



Design Review Subcommittee (DRSC)

Meeting Date: May 9, 2018

PLANNER: David Carrillo, Community Development Technician *xc*

SUBJECT: **Discretionary Sign Permit 17-399, El Camino Real Shell Master Sign Program**, a request to consider a Master Sign Program for an existing service station located at 2400 South El Camino Real.

BACKGROUND:

Project Description

The applicant, Sorin Enache, proposes a Master Sign Program that includes canopy signs, gas dispenser signs, a monument sign, and a pole sign. Signage will remain on the existing locations as the applicant does not propose signage in new areas on site. Per the Zoning Ordinance, any new or modified signs at a service station require a Master Sign Program with approval of a Discretionary Sign Permit. The applicant proposes the following changes:

1. Replace two channel letter canopy signs with two internally illuminated polycarbonate canopy signs. The sign area on the canopy would be reduced with the replacement of existing canopy signs;
2. Reface existing gas dispenser spanner signs and pump skirts with vinyl decals. No lighting is proposed, and the sign area of the gas dispensers would not be increased;
3. Reface the State required pricing and logo portions of the monument sign. The applicant provides two designs for the pricing portion of the monument sign: one with white LED lights, and one with backlit vinyl letters. The logo portion of the monument sign consists of an internally-illuminated polycarbonate push-through logo sign. No structural changes to the monument sign are proposed, and the sign area would not be increased; and
4. Reface the pole sign with an internally-illuminated polycarbonate face. No structural changes to the pole sign are proposed, and the sign area would not be increased.

Why is DRSC Review Required?

Per the Zoning Ordinance, the Design Review Subcommittee (DRSC) must review the request to ensure the proposed signage meets standards, and is compatible with the

structures. Common design issues reviewed by the DRSC for Discretionary Sign Permit applications are related to design, size, materials, lighting, and visual impacts to surrounding properties.

Site Data

The site is located adjacent to Interstate-5 and a Jack in the Box fast food restaurant. Surrounding land uses include a motel, retail shops, offices, restaurants, and a laundromat. The site is in the Neighborhood Commercial 1.3 Zoning District and Affordable Housing and Coastal Zone Overlay Districts. Per the General Plan, the service station is located in a City Gateway and within the South El Camino Real Focus Area (East of Interstate 5). Spanish style architectural elements such as clay tile roofs and white stucco siding have been incorporated throughout the site on the mini mart building and canopy. The canopy has a front gable roof facing El Camino Real with clay tiles and stucco gables. The site has an existing freeway-oriented pole sign.

ANALYSIS:

Proposed Signage

The existing sign area currently exceeds the maximum sign area allowed by the Zoning Ordinance. The proposed modifications would reduce the total sign area for the site by reducing the size of the existing canopy signs. Table 1 is a list of all the proposed signage for the Master Sign Program.

Table 1 – Proposed Signage

Proposed Signage	Sign Square Footage
Monument Sign	42.7 square feet
Pole Sign	169 square feet
Canopy Signs (2)	8 square feet (4 square feet each)
Dispenser Spanner Signs (8)	80 square feet (10 square feet each)
Pump Number Signs (8)*	6.4 square feet (.8 square feet each)
Dispenser Pump Skirt Signs (8)*	.8 square feet (.1 square feet each)
Clearance Signs (4)*	8 square feet (2 square feet each)
Air and Water Sign*	6 square feet
Total Permitted Sign Area	193.72 square feet
Total Proposed Sign Area**	320.9 square feet

*No sign permit is required. Square footage is provided for information purposes only.

** The total proposed sign area exceeds the total permitted sign area due to the nonconforming pole sign. The total proposed sign area without the nonconforming pole sign is 151.9 square feet.

Signage Design Guidelines and Standards

Since the General Plan requires high quality architecture at City Gateways and encourages attractive sites in all focus areas, staff utilizes the Architectural Overlay (A-Overlay) design standards and the City's Design Guidelines for guidance on the style, lighting, and finish of signs that are in character with Spanish architecture. These standards and guidelines require signage to be in character with the building's architecture.

Monument Sign

The applicant proposes to reface the existing monument sign located on the east side of the property along El Camino Real. No structural modifications are proposed to the monument sign. The applicant proposes to reface the monument structure to contain more white background compared to the current sign. The proposed polycarbonate push-through logo sign is inconsistent with A-Overlay material and hand-crafted standards. It is unclear if the proposed logo sign will have varied depth and shadow to meet the hand-crafted standard. The applicant provided two proposed designs for the State required pricing numbers of the monument sign: Design 1 includes white LED lighting, and Design 2 includes vinyl letters on clear plex faces with backlighting. The applicant is seeking DRSC input regarding preference for one of the proposed designs. Staff has previously supported LED lighting on service station monument signs. However, if the applicant proceeds with Design 1, staff recommends including a condition of approval that requires the owner or designee to reduce light intensity and illumination glare to the satisfaction of the City Planner if it is determined that lighting impacts exist.

