



PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

STAFF REPORT

DATE: FEBRUARY 9, 2021

TO: DESIGN COMMISSION

FROM: DAVID M. REYES, DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: APPLICATION FOR CONSOLIDATED DESIGN REVIEW
NEW ILLUMINATED BUILDING IDENTIFICATION SIGN (LAGERLOF)
155 NORTH LAKE AVENUE

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Design Commission:

Environmental Determination

Find that the application for Consolidated Design Review is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15311, Class 11 pertaining to accessory structures which includes the construction of signs for existing commercial, industrial, or institutional facilities, and there are no features that distinguish this project from others in the exempt class and, therefore, there are no unusual circumstances.

Findings for Compliance with the Tree Protection Ordinance

Acknowledge that no protected trees are proposed to be removed in conjunction with this application.

Findings for Consolidated Design Approval

1. Find that the project, upon implementation of the condition of approval, **will comply** with the purposes of design review the Design Guidelines in the Central District Specific Plan, and the Sign Design Guidelines; and
2. Based on these findings, **approve** the application for Consolidated Design Review subject to the following condition which shall be subject to staff review and approval prior to issuance of a building permit:

Condition:

1. The project shall be subject to a final site inspection and sign-off by staff of the Design & Historic Preservation section to ensure that the work plan undertaken is consistent with the approved plans, the Design Guidelines in the Central District Specific Plan, and Sign Design Guidelines.

BACKGROUND:

Project Overview

- General Plan Designation: High Commercial
- Zoning: CD-5 (Central District Specific Plan; Lake Avenue Sub-district)
- Design Guidelines: The applicable design guidelines are the Design Guidelines in the Central District Specific Plan and the Sign Design Guidelines.
- Site: The proposed sign will be located at the top of the southerly elevation of an existing 11-story, approximately 138-foot tall office building. The building is located on the west side of North Lake Avenue, between Union Street and Walnut Street.
- Surroundings: Surrounding land uses consist of office, retail, and service station uses in buildings varying from one to six stories.
- Project Description: The applicant proposes a building identification wall sign consisting of internally illuminated channel letters attached to a raceway and secured to the parapet wall area above the eleventh floor of the southerly building elevation. The new sign is proposed to be mounted at the center of the building façade, approximately 133 feet above the ground. The combined sign area of the approximately 5-foot tall channel letters is proposed to be 96 square feet. Each letter is proposed to be constructed of a 5-inch deep prefabricated black aluminum cabinet and return, a translucent acrylic face overlaid with color vinyl graphics, and a ¾-inch thick trim cap. The lettering will have internal LED illumination. The new raceway is proposed to project approximately two inches from the building wall and its design would consist of a square tube frame clad in aluminum panels that would be painted to match the building. The sign is proposed to be mounted in the middle of the parapet wall and would obscure portions of the pilaster detailing at the top edge of the façade in order to secure the raceway appropriately to the building.
- Property Owner: Swift Real Estate Partners
- Designer: Sign Specialists Corporation, Allan Tannaya

ANALYSIS:

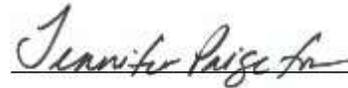
The proposed sign complies with the applicable guidelines and standards. The proposed sign is an attractive, high-quality sign that will be placed in a location that is appropriate to the design of the building. The sign is properly proportioned to, and integrated with the design of the building. The proposed sign is centered within the parapet above the eleventh-floor windows. The blue colors of the lettering are simple and appropriately contrast with the building face. The building façade design consists of concrete masonry walls with subtle plane variation and recessed pilaster elements, creating a pleated pattern across the elevation. The raceway design consists of a thin, 2-inch profile, will match the color of the building, and will be minimally visible from the ground level. The proposed raceway for the sign is necessary to secure the sign to the building and has been designed to extend over and obscure a minimal portion of the pilaster elements. The size of the raceway has been minimized to reduce the number of penetrations and overall damage to the concrete wall. The lettering will be directly mounted to the raceway and will maintain adequate separation from the windows below and the top edge of the parapet, sensitively responding to the building elements to achieve a high-quality aesthetic. The method of illumination (internal) is consistent with the Sign Design Guidelines and electrical conduit and connections will be properly concealed within the raceway.

The proposed sign is also consistent with all provisions of the Zoning Code for building identification wall signs. Building identification signs are limited to structures over 75 feet in height. The subject building is approximately 138 feet tall. The proposed 96 square-foot sign area is consistent with the maximum allowed sign area of 100 square feet. Staff recommends a condition of approval requiring a final inspection to ensure the work performed is consistent with the approved plans, the Design Guidelines in the Central District Specific Plan, and the Sign Design Guidelines.

CONCLUSION:

The proposed building identification sign is consistent with the Sign Design Guidelines for the CD Zoning District. The size and location of the proposed sign are appropriate to the scale of the building and relate well to building's architectural elements including the spandrels and ribbon windows. The presentation is well executed and the architectural expression of the sign will be of high quality. Therefore, staff recommends approval of the project as conditioned.

Respectfully Submitted,



David M. Reyes
Director of Planning and
Community Development

Prepared by:



Rodrigo Pelayo
Associate Planner

Reviewed by:



Leon E. White
Principal Planner

Attachment:

- A. Applicant's submittal including site plan, construction drawings and photographs