



PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

STAFF REPORT

DATE: JUNE 28, 2022

TO: DESIGN COMMISSION

FROM: JENNIFER PAIGE, ACTING DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: APPLICATION FOR CONSOLIDATED DESIGN REVIEW
NEW 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 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 the proposed project complies 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.

BACKGROUND:

Project Overview

- General Plan Designation: High Commercial
- Zoning: CD-5 (Central District Specific Plan; Lake Avenue 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 project site contains an 11-story, 138-foot tall, office building at the east end of the site, fronting North Lake Avenue, and a four-story above-ground parking structure at the west end of the site, fronting North Hudson Avenue. The property is a double-frontage lot, with frontage on North Lake Avenue and Hudson Avenue, between East Union Street and East Walnut Avenue. 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 was constructed in 1983 and was designed with horizontal bands of cement plaster with a repetitious pattern of darkly tinted ribbons of glazing. It is rectangular in plan, with its long facades facing east and west.
- Project Description: The applicant is proposing to install one new 95.94 square-foot, internally illuminated, building identification sign on the west elevation (rear) of the office building, facing North Hudson Avenue; the sign would be centered on the parapet wall. The sign would be made of 3/16" translucent acrylic letter faces with painted blue vinyl that would appear white when illuminated at night. The sign would have 3/4" white trim caps, .040" aluminum returns, white backing, and internal white LED illumination. The individual channel letters would be attached to a raceway consisting of a series of aluminum panels that would create a flat mounting surface across articulations in the building facade. The building identification sign would read "Lagerlof Lawyers LLP."
- Property Owner: Swift Real Estate Partners
- Designer: Sign Specialists / Ricardo Silva

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. It is an attractive, high quality sign that will be placed in a location that is appropriate to the design of the building. The design of the proposed sign includes a raceway that would be internally-mounted to the concrete parapet wall of the building, with a single electrical conduit running through the wall from one location on the raceway.

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, and that a maximum of one building identification sign is allowed per wall plane with a maximum sign area allowance of one square-foot per linear foot of primary frontage, up to 100 square feet. The proposed sign complies with all the provisions of the Zoning Code. One building identification sign is proposed on the west elevation, below the parapet, of the 138-foot tall building. The west façade plane of the building measures approximately 143 feet in length, and the applicant is proposing one 95.94 square-foot sign on west façade.

Overall, the location of the sign respects the architectural detailing of the building and is aesthetically appropriate and compatible with the overall building design, providing west-facing

visibility. Additionally, the approximate location of the proposed sign provides 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 Design Guidelines and the Sign Design Guidelines.

CONCLUSION:

The proposed new building identification sign is consistent with the Sign Design Guidelines for the CD Zoning District. The scale of the sign elements are appropriate to the scale of the building, the sign is responsive to the building's architecture, and is 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.

Respectfully Submitted,



Jennifer Paige
Acting Director of Planning and
Community Development

Prepared by:



Robert W. Keatinge
Assistant Planner

Reviewed by:



Kevin Johnson
Principal Planner

Attachment:

A: Plans and photographs