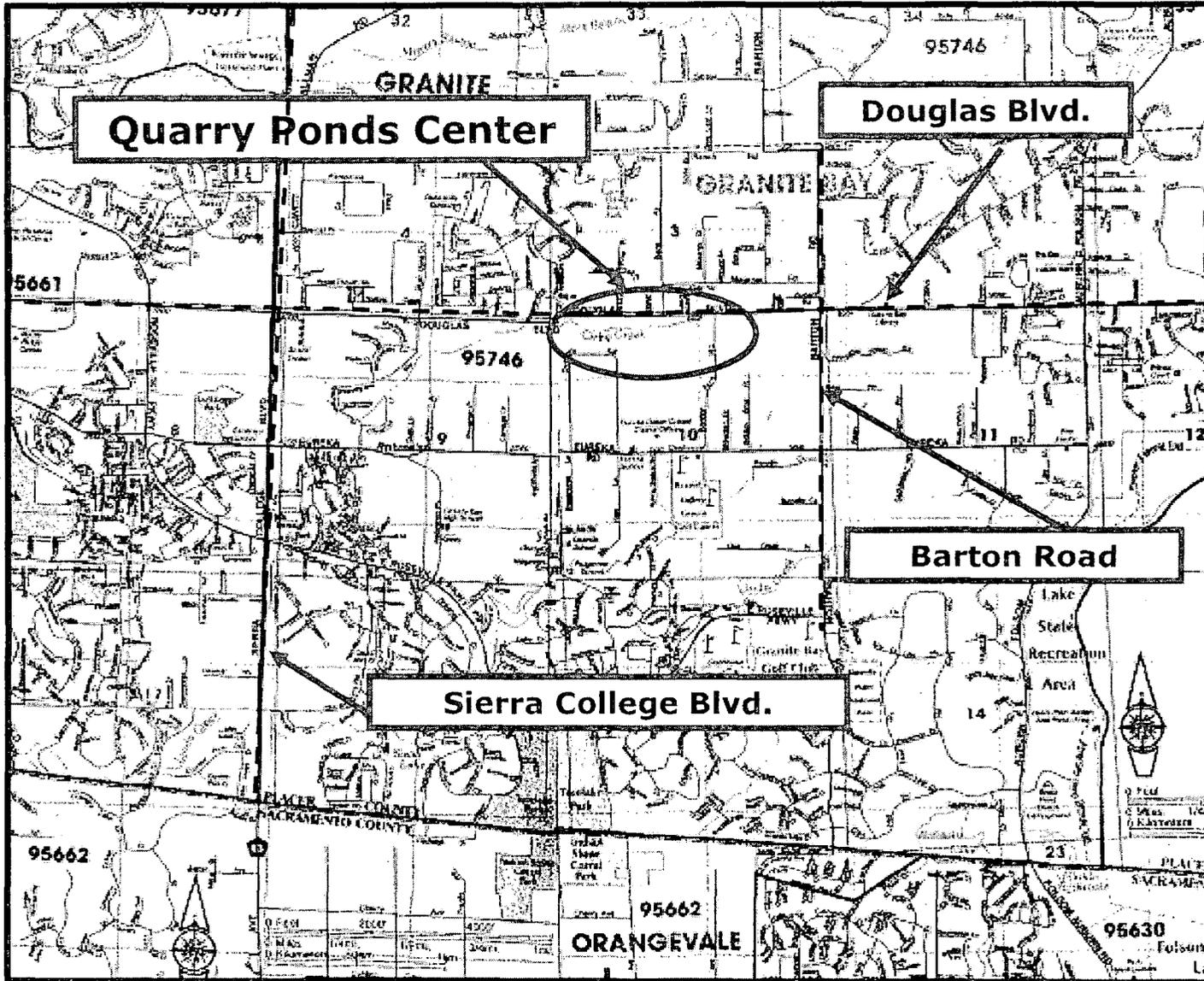


Exhibit 2





PLACER COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

AUBURN OFFICE
3091 County Center Dr
Auburn, CA 95603

530-886-3000/FAX 530-886-3080
Web page: www.placer.ca.gov/planning

TAHOE OFFICE
565 W. Lake Blvd./P. O. Box 1909
Tahoe City CA 96145
530-581-6280/FAX 530-581-6282
E-Mail : planning@placer.ca.gov

Reserved for Date Stamp

PLANNING APPEALS

The specific regulations regarding appeal procedures may be found in the Placer County Code, Chapters 16 (Subdivision), 17 (Planning and Zoning), and 18 (Environmental Review Ordinance).

OFFICE USE ONLY

Last Day to Appeal 5/3/2010 (5 pm)
Letter
Oral Testimony
Zoning C-2-UP-DL
Maps: 7-full size and 1 reduced for Planning Commission items

Appeal Fee \$ 495.00
Date Appeal Filed 5/3/2010
Receipt # 10-0065985
Received by Mail / Beth Hebert/jc
Geographic Area South

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE APPLICANT

1. Project name QUARRY PONDS CENTER

2. Appellant(s) QUARRY POND, LLC; by Lisa Powers, Manager

Address 201 California Street, Ste 490, San Francisco CA 94111
Telephone Number 415.397.1115; 465.256
Fax Number 415.397.9418
City State Zip Code

3. Assessor's Parcel Number(s): 048-083-024-000

- 4. Application being appealed (check all those that apply):
Administrative Approval (AA- )
Use Permit (CUP/MUP- )
Parcel Map (P- )
General Plan Amendment (GPA- )
Specific Plan (SPA- )
Planning Director Interpretation (date)
Minor Boundary Line Adj. (MBR- )
Tentative Map (SUB- )
Variance (VAA- )
Design Review (DSA- )
Rezoning (REA- )
Rafting Permit (RPA- )
Env. Review (EIAQ- )
Other: SIGN ORDINANCE VARIANCE REQUEST

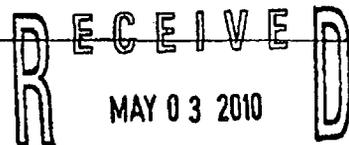
5. Whose decision is being appealed: Planning Commission (see reverse)

6. Appeal to be heard by: Board of Supervisors (see reverse)

7. Reason for appeal (attach additional sheet if necessary and be specific):
Decision was not sufficient to address the chronic problem of anchor tenant names needing to be on the monument sign
In order to mitigate site plan of tenants more than 400 feet from the roadway; proper signage will mitigate this condition
(If you are appealing a project condition only, please state the condition number)

Note: Applicants may be required to submit additional project plans/maps.

