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City of Sebastopol Design Review Board Staff Report

Meeting Date: January 18, 2017
Agenda Item: 8a
To: Design Review Board
From: Dana Morrison, Assistant Planner
Subject: Design Review: Façade Improvements, patio, signage
Recommendation: Approval with Conditions
Applicant/Owner: Spencer Interests, LLC
File Number: 2016-105
Address: 801 Gravenstein Hwy S
CEQA Status: Categorical Exemption: Section 15301: Class 1
General Plan: Commercial Office
Zoning: Heavy Commercial: CH

Introduction:

This is a Minor Design Review application, requesting approval of exterior improvements to the existing structure, with existing drive-through service, located at 801 Gravenstein Highway South. The building is currently Spencer's Fish and Chips. The improvements will upgrade the building's appearance, add an outdoor patio and allow the owner to add a new interior demising wall to allow for an additional tenant space.

Project Description:

The project involves the development of an outdoor patio, façade modifications, installation of four wall signs and one monument sign, and the addition or removal of certain doors and windows. The specific improvements are listed below:

Site Design-

- Upgrade the signage on the existing monument sign with the main tenant logo and tenant address numbers.

West Elevation-

- Remove the arched elements at the building entry. Create new rectangular soffit element that is more in keeping with the rest of the building and match the existing building fascia material.
- Remove the single man-door that is roughly in the center of the building elevation, in fill with stucco to match the existing building.
- Remove portion of the raised planter along the south side of this elevation to allow for new windows and doors to create visibility and access for a new future tenant.

- Add three new storefront openings (6' wide x 7' tall). The center opening will be a pair of storefront doors.
- New main tenant logo signage (48" long x 48" tall), located above the main entry with new exterior signage light to replace previous tenant logo sign.
- New tenant logo sign (130" long with 12" tall white letters) with new exterior signage lights to replace previous tenant sign.

North Elevation-

- Remove the existing raised planter to allow for an outdoor seating area (approximately 360 square feet). Establish bases under the existing columns and install a new wrought iron railing at the outside edge of the seating to protect from the adjacent vehicle travel lane.
- Add new 14" tall- 200" long, white tenant letters with new exterior signage lights to replace previous tenant signage.

East Elevation-

- Remove the southernmost existing drive-thru window and infill the opening with stucco to match the existing building.
- Remove and replace the existing drive-thru window with a new smaller drive-thru window.
- Remove the existing storefront door toward the north side of this elevation and infill the opening with stucco to match the existing building.
- Remove the existing window on the north side of this elevation and replace it with a new storefront door. Stucco patch and repair the wall to match the existing building.
- Add new 14" tall- 200" long, white tenant letters with new exterior signage lights.

Environmental Review:

The project is categorically exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), pursuant to the following:

Façade Improvement and Patio- 15301: Existing Facilities: Class 1 consists of the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of use beyond that existing at the time of the lead agency's determination.

Wall Signs: The signs are categorically exempt from the requirements of CEQA pursuant to Section 15311, Class 11, which exempts the installation of on-premise signs.

The project is consistent with these categorical exemptions in that it involves exterior and interior improvements, which are minor alterations and the installation of on-premise signs.

General Plan Consistency:

The General Plan Land Use Designation for the site is Commercial Office. The General Plan states the following: "This designation provides areas for commercial and office uses with off-street parking and/or clusters of street-front stores. This designation allows primarily local-serving retail establishments, specialty shops, banks, professional offices, motels, professional, administrative, medical, dental, and business offices, bed and breakfast users, and business

and personal services, along with ancillary commercial and service uses. This designation is typically assigned to parcels, located on a major arterial street, that can provide sufficient land for commercial establishments that do not benefit from high-volume pedestrian concentrations found Downtown. The following types of retail uses are discouraged in this land use designation: factory outlets; large regional-serving shopping centers; and other similar retail uses generating high traffic volumes. Maximum floor area ratio (FAR) shall not exceed 1.5. Residential uses are permitted as a secondary use to the primary commercial uses permitted in this land use designation if generally located above the ground floor at the High Density Residential density of 12.1-25 units per acre. The residential spaces will not be counted in calculating the FAR for a development.” The project does not have any land use implications because it only involves façade improvements for an existing building.

