

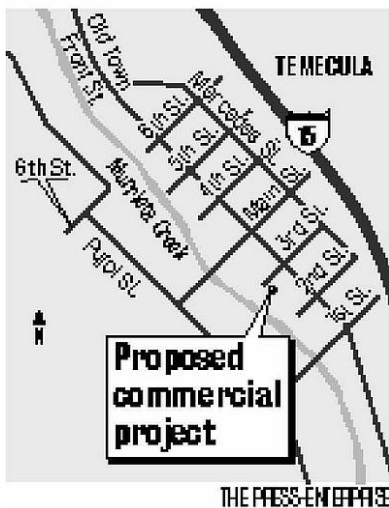
Old Town Temecula project approved

DEVELOPER: Al Rattan plans to replace an old house on Third Street with a commercial site.

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By **TIM O'LEARY**
The Press-Enterprise

TEMECULA - A proposal to add another four-story building to Old Town Temecula's skyline was approved by city planning commissioners Wednesday night.



Ending a low-key hearing, commissioners voted unanimously to approve developer Al Rattan's plan to replace an aging bungalow-style house on Third Street with a 50,376- square-foot building that would have a restaurant on the ground floor and offices on the upper three floors.

"This is a great project. I'm a little concerned about the height, but it looks like it's going to fit," said Commissioner Ron Guerriero during the half-hour hearing.

The project, slated for a half acre along Murrieta Creek, would be the first commercial building on a cul-de-sac that for decades attracted few retail customers. It would join a growing number of three- and four-story buildings that have been constructed or are being planned in Old Town.

Rattan, who developed the Renaissance Estates subdivision in rural DeLuz, plans two other projects in Old Town.

A key part of Rattan's long-term goal is to put the seasonal creek to work in the summer months. He wants to trap enough water there to create a focal point for shoppers, diners, office workers and residents.

There was no organized opposition to Rattan's development plan. In a February letter, the former owner of the Third Street house described the structure as "very dilapidated and run down." In that letter, Patricia Nakai said the house was moved to that location and it is not a significant Old Town building.

Eve Craig, president of the Temecula Valley Historical Society, echoed those observations in a letter to the city a month later.

Ed Dool, an Old Town business owner and former City Council candidate, attended Wednesday's hearing to praise Rattan's proposal. Dool said another four-story building would enhance Old Town's skyline and make the historic business district more visible to drivers on Interstate 15.

Dool, who owns an outdoor pub and a bus depot and leases space to a barbecue restaurant and a camera shop, also applauded Rattan's design.

"The architecture is fantastic," he said.

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