



"We are a welcoming, active and business-friendly rural foothill community built on California's rich gold rush history."

Planning Commission Staff Report

Meeting Date: May 19, 2026

Prepared By: Carole Kendrick, Director of Development Services

PROJECT INFORMATION SUMMARY

Case File: Conditional Use Permit (CUP) 26-01, Variances (VAR) 26-01 and 26-02 "Sequoia Mansion"

Request: Consideration of a request to: (1) legalize the use of the existing building from a restaurant to an event venue and legalize an existing accessory shed; (2) allow the shed to encroach into the required setback; and (3) approve a parking reduction variance due to site topography. The project is located at 643 Bee Street, Placerville, CA (APNs 001 111 034, 032, and 027). Property Owner/Applicant: Olivio Enterprises. The project is Categorical Exempt from environmental review pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) (Common Sense Exemption) and Section 15301 (Existing Facilities).

Summary Recommendation: Staff recommends approval of the CUP and Variances, subject to conditions of approval, based on consistency with the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance, provision of off-site parking agreements, supportive neighbor input, and mitigation of public safety and operational concerns.

<u>Property Owner/Applicant:</u>	Olivio Enterprises / Wedgewood Weddings
<u>Address:</u>	643 Bee Street
<u>APN:</u>	001-111-034, -032 and -027
<u>Lot Area:</u>	0.78 acres
<u>General Plan Designation:</u>	Business Park (BP)
<u>Zoning:</u>	Business Park (BP)
<u>Existing Use:</u>	Wedding Venue
<u>Environmental Document:</u>	Categorically Exempt per §15061(b)(3) & §15031
<u>Decision Making</u>	Placerville Zoning Ordinance §10-3-1(C) for CUP and §10-3-5(A) for Variance;

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant seeks to formalize the long-standing operation of the Sequoia Mansion as a modern event venue. The project includes legalization of an existing accessory shed in the front of the property and a parking variance to recognize the physical constraints of the historic lot. No new construction or major exterior alterations to the historic building are proposed.

BACKGROUND

The Sequoia Mansion, also known as the Bee-Bennett House, is one of Placerville’s oldest preserved homes. Constructed in 1853 by Colonel Frederick A. Bee and enlarged in 1889 by Judge Marcus P. Bennett, the property features a local historical marker placed in 1986 by the Native Sons of the Golden West.

The building was previously operated as the Elks Lodge. In 2001–2002, the Olivo family (through Sequoia Restaurant, Inc.) obtained approvals to convert the property to a restaurant with meeting and assembly rooms:

- CUP 01-01 (June 5, 2001): Approved operation of a restaurant with meeting rooms; 29 on-site parking spaces for 116 occupants.
- SPR 02-01 & CUP 01-01 Amendment (February 19, 2002): Approved minor additions and modifications (enclosed porch, sunroom, accessibility improvements).
- CUP 01-01 Amendment (December 17, 2002): Increased maximum occupancy from 116 to 250 persons and authorized off-site parking within 300 feet at three nearby locations (churches and a mortuary). At that time, staff confirmed approximately 34 on-site parking spaces.

Key conditions from the 2002 approval included:

- Maximum occupancy of 250.
- Use of on-site and designated off-site parking (1 space per 4 seats).
- On-site spaces are reserved primarily for patrons (employee parking in rear).
- Record-keeping for events and off-site parking arrangements, available for City review.

The current application transitions the formal use description from “restaurant” to “event venue” to better reflect actual operations under Wedgewood Weddings & Events. The applicant has secured updated, formal shared parking agreements with two nearby churches and is requesting variances to address the accessory shed and current parking realities on the constrained site.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The project site encompasses the historic Sequoia Mansion, a multi-gabled Victorian structure on a wooded knoll. The approximately 0.78-acre historic city lot is constrained by topography, shape, and surrounding development, limiting on-site parking expansion. Improvements include the main building, front/east guest parking area, rear employee parking/driveway, and the existing accessory shed.

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Surrounding land uses are a mix of residential and commercial, with the historic context of the neighborhood enhancing the unique character of the area.

PROJECT SETTING

Surrounding land uses are a mix of residential and commercial, with the historic context of the neighborhood enhancing the unique character of the area.

The project setting can also be seen in the following materials attached to this staff report:

- General Plan Land Use Map (Attachment G)
- Zoning Map (Attachment H)
- Aerial Photograph (Attachment I)

The land uses, zoning, and Placerville General Plan Land Use Element designations of the project site and surrounding area are shown in the following Table.

	LAND USE	GENERAL PLAN	ZONING
PROJECT SITE	Wedding/Event Venue	Business Park (BP)	Business Park (BP)
NORTH	Residential	Medium Density Residential (MDR)	Residential (R1-6)
SOUTH	Cemetery	Open Space (OS)	Open Space (OS)
EAST	Church	Business Park (BP)	Business Park (BP)
WEST	Residential	Medium Density Residential (MDR)	Residential (R1-6)

PROJECT ANALYSIS

General Plan Consistency: The proposed Event Venue use is consistent with the Business Park (BP) General Plan designation, which encourages commercial and service-oriented activities that promote economic vitality and tourism.

Special Emphasis on Historic Resource: Adaptive reuse of the Sequoia Mansion directly supports Placerville's goals of historic preservation and heritage tourism. By formalizing the event venue operations, the project ensures the long-term maintenance and preservation of this 1853 Gold Rush-era landmark. Without viable economic uses, many historic structures face deterioration or demolition pressure. The mansion's continued operation as a wedding and event venue celebrates Placerville's rich history while providing a desirable community amenity. The project involves no alterations to the historic fabric of the building, thereby preserving its architectural integrity.