Zoning Ordinance Consistency:

The site is located in the CH: Heavy Commercial District. The Zoning Ordinance states the following: The CH District is intended to create, preserve, and enhance areas with a variety of retail and small-scale industrial establishments which are essential to the economy of Sebastopol, but which are frequently incompatible with a retail shopping or office area, and is typically appropriate to areas near industrial neighborhoods.” The project involves the development of an outdoor patio for a restaurant, which is classified as a permitted-use under ‘Food Sales and Service’.

Outdoor Patio: The outdoor patio is subject to the following development standards of the CH District:

- Building Height: The maximum building height for commercial facilities is two stories and thirty-two (32) feet as set forth in Section 17.68.060 of the Zoning Ordinance. The outdoor patio will have a maximum height of 16 feet 2 inches (equal to the existing height of the building), which is substantially lower than the maximum allowable height. The application is consistent with this requirement.
- Setbacks: No yards are required unless site abuts a residential zoning district as set forth in Section 17.68.070 of the Zoning Ordinance. The application is consistent with this requirement in that the site does not abut a residential zoning district.
- Floor Area Ratio: Floor Area Ratio (FAR) is 1.5 as stated in the General Plan. The application is consistent with this requirement in that the FAR falls under the required 1.5.

Wall Signs: The signs are subject to the following provisions of the Zoning Ordinance:

Section 17.230.050.A: General Sign Standards and Regulations

<p>The maximum sign area permitted for each tenant space at 801 Gravenstein Highway South is 87.5 square feet according to calculation guidelines set forth in this section. Sign Area = Total Allowable Sign Area (based on building frontage) / Number of Tenant Spaces.</p>
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The 4 wall signs will have a total sign area that is approximately 65.5 square feet, which is substantially below the maximum allowable sign area. The tenant building has 126+ feet of

building frontage which allows for a sign area of up to 175 square feet, divided by the two tenant spaces = 87.5 square feet of sign area per tenant. The application is consistent with this requirement.

Section 17.230.050 C: Lighting of Signs

(1) No sign shall be illuminated with such intensity as to prevent normal perception of objects, buildings, streets and other signs in the immediate area.

The application includes three externally illuminated walls signs. The proposed lighting utilizes a Micro Nite/Style A Sign Star. The application is consistent with this provision.

(2) External illumination is preferred over internal illumination in all Zoning Districts. Internally illuminated signs must be reviewed and approved by the Design Review Board, and are generally not allowed within the CD: Downtown Core district, within any residential district, or in proximity to an existing residential use.

The applicant indicated that external illumination is proposed. The application is consistent with this provision.

Section 17.230.060 C: Signs Permitted in Commercial and Office Districts

(2) A maximum of 2 window, awning, wall, or fascia business identification signs are permitted for each ground floor use or tenant. One of those 2 signs may be a projecting sign, providing that the sign does not exceed 6 square feet in area or 18" in height, and has a minimum clearance of 7 1/2 ' above the sidewalk.

The project involves the installation of three wall signs (one logo sign and two letter signs) for one of the tenant spaces and a single wall (logo and letter) sign for the newly created tenant space. The proposed signage for Spencer's Coffee currently exceeds the allowed number of signs permitted in the General Commercial District. The Spencer's Coffee signage will be placed on each of the three frontages and will equal 54.6 square feet total. A Sign Exception is required. Planning Staff feels that this allowance appears to be reasonable in that the building has three frontages and the proposed sign area for each tenant falls well under the allotted sign area permitted for this building, 87.5 square feet. The signage for the CSC Electronics will be 10.83 square feet.

Public Comment:

The Planning Department has not received any comments from the public as of writing this staff report.

City Departmental Comment:

The Planning Department circulated the application to the following City departments for review: Building and Safety, Engineering, and Fire. The Planning Department has not received any City departmental comments as of writing this staff report.

Required Findings:

Design Review: Section 17.310.030.B.2 of the Zoning Ordinance establishes the following Design Review Procedure: In considering an application for design review, the Design Review Board, or the Planning Director, as the case may be, shall determine whether:

- a) The design of the proposal would be compatible with the neighborhood or and with the general visual character of Sebastopol.
- b) The design provides appropriate transitions and relationships to adjacent properties and the public right of way.
- c) It would not impair the desirability of investment or occupation in the neighborhood,
- d) The design is internally consistent and harmonious.
- e) The design is in conformity with any guidelines and standards adopted pursuant to this Chapter.

