

**PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION  
MINUTES  
DECEMBER 12, 2023  
LOWER LEVEL – LIBRARY COMMUNITY ROOM  
702 E. FRONT AVENUE**

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:**

Tom Messina, Chairman  
Jon Ingalls, Vice-Chair  
Lynn Fleming  
Phil Ward  
Peter Luttrupp  
Sarah McCracken  
Mark Coppess

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Hilary Patterson, Community Planning Director  
Sean Holm, Senior Planner  
Traci Clark, Administrative Assistant  
Randy Adams, City Attorney

**CALL TO ORDER:**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Messina at 5:30 p.m.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Motion by Commissioner Luttrupp, seconded by Commissioner McCracken, to approve the minutes of the Planning Commission meeting on November 14, 2023. Motion carried.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

None.

**STAFF COMMENTS:**

Hilary Patterson, Community Planning Director, provided the following comments:

- The December 13<sup>th</sup> Joint Workshop with the Planning Commissions in Kootenai County will be held at the County Administration Building at 5:30 p.m.
- The January 9<sup>th</sup> Planning Commission Meeting will have two items on the agenda, a zone change request and a PUD (Planned Unit Development) Amendment request.
- The Impact Fees have been delayed. City Council heard the Capital Improvement Plans and we received feed back to rework some of the Parks Capital Improvement Projects. We have been working with the consultant team. Council has also directed us to remove the Julia Overpass planning fees from the Transportation CIP. We are working with the consultant team to update that information. The hearings for the ordinance amendment will be held on January 2, 2024 and adoption of the Capital Improvement Plans and fees will be on January 16, 2024.

**COMMISSION COMMENTS:**

Commissioner Fleming asked would the Impact fees come back to the Commission.

Ms. Patterson stated no, unless the City Council directs them back to the Commission.

Commissioner Luttrupp asked about the Rivers Edge project that had committed to providing Workforce Housing. Have they progressed far enough to construction and renting that we can assess how they are doing with that project?

Ms. Patterson answered that the Rivers Edge project request for a zone change and associated density increase has not gone to the City Council yet. They are currently building what was already approved. It would be another year at least for those reports to start coming forward.

Commissioner McCracken asked about the Cell Tower application and if that was still going to be heard in January.

Ms. Patterson answered no, the applicant withdrew their application.

**ADMINISTRATIVE: \*\*\*ITEM BELOW IS CONSIDERED TO BE AN ACTION ITEM.**

1. Applicant: Birkdale Commons Subdivision & PUD Extension  
Request: Extend the Preliminary Plat and PUD approval for the project known as Birkdale Commons (S-3-22 and PUD-4-22)

Ms. Patterson, Community Planning Community Planning Director, provided the following statements:

- The request before the Planning & Zoning Commission is to approve or deny the request of Lake City Engineering for a one-year extension of the approved Birkdale Commons PUD (PUD-4-22) and Subdivision (S-3-22).
- On November 8, 2022, the Coeur d'Alene Planning Commission held a public hearing on the above requested items and approved them by a 6 to 1 vote with the following conditions:
  1. The creation of a homeowner's association will be required to ensure the perpetual maintenance of the open space, all other common areas, stormwater maintenance and snow removal.
  2. The applicant's requests for subdivision, and PUD run concurrently. The subdivision and PUD designs are reliant upon one another. Additionally, approval of the requested PUD is only valid once the Final Development Plan has been approved by the Planning Department.
  3. The Open Space must be installed and completed prior to the issuance of the first Certificate of Occupancy. The open space areas shall be consistent with this approval and include the same or better amenities and features.
  4. Since annexation has occurred, the designated parcel is eligible for a water main extension. A single service currently exists for the proposed lot # 1 which will not require cap fees. All other lots will require individual services with cap fees due at time of building permits. As this will be a private street, a 20' public utility easement centered on the water main, (30' if combined with public sewer), must be granted where no permanent structures such as building footings, car ports or garages are allowed. All improvements will be at the developer's expense and will be conveyed to the City upon final acceptance. Applicable fire hydrants must be operational prior to granting building permits.
  5. An unobstructed City approved "all-weather" access shall be required over all public sewers.