Signature of Appellant(s) Lisa Powers 4/30/10



PLANNING DEPT.



**COUNTY OF PLACER**  
**Community Development Resource Agency**

Michael J. Johnson, AICP  
Agency Director

**PLANNING**

**HEARING DATE:** March 11, 2010

**ITEM NO.:** 1

**TIME:** 10:05 AM

**TO:** Placer County Planning Commission  
**FROM:** Development Review Committee  
**DATE:** March 11, 2010  
**SUBJECT:** **APPEAL: QUARRY PONDS SIGN VARIANCE**  
**(PVAA-20090261)**  
**APN: 048-083-024**

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**COMMUNITY PLAN:** Granite Bay Community Plan

**GENERAL/COMMUNITY PLAN DESIGNATION:** Commercial

**ZONING:** C2-UP-DC (General Commercial, combining Use Permit, combining Design/Scenic corridor)

**STAFF PLANNER:** Leah Rosasco, Senior Planner

**LOCATION:** The subject property is located on the south side of Douglas Boulevard at 5520-5550 Douglas Boulevard in the Granite Bay area.

**APPLICANT:** Lisa Powers on behalf of Quarry Ponds, LLC

**PROPOSAL:** The applicant is appealing the Zoning Administrator's decision to approve a Variance to allow for two tenant signs rather than the eight tenant signs requested.

The applicant is requesting approval of a Variance to Section 17.54.180, (A)(1)(e), On-Premises Signs, of the Placer County Zoning Ordinance, which states that shopping centers shall only display the name of the center and shall not include the names of individual businesses. The applicant is requesting the Variance in order to allow for the placement of individual business names on the three existing monument signs at the Quarry Ponds Center.

**CEQA COMPLIANCE:** This Variance application and Appeal are categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA per section 15305 [Class 5(a)], Minor alterations in land use limitations, and

section 18.36.070 [Class 5 (A)(1)], Minor alterations in land use limitations, of the Placer County Environmental Review Ordinance.

**PUBLIC NOTICES:** Public notices were mailed to property owners of record within 300 feet of the project site. Other appropriate public interest groups and citizens were sent copies of the public hearing notice the Granite Bay Municipal Advisory Council. Copies of the appeal were transmitted to the Community Development Resource Agency Staff and the Departments of Public Works and Environmental Health Services, the Air Pollution Control District, and Special Districts for their review and comment.

**MUNICIPAL ADVISORY COUNCIL REVIEW:** The applicant presented the proposed sign design to the Granite Bay Municipal Advisory Council as an Informational Non-Action Item on July 1, 2009. While there was no formal action taken on the item, the project did appear to have the support of some MAC members, while some members of the public expressed concern regarding the potential for this project to set precedence for the inclusion of tenant signage on monument signs, and the possibility that the signage may become a distraction to drivers on Douglas Boulevard.

**SITE CHARACTERISTICS:** The project site is currently developed with the Quarry Ponds Center.

**EXISTING LAND USE AND ZONING:**

	LAND USE	ZONING
SITE	Quarry Ponds Center	(C2-UP-DC) General Commercial, combining Use Permit, combining Design Scenic Corridor
NORTH	Douglas Boulevard with Rural Residential land beyond	(RS-B20) Single-family residential with a building site minimum of 20,000 square feet
SOUTH	Undeveloped land	(RA-B100, PD=0.44) Residential agriculture with a building site minimum of 100,000 square feet combining Planned Development designation of .44 dwelling units per acre
EAST	Parking area for Quarry Ponds Center and undeveloped land	(RA-B100, PD=0.44) Residential agriculture with a building site minimum of 100,000 square feet combining Planned Development designation of .44 dwelling units per acre
WEST	Existing retail center	(C2-UP-DC) General Commercial, combining Use Permit, combining Design Scenic Corridor

**ZONING ADMINISTRATOR ACTION:** The applicant is appealing the Zoning Administrator's decision to grant partial approval of a request for a Variance to Section 17.54.180, (A)(1)(e), On-Premises Signs, of the Placer County Zoning Ordinance, which states that shopping centers shall only display the name of the center and shall not include the names of individual businesses. The applicant requested approval of a Variance to allow for the placement of eight individual tenant signs on the three existing monument signs at the Quarry Ponds Center; however the Zoning Administrator approved the Variance to allow for only two individual tenant signs to be placed on the existing monument signs.

**LETTER OF APPEAL:**

Issue #1: Two tenant names on the monument signs are not enough.

The appellant has stated that the number of tenant signs approved by the Zoning Administrator is not adequate to meet the needs of the Center, as there are 24 tenant spaces in the Quarry Ponds Center. In an attachment to the Appeal submitted (Attachment D), the applicant states the "difficulty in providing that only two tenant's names may be on the center's monument signs is first of all : which tenants are to be chosen, and then, for what reason?". Additionally, the Appellant states that "It is most helpful and important to continuing and new center traffic growth that as many of the above four types of tenants will be represented on the monument signs."

Staff Response:

The Zoning Administrator took action to approve two individual tenant signs rather than the eight requested as this action represented the minimum departure from the Zoning Ordinance. The Zoning Administrator's action would also permit the Quarry Pond Center to be compatible with the signage of existing centers within the general area of the project site. The Zoning Administrator determined that special circumstances did exist that warrant the approval of not more than two tenant signs, however he was not able to make the findings that special circumstances existed that would warrant eight tenant signs. The Zoning Administrator cited concerns with the potential for any more than two tenant signs to cause a distraction and create a public safety hazard based on the rate of speed of vehicle traffic along Douglas Boulevard, and the fact that the Zoning Ordinance, Design Guidelines, Granite Bay Community Plan, and Quarry Pond Signage Criteria were clear on the requirement that monument signs identify the center only as reasons for his approval of a limited number of signs. Although the appellant states that two signs are not adequate, the appellant has not illustrated that there are special circumstances, base on size, shape, topography, or any other physical or environmental characteristic that would warrant the approval of a Variance to allow for eight tenant names on the monument sign.

