



Design Review Subcommittee (DRSC)

Meeting Date: July 26, 2017

PLANNER: Albert Armijo, Contract Planner *AA*

SUBJECT: Sign Exception Permit (SEP)15-428; Amendment to Discretionary Sign Permit (AM DSP)05-176; Administrative Sign Permit (ASP) 16-128 – Outlets at San Clemente Freeway Oriented Signs, a request for 36 total signs comprised of 27 freeway oriented tenant signs, four project identification signs, and five hotel identification signs; 20 of the total signs are more than 64 square feet in area, for The Outlets at San Clemente, 101 West Avenida Vista Hermosa.

BACKGROUND:

The Outlets at San Clemente has an approved Master Sign Program that regulates all entry monument signs and all interior signage (i.e. all non-freeway oriented signs) for the Outlets. The Master Sign Program is provided as Attachment 2 to this Staff Report.

On February 20, 2007, the City Council approved a Sign Exception Permit (SEP) to allow a freeway oriented sign package for The Outlets at San Clemente. In May, 2007, Citizens for Integrity in Development filed a suit in Orange County Superior Court in opposition to the Sign Exception approval. On June 24, 2008, the Superior Court determined that the City did not complete adequate California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review for the proposed sign package and issued a writ of mandate ordering the City to set aside and void its approval of the freeway oriented signs. On July 15, 2008, the City rescinded its approval of the freeway oriented signs exclusively.

As indicated in Table 1 below, the Craig Realty Group (Applicant) has submitted a new application for wall mounted freeway oriented tenant signs, wall mounted project identification signs, and hotel identification signs. A Sign Exception Permit was required (and remains so) to allow the freeway oriented signs, to allow 20 of those signs to exceed 64 square feet in area, and to allow the total sign area to exceed one square foot for each linear foot of building frontage.

Table 1 – Application Signs

SIGN TYPE	NUMBER OF SIGNS
Wall Mounted Freeway Oriented Tenant Signs	27
Wall Mounted Project Identification Signs	4
Hotel Identification Signs	5



Why Design Review Subcommittee (DRSC) Review is Required

The Sign Exception process includes review by the DRSC, which evaluates and makes recommendations about how the Project can best comply with policies and design guidelines that relate to visual impact, architectural design, compatibility and aesthetics.

DRSC Review (August 24, 2016)

The initial DRSC review of the proposed 26 wall mounted Freeway Oriented signs occurred on August 24, 2016. The Staff Report for that DRSC meeting described the Freeway Oriented tenant signage proposed at that time, and the view and architectural context of the signage. In addition, staff made three recommendations pertaining to sign colors, sign locations, and sign scales. Staff supported dark bronze or black lettering, both of which would complement the Spanish design of the building architecture and San Clemente's Spanish Village by the Sea image. Staff also indicated placement of signs 3, 21 and 22 were located on building features in locations that would detract from the building architectural design and thereby should be eliminated. Staff further indicated there were several signs that appeared to be too large for the spaces in which they were located. The context for this recommendation was that for a sign to look proportional to the space in which it is located there would need to be sufficient space around the sign where there are no "pinch points" along the exterior edges of the signs (so the sign does not appear to overcrowd the space). Thereby, staff recommended the Outlet Identification Sign on Sheet MSP3.2 and Tenant Signs #11, #12, and #16 should be reduced in size to better fit the spaces in which they were to be located. Staff further stated the dimensions of the proposed Outlet Identification Signs should be provided on Sheets MSP 3.2 and 3.3 for staff and DRSC evaluation.

In addition, the Staff Report informed the DRSC that the City had contracted with CAA Planning to prepare the CEQA document (Environmental Impact Report) for the Project and that once the environmental analysis had been completed "...staff will present this

information to the DRSC for final consideration prior to scheduling this item for Planning Commission review.”

The Minutes from the August 24, 2016 DRSC meeting indicate the DRSC made the following comments individually or as a group.