6. All public sewer plans require IDEQ or QLPE Approval prior to construction.
  7. Sewer Policy #716 requires all legally recognized parcels within the City to individually connect and discharge into (1) public sewer connection.
  8. A utility easement for the public sewer shall be dedicated to the City prior to building permits.
  9. Public sewer shall be run to and through this project and installed to all city specifications and standards.
  10. A public access easement shall be granted to allow the dead-end road/fire turnaround to the south to be extended in the future, if the lot to the south desires to develop.
- For the PUD and Subdivision, the Planning Commission may extend its approval for one-year upon the finding that upon receiving written request filed prior to the expiration of the approvals and showing of unusual hardship not caused by the owner or applicant.
  - The Subdivision Code Section 16.20.040 authorizes the Planning Commission to grant the applicant up to five (5) extensions of twelve (12) months each for the Preliminary Plat as long as the plat complies with current development requirements.
  - The Zoning Code Section 17.09.478 authorizes the Planning Commission to grant the Applicant a one-year extension of the PUD without public notice and upon stating conditions requiring the extension. This is the first request extension for the PUD and Subdivision/Preliminary Plat.
  - The applicant has submitted a request for the extensions prior to the approvals expiring. The letter states that the reason for the extension is that the owner is intending to build Birkdale Commons and Birkdale Commons North simultaneously. Birkdale Commons North PUD and Subdivision was approved by the Planning Commission at the November 2023 meeting and the annexation was approved by the City Council on December 5, 2023. While waiting for approval from the City on the Birkdale Commons Preliminary Plat and PUD, the project proponent began negotiations on the property to the north (Birkdale Commons North). Due to the timeline for annexation, the preliminary plat and PUD for Birkdale Commons North, they are now at risk of the original approvals expiring. The requested extension is so that both projects can be built together. (See attached extension request from the applicant.)
  - It should be noted that when the PUD and Subdivision were approved in 2022, the City sent a letter informing the owner and applicant that the approval date was November 22, 2023, which included the appeal timeframe. That was the interpretation at the time. Since then, the City Attorney has determined that approval dates should be based on the date of the decision. In this case, if the extension is approved, the new expiration date would be November 8, 2024.
  - The Commission has two alternatives:
    - The Commission may, by motion, grant a one-year extension of the approved PUD and Subdivision to November 8, 2024.
    - The Commission may, by motion, deny the one-year extension. If denied, the items would expire and the applicant must reapply for the PUD and the Subdivision

Ms. Patterson concluded her presentation.

**Commission Comments:**

Commissioner Ingalls stated the advantages to these two projects, Birkdale and Birkdale North, being built simultaneously. He sees very little down side risk of doing this and the code allows five 1-year extensions, this

is just one. The one thing that he would ask is just as an educational question for the future is what is the unusual hardship. Is the challenge of the coinciding time lines of two annexations and two PUD's, two development plans and one build the hardship, or would an unusual hardship be something like the applicant had a medical issue? He questioned if they needed to get hung up on the unusual hardship.

Ms. Patterson stated it might be a good question for attorney Randy Adams, but the Commission has made this determination before when there has been a hardship for the issue of Covid and the supply chain, etc. In this case the applicant is here tonight if you would like to hear from him regarding those issues. The struggle was the applicant coming in with the property from the South and one of the property owners decided not to proceed with the Planned Unit Development and Subdivision. Logistically right now it does make sense to go forward with this.

Mr. Adams stated that the ordinances for the PUD and Subdivision extensions do not use this term. There is no requirement to show an unusual hardship in the case of an extension for a subdivision. All they have to show is that the preliminary plat complies with current development requirements and all other conditions of approval for the PUD. It says as long as you make it timely it can be granted.

Ms. Patterson stated that the hardship language might be in the Special Use Permit.

Mr. Adams clarified it was not a requirement for the PUD or Subdivision extensions.

Commissioner Ingalls commented he is not trying to create waves; he just wanted some clarity. He is in full support.

Commissioner Fleming stated there is less disturbance to the neighborhood by building these two projects as one. You will have it built in one fell swoop. By combining the projects, there would be fewer left turns onto 15<sup>th</sup> Street.

