

PINE INN
CARMEL-BY-THE-SEA**RECEIVED****JAN 07 2019****City of Carmel-by-the-Sea
Planning & Building Dept.**

January 7, 2019

Dear Chair LePage, members of the Planning Commission and Staff,

With the prospect of the City of Carmel creating a Specific Plan zoning for the current Christian Science Church properties at Block 54 between Monte Verde and Lincoln, we wanted to engage the City on the potential of our essentially empty, asphalt-paved property used as a parking lot directly across Sixth Avenue from the historic Pine Inn at the NE corner of Monte Verde and Sixth.

The actual zoning of this property (R-1) has always been an aberration. It is directly adjacent to our very large Pine Inn structure and across the street from the Tally Ho Inn, both zoned Commercial and currently up against the large, existing Christian Science Church. It has never made sense to have this island of R-1 in the middle of this kind of density. The way this town has developed and been zoned is clearly based on having the most density and mass at the central commercial district centered along Ocean Avenue with the gradual reduction in this moving out toward the residential neighborhoods-- Central Commercial, Service Commercial, Residential Commercial, R-4, then R-1. The zoning of our Pine Inn parking lot property has always seemed some sort of mistake from the beginning. There are virtually no other examples of Central Commercial being directly up against R-1 zoning, except at the Carmel Plaza which is separated by the wide Junipero Street boulevard from the First Presbyterian Church.

Because there is such a critical need, it is used as a parking lot for the hotel; and because of it's strange, current R-1 zoning, the property cannot be improved. I have felt for many years, that having an empty, asphalt parking lot in this wonderful part of downtown Carmel was a bit of an eye-sore and certainly a waste of what could be an important contribution to the City. We think the proper development of this property could address multiple issues that the City has historically encouraged action on. What we are proposing does this.

The Pine Inn has 49 rooms, many of which, are quite small and need improvements. We propose enlarging, consolidating and upgrading some of these rooms within the existing building envelope of the inn thereby reducing the overall number. We would then take the number of rooms which were eliminated and transfer that exact number to the vacant property across the street, therefore the overall number of rooms would NOT be increased. The existing number off-street parking spaces would be at least maintained if not added to. It is important to understand our design

concept is not to have a large number of rooms transferred to this lot. The thought is for the new structure to be a much less dense building mass and have a more residential feel, perhaps with paths and green roofs, that would relate more to the buildings being proposed by the Christian Science Church development and the residential neighborhood beyond.

The project we would be proposing would:

1. Provide off-street parking to the Commercial District.

It would maintain and possibly increase the existing number of off-street parking spaces provided while eliminating a vacant lot full of asphalt from the downtown area.

2. Improve and upgrade the current Hotel Room stock in the City, while not increasing the number of rooms.

The City of Carmel has historically encouraged the proper maintenance, improvement, and upgrade of the City's hotel rooms. This helps improve the visitor experience in the town, not to mention, help with higher occupancy rates and tax revenue.

3. Contribute to a more natural, consistent reduction in mass and scale from the Central Commercial Ocean Avenue to the residential neighborhood.

We are exploring two options for use for this project: either keeping the transferred hotel rooms as such or providing actual rental apartment units.

In terms of other aspects of feasibility like water use, we have been in discussion with the Monterey Peninsula Water Management District Cal-Am, and City Staff and verified a water permit could be granted for the project.

With water issues resolved, moving ahead with these improvements rests with the rezoning of this parcel to be in keeping with the adjacent properties. It simply makes sense for the Specific Plan being discussed for the Christian Science Church properties, that would be prepared by the City, to include our adjacent lot as well. Therefore, we wanted to give the Planning Commission and the City our ideas on what could happen there which would be a win-win for City and our hotel.

We look forward to the further discussions and working with the City on this exciting potential project.

Sincerely,



Richard V. Gunner
Owner, The Pine Inn