



PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

STAFF REPORT

DATE: JUNE 14, 2022

TO: DESIGN COMMISSION

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

SUBJECT: APPLICATION FOR CONSOLIDATED DESIGN REVIEW
NEW BUILDING IDENTIFICATION SIGNS AND MONUMENT SIGN
REPLACEMENT (FIRST CITIZENS BANK)
75 NORTH FAIR OAKS 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 facilities, and that there are no features that distinguish this project from others in the exempt class; 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, upon implementation of the conditions of approval, the proposed project will comply with the design related goals and policies of the Land Use Element of the General Plan, 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 as illustrated in Attachment A, subject to the following conditions, which shall be subject to staff review and approval prior to issuance of a building permit:

Conditions:

1. The location of the proposed building identification signs shall be adjusted, within the fascia, to be aligned or justified to an existing facade element such as the band of windows, or the mullion separating the band of windows below the sign.
2. The building identification signs shall be reduced in size to a maximum of 100 square feet per sign, pursuant to Zoning Code Section 17.48.090.C, Table 4-20.

BACKGROUND:

Project Overview

- General Plan Designation: Medium Mixed-Use
- Zoning: CD-3 (Central District Specific Plan; Walnut Housing Subdistrict)
- Design Guidelines: The applicable design guidelines are the design related goals and policies of the Land Use Element of the General Plan, the Design Guidelines in the Central District Specific Plan, and the Sign Design Guidelines.
- Site: The subject building is the east tower of a commercial office complex which also includes two above-ground parking structures flanking Leonard J Pieroni Street (a private street) and a west tower fronting Pasadena Avenue (74 N. Pasadena Avenue). The project site occupies an entire block and is bounded by West Union Street to the south, Pasadena Avenue to the west, Holly Street to the north, and North Fair Oaks Avenue on the east. The property is located within the Central District and outside the northern boundary of the Old Pasadena Historic District. The surrounding land uses consist primarily of office, retail, and multi-family residential uses in buildings of varying heights, styles, and ages. The subject building is located on the east side of the property and sits slightly above street-level, with primary frontage on North Fair Oaks Avenue. The subject building was constructed in 1977 and was developed to mirror the west office building tower located on the same site. Both office towers were designed with horizontal bands of cement plaster with a repetitious pattern of darkly tinted ribbons of glazing. The subject building is rectangular in plan, with its long facades facing east and west.
- Project Description: The applicant is proposing to install two new 123.25 square-foot, internally illuminated, building identification signs. One sign would be placed on the south elevation of the 90-foot tall building, located at the top of the southeast edge; facing Union Street. A second matching sign would be installed on the north elevation, at the top of the northeast edge facing Holly Street. Both building identification signs would be made of 3/16" white acrylic with blue and red faces, silver returns and trim-cap, and internal LED illumination. Both building identification signs would read "First Citizens Bank" with a corresponding logo. An existing monument sign, with 24.4 square feet of sign area, is located at the northeast corner of the property at the intersection of North Fair Oaks Avenue and Holly Street. The existing monument sign would be removed and replaced with a new monument sign. The new monument sign would be in the same location and have the same dimensions as the existing. The monument sign would be made of a routed-out aluminum

panel backed with white acrylic and vinyl copy with blue text that would read "First Citizens Bank" with a corresponding corporate logo. Note that additional signs shown in the submitted drawings in Attachment A (ATM sign and interior signs) are exempt from design review.

- Property Owner: Lincoln Property Co
- Designer: AKC Permit / Kasey Clark

ANALYSIS:

Pursuant to PMC Section 17.61.030.K, approval of Consolidated Design Review shall be based on the following findings:

1. *The project's design is consistent with a) The purposes of design review; and b) Any applicable design guidelines adopted by the Council.*

Supporting Design Guidelines:

Central District Specific Plan Area Design Guidelines

BD 3.1: Establish a building's overall appearance on a clear and pleasing set of proportions; a building should exhibit a sense of order.