**Motion by Commissioner Fleming, seconded by Commissioner Coppess, to approve the 1-year extension (PUD-4-22 & S-3-22) to November 8, 2024. Motion carried.**

ROLL CALL:

Commissioner Fleming	Voted	Aye
Commissioner Ingalls	Voted	Aye
Commissioner Coppess	Voted	Aye
Commissioner McCracken	Voted	Aye
Commissioner Luttrupp	Voted	Aye
Commissioner Ward	Voted	Aye
Chairman Messina	Voted	Aye

Motion to approve carried by a 7 to 0 vote.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS: \*\*\*ITEMS BELOW ARE CONSIDERED TO BE ACTION ITEMS.**

1. Applicant: Jay Lange  
Location: 707 N. 4<sup>th</sup> Street  
Request: A proposed zone change from residential R-17 (MO) to commercial C-17L (MO) QUASI-JUDICIAL, (ZC-1-23)

Sean Holm, Senior Planner, provided the following statements:

- The applicant is requesting approval of a zone change from the R-17(MO) to the C-17L(MO) zoning district.

- The 0.21-acre parcel is located on the west side of 4<sup>th</sup> Street and north of E. Foster Avenue.
- There is an existing single-family dwelling located on the parcel which is currently being rented.
- Should the zone change request be approved, the owner would like to use the existing structure for a Professional and Administrative Office Use.
- The main floor of the existing structure is 1400 SF +/- with a 1400 SF basement. Future plans may be to construct a new office building to include residential living space above and/or behind.
- The applicant is aware that any future commercial use of the property would trigger improvements to accommodate the public including ADA.
- The subject property is currently zoned R-17 and is located in the Midtown Infill Overlay District (MO).
- The subject property is within the existing city limits.
- There are 4 findings that must be met for the zone change. Findings #B8A - #B811.

Findings #B8: Is the proposal in conformance with the Comprehensive plan policies? The 2022-2042 Comprehensive Plan – Land Use Category is Urban Neighborhood, which is highly walkable with multifamily building types, green spaces and parking areas, gridded street patterns, a mix of housing types and convenient access to goods, services, and dining for nearby residents. Compatible zoning is R-17 and R-34SUP; NC, CC, C17, and C17L.

Applicable goals and objectives include Goal C1 1, Objective C11.1, Goal CI 3, Objective CI 3.1, Goal GD 1, Objectives GD 1.1 and GD 1.5, Goal GD 2 and Objective GD 2. These relate to inclusive community involvement, making Coeur d'Alene a livable community for families with median and below income levels, preserving existing housing stock and providing new workforce and affordable housing opportunities, developing a mix of land uses that balance housing and employment, and ensuring high quality infrastructure to support growth.

Additionally, there is a bicycle, walking and transit network in this neighborhood.

Findings #B9: Are public facilities and utilities available and adequate for the proposed use?

City staff from Streets and Engineering, Water, Fire, Parks, Police and Wastewater Departments have reviewed the application regards to public utilities and public facilities. Each department had indicated that there are public facilities and public utilities available and are adequate for the proposed zoning C-17L.

Findings #B10: Do the physical characteristics of the site make it suitable for the request at this time?

The site is generally flat as is the over-all location. Midtown has seen significant change and investment over the last decade, from public corridor improvements, rehab of several out-of-date storefronts, to a substantial under construction mixed-use project.

Findings #B11: Would the proposal adversely affect the surrounding neighborhood with regard to traffic, neighborhood character, and/or existing land uses?

City staff indicates that the proposed zone change itself would not adversely affect the surrounding area with regard to traffic.

The subject property is within the Midtown Overlay (MO) District. The purpose of the overlay regulations is to establish infill overlay districts and to prescribe procedures whereby the development of lands within these infill overlay districts can occur in a manner that will encourage

infill development while protecting the surrounding neighborhoods. It is the intent of these development standards to encourage a sensitive form of development and to allow for a reasonable use that complements the visual character and the nature of the city.

The intent of the MO district is to create a lively, neighborhood business district with a mixture of uses, including retail, services, and residential. Storefronts would be relatively continuous along the street within the core of the district. Housing would be encouraged both above and behind commercial uses. Traffic calming measures would be applied and there would be an emphasis on creating a streetscape that would offer safety, convenience and visual appeal to pedestrians.