- The building architecture was very attractive and the proposed signs should match said architecture in quality and aesthetics.
- The Carlsbad Outlets do not have individual tenant signs and that center was successful.
- If freeway oriented signs were approved, the signs would need to be in harmony with the quality Spanish Design of the Outlets center and the Spanish Village by the Sea image of San Clemente.
- The DRSC supported a reduced color palette for the signs. Staff suggested Bronze and Black (particularly recommended against using red); the Applicant suggested a range of metallic colors that would be consistent with the Spanish architecture of the Outlets buildings. The DRSC commented that the other colors proposed were too bright and inappropriate with the Spanish Colonial Revival architecture of the buildings. The DRSC indicated the Applicant needed to submit color samples (rather than simply identify the name of the color) so the Subcommittee would clearly see the actual colors.
- Signs #3, #21, and #22 should be eliminated because they conflicted with architectural features.
- The Sign Program should prohibit future placement of freeway oriented banners.
- Signs #11, #12, #16 and #23 would need to be scaled appropriately (reduced in area) for the wall spaces on which they are located.

The DRSC requested the Applicant incorporate the requested modifications and come back to the Subcommittee for review.

In addition, two members of the public commented. Jim Ruehlin suggested the DRSC consider the following: 1) Was the freeway oriented signage in character with the community; 2) Should the City have freeway signage; and, 3) Perhaps appropriate signage should identify the Outlets center rather than each tenant. A second City resident, Mr. Richard, also indicated any allowed freeway oriented signage should be a consistent color and indicated the number of such signs the Applicant is proposing is not in character with the community and agreed with comments that freeway oriented signage is not in character with the community.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

On May 30, 2017, the Applicant re-submitted the Sign Exception Permit/Administrative Sign Permit package (reference Attachments 3 and 4) for DRSC review. The Attachments to this Report depict the locations and dimensions of each of the proposed signs. The signage in the submittal can be considered within the following contexts: Tenant Signs; Outlet Identifications Signs; and, Hotel Identification Signs. The scales,

colors and materials of the signs must be designed to be compatible with the buildings on which they will be placed and in a manner consistent with the character and image of San Clemente. Furthermore, since the signs would be visible by travelers along Interstate-5 it is desirable that sign design and placement balance The Outlets need for identification and advertisement with San Clemente's image as the Spanish Village by the Sea.

Tenant Signs

The DRSC reviewed the Freeway Oriented Tenant Signs in August 2016, and made comments as indicated above. The locations of the Tenant Signs extend along the northeast, east and southeast perimeter of the Outlets site. The Tenant Signs will be limited to nationally trademarked logos and signs. As indicated in the "Analysis" Section of this Staff Report, the applicant has reduced the sizes of, or maintained the sizes of, all but two of the 23 Tenant Signs proposed to be placed on commercial building walls.

Outlet Identification Signs

The application graphics depict the locations only of four Outlet Identification Signs, all of which are Freeway Oriented. The proposed locations are as follows:

- On Northeast Elevation of the Tower Icon (100 square feet in area)
- On Southeast Elevation of the Tower Icon (100 square feet in area)
- Over the entry arch between Buildings 17A and 19 in the easterly perimeter of the property, facing Interstate-5 (200 square feet in area)
- On the northeasterly facing elevation of Building 17B (200 square feet in area)

Hotel Identification Signs

The application graphics depict five Hotel Identification Signs. Two of the signs would be Freeway Oriented and would be located on the East Elevation of the tower feature on the hotel building wall. One of the two signs would identify the hotel and occupy 64 square feet; the second sign would identify the conference center and occupy 30 square feet. Two additional signs – identical in areas to those on the tower feature on the hotel building wall – would be located on the North Elevation of the hotel. One of the signs would be placed on the hotel building wall; the second sign would be placed on the entry arch to the Conference Center. A fifth Hotel Identification Sign (labeled in the attached sign package as #8) would occupy 64 square feet and be placed on the South Elevation of the hotel building wall.

Tower Icon

The Tower Icon at its base is 576 square feet in area (24' x 24') and is depicted as extending to a height of 42 feet to the top of the peak of its roof. A height of 45 feet is allowable. The walls are to be smooth plaster with a single barrel tile roof. Its colors will match those of the Outlets buildings. Two sides of the Tower Icon will have signage.

Each of the elevations proposes a project identification sign (100 square feet each) and two tenant signs (64 square feet each).

Additional important points noted in the Administrative Sign Permit application package are the following.