Sign Exception: Section 17.230.020.B.2 of the Zoning Ordinance states that the Design Review Board may grant a Sign Exception based on the following criteria:

- a) The exception will allow a unique sign of exceptional design or style that will enhance the area or building, or that will be a visible landmark; or
- b) The exception will allow a sign that is more consistent with the architecture and development of the site; or site context; or is appropriate given the nature of the business; or
- c) The granting of the exception will not constitute the granting of a special privilege inconsistent with the sign limitations upon other properties in the same vicinity and Zone District.

Analysis:

Outdoor Patio- The project involves the development of an outdoor patio on the northern elevation of the building. The outdoor patio will require the removal and replacement of an existing planter and façade improvements to make it accessible to and from the interior of Spencer's Coffee. The design of the outdoor patio is internally compatible and harmonious in that it is consistent with its uses existing space, currently a planter, and converts it into outdoor seating. The design of the outdoor patio also appears to be harmonious with the existing building in that it requires no additional changes to the existing overhang area and columns. The outdoor patio also appears to have a harmonious relationship with the existing building in terms of scale in that it is not disproportionately larger or smaller.

The outdoor patio appears to be compatible with the neighborhood and greater Sebastopol in that there are a number of restaurants in proximity and throughout the community that contain outdoor dining areas of similar size. The outdoor patio does not appear to impair the desirability of investment or occupation in the neighborhood in that it beautifies the blank façade of a highly visible building that was constructed decades ago. Furthermore, the outdoor patio provides appropriate transitions to the public right-of-way it is setback and contains landscaping and a railing, which creates buffer with the patio and drive through exit.

Signs- The project involves the installation of four wall signs: two, identical, externally-illuminated letter signs (200" long and 14" tall, reading: Spencer's Coffee) on the North and East elevations, one logo sign externally-illuminated (48" long by 48", reading Spencer's Coffee with logo) on the West elevation, and one externally-illuminated letter sign (130" long and 12" tall,

reading CSC Electronics with a logo) on the West elevation. The design of all the signs appear to be compatible with the site in that they all contain white letters, which is characteristic of tenant wall signs and the overall sign theme in Southpoint Center.

The application includes the installation of one monument sign to be placed in the existing monument stand meant for the shopping center's main tenant. The sign will be 48" long by 48" tall and will read Spencer's Coffee, with white lettering, and contain the Spencer's Coffee logo. The shopping center address numbers will be located above the logo in 10" white lettering as well.

The Board may find that the wall signs, tenant signs that faces Gravenstein Highway South to be suitable for the site in that it contributes to the beautification of an outdated façade with the development of the outdoor patio. The Board could also find that the wall signs are compatible with the site in terms scale and number of signs in that the Spencer's building has three frontages. The Board will also need to determine if a Sign Exception is appropriate for the additional wall sign.

The Board could find that the signs are appropriate for the site in that they will supplement greater improvement efforts for an older commercial building, particularly the monument sign, which would undergo a reface. Finally, the Board may find that the design of the wall sign is compatible with the site and neighborhood in that it is located on a highly visible commercial corridor, and lighting is appropriate.

Recommendation:

Staff has prepared separate findings and conditions of approval for the outdoor patio and wall signs, if there is a consensus to approve one or both components.

Alternatively, the Board may find that revisions are necessary and a continuance is appropriate. Staff recommends that the Board provide specific direction for redesign to the applicant in the event of a continuance or rationale in the event of a denial.

Outdoor Patio:

If it is the consensus of the Board that the proposed outdoor patio is compatible with the site, staff recommends that the application be approved based on the facts, findings, and analysis set forth in this staff report, and subject to the conditions of approval outlined.

Alternatively, the Board may find that revisions are necessary and a continuance is appropriate. Staff recommends that the Board provide direction for redesign to the applicant in the event of a continuance or rationale in the event of a denial.