Issue #2: The current economic climate necessitates as much assistance as possible to both the Quarry Ponds Center tenants and to Placer County and the State of California.

The Appellant has stated that due to the economic downturn currently being experienced throughout the region and the state, "It is utterly and rightly within the best interests of Placer County to join in the Quarry Ponds Center's desire to continue, to increase and to support the gross taxable sales at this center as we bring will more revenue to Placer County, also." The

Appellant also states that "The slowness of sales threatens the financial wherewithal and health of not only our country's, state's and Placer County's businesses, but also that of Placer County and the state of California. Further, a business which stays afloat during the comeback from our damaged economy will also be able to pay the annual property tax assessment the county needs for us to pay so it may conduct its own county business affairs. A closed or financially damaged business generally cannot do this. We are connected in our efforts to succeed."

**Staff Response:**

The Zoning Administrator's decision was based on the consistent application of County standards regarding land development, specifically signage. The standards that apply in this case are contained in the Placer County Zoning Ordinance, the Placer County Design Guidelines, the Granite Bay Community Plan, and the Quarry Pond Signage Criteria, and address issues regarding public health and safety, and aesthetics. Although the appellant cites the current economic climate as a reason to approve the Variance to allow for eight tenants signs, the appellant has not demonstrated special circumstances related to the property that would warrant the Variance as requested. The Zoning Administrator cited public safety concerns and inconsistency with adopted Placer County ordinances and plans as reasons for his approval of a Variance that would reduce the number of tenant signs from the eight requested to two. While the Zoning Administrator acknowledged the hardships being experienced by the Appellant and the Quarry Pond Center, the applicant failed to demonstrate special circumstances exist on the parcel that support such a departure from adopted ordinances and standards.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission take action to uphold the Zoning Administrator's decision to **approve** the Variance (PVAA 20090261) to allow for the placement of no more than two individual tenant signs on the existing monument signs based on the findings listed below.

**RECOMMENDED FINDINGS:**

**CEQA Findings**

The project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA per section 15305 [Class 5(a)], Minor alterations in land use limitations, and section 18.36.070 [Class 5 (A)(1)], Minor alterations in land use limitations, of the Placer County Environmental Review Ordinance.

**Variance Findings**

1. There are special circumstances applicable to the subject property, including the location of the existing monument sign on Douglas Boulevard and the distance of some of the existing storefronts to Douglas Boulevard, and because of such circumstances, the strict application of the Zoning Ordinance has been found to deprive the subject property of privileges enjoyed by other properties in the vicinity and under identical zone classifications. The approval of two tenant signs will allow the property to enjoy privileges enjoyed by other properties in the vicinity and under identical zone classifications.

2. The granting of this Variance to allow for two tenant signs will not constitute a grant of special privileges inconsistent with the limitations upon other properties in the vicinity and in the same zone district.
3. The Variance does not authorize a use that is not otherwise allowed in the zone district.
4. The granting of this Variance to allow for two tenant signs does not, under the circumstances and conditions applied in this particular case, adversely affect public health or safety, is not materially detrimental to the public welfare, nor potentially injurious to nearby property or improvements.

Respectfully submitted,



Leah Rosasco  
SENIOR PLANNER

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- Attachment A – Recommended Conditions of Approval
- Attachment B – Vicinity Map
- Attachment C – Site Plan
- Attachment D – Appeal Application
- Attachment E – Zoning Administrator Staff Report dated January 21, 2010

cc: Applicant  
Michael Johnson – CDRA Director  
Paul Thompson – Zoning Administrator, Planning  
Holly Heinzen - CEO  
Scott Finley - County Counsel  
Karin Schwab – County Counsel  
Phil Frantz – Engineering and Surveying Department  
Laura Rath – Environmental Health Services Department

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**COUNTY OF PLACER**  
**Community Development Resource Agency**