Pole Sign (Freeway-Oriented)

The pole sign is located on the northwestern side of the property. In 1981, a modular high rise sign was replaced with the pole sign which resulted in a height reduction. The applicant does not propose to make structural changes to the pole sign. The Zoning Ordinance prohibits freeway-oriented signs but allows changes of copy if the structure of the nonconforming sign is not being modified. The proposed change of copy is inconsistent with the A-Overlay material, lighting, and hand-crafted standards. The pole sign will be internally-illuminated and refaced with a flat polycarbonate material with the red and yellow pecten logo.

Canopy Signs

Two channel letter canopy signs exist on the north and south elevation of the canopy fascia. The applicant proposes to replace the channel letters on each elevation with logo signs. The removal of the existing channel letters will reduce the sign area and length on the canopy. The proposed canopy signs are inconsistent with the A-Overlay material, lighting, and hand-crafted standards. The canopy signs will be internally-illuminated and

have a polycarbonate push-through logo. The proposed aluminum back panels on the canopy signs are incompatible with Spanish architecture and can be removed from plans to improve compatibility.

Gas Dispenser Signs

As required by the State, the applicant proposes signs on the gas dispenser that identify the Shell brand. Vinyl decals for the spanner signs and pump skirt logos are proposed on each gas dispenser. Vinyl decals are inconsistent with the A-Overlay sign material standards; however, this material is regularly used at gas dispenser pumps. Both the spanner signs and pump skirts on the gas dispensers will contain the red and yellow company colors; the remaining portions of the dispensers will be white. No direct lighting is proposed for the gas dispenser signs. The gas pump signs will be indirectly illuminated by canopy-ceiling lighting.

Table 2 summarizes the sign program’s consistency with standards and guidelines.

Table 2 – Project Consistency

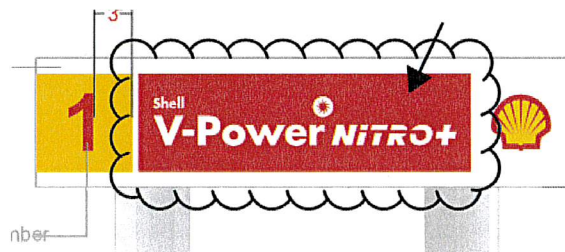
Design Guideline/Zoning Standard/General Plan Policy	Project Consistency
<i>Zoning Ordinance Section 17.84.020(B)(f): “Sign design, scale, color and materials shall be selected that are compatible in style with the building it serves”.</i>	<i>Inconsistent.</i> The design, materials, and lighting of the signage is not in character with the Spanish building. While the site is not located in the Architectural Overlay, the A-Overlay provides guidance on the style, lighting, and finish of signs that are in character with Spanish architecture. The proposed signs are contemporary and do not conform to recommended sign design principles for Spanish architecture. The sign program includes internally-illuminated push-through logo signs on the canopy and monument sign and one internally-illuminated pole sign. Consistent with A-Overlay standards, signage should appear hand-crafted with pin-mounted letters, painted letters, sandblasted wood, or similar materials, and have back-lighting or external lighting.
<i>General Design Guidelines for All Architecture Subject to Discretionary Design Review II.C.3.e: “Carefully integrate signage with the design concept of the building and site. Signage should be consistent with the architectural character of the building.”</i>	<i>Inconsistent.</i> See comments above.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

To achieve the General Plan's goals, staff recommends the following design changes:

1. Remove the aluminum back panel on the canopy signs. The proposed Shell logo is attached to a white background measuring 2 feet in height and 2 feet in width. Removing the aluminum back panel would reduce the amount of sign area proposed and improve the project's consistency with General Plan policies which encourage high quality materials and design.
2. Remove the pump number flags from the canopy posts to reduce visual noise. If the applicant desires to keep the pump number flags, staff recommends they be ornamentally attached to the canopy posts using Spanish-influenced materials and design. An example of an ornamental attachment method used at 606 Camino De Los Mares is provided as Attachment 2.
3. Remove the red background identified on Image 1 below from the spanner signs, and use red font for "Shell V-Power Nitro" instead. Since white is a prominent color of Spanish architecture, this will improve architectural compatibility.

Image 1 – Spanner Sign



4. Use materials consistent with A-Overlay sign standards, for all signs, such as, sandblasted and carved wood, hand painted, glazed tile, or metal or wood logos.

Staff seeks DRSC concurrence with the above recommendations and welcomes additional input. DRSC comments on the project's design will help ensure the highest quality project.

Attachments:


1. Location Map
2. Ornamental Pump Number Sign
3. Plans



LOCATION MAP

DSP 17-399, El Camino Real Shell MSP
2400 S. El Camino Real



No scale 

Example of Ornamental Pump Number Sign