BD 6.2: Use materials, colors, and details to unify a building's appearance; buildings and structures should be built of compatible materials on all sides.

Sign Design Guidelines

D.2.a.: Sign orientation. For the most part, signs in the CD zoning district should be oriented to the pedestrian. This may include wall signs, projecting signs, and window signs.

D.2.c.: Respect for architectural elements and details. Signs should not cover over architectural elements such as transom windows, vertical piers, or spandrel panels. As major elements of the storefront, signs should fit into the building façade just as if they were one of the architectural elements.

D.3.a.: Location and mounting. (1) Signs should be mounted in locations that respect the design of a building. (2) Wall-mounted signs on fascias above storefront windows should be sized to fit within existing friezes, lintels, spandrels, and other such features and not extend above, below, or beyond them. Typically, wall-mounted signs should be centered on horizontal surfaces.

D.3.b.: Illumination. (1) Internally illuminated cabinet signs are allowed as projecting signs only. Such signs are required to have non-illuminated/opaque face panels so that, only letters and/or logos appear to be back-lighted.

The proposed signage is in compliance with the applicable guidelines. They are attractive, high quality signs that will be placed in locations that are appropriate to the design of the building. Conditions of approval have been added to ensure that the building identification signs align or justify to an existing façade element such as the banding of windows or separating mullions in order to improve the signs' locations in relation to the design of the building and that the sign area of the new signs be in conformance with the Zoning Code.

Pursuant to PMC Section 17.48.090.C, Table 4-20, Part 4, building identification signs are allowed in the Central District provided that the building is greater than 75 feet in height, that the signs are located below the roof or parapet, that a maximum of one building identification sign is located per wall plane, and a maximum sign area of one square-foot per foot of primary frontage, up to a 100 square-feet. As currently proposed, the building identification signs comply with all standards except sign area. The north and south frontages of the subject building measure approximately 129 feet in length, and the applicant is proposing 123.25 square feet of sign area for each sign, which exceeds the 100 square-foot sign area maximum. This approval is conditioned upon the identification signs being reduced in size to comply with the 100 square-foot size requirement. The design of the proposed building identification signs includes a raceway that is proposed to be internally-mounted to the concrete parapet wall of the building, with a single wallbuster electrical conduit running through the wall from one location on the raceway.

The applicant is also proposing a new monument sign that would replace an existing monument sign. The new monument sign would be in the same location and have the same dimensions as the existing. Pursuant to PMC Section 17.48.090.C, Table 4-20, Part 3, monument signs are allowed in the Central District provided that they are limited to one sign for each 200 feet of property frontage and 0.5 square feet of sign area per foot of property frontage. The existing monument sign is located at the northeast corner of the property, on a frontage that exceeds 200 feet, and has 24.4 square feet of sign area, in compliance with the provisions of the Code. The proposed monument sign replacement is not proposing any illumination.

The locations of the signs, as conditioned, respect the architectural detailing of the building and are aesthetically appropriate and compatible with the overall building design, providing visibility from West Union Street, North Fair Oaks Avenue, and Holly Street. Additionally, the approximate locations of the proposed signs provide cohesive and balanced design elements that are complementary to the commercial office complex. The use of internal illumination, placement of electrical conduits, and concealment of raceways are consistent with the Central District Specific Plan Area Design Guidelines and the Sign Design Guidelines.

Design Commission

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Identification and Monument Signs)

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CONCLUSION:

As conditioned, the proposed new building identification signs and monument sign are consistent with the Supporting Design Guidelines for the CD Zoning District. The scale of the sign elements is appropriate to the scale of the building, the signs are responsive to the building's architecture, and are consistent with the signage in the commercial office complex, while accommodating the corporate identity needs of the building's tenant. Therefore, staff recommends approval of the project as conditioned.

Respectfully Submitted,



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Attachment:

A: Plans