Michael J. Johnson, AICP  
Agency Director

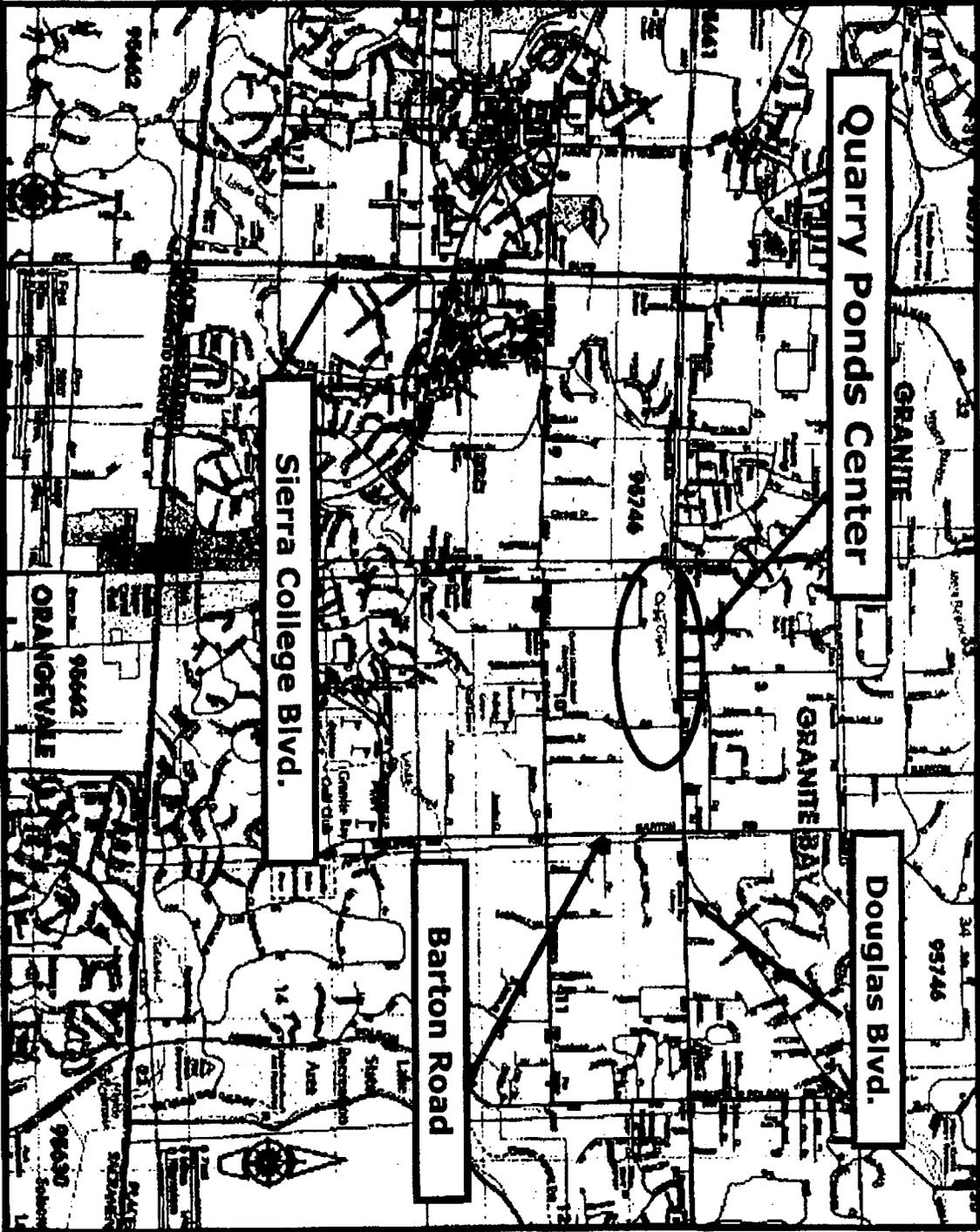
**PLANNING**

**RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL**  
**VARIANCE (PVAA 20090261) QUARRY PONDS**

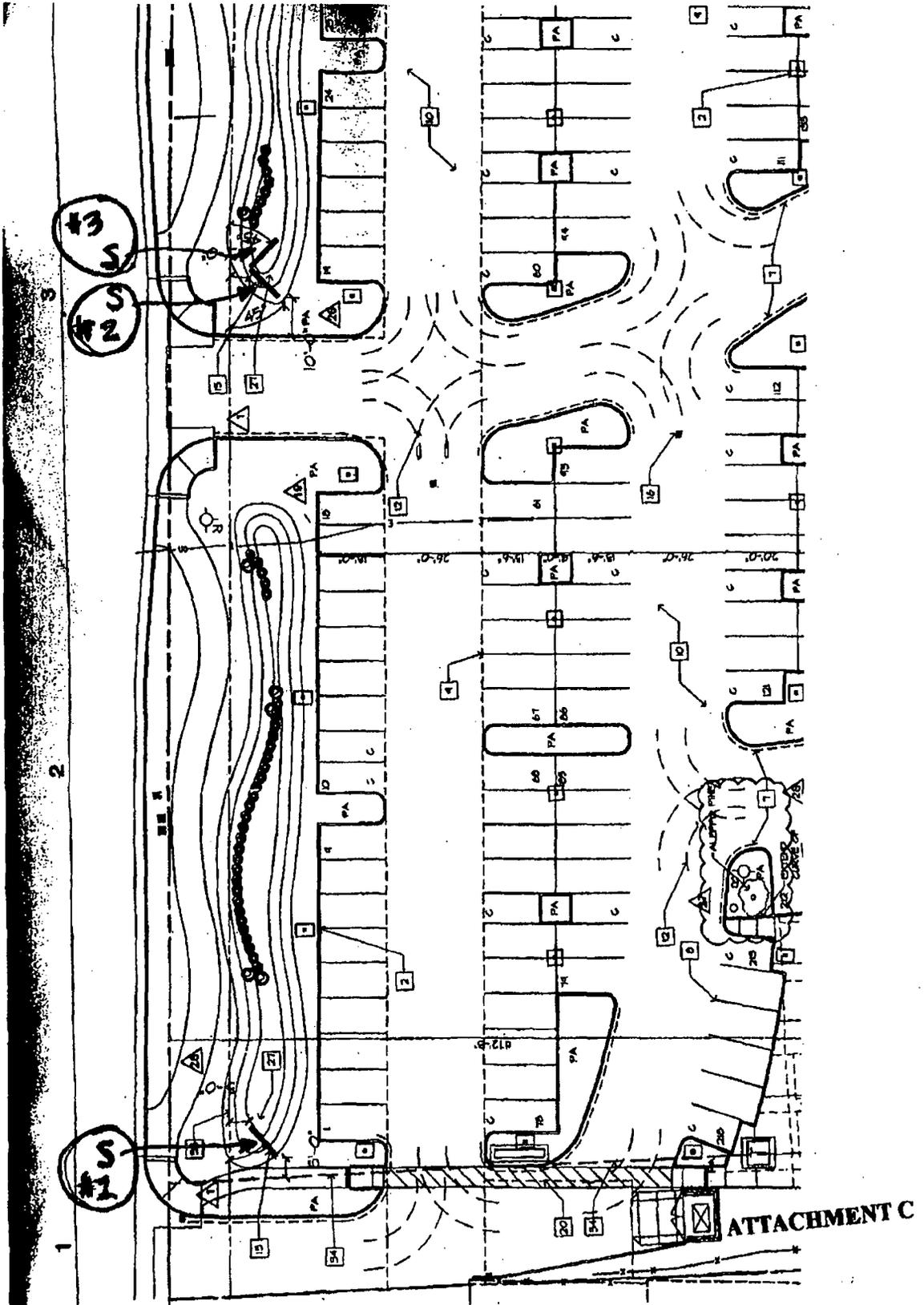
**RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL:**

1. Approval of this Variance (PVAA 20090261) allows for the placement of two tenant names on the three existing monument signs.
2. The tenant names shall be the same on all three monument signs and the monument signs shall also include the center name.
3. Prior to the construction or modification of any of the existing monument signs the applicant shall obtain a building permit from the Placer County Building Department.
4. None of the monument signs shall exceed the maximum allowable square-footage allowed by section 17.54.180 (A)(b) of the Placer County Zoning Ordinance.
5. The proposed sign and foundation shall be located in the same location as the existing monument sign and foundation.
6. Prior to Building Permit Issuance and/or approval of the sign permit, the applicant shall remove the existing Real Estate sign from within the Douglas Blvd. right-of-way. If the sign is relocated on the site, then it shall meet the Zoning Ordinance requirements. If the sign is reconstructed within the Douglas Blvd. right-of-way in the future, the sign shall be removed by the County at the applicant's expense.
7. This Variance (PVAA 20090261) is approved for twenty-four months from the date of approval, unless previously exercised by issuance of a building permit.