Findings for Minor Design Review (Application Number 2015-10) approval to develop an outdoor patio at 775 Gravenstein Highway South:

1. That project is categorically exempt from the requirements of CEQA under Section 15301, Class 1, which includes operation, repair, maintenance or minor alteration of existing public or private structures involving negligible or no expansion of use beyond that existing at the time of the lead agency's determination.

2. That the project is consistent with the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance in that it involves the development of an outdoor patio for a restaurant in an area that contains an array of commercial uses.
3. That the design of the outdoor patio is internally compatible and harmonious in that it is consistent with its use of the existing columns and existing planter overhang.
4. That the design of the outdoor patio is to be harmonious with the existing building in that it is converting an existing planter space with minor improvements, matching the existing façade.
5. That the outdoor patio has a harmonious relationship with the existing building in terms of scale in that it is not disproportionately larger or smaller.
6. The outdoor patio is compatible with the neighborhood and greater Sebastopol in that there are a number of restaurants in proximity and throughout the community that contain outdoor dining areas of similar size.
7. That the outdoor patio does not impair the desirability of investment or occupation in the neighborhood in that it beautifies the façade of a highly visible building that was constructed decades ago.
8. That the outdoor patio provides appropriate transitions to the public right-of-way and contain a wrought iron fence which creates buffer between the patio and the drive-through exit.

Conditions of Approval:

1. Approval is granted for the Design Review submittal described in the application and plans date-stamped December 22, 2016. This approval is valid for two (2) years, except that the applicant may request a one (1) year extension of this approval from the Planning Director, pursuant to Section 17.250.050 of the Zoning Ordinance.
2. All construction shall conform to the plans date-stamped December 22, 2016, unless the design is modified herein. The applicant must obtain a Building Permit prior to the commencement of construction activities.

Signs:

If it is the consensus of the Board that the proposed signs are compatible with the site, staff recommends that the application be approved based on the facts, findings, and analysis set forth in this staff report, and subject to the conditions of approval outlined.

Alternatively, the Board may find that revisions are necessary and a continuance is appropriate. Staff recommends that the Board provide direction for redesign to the applicant in the event of a continuance or rationale in the event of a denial.

Findings for Minor Design Review (Application Number 2016-105) approval to install four externally illuminated wall signs (2 identical letter signs, one logo sign and one letter/logo sign) and one monument sign for 801 Gravenstein Highway South:

1. That the signs are categorically exempt from the requirements of CEQA pursuant to Section 15311, Class 11, which exempts the installation of on-premise signs.
2. That the project is consistent with the applicable provisions of the Zoning Ordinance with the approval of a Sign Exception.
3. That the design of the externally-illuminated wall signs appear to be compatible with the site in that it contains white letters, which is characteristic of tenant wall signs and the overall sign theme in Southpoint Center.
4. That the externally-illuminated wall signs are also compatible with the site in that they are of a similar size to that of existing wall signs in Southpoint Center.
5. That the externally-illuminated wall signs are compatible with the site in terms scale and number of signs in that Spencer's Coffee has multiple frontages.
6. That the design of the non-lit monument sign appears to be compatible with the site in that it contains white letter and is compatible with the site in terms of scale, and that it will fill in and beautify the existing sign.
7. That the design of the monument and wall signs are compatible with the site and neighborhood in that it is located on a highly visible commercial corridor.

Conditions of Approval:

1. Approval is granted for the Design Review Board submittal described in the approved application and plans, except as modified. This approval is valid for a period of two (2) years, except that the applicant may request one (1) year extension of this approval from the Planning Director, pursuant to Section 17.250.050 of the Zoning Ordinance.
2. The signs shall be installed consistent with the application materials and plans approved by the Design Review Board. No other signs regulated by the Sign Ordinance shall be installed or displayed without the prior written approval of the Planning Department.
3. An Encroachment Permit may be required prior to installation of the signs. Please contact the Engineering Department prior to installation if work will be performed, or materials placed, in the public right-of-way. The phone number for the Engineering Department is (707) 823-2151.
4. A Building Permit is required for the installation of most signs. Please contact the Building and Safety Department for Building Permit Application information at (707) 823-8597.

Attachments:

- Master Planning Application Form
- Design Review Submittal
- Full size plans