Mr. Holm noted that the applicant stated in his narrative that his daughter would like to open a professional office in the future, and would like the option in the future to possibly provide some kind of living units to the rear. Mr. Holm noted that the applicant is aware that he will have to meet setbacks, parking, etc. in the Midtown Overlay District.

Mr. Holm stated that Commissioner Fleming reached out to him today via phone call regarding the code with a question about juvenile offenders' facility since the code contradicts itself a bit. He explained to her that C-17L does allow a juvenile offenders facility, but the Infill Overlay District that sits on top of this specifically prohibits that use. The overlay district is the most restrictive and is the one that governs.

Mr. Holm explained that the allowed uses in an infill overlay district are based on a floor area ratio meaning that the size of the lot determines the ability or the amount of floor area that you are allowed to build on any given property. The subject property measures approximately 9,000 square feet and, subject to meeting setbacks, parking requirements, heights, etc., these are the theoretical numbers that they would have to live within. For a non-residential use, the basic multiplier is .5 (or half) of the subject property that could be the floor area for a non-residential use. The residential use has a basic multiplier of 1.0. There are bonuses that are identified for upgraded building materials, public art, and public access that would bump up that multiplier to a maximum of 3.0. This applies to all subject properties in the Midtown Infill Overlay District subject to the underlining zone and what it does allow.

Mr. Holm concluded his presentation.

### **Commission Comments:**

Commissioner Ward asked if the applicant's property is rezoned and used for an office, what requirements are put in place for the applicant to change the use, such as landscaping, etc.?

Mr. Holm stated the applicant would have to provide the improvements such as landscaping, if it's asphalt, we have not required anyone to remove asphalt to install landscaping, they do have to provide parking. Parking is one (1) stall per 330 square feet. The structure itself would have to be upgraded to meet the minimum ADA standards.

Commissioner Coppess asked about Finding B10 (Do the physical characteristics of the site make it suitable for the request at this time). He asked if there was configuration of an existing structure, could that pose challenges for future parking. In the letter from Mr. Lange, he talks about a hammer head drive, can you explain what that is?

Mr. Holm replied that hammer head parking is a term that the fire department uses. A car needs to be able to turn around and get out in a forward fashion. The fire department does not want vehicles backing out into 4<sup>th</sup> Street. The applicant would have to provide an ADA stall and a number of stalls that are required by the square footage. The stalls are 9x20, access aisles are 12ft in either direction.

Commissioner Coppess wanted to know Mr. Holms thoughts on taking away residential homes in this neighborhood and turning them into commercial lots and meet the parking and landscaping requirements.

Mr. Holm replied there is ample opportunity to provide the landscaping and parking for the proposed uses. The city would require this project to meet the parking lot and landscaping requirements. He compared the subject property to the neighboring property that had put parking in the front yard. The subject property has the ability to have those parking stalls.

**Public testimony open.**

Jay Lange, applicant, introduced himself and was sworn in. The applicant has owned the property for four (4) years. He would like the property to be rezoned because his daughter has received her Master's in Mental Health and addiction, and she would like to start her own business and this property would be ideal.

Christine Schader, introduced herself and was sworn in. Her main concern is parking. She has some concerns with the large condos that were recently put in, also Izzy's restaurant that brings in all of the traffic and parking issues. She supports Mr. Lange but is worried about the future and what if he sells this property. She has seen some very large buildings put up, for example the structure on Foster Avenue, the apartments across the Street from Izzy's. She said these are residential lots and asked what would happen on a commercial lot. (She has handed some photos to Mr. Holm to give to the Commissioners). She said she didn't think the subject property could fit the required parking for the commercial use and future residential, unless the garage was removed to allow for parking at the rear. She noted that people going to and from Mr. Lange's property encroach onto her property. She also questioned the need for a zone change. She read the zoning code and said the current residential zoning would allow for an office.

Chairman Messina asked Ms. Schader to clarify where her property line is located in the front of her property.

Ms. Schader showed the commission where her property line was in relation to Mr. Lange's property and driveway. She also noted that most of this property is behind the structure.

Mr. Holm clarified that with the current R-17 zoning a civic office space is allowed, which is more of a 501(c)(3). It does not allow all office uses. That is the difference. He

Ms. Schader read from the City of Coeur d'Alene R-17 form and noted under principal uses that home occupations are allowed, central services, and rehabilitation facilities are allowed with Special Use Permits. It appears that it is already allowed for what they intend to use it for. She is asking why does the zoning need to be changed, if down the road the property sells and someone wants to put a high rise in like we have seen popping up all over town recently.