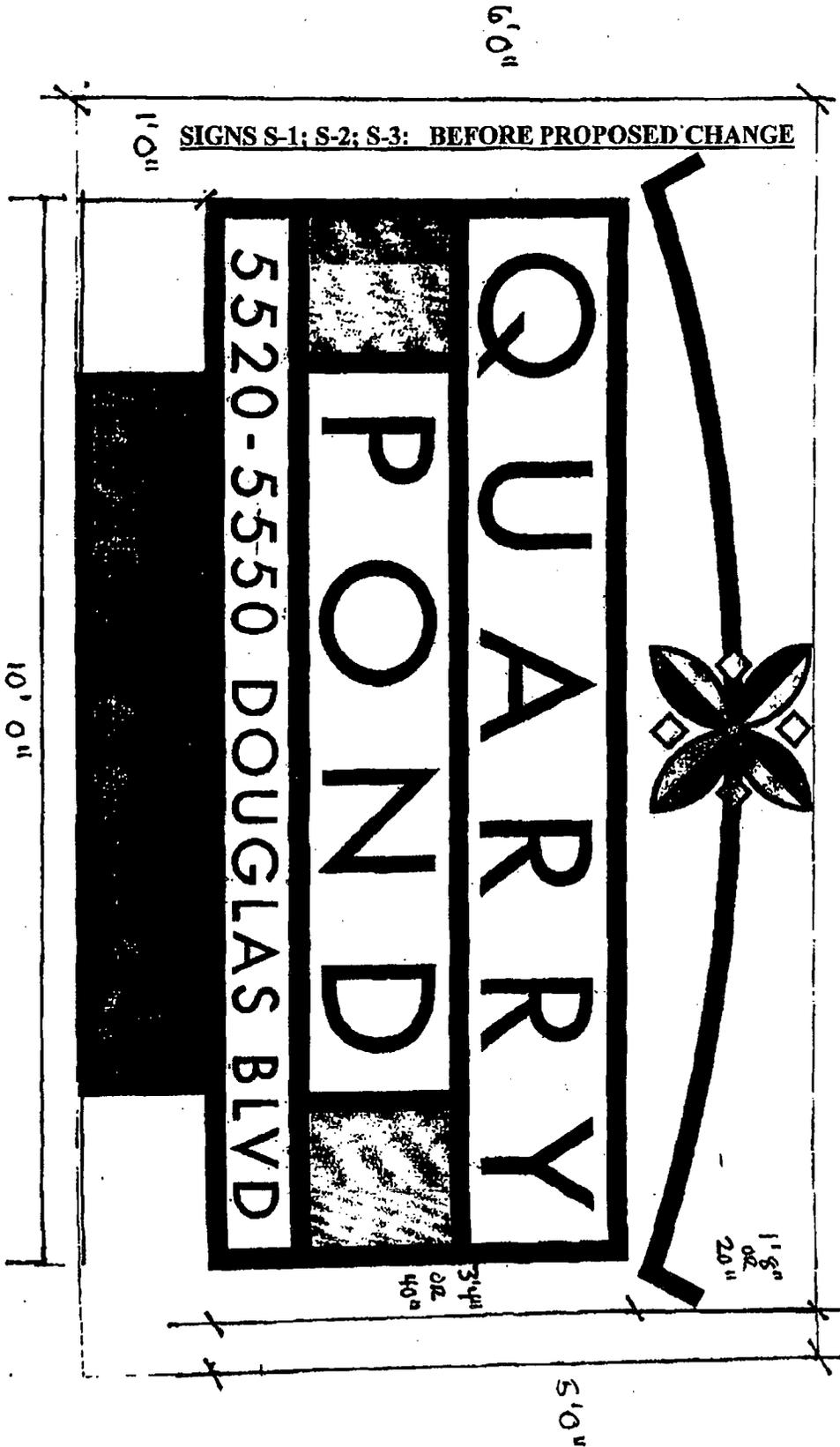
VICINITY MAP



QUARRY PONDS CENTER SITE PLAN  
PLACER COUNTY SIGN VAIANCE APPLICATION; EXHIBIT A).



