

**FINAL FINDINGS
MAJOR SITE DEVELOPMENT PERMIT
CONSTRUCTION OF A SINGLE-STORY COMMERCIAL SHELL WITH ASSOCIATED SITE
IMPROVEMENTS
1294 and 1296 N. STATE STREET, UKIAH, CA; APN 001-370-36 AND APN 001-370-37
FILE NO. 25-001039; PA25-000017 (FORMERLY FILE NO. 17-3069)**

These Findings pertain to the construction and operation of a new single-story, ±3,261-square-foot commercial shell building and associated site improvements located at 1294 and 1296 N. State Street (APNs 001-370-36 and 001-370-37) within the Community Commercial (C-1) Zoning District, approved via a Major Site Development Permit; File No.: 25-001039; PA25-000017 (formerly File No. 17-3069). The structure features a contemporary design with storefront glazing, parapet detailing, and a maximum height of 18 feet. This approval is explicitly conditioned upon the permanent removal of the originally proposed drive-through facility, eliminating all associated dedicated queuing, stacking (previously 8 spaces), and access aisle infrastructure. The development revitalizes a vacant commercial parcel previously destroyed by fire, incorporating comprehensive site enhancements, including 32 total vehicle parking spaces and 3 bicycle parking spaces; expanded pedestrian walkways to enhance connectivity from the parking lot to the building frontage (via modification of the former 6-ft wide planter area); provision for potential outdoor dining; installation of shading elements; and implementation of a new landscaping plan achieving 21% coverage of the total parcel area, ensuring the project is consistent with the City's General Plan goals and exempt from further environmental review under a Categorical Exemption (Class 32, In-Fill Development).

SITE DEVELOPMENT PERMIT FINDINGS (UCC §9263E)

1. The proposal is consistent with the goals, objectives, and policies of the City General Plan.

The project, consisting of a new commercial shell building, is compatible with the "C" Commercial land use designation and the C-1 Community Commercial Zoning District. It supports the goal of revitalizing underutilized property by proposing construction on the parcel area (APN 001-370-36) that has been vacant since a fire destroyed the previous commercial building. The proposed contemporary design and enhanced landscaping along N. State Street support the goal of establishing key City gateways with appropriate design and signage (Policy LU-11.2)

2. The location, size, and intensity of the proposed project will not create a hazardous or inconvenient vehicular or pedestrian traffic pattern.

By removing the drive-through facility as a project component, the potential for significant hazardous traffic generation, vehicular queuing, and circulation problems onto adjacent streets and the congested intersection of N. State Street/S. Empire Drive is eliminated. The resulting project is a standard commercial/retail use, and the location, size (±3,261 sq. ft. commercial shell), and intensity are appropriate for the C-1 commercial corridor

- 3. The accessibility of off-street parking areas and the relation of parking areas with respect to traffic on adjacent streets will not create a hazardous or inconvenient condition to adjacent or surrounding uses.**

The initial concern regarding hazardous conditions was directly tied to the drive-through stacking and queuing impacting the existing street layout. With the removal of the eight dedicated stacking spaces and the drive-through use, the ample provision of 32 total parking spaces for the site ensures adequate off-street vehicle accommodation for the new and existing commercial uses. This design avoids creating hazardous conditions related to parking accessibility or overflow onto adjacent streets.

- 4. Sufficient landscaped areas have been reserved for purposes of separating or screening the proposed structure(s) from the street and adjoining building sites, and breaking up and screening large expanses of paved areas.**

The project proposes 21% landscaping coverage for the combined parcel area, exceeding the minimum 20% requirement. Although the specific need to screen the drive-through lane is eliminated, the overall quantity and placement of planters and new street trees are sufficient to screen paved areas and enhance the frontage appearance along North State Street, which currently lacks vegetation.

- 5. The proposed development will not restrict or cut out light and air on the property, or on the property in the neighborhood; nor will it hinder the development or use of buildings in the neighborhood, or impair the value thereof.**

The proposed commercial shell structure has a maximum height of only 18 ft. to the top of the parapet, which is well below the 50 ft. C-1 maximum. This modest height and the construction on a vacant parcel previously occupied by a fire-destroyed building ensures the development serves to improve the neighborhood without restricting light, air, or impairing property values.