1. Freeway Oriented Tenant Signs will be composed of metal channel letters painted from a color palette that includes black, navy blue, brown, grey copper, bronze, and white; or, up to four Director of Community Development-approved other colors (refer to Page FSc of the attached Tenant Sign Plans – Booklet)
 - White halo lighting will be used
 - Banners (freeway facing) are prohibited
 - Project sign lighting will be turned off one hour after individual tenant stores close

ANALYSIS:

Changes Since Previous DRSC Review

In response to DRSC comments and to reflect its current proposal, the Applicant has submitted a revised sign package, dated May 25, 2017. The application identifies 36 signs as indicated in Table 1 above. The Applicant has decreased the sizes of 17 of the previously-reviewed wall signs. However, the sizes of two previously-reviewed wall signs have increased. The areas of the other four wall signs remain unchanged. The following Table 2 provides a comparison between the Tenant Sign areas the DRSC previously reviewed and the currently-proposed Tenant Sign areas. Areas for individual Tenant Signs are calculated by enclosing each proposed Tenant Sign within a rectilinear enclosure with eight sides maximum and each Tenant is permitted a maximum Primary Sign area calculated at 1.5 square feet of signage per foot of building frontage. Table 2 below indicates provides a comparison between the areas of the previously-reviewed Tenant and Project Identification signage and the currently-proposed (as modified) respective signage, together with information about the proposed Hotel Identification Signs. As indicated in Table 2, twenty (20) signs previously reviewed had areas greater than 64 square feet; twenty (20) currently proposed signs also have areas greater than 64 square feet. However, the larger signs include four Project Identification Signs – one more than previously proposed.

Table 2 – Sign Areas Comparison

SIGN	DRSC REVIEW 2016 SIGN AREA (Square Feet)	ILLUSTRATED SIGN AREAS, REVISED 2017 (Difference)	MAXIMUM ALLOWABLE SIGN AREA
Outlet Building Tenant Signs			
1	130.5	127.5 (-3)	127.5
2	72	72 (same)	88.5

SIGN	DRSC REVIEW 2016 SIGN AREA (Square Feet)	ILLUSTRATED SIGN AREAS, REVISED 2017 (Difference)	MAXIMUM ALLOWABLE SIGN AREA
3	75	74.75 (-0.25)	76.5
4	88.5	90 (+1.5)	90
5	90	88 (-2)	90
6	81	68.6 (-12.4)	79.5
7	81	58.9 (-22.1)	79.5
8	36	36 (same)	36
9	67.5	66.4 (-0.6)	67.5
10	80.25	75 (-4.75)	80.25
11	108	116 (+8)	116.25
12	54	48.8 (-5.2)	54
13	100.5	100 (-0.5)	100.5
14	120	76 (-44)	120
15	91.5	73.5 (-18)	73.5
16	58.5	46.75 (-11.75)	58.5
17	130.5	122.9 (-8.5)	124.5
18	77.625	74.25 (-3.375)	74.25
19	90	88 (-2)	90
20	63	62.5 (-0.5)	63
21	31.5	31.3 (-0.2)	31.5
22	31.5	31 (-0.5)	31.5
23	112.5	71.8 (-40.7)	* 105
Tower Tenant Signs			
24	Not Reviewed	35	64
25	Not Reviewed	43	64
26	Not Reviewed	52	64
27	Not Reviewed	63.5	64
Project Identification Signs (3 in previous proposal; 4 in current proposal)			
1	300	200	200
2	300	200	200
3	300	100	100
4	Not Reviewed	100	100
Hotel Identification Signs			
1	Not Reviewed	64	64
2	Not Reviewed	64	64
3	Not Reviewed	64	64
4	Not Reviewed	30	30
5	Not Reviewed	30	30

The Applicant responded to DRSC comments pertaining to number and sizes of signs, as discussed in this Staff Report.