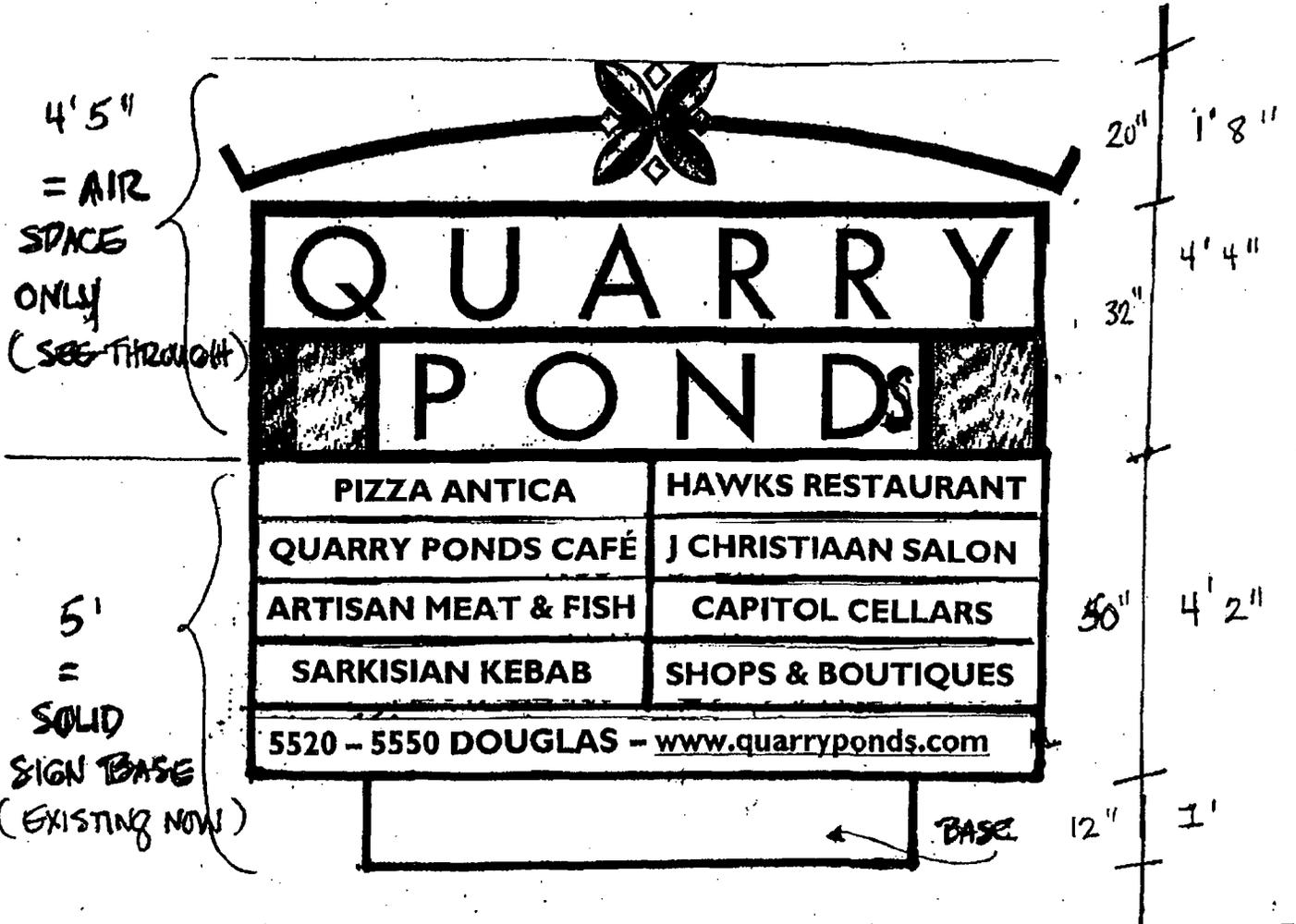
QUARRY PONDS CENTER SITE PLAN  
PLACER COUNTY SIGN VAIANCE APPLICATION; EXHIBIT B-1).



SPECIFICATIONS FOR SIGN SIGNS . . . . . Page 1 of 2

QUARRY PONDS CENTER SITE PLAN  
 PLACER COUNTY SIGN VARIANCE APPLICATION, EXHIBIT B-2)

SIGNS S-1; S-2; S-3: AFTER PROPOSED CHANGE



TOTALS - 114" / 9' 5"  
 HEIGHT - OR -

95 x 10 = 950



# PLACER COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

**AUBURN OFFICE**  
3091 County Center Dr  
Auburn, CA 95603

530-886-3000/FAX 530-886-3080  
Web page: [www.placer.ca.gov/planning](http://www.placer.ca.gov/planning)

**TAHOE OFFICE**  
565 W. Lake Blvd./P. O. Box 1909  
Tahoe City CA 96145

530-581-6280/FAX 530-581-6282  
E-Mail: [planning@placer.ca.gov](mailto:planning@placer.ca.gov)

Reserved for Date Stamp

RECEIVED  
JAN 23 2010  
PLANNING DEPT.

## PLANNING APPEALS

The specific regulations regarding appeal procedures may be found in the Placer County Code, Chapters 16 (Subdivision), 17 (Planning and Zoning), and 18 (Environmental Review Ordinance).

### -----OFFICE USE ONLY-----

Last Day to Appeal 1/31/2010 (5 pm) Appeal Fee \$ 500 + 4.95  
 Letter \_\_\_\_\_ Date Appeal Filed 1/28/2010  
 Oral Testimony \_\_\_\_\_ Receipt # 10-0064207 & 10-0064206  
 Zoning C2-WP-DC Received by mail/lec  
 Maps: 7-full size and 1 reduced for Planning Commission items Geographic Area South

### -----TO BE COMPLETED BY THE APPLICANT-----

- Project name QUARRY PONDS CENTER fox
- Appellant(s) QUARRY PONDS - LISA POWERS 415.397.1115 / 415.397.9418  
 Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Fax Number \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address 201 CALIFORNIA ST, STE 490, SAN FRANCISCO CA 94111  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_
- Assessor's Parcel Number(s): 048-083-024-000
- Application being appealed (check all those that apply):
 

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Administrative Approval (AA-____)	<input type="checkbox"/> Tentative Map (SUB-____)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use Permit (CUP/MUP-____)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Variance (VAA-____) <span style="float: right;">SIGN VARIANCE</span>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Parcel Map (P-____)	<input type="checkbox"/> Design Review (DSA-____)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> General Plan Amendment (GPA-____)	<input type="checkbox"/> Rezoning (REA-____)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Specific Plan (SPA-____)	<input type="checkbox"/> Rafting Permit (RPA-____)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Planning Director Interpretation _____ (date) _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Env. Review (EIAQ-____)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor Boundary Line Adj. (MBR-____)	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
- Whose decision is being appealed: ZONING ADMINISTRATOR right tenant names on signs was requested; only two were allowed or approved.
- Appeal to be heard by: PLANNING COMMISSION (see reverse)
- Reason for appeal (attach additional sheet if necessary and be specific): \_\_\_\_\_

(If you are appealing a project condition only, please state the condition number)

Note: Applicants may be required to submit additional project plans/maps.