Commissioner Luttrupp states that the city has certain codes and requirements. When an applicant goes through a process to get a building permit it has to go through the city and meet the certain criteria or it will be refused. There are rules and codes in place. If an individual wants to build a big house, if it meets the code, they can do it. If they do not meet the codes, they are not permitted to go further on the building.

Ms. Schader replied that the building that went in on Foster and 1<sup>st</sup>, is meeting all of the requirements right up the very inch. That is such an eye sore and pushing the element, to have that on a residential lot. If you pushed all the rules on a commercial lot, that is her concern.

Commissioner Coppess stated to Ms. Schader that he heard her say she was from Sagle ID, and realizes she owns the building next door, he wanted to know the zoning of her property.

Ms. Schader answered that her property is zoned C-17L.

Commissioner Coppess asked Ms. Schader to acknowledge that Mr. Lange is seeking the same zoning that she has.

Commissioner McCracken asked Ms. Schader if someone is living in her building.

Ms. Schader answered they have an apartment in the basement that she and her husband live in half time. Upstairs she has a Financial Planning Firm.

Cliff Schader, introduced himself and was sworn in. The property he and his wife own is 715 N. 4<sup>th</sup> Street and is next door to Mr. Lange. They have owned it for about 13 years. He explained the original owners of Mr. Lange's property was built and owned by the Hough's who built it in 1945. They built a little tiny garage that was built to fit a model T. Currently Mr. Lange's tenants are trying to put 3 full size trucks on the front parking lot that was built to fit a model T. His main concern is parking, since the multi-unit complex went in on the corner of Read and 4<sup>th</sup>, a small home sat on the corner and now this six multi-unit complex on this lot with 1 parking spot per unit. He said the parking for the apartment project is not sufficient. , The parking is backed up into his property which is about 4 houses back and the street parking is full of parked cars. His primary issue is Mr. Lange's property has limited parking. He will have to put a short fence up for his own client's to be able to park properly.

Chairman Mesina stated that there are requirements regarding parking. He admits that the parking ordinance is not 100% correct. There are so many parking spaces that are required for so many square feet, based on the usage. When the applicant sits down with the city, parking, landscaping and what he wants to do as a business, he is going to be told how many spots he needs and how that is addressed.

Mr. Schader stated that whoever is in charge of the parking codes needs to reevaluate it. The parking requirements need to be doubled or tripled. It is not close to reality.

Chairman Mesina replied that the commission struggles with parking but the code is in place until it is changed.

Mr. Schader stated he will be the guy to get that code changed, and stated that whomever came up with that parking code should lose his job.

Kristin Oliver, introduced herself and was sworn in. She stated that she is a nurse and is representing the Oliver Family Trust, Pamela Oliver owns the property on 3<sup>rd</sup> St. around the corner from where this proposed project is. She asked the commission if it was correct that essential services or health care could be provided on this property without the zone change.

Commissioner Fleming replied, no.

Ms. Oliver stated that her concern is the owner is proposing to have her daughter run a business, but at some point, additional houses may be added. Her family has been in the house for over fifty years and parking on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street is unattainable at times. She has received multiple threatening messages from new neighbors not to park on the street. She is concerned with the homes in her neighborhood that have turned into short term rentals, they bring in four or more cars to park at a time not just two.

Lynn Schwindel, introduced himself and was sworn in. He stated he does not oppose to what Mr. Lange wants to do, he just wants to make a comment on traffic., He said traffic should be considered more in the findings as parking is. When 4<sup>th</sup> Street was rebuilt about 9 years ago, they did provide some traffic calming, but he lives there 24 hours a day, and it does not work. There is a popular business that is a problem all of the time, since they do not have enough parking spaces. There are cars parked on the street and it forces pedestrians to walk between the cars or walk into the street to get around. The Midtown Overlay came up with a pilot parking plan with permits for some residents but it only lasted about 2 years on a trial period. Business in the Midtown Overlay and existing buildings were not required to comply with all of the new parking regulations. This has presented some problems. Anytime you add something it will create more traffic. The 800 block, they made the sidewalks extra wide, so the street is very narrow. When people open their car doors after parking, you will have to stop your car because there



is not enough room to drive past the parked cars on the street. He asked that the commission would take traffic into more consideration in the findings in the future.

