

**CITY OF SAN CLEMENTE  
MINUTES OF THE  
DESIGN REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING  
MARCH 27, 2013**

Subcommittee Members Present: Michael Kaupp, Julia Darden and Bart Crandell

Staff Present: Jim Pechous, Cliff Jones and Sean Nicholas

**1. MINUTES**

The March 13, 2013 minutes were approved

**2. ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS**

**A. Conditional Use Permit 12-362/Cultural Heritage Permit 12-363/Discretionary Sign Permit 13-082/Sign Exception Permit 13-083/Minor Exception Permit 13-084/Outdoor Dining Permit 13-085, North Beach Rooftop Grill and Bar**

A request to convert a one-story commercial building into a restaurant with an open roof top bar and grill, and approve a new sign package which exceeds the allowed total sign area for the site. The project is located at 1509 North El Camino Real.

Associate Planner Sean Nicholas introduced the item. The DRSC began the discussion by going over the previous changes made to the building including:

- Modifications to the trellis structures located on the roof.
- Decrease in the height of the trellis structure to reduce the mass of the roof top structure.
- Modified color on the roll up doors.
- Modified rear stair well.
- Clarified that the stucco of the support posts for the trellises and the monument sign should match the existing stucco in color and texture.

Design Review Subcommittee members indicated that the design revisions were well done and addressed the discussion points from the previous meeting.

Commissioner Darden indicated again, that while it was not the purview of DRSC, that noise could be a major topic of discussion at Planning Commission.

The applicant, Dave Gutierrez, indicated that he understood the requirements of the Municipal Code and that he would be policed the same as everyone, and they have a sound meter to make sure there will not be a problem and a noise study had not been completed for the project.

Associate Planner Nicholas presented the various signs proposed for the project, sign area, materials and illumination choices. In particular, staff discussed issues related to the applicant's proposal to use neon for illumination for the three signs. Staff indicated that neon is unique and hand crafted in appearance, but was substantially different from what has been approved for other signs in the community especially in the architectural overlay. Staff indicated that there were neon signs within the architectural overlay areas in the past, but most if not all of those signs had been removed.

Staff indicated that overall, with the recommendations listed in the staff report, staff is supportive of the unique signage for the site and it is staff's position that the required findings can be made for a Discretionary Sign Permit to approve the use of neon especially in North Beach which is identified as a entertainment and restaurant hub of the community both in the current and Centennial General Plan.

Subcommittee Member Kaupp felt it best to first discuss the signage conceptually. Committee Member Kaupp indicated that he is a proponent of neon and finds that it is a great detail for signage. Though he indicated concern that with the way San Clemente used to be with signage was not necessarily a good thing, and that approving this opens the door for more signage with neon. The concern is that it will be going back to a time which was not aesthetically pleasing and was allowed to proliferate and become excessive. He stated that he believes that people do not want to go back to this time period in San Clemente. Once neon is introduced, how do you say no in the future? He did make it clear that he liked the signage, the signs were bright, interesting, and well designed, and one of the better signs brought before the Subcommittee, perhaps not for this location and opening the door to other larger applications.

City Planner Pechous indicated that most of the signs being looked at by the DRSC would not be permitted today as they are oversized signs, types, and locations.

Subcommittee Member Kaupp again brought up his concern regarding opening the door to neon and what the result would be for the community.

Subcommittee Member Darden expressed similar concerns as Subcommittee Member Kaupp. She indicated she appreciated the vintage

style and the nostalgia and finds it charming, but has concerns about how to tell people no in the future if approved. She indicated that she liked the style of the signs, but does not feel that it blends with the architecture of the building, in particular the projection sign. She stated that the use of neon in combination with the overall design of the projecting sign is not consistent with the architecture. This is a concern for her.

Subcommittee Member Crandell indicated that looking at the findings, he did not think he could support the findings for the Discretionary Sign Permit because, as Subcommittee Member Darden stated, that the projecting sign does not harmonize with the building and architecture. He also stated that he could not support a Sign Exception Permit.

Associate Planner Nicholas stated that reducing the sign square footage is the first recommendation from staff and preliminarily talked with the applicant about reducing the sign.

The applicant indicated that he was supportive of reducing the signage to the necessary square footage so it would not require a Sign Exception Permit.

Associate Planner Nicholas then indicated that the Sign Exception Permit is now no longer needed, but the Discretionary Sign Permit is still required for the amount of site signage and use of neon.

Subcommittee Member Crandell indicated that he still needed to understand how the sign is compatible with the building similar to what the other Subcommittee members indicated. He stated on other buildings in the community it may work well, but on this building in the Architectural Overlay, he believes it doesn't.

**3. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS**

None.

**4. ADJOURNMENT**

Adjourn to the Design Review Subcommittee meeting of April 10, 2013 at 10:00 a.m. in Conference Room A, Community Development Department, 910 Calle Negocio, Suite 100, San Clemente, CA 92673.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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Michael Kaupp, Chair

Attest:

  
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Cliff Jones