Table 3 – DRSC Comments Regarding Signage and Proposed Modifications

	DRSC Comment	Proposed Modifications
1	The building architecture was very attractive and the proposed signs should match said architecture in quality and aesthetics.	No modification. The proposed signage will be controlled in terms of color and size so that the aesthetics and quality of the signage corresponds appropriately with the high quality of building design.
2	The Carlsbad Outlets do not have individual tenant signs and that center was successful.	Noted. The Carlsbad Outlets are not directly positioned adjacent to Interstate-5.
3	If freeway oriented signs were approved, the signs would need to be in harmony with the quality Spanish Design of the Outlets center and the Spanish Village by the Sea image of San Clemente.	No modification. The proposed signage will be controlled in terms of color and size so that the aesthetics and quality of the signage corresponds appropriately with the high quality of building design.
4	The DRSC supported a reduced color palette for the signs. Staff suggested Bronze and Black (particularly recommended against using red); the Applicant suggested a range of metallic colors that would be consistent with the Spanish architecture of the Outlets buildings. The DRSC commented that the other colors proposed were too bright and inappropriate with the Spanish Colonial Revival architecture of the buildings. The DRSC indicated the Applicant needed to submit color samples (rather than simply identify the name of the color) so the Subcommittee would clearly see the actual colors.	Partially modified as requested. The majority of the signs illustrated have black or copper/bronze lettering. However, it is anticipated some tenant signs will retain their corporate logos and colors. Color samples proposed are depicted on Page FSc of the attached Tenant Sign Plans – Booklet and include the following: White; Blueberry Hill; Antique Patina; Medium Bronze; Black; Charcoal Grey; Zinc Grey; Champagne; and, Copper Penny. In addition, four color exceptions (LogoRed; Green; Orange; and, Dark Raspberry) are depicted and are based on current tenants and their individual branding requirements.
5	Signs #3, #21, and #22 should be eliminated because they conflicted with architectural features.	Not modified. These signs have been retained. Sign #3 (Ruby's) not only has bright red lettering, but also retains its general corporate logo form. Signs #21 and #22 are positioned on building tower features and also retain colors and shapes of corporate logos. However, all three signs have been reduced in area by between 0.2 and 0.5 square feet.
6	The Sign Program should prohibit future placement of freeway oriented banners.	Modified as requested. Freeway Oriented banners are prohibited.

	DRSC Comment	Proposed Modifications
7	Signs #11, #12, #16 and #23 would need to be scaled appropriately (reduced in area) for the wall spaces on which they are located.	<p>Partially modified as requested. Tenant Sign #11 has been increased in size by eight square feet (to 116 square feet) via slight increases in height and width, but still remains within the maximum allowable sign area of 116.5 square feet and occupies only 6.3% of the building façade area.</p> <p>The Applicant decreased the area of Sign #12 from its previously-proposed size of 54 square feet to 48.8 square feet by slightly decreasing the height and width of the sign. The reduced sign size is more than seven square feet less in area than the maximum allowable sign area and would occupy only 3.6% of the building façade area.</p> <p>The Applicant decreased the area of Sign #16 from 58.5 square feet to 46.75 square feet (by slightly decreasing the height and length of the sign), which is well within the maximum allowable sign area (58.5 square feet) and would occupy only 4.2% of the building façade area.</p> <p>The Applicant has decreased the area of Sign #23 by more than 40 square feet (to 71.8 square feet) by decreasing the overall height of the sign. The proposed sign area is significantly less than the maximum allowable sign area of 105 square feet. The revised sign would occupy 6.3% of the building façade element.</p>

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Staff's previous recommendations pertaining to the proposed Freeway Oriented Signs are as follows.

1. Staff supported a dark bronze or black lettering for the proposed signs to better complement the Spanish building design and high quality of building materials.
2. The majority of sign locations were on open walls where placement is complementary to building architecture. However, placement of signs 3, 21 and 22 were such that detract from building architectural design and should be eliminated.

3. Several signs were too large for the spaces in which they would be located. Tenant Signs 11, 12 and 16 should be reduced in scale to better fit the location space. Also, dimensions of the proposed Outlet Identification Signs should be provided on the submitted plans for staff and DRSC evaluation.

Staff's current recommendations are as follows.

1. Staff remains in support of dark lettering such as the black or dark bronze previously recommended for the Tenant Signs.
2. Although depicted Tenant Sign #3 is a corporate logo and color, staff recommends the color of the logo be changed to better complement the Spanish architectural design of the building as should the colors for any other corporate logos on Tenant Signs.
3. Tenant Signs #21 and #22 should be eliminated for the same reason as staff previously recommended.
4. Although Tenant Sign #11 has been increased in size by eight square feet, the Sign still occupies only 6.3% of the building façade area and remains within the maximum allowable sign area of 116.5 square feet. However, staff recommends the Sign logo be outlined in black to enhance the aesthetics of the Sign.
5. Sign #12, which has decreased in area from 54 square feet to 48.8 square feet, is supportable as proposed in that it occupies only 3.6% of the building façade area and is more than seven square feet less in area than the maximum allowable sign area.
6. Sign #16, is supportable because its proposed area has been decreased from 58.5 square feet to 46.75 square feet, occupies only 4.2% of the building façade area, and is well within the maximum allowable sign area (58.5 square feet).

Attachments:

1. August 24, 2016 DRSC Staff Report and Minutes
2. Master Sign Program Signage Criteria – Large-Scale Plan
3. Sign Plans – Large-Scale Plans
4. Tenant Sign Plans – Booklet