Signature of Appellant(s) Lisa Powers

1/26/10

Paul Thompson - Deputy Director

Planner: Leah Rosas  
ESD: Rebecca Taber  
ESD: Janelle Heinzler  
APCD  
Parks: Vance Kimbrell/Andy Fisher  
Building  
Environmental Health

February 22, 2010

QUARRY PONDS CENTER  
APPEAL TO PLANING COMMISSION RE ZONING ADMINISTRATOR SIGN  
VARIANCE APPLICATION DECISION, to be heard Thursday, March 11, 2010

Submitted by Lisa Powers, Manager, Quarry Ponds Center

**REASONS FOR APPEAL OF ZONING ADMINISTRATOR'S  
DETERMINATION TO PLACER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION**

The acting Zoning Administrator, Mr. Paul Thompson, determined the following in a hearing held January 21, 2010:

1. due to the high rate of speed on Douglas Blvd., the Application for Sign Variance by the Quarry Ponds Center should be granted,
2. due to the fact that there was no intersection at the center's main or any other entry, the Application for Sign Variance should be granted
3. that two tenant names by be put on the center monument signs.

Although eight tenant names were requested to be allowed to be put on the existing monument signs, allowing for only a slight modification thereto as demonstrated in the requested monument sign diagram submitted with the Variance Application, the decision was made to allow two, rather than eight tenant names to be placed on the Douglas Blvd. monument signs. We believe the rationale for this was a reference to another nearby center which had also been allowed to place two tenant names on its monument signs. (Note: however the 2007 decision on behalf of the Dry Creek Center in Auburn, CA to allow up to twenty-four tenant names on its monument signs, granted for similar reasons: high traffic volume; potentially high traffic speed, and lack of visibility due to most of the property's buildings being located in the rear, as opposed to the front of the parcel; these were all compelling reasons for the Zoning Administrator's determination.)

While the Center and its tenants very much appreciate the favorable determination by the Zoning Administrator on the merits of its application, we do not think the determination as originally made will fully address the essential reasons for the request for variance.

The reasons for our appeal of the above determination as first rendered are as follows.

a). Two tenant names on the monument signs are not enough.

There are twenty-four tenant spaces at the Quarry Ponds Center which range in size from the largest of 4,798 square feet to the smallest of 448 square feet. If the Sign Variance Application had been fully approved, the center stated in the ZA Hearing it

would award the spots on the Douglas Blvd. monument signs first to those tenants renting the largest number of square feet and also those having the most probable public interest for purposes of bringing more traffic to the center. This also benefits those tenants which will not have their names on the monument signs.

The largest-sized eight tenants at the center have the following square footage and current tenants doing business there:

1. Hawks Restaurant	4,798 SF
2. Pizza Antica	3,773 SF
3. J Christiaan Salon & Spa	3,254 SF
4. Toast Café	2,943 SF
5. Peet's Coffee & Tea	2,045 SF
6. Capitol Cellars	2,045 SF (lease in signing)
7. Bay Gourmet Market	1,905 SF
8. Artisan Meat & Fish	1,783 SF

All of these tenants have been doing business at the center since its opening in May, 2007, however they have suffered mightily during the current recession which began in early fall, 2007. Their financial statements are much weaker than when they began doing business in 2007, and they have also been largely unable to borrow from our country's banks, due to the current lending crisis to most all business entities.

The difficulty in providing that only two tenant's names may be on the center's monument signs is first of all : which tenants are to be chosen, and then, for what reason?

The center has a diversity of tenants ranging from four al fresco dining enterprises; a salon and day spa; wine and coffee bars and purveyors of products; four grocery or food and floral shops, and a total of eight currently vacant retail or service retail locations: the ones hit hardest in the current recession. It is most helpful and important to continuing and new center traffic growth that as many of the above four types of tenants will be represented on the monument signs. All will be benefitted: the tenants, our customers, and our community and public. Every business needs to continually attract new customers in the course of its business life. New customers cannot and will not readily pull off from the main thoroughfare travelling at least at 55 miles per hour if they cannot identify what is in a retail center. We urgently need to increase our customer traffic and new customer traffic.

b). The current economic climate necessitates as much assistance as possible to both the Quarry Ponds Center tenants and to Placer County and the State of California:

The current and the near term (meaning two to three years) economic times are not good. The hardest hit segment has been the consumer retail economy due to a very high and lengthy unemployment rate of at least 12.4% in the state of California which, is expected to remain high for up to three or four more years.

The slowness of sales threatens the financial wherewithal and health of not only our country's, state's and Placer County's businesses, but also that of Placer County and the state of California. It is utterly and rightly within the best interests of Placer County to join in the Quarry Ponds Center's desire to continue, to increase and to support the gross taxable sales at this center as we bring will more revenue to Placer County, also. Further, a business which stays afloat during the comeback from our damaged economy will also be able to pay the annual property tax assessment the county needs for us to pay so it may conduct its own county business affairs. A closed or financially damaged business generally cannot do this. We are connected in our efforts to succeed.

Summary:

While the center and its tenants tremendously appreciated the initial Determination made by the Placer County Zoning Administrator, we ask the Planning Commission to take into account the comments and reasons noted above as the basis for our Appeal of one very significant aspect of the approval decision. We ask you for and appreciate the Planning Commission's support on this matter, and hope to see you soon at the Quarry Ponds Center.



**COUNTY OF PLACER**  
**Community Development Resource Agency**

Michael J. Johnson, AICP  
Agency Director

**PLANNING**

**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** January 21, 2010

**TO:** Zoning Administrator

**FROM:** Planning Department

**SUBJECT:** PVAA 20090261

**APPLICANT:** Lisa Powers on behalf of Quarry Ponds, LLC

**STAFF PLANNER:** Leah Rosasco

**ZONING:** C2-UP-DC

**LOCATION:** 5520-5550 Douglas Boulevard, Granite Bay

**APN:** 048-083-024

**PROPOSAL:** The applicant is requesting approval of a Variance to Section 17.54.180, (A)(1)(e), On-Premises Signs, of the Placer County Zoning Ordinance, which states that shopping centers shall only display the name of the center and shall not include the names of individual businesses. The applicant is requesting the Variance in order to allow for the placement of individual business names on the three existing monument signs at the Quarry Ponds Center.

**CEQA COMPLIANCE:**

This project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA per section 15305 [Class 5(a)], Minor alterations in land use limitations, and section 18.36.070 [Class 5 (A)(1)], Minor alterations in land use limitations, of the Placer County Environmental Review Ordinance.

**BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:**

Staff conducted a field review of the site on December 11, 2009. The subject parcel is approximately 5.2 acres and is located on the south side of Douglas Boulevard between Berg Street and Barton Road. The parcel is currently developed with the Quarry Ponds retail shopping center.

The applicant is requesting approval of a Variance to the Placer County Zoning Ordinance to allow tenant names to be placed on three existing monument signs. The Zoning Ordinance sets forth requirements for on-site signage in Section 17.54.180. This section states that shopping centers shall only display the name of the center and shall not include the names of individual businesses.

The applicant states that the Variance is necessary in order create equality between the Quarry Ponds Center and other existing shopping centers in the area and to allow travelers on Douglas Boulevard to become aware of the stores in the Center. The applicant has stated that the Quarry Ponds Center is at a disadvantage as the high average rate of speed along Douglas Boulevard and the lack of a traffic signal at the project center prevent drivers from reading tenant signs on the storefronts in the Center. Without the ability to clearly read all tenant signage, the applicant states that businesses and the Center are negatively impacted by the lack of visitors and shoppers. The applicant has stated that she and several tenants from the Quarry Ponds Center, presented their proposed sign modifications to the Granite Bay MAC and received support for the project. It should be noted that the presentation made by the applicant was an informational item and no formal action was taken by the MAC.

Staff visited the project site and conducted a survey of signage for the existing commercial centers in Granite Bay along Douglas Boulevard in the project area. Staff took photos of the monument signs for the existing commercial development along Douglas Boulevard between Sierra College Boulevard and Auburn Folsom Road. Of the seven centers, two had monument signs that included the names of tenants. The monument sign for the Sierra Oaks Center at Sierra College and Douglas Boulevards includes the names of two large-scale tenants, and the monument sign for the Hidden Lakes Center at Auburn Folsom Road and Douglas Boulevard includes the names of six tenants, all of which are medical offices. The remaining five shopping centers within the more immediate vicinity of the Quarry Ponds Center along Douglas Boulevard between Sierra College Boulevard and Auburn Folsom Road include only the name of the center.

The applicant has stated that the Quarry Ponds Center is at a disadvantage with regard to signage, however the Quarry Ponds Center has obtained approval for and constructed three monument signs along Douglas Boulevard rather than the one monument sign that is allowed per the Placer County Zoning Ordinance for parcels with less than 600 linear feet of frontage. The majority of the shopping centers along Douglas Boulevard that have less than 600 feet of linear frontage have only one monument sign, in accordance with the Zoning Ordinance. Additionally, the Quarry Ponds Center is configured in a U-shape and oriented toward Douglas Boulevard so that the buildings are visible in varying degrees from Douglas Boulevard. This configuration, paired with the fact that the Center is located below the grade of the traveled way, create a situation where the storefront signage is more visible to drivers as they approach the Center than many of the stores in other shopping centers in the project vicinity.

Staff agrees with the applicant that the rate of speed along Douglas Boulevard does not create a safe environment for drivers to attempt to read signs as they travel along Douglas Boulevard. According to the exhibits provided by the applicant, the proposal would include increasing the height of the three existing monument signs from a total of six feet high to nine and one-half feet high in order to add the names of eight tenants to the signs. Staff has concerns with this proposal as it could cause a distraction to drivers as they attempt to read through a list of tenant names while driving.

The proposed modifications to the signs are also in conflict with policy (1.) (C.) (2.) (d.) items (1.) & (2.) of Appendix A, Community Design Standards/Guidelines of the Granite Bay Community Plan, which state that developments "shall be permitted free-standing monument-type signs which identify

the center only” and that “Individual tenant signs shall be installed on the building frontages” respectively. Additionally the Placer County Design Guidelines, Section IV, Design Criteria/Guidelines, sets forth “Special District Guidelines” for specific communities within the County in Section 4, including Granite Bay. This section states that signs should be “low profile monument signs. If part of a shopping center it shall only identify the center.” The proposed project does not meet the intent of this guideline as a nine and one-half foot tall sign would not be considered “low profile” and because the project would include the listing of tenant names as well as the name of the shopping center.

Staff is not able to make the findings required in Section 17.60.100 (D.) (1.) of the Placer County Zoning Ordinance to support the applicant’s request for a Variance.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends denial of the Variance (PVAA 20090261) based on the findings listed below. Should the Zoning Administrator take action to approve the Variance, recommended Conditions of Approval have been prepared and are included below.

**FINDINGS:**

**CEQA Findings**

The project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA per section 15305 [Class 5(a)], Minor alterations in land use limitations, and section 18.36.070 [Class 5 (A)(1)], Minor alterations in land use limitations, of the Placer County Environmental Review Ordinance.

**Variance Findings**

1. There are no special circumstances applicable to the subject property and because of the lack of such circumstances, the strict application of the Zoning Ordinance has not been found to deprive the subject property of privileges enjoyed by other properties in the vicinity and under identical zone classifications.
2. The granting of this Variance will constitute a grant of special privileges inconsistent with the limitations upon other properties in the vicinity and in the same zone district.
3. The Variance does not authorize a use that is not otherwise allowed in the zone district.
4. The granting of this Variance does, under the circumstances and conditions applied in this particular case, adversely affect public health or safety, is materially detrimental to the public welfare, and potentially injurious to nearby property or improvements.
5. The Variance is not consistent with the Granite Bay Community Plan or the Placer County Design Guidelines.

**RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL:**

1. Approval of this Variance (PVAA 20090261) allows for the placement of eight tenant names on the three existing monument signs.
2. The tenant names shall be the same on all three monument signs.

3. Prior to the construction or modification of any of the existing monument signs the applicant shall obtain a building permit from the Placer County Building Department.
4. None of the monument signs shall exceed the maximum allowable square-footage allowed by section 17.54.180 (A)(b) of the Placer County Zoning Ordinance.
5. The applicant shall satisfy all conditions set forth by the Engineering and Surveying Department in the attached memo.
6. This Variance (PVAA 20090261) is approved for twenty-four months from the date of approval, unless previously exercised by issuance of a building permit.

**Attachments:**

**Memo from the Engineering and Surveying Department**

**Memo from the Environmental Health Services Department**

**cc: Engineering and Surveying**

**Environmental Health Services**

**PVAA 20090368 File**

**Applicant**

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