

Davenport project approved

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DAVENPORT — Developers got a thumbs-up Tuesday to raise the roof of an old brussels sprouts packing shed a few feet, and put in a parking lot — a project that in most cities would scarcely be noticed.

But this is Davenport: population 200, including kids and dogs. Residents already are planning to try to overturn the approved commercial development.

"It's just too big for our little village," said Andrea Tischler, a Davenport resident.

At issue is the 13,000-square foot one-time packing shed on the ocean side of Highway 1. In 1984, it became home to Odwalla, an organic juice making firm, which since has moved its main manufacturing plant to Central California.

The county Board of Supervisors, on a 3-2 vote, approved plans by Odwalla founder Greg Steltenpohl and Davenport residents Fred and Bren Bailey, who want to move the remaining Odwalla operation out. In its place, they plan a small organic restaurant, a juice bar, offices for a handful of health practitioners, five overnight accommodations and a 66-car parking lot.

To accomplish this, they plan to add 9,800 square feet to the building with a partial second story. The roof of the building would go up between three to six feet.

The center would include room to sell local crafts and conference facilities for about 40 people, for "socially responsible" businesses, said Steltenpohl. He promised the community could also use the building

for meetings and events.

"All in all, the spirit of the project for us has been to create something that is in ... harmony with the North Coast," said Steltenpohl.

Supporters called Steltenpohl and the Baileys "visionaries" whose project was tasteful and sensitive to its North Coast location. One woman called it a blessing.

County planners, using computer-generated photos, said the ocean panorama would change little or not at all for most places in town. A number of other conditions, including lowering the grade of the parking lot and limiting the height of landscaping, were added to minimize the impact on the town's view.

That didn't change the opinion of many residents, who see the proposal as a Frankenstein monster that will add to the town's water, sewage and traffic problems, and which will set a precedent for development on the coast.

They objected to their view of the ocean being blocked by the roof and the parking lot, now used informally by whale watchers. The 66 car parking lot, in a town the size of Davenport, would be the equivalent of a 20,000 car parking lot in Santa Cruz, said Supervisor Mardi Wormhoudt.

The project would double the amount of space devoted to retail sales in the town. Because it is across highway from the other stores, it will also encourage people to run across busy Highway 1, opponents said.

"This is a major project for one little town," said Bruce McDougal, who, with his wife, Marcia, owns the Davenport Cash



Shmuel Thaler/Sentinel

Badges held by Davenport resident John Hay express the opposition of some in the community to the development approved on Tuesday.

Store.

Supervisor Wormhoudt, who represents the Davenport area, and Supervisor Jan Beautz opposed the project. Wormhoudt argued that an environmental impact report should be required. Beautz maintained that

the zoning change needed for overnight visitors would set a precedent for other similar places along the coast.

Residents said after the decision that they expected to appeal the approval to the Coastal Commission.