- 6. The improvement of any commercial or industrial structure will not have a substantial detrimental impact on the character or value of an adjacent residential zoning district.**

The site has historically featured commercial activities and is situated along a commercial frontage (N. State Street). The new commercial shell, designed for retail or office uses, maintains the site's commercial function and is not expected to cause a substantial detrimental impact on the character or value of the adjacent residential zoning district.

- 7. The proposed development will not excessively damage or destroy natural features, including trees, shrubs, creeks, and the natural grade of the site.**

The site is a developed parcel. There are no known creeks or watercourses on-site. The proposal includes provisions for preserving existing healthy mature trees where feasible and incorporating new vegetation, satisfying guidelines for preservation.

- 8. There is sufficient variety, creativity, and articulation to the architecture and design of the structure(s) and grounds to avoid monotony and/or a box-like uninteresting external appearance.**

The Design Review Board positively acknowledged the contemporary style of the design and supported its distinctiveness from the adjacent structure. The revised plans incorporate

necessary architectural refinements, including the addition of shading elements for glare reduction and enhancing pedestrian access (by reconfiguring the former 6-ft wide planter), ensuring the design avoids a monotonous external appearance.

CEQA FINDINGS

The proposed project qualifies for a Categorical Exemption under CEQA Guidelines Section 15332 (Class 32), as it involves construction on a small, previously developed parcel within an urban area and satisfies all five of the exemption's required criteria:

- a) *The project is consistent with the applicable general plan designation and all applicable general plan policies as well as with applicable zoning designation and regulations.*

The project is consistent with the applicable General Plan designation of Commercial (C) and the Community Commercial (C-1) Zoning District. The proposed building height (18 ft. maximum) and density (retail/commercial use) comply with all applicable standards for the C-1 zone. The intent is to promote reuse of an underutilized commercial parcel.

- b) *The proposed development occurs within city limits on a project site of no more than five acres substantially surrounded by urban uses.*

The development occurs within the City of Ukiah limits on a project site that is no more than five acres in total area (± 0.90 acres). The site is a historically developed location, previously housing a commercial building destroyed by fire. The site is substantially surrounded by urban uses (existing commercial enterprises along N. State Street/Empire Drive), meeting the definition of an infill site.

- c) *The project site has no value as habitat for endangered, rare or threatened species.*

The project site has no value as habitat for endangered, rare, or threatened species. It is an urban site that is predominantly covered by paving or was previously developed. The project does not abut any sensitive environmental resources (e.g., wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, historical resources) that would preclude the use of this exemption.

- d) *Approval of the project would not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality.*

By requiring the elimination of the drive-through component as a condition of approval, the project avoids the potential for hazardous vehicular queuing and traffic patterns that previously prevented this finding. Any remaining project-specific impacts (such as construction noise or air quality) are expected to be temporary and are addressed through compliance with universally applied development policies, including City of Ukiah noise and grading regulations. The modest size of the new structure ($\pm 3,261$ sq. ft.) and the infill location confirm that traffic, noise, and air quality impacts will not be significant.

- e) *The site can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services.*

The project site can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services. The site is already serviced by existing City water and wastewater infrastructure due to its history as a

developed commercial property. The proposal does not expand the service area or capacity needed in a manner that would strain existing systems.

Based on the above conditions, the Planning Commission's approval of the Major Site Development Permit (MaSDP) for the commercial shell structure, specifically conditioned on the removal of the drive-through element, is eligible for a CEQA Categorical Exemption (Class 32).

PUBLIC NOTICE

- Notice of the Public Hearing was provided in the following manner, in accordance with UCC §9231.3, 9263 and 9264:
- Published in the Ukiah Daily Journal on November 2, 2025; and
- Posted on the Project site on October 30, 2025; and
- Posted at the Civic Center (glass case) 72 hours prior to the public hearing; and
- Mailed to property owners within 300 feet of the Project parcels on October 29, 2025; and
- Emailed to all agencies having jurisdiction: September 18, 2025.