Chairman Messina read one more name off the signup sheet for the individual that did not wish to testify.

Mr. Lange stated he understands people are concerned with parking. He is trying to be rezoned just like the Shader's. He feels he will have parking in the driveway and would not create a parking issue on the street. The traffic should be minimal with the type of business that would go into his building. If his daughter is doing counseling, she will only have 1 client at a time.

**Public testimony closed.**

**Commission Comments:**

Commissioner Ward stated he is familiar with the area. Until recently, he lived close to Capones restaurant. If the intent is to have counseling in the building, you will not see 20 people at one time. The amount of people would be limited to 1 client every hour. The code requires a certain number for an office type use and the applicant would have to satisfy that number of parking spaces. 4<sup>th</sup> Street is in the Midtown Overlay District, from Sherman to Foster, where the intent is to have professional offices and small business that provide pedestrian type use. This encourages people to walk, not use their vehicle. He agreed that Izzy's restaurant's parking is a problem. He noted that the apartment complex across the Street had to provide adequate parking by the code. He believes the entire strip of 4<sup>th</sup> Street is going to be change in the future and many of the homes may be converted to small businesses, which is consistent with the Overlay District. Professional offices, well maintained with a residential appearance and possibly some retail uses that allow people to walk to get what they need. Mr. Lange's request is consistent with all of these factors. If Mr. Lange sells this property, whoever wants to build on it, is going to have to jump through a lot more hoops.

Commissioner Ingalls stated he agrees with Commissioner Ward. He is in support of this rezoning, it makes sense. The applicant is surrounded by C-17L. The Commission looks at all the facts and this isn't about parking. If the property sold to a family who has 5 kids and they all have their driver licenses, the parking for the single-family residential use would be a problem. If someone wanted to tear the house down and had a R-17 lot, they could build an apartment tomorrow. The city requires so many parking stalls. Whether it goes to R-17 to C-17L, that alone does not drive parking improvements. This is not about parking but the right use for the building. He supports this zone change.

Commissioner Fleming stated she agrees that the property is moving from R-17 to C-17L. Mr. Lange could tear down the garage out back and have plenty of parking.

Commissioner Coppess asked Mr. Holm to speak about the process for findings review. He wants to know how you look at traffic and parking.

Mr. Holms replied from the city stand point, when a request comes in for a zone change a number of departments are asked to review the request and provide comments and concerns related to the findings. There is a finding that talks about traffic. The City Engineer responded that a zone change by itself does not change or drive parking, it's the use that comes at the time of the permit. The potential is that Mr. Lange could tear down the existing building and rebuild apartments now with the R-17 zoning using the FAR (floor area ratio) as long as he is providing the parking and it is meeting the code. The traffic itself is determined by the Trip Generational Manual. Each type of use has the peak traffic, either in the morning or at night. This is what a particular use would drive per unit or square foot. We look to the professionals in this case to provide that feedback to us. The traffic impact is going to be tied to the use.

Commissioner McCracken stated she agrees with the other commissioners. She wanted to know the difference between R-17 and C-17L on the parking requirements.

Mr. Holms replied that multifamily is by bedroom. If there were five bedrooms, they would need five

parking spaces under the code. The Commercial is one (1) space per 330 sq ft for the interior floor and the existing building is 1400 sq feet.

**Motion by Commissioner Ingalls, seconded by Commissioner Coppess, to adopt Item ZC-1-23.  
Motion approved.**

ROLL CALL:

Commissioner Fleming	Voted	Aye
Commissioner Ingalls	Voted	Aye
Commissioner Coppess	Voted	Aye
Commissioner McCracken	Voted	Aye
Commissioner Luttrupp	Voted	Aye
Commissioner Ward	Voted	Aye
Chairman Messina	Voted	Aye

Motion to approve carried by a 7 to 0 vote.

**ADJOURNMENT/CONTINUATION:**

Motion by Commissioner Fleming, seconded by Commissioner Luttrupp. Motion approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:36 p.m.

Prepared by Traci Clark, Administrative Assistant