



Memorandum Planning

April 1, 2013

To: Planning Commission
From: Sean Nicholas, Associate Planner
Subject: CUP 12-362/CHP 12-363/ DSP 13-082/MEP 13-084/ODP 13-085, North Beach Rooftop Grill and Bar Supplemental Information
Copies: Jim Pechous, City Planner

In the Staff Report for North Beach Rooftop Grill and Bar, under the Design Review Subcommittee (DRSC) heading, there is an incorrect reference to the DRSC supporting the proposed signage for the project. At the March 27th DRSC meeting it was clear that the Subcommittee members did not support the signage and had concerns regarding the use of neon, overall design, and proposed materials. In particular the projecting sign was the main portion of discussion. To clarify the issue, here are discussion points and comments regarding signage from the March 27th DRSC meeting:

- Associate Planner 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
 - Decreased the height of the trellis structure to reduce the mass of the roof top structure.
 - Modified the color on the roll up doors
 - Modified the rear stair well portion of the building
 - 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 of the improvements were well done and addressed the discussion points from the previous meeting.
- Associate Planner Nicholas then 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 handcrafted in appearance, but was substantially different from what has been approved for other signs in the community, especially in the architectural overlay. Staff did

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 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 use to be with signage was not necessarily a good thing, and that approving this potentially opens the door for more signage with neon. The concern is it would be going back towards a time which was not aesthetically pleasing. He stated that he has concerns that this signage takes a step back to when signage was allowed to proliferate and become obsessive. He stated that he believes that people do not want to go back towards this time period in San Clemente, and once neon is introduced, how do you say no in the future. He did make it clear that he liked the signage, that they were bright, interesting, well designed, and one of the better signs brought before them, but perhaps not for this location and opening the door to other larger applications.
- 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 the projecting sign with the use of neon in combination with the overall design is not consistent with the architecture and is a concern.
- Subcommittee Member Crandell indicated that looking at the findings he did not think he could support the Discretionary Sign Permit because, as Subcommittee Member Darden stated, the projecting sign does not harmonize with the building and architecture. Subcommittee Member Crandel indicated that he still needed to understand how the sign is compatible with the building, similar to what the other Commissioners indicated. He stated on other buildings in the community this sign may work well, but on this building in the Architectural Overlay, he believes it doesn't. He also indicated that the arrow is a harsh feature and is not compatible with this architectural style. He doesn't feel the concept in general is a bad design, just not appropriate for the building and site.

- Subcommittee Member Darden reiterated her belief that the design of the sign and use of neon is not compatible with the building and does not work within the Architectural Overlay. She did understand the need for the amount of different signs to attract people at the various scales, and was not opposed to that. She also indicated that the arrow was not compatible, and would be more supportive of a blade sign design.
- Subcommittee Member Crandell indicated that he agreed with the staff analysis that the design was Route 66 in style but not El Camino Real.
- Subcommittee Member Kaupp indicated that he was in agreement with the discussion of the other two subcommittee members.