Zoning Consistency: Event venues and places of public assembly are allowable with a Conditional Use Permit in the BP zone. The use has demonstrated compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood over many years, with the historic character of the mansion contributing positively to the aesthetic and cultural environment.

Parking Variance (VAR 26-01): Due to the lot constraints, full on-site compliance with current parking standards is infeasible. The project provides 24 marked on-site spaces plus formal shared parking agreements with:

- New Wine Christian Fellowship (680 Bee Street) (see Attachment E)
- Templo El Messias Placerville (669 Bee Street) (see Attachment F)

These agreements are similar in concept to the 2002 approvals but reflect updated, executed documents with clear responsibilities for management, enforcement, and cleanup by Wedgewood. This approach continues the long-established practice of using nearby off-site parking for this venue.

Shed Variance (VAR 26-02): The existing shed is functionally located near the front for event setup efficiency and blends with foliage. Adjacent neighbors do not object. A condition is recommended for a sewer line survey if made permanent.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The City has reviewed this request and determined that the project is exempt from environmental review pursuant to CEQA Section 15061(b)(3), as it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility of significant environmental effect, and Section 15301 for existing facilities, involving minor alterations with no expansion of use.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

Property owners located within a 300-foot radius of the project site were notified of the public hearing on April 29, 2026, with a 10-day hearing notice in addition to a public notice in the Mountain Democrat (see Attachment J). At the time of report preparation, the Planning Department received two (2) letters from adjacent property owners.

- Peggy and Ron Cecchettini (adjacent western neighbors for 50+ years): Generally supportive. They describe the Sequoia as good neighbors. Primary concerns relate to employee parking blocking the rear driveway (fire access/safety) and request for marked rear spaces. They support the shed with a sewer survey condition (see Attachment K).
- Dave Musker (rear neighbor): Requests that the commercial kitchen vent not be left on overnight and that garbage pickup occur after 7:00 a.m. (currently 4-6 a.m. on Thursdays) (see Attachment L).

Any comments received prior to the time of the scheduled Planning Commission meeting will be provided to the Commission at the time of the public hearing.

DECISION MAKING AUTHORITY

The Planning Commission is authorized under Zoning Ordinance Section 10-3-1(C) to act upon all applications for use permits within the City.

Section 10-3-3 of the City of Placerville Zoning Ordinance states: “Certain uses may be permitted in zones in which they are not otherwise outright permitted by this chapter, where such uses are deemed essential or desirable to the public convenience or welfare, and are in harmony with the various elements or objectives of the comprehensive general plan and are not detrimental to surrounding property. (Ord. 1474, 1-8-1991)”

Section 10-3-5 of the City of Placerville Ordinance states: “(A) The commission may grant a variance to authorize a specific exception to any regulation of this title in accordance with the procedure specified in section 10-3-6 of this chapter. (B) The commission may grant variances from the terms of the zoning regulations contained in this title only when, because of special circumstances applicable to the property, including size, shape, topography, location or surroundings, the strict application of this title deprives such property of privileges enjoyed by other property in the vicinity and under identical zoning classification.

FINDINGS

Conditional Use Permit (CUP) 26-01

1. No Significant Environmental Impacts: The project involves no alterations to an existing facility with no expansion of use, resulting in no significant impacts to environmental resources, consistent with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Sections 15061(b)(3) and 15301.
2. Consistency with General Plan: The proposal enhances commercial services, aligning with Goal C of the Land Use Element for convenient access to goods and services for the community.
3. Zoning Compatibility: The uses are appropriate for the Business Park (BP) zone with a CUP, maintaining harmony with surrounding properties.
4. Public Welfare: The operations are deemed desirable for public convenience, with no detriment to adjacent properties.
5. Parking Adequacy: Parking Variance (VAR 26-01) Standard parking requirements for the use generate a higher number of spaces than can feasibly be provided on-site due to topography and lot constraints. The applicant has provided approximately 24 marked on-site spaces and has executed formal shared parking agreements with:

Variance (VAR) 26-01 and 26-02

1. Special Circumstances: The subject site is surrounded by developed properties and does not have the opportunity to expand on-site parking but has provided adequate off-site parking with parking agreements with the churches in the area; in addition, the existing shed is located off the driveway and does not have any impacts to the property.
2. No Special Privilege: The variances will not grant special privileges as parking is adequately provided by adjacent properties that the applicant has parking agreements with and due to the topography and development of the site, the shed is in the most logical location.
3. No Injury to Public: Adequate parking is provided with secured parking agreements with surrounding churches, and the shed does not provide any visibility issues in its current location.
4. Consistency with General Plan: Supports commercial viability without adverse impacts, aligning with the Business Park land use designation.

RECOMMENDED PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION

1. Hold a public hearing and take public testimony; and,

Option 1:

1. Approve Conditional Use Permit (CUP) 26-01, Variance (VAR) 26-01 and (VAR) 26-02 subject to the attached conditions of approval; and
2. Direct staff to prepare a Notice of Exemption (NOE) for the applicant to file with the El Dorado County Clerk Recorder's Office.

Option 2:

1. Continue the item to a future meeting for further discussion or additional information.

Option 3:

1. Deny one or more applications.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Site Plan
- B. CUP10-01 Approved Site Plan
- C. Draft Conditions of Approval
- D. Variance Justification Letter
- E. New Wine Parking Agreement
- F. Tempo el Messias Parking Agreement
- G. General Plan Land Use Designation Map
- H. Zoning Map

- I. Aerial Photograph
- J. Proof of Publication
- K. Cecchittini letter dated 4.27.26
- L. Muster email dated 4.29.26

INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE

City of Placerville General Plan
City of Placerville Zoning Ordinance
Contents of City of Placerville Planning Department Project File CUP26-01, VAR26-01, VAR26-02, SPR02-01 & CUP01-01