

Caruso Plan for New Hotel in Montecito on Site of Miramar Hotel Wins Approval from Montecito
Planning Commission
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The Montecito Planning Commission voted 4-1 yesterday to approve Caruso Affiliated's plans for a new 192-room five-star luxury hotel on the site of the shuttered Miramar Hotel.

The vote followed a nine-hour meeting and was Caruso's fourth appearance before the planning group since July. Caruso Affiliated purchased the hotel 18 months ago with a vision to create a world class resort destination on the 16-acre site. Caruso has proposed a 192-room luxury hotel, with three restaurants, a spa, a beach club, ballroom facilities, and a beach front boardwalk along Miramar Beach.

'We are delighted and grateful to receive the Planning Commission's approval. It has been a long road, but the community has been behind us all the way, and we look forward to getting started soon,' said Rick Caruso, CEO of Caruso Affiliated. 'During our several sessions, the Planning Commissioners and members of the community made excellent and constructive recommendations, which we have incorporated into our plan. Montecito is a great community and has waited a long time for the Miramar to come back. We are anxious to create a great hotel that will make the community proud.'

Among the changes which brought Planning Commission approval are:

Moving the guestroom and ballroom buildings along South Jameson Lane further back from the road,

Lowering the height of the Main Building an additional four feet,

Reducing the overall room count by 12 rooms by removing two-story 24-room guest building and replacing it with two one-story six-room cottages,

Moving the guest rooms further away from the western property line,

Reducing the overall floor area of the hotel by the elimination of rooms,

And, removing lighting from the tennis courts.

The Montecito Planning Commission's decision is final, though it is subject to appeal to the Board of Supervisors. Appeals must be filed by October 20th. With the approvals in hand Caruso intends to do final design work and begin construction at the beginning of the year with an eye toward a grand opening in spring 2011.

Caruso's plan received the endorsement of all local homeowners associations, including the Montecito Association, and enjoyed overwhelming support throughout the community.

Caruso Affiliated is best known for developing and operating high quality outdoor retail properties that are destinations including The Lakes at Thousand Oaks, The Commons at Calabasas, The Grove in West Los Angeles and The Americana at Brand in Glendale.

'These centers have had incredible success because of our strong emphasis on hospitality and customer service,' said Caruso. 'Breathing new life into the Miramar Hotel is a great extension of that focus on hospitality.'

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