



Historic Site Preservation Board Staff Report

Date: April 13, 2010

Case No.: SP 10-001 – HSPB # 55 Oasis Commercial Building

Application Type: Sign Program

Location: 101-121 S. Palm Canyon Drive

Applicant: Lyle Commercial

Zone: CBD (Central Business District)

General Plan: CBD (Central Business District)

APN: 513-143-009

From: David A. Newell, Associate Planner

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The certificate of approval request is for a new sign program for the Oasis Commercial Building located at 101 through 121 South Palm Canyon Drive. The proposed sign program will establish guidelines for all future signage for the building and individual tenants.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Historic Site Preservation Board approve a certificate of approval request for the sign program to guide staff for future signage on the Oasis Commercial Building.

PRIOR ACTIONS TAKEN ON THE PROJECT

On November 4, 2009, the City Council approved a Class 1 Historic Designation to the upper rectangular portion of the building, including the all areas above the first floor soffit. (A final resolution of approval will be submitted for Council action on April 21, 2010.)

BACKGROUND AND SETTING

The site is a 1.35-acre parcel in the Central Business District located at the southwest corner of South Palm Canyon Drive and Tahquitz Canyon Drive in downtown Palm Springs. To the south is the Oasis Hotel Tower and commercial storefront that were integral parts of the Oasis Hotel designed by Lloyd Wright in 1923. To the east is the historic Wellwood Murray Library. To the north is the vacant Bank of America building (corner of the Fashion Plaza site). There is a parking lot on the western portion of the site and smaller boutique hotels to the west.

The Oasis Commercial Building at 101-121 South Palm Canyon Drive, completed in 1953, was designed in the International Style by the architectural firm of Williams, Williams & Williams, Architects. E. Stewart Williams, FAIA, was the partner-in-charge of its design. The building was constructed as a retail and office block for the Western Hotels, Inc., then owners of the Oasis Hotel. The building is a steel frame structure with extensive use of glass, native stone, aluminum and cement plaster stucco.

There are presently signs in various locations on the building with a majority facing South Palm Canyon Drive and Tahquitz Canyon Way. The tenants on the second floor are identified by a tenant directory which is located on the first floor. The tenants on the first floor have signage that faces the street and includes freestanding channel letters on a raceway facing South Palm Canyon Drive and / or flush-mounted channel letters facing Tahquitz Canyon Way. Menu boards are also used by the restaurants on the first floor.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Sign programs are required for all buildings with more than one (1) tenant. According to Section 93.20.10(C)(6) of the Palm Springs Zoning Code (PSZC), "*sign programs shall integrate with the architecture of the building complex, including such elements as size, color, location and construction material.*" A sign program may be approved which varies from the specific limitations of the sign ordinance. The applicant has submitted a sign program that has the following types of signage:

1. Main Signs
 - a. Projecting Signs
 - i. Blade / Arcade Signs
 - ii. Awning Signs
 - iii. Individual Letters on Raceway**
 - b. Flush-mounted Signs
 - i. Signs on Glazing
 - ii. Individual Letters**
 - iii. Exposed Neon
 - iv. Fascia Panel / Plaque Signs
2. Accessory Main Signs (Convenience)
 - a. Projecting Signs

- i. Blade / Arcade Signs
 - ii. Awning / Umbrella Signs
 - b. Flush-Mounted Signs
 - i. Signs on Glazing
 - ii. Individual Letters
 - iii. Fascia Panel Signs
3. Pedestrian Directory
4. Attraction Boards by Nightclubs, Cabarets and Theaters
5. Customer Convenience Signs (Hours of Operation, Menu Boards, etc.)
6. Temporary Signs (Banners)

The signage that is noted in bold above varies from the specific limitations of the sign ordinance.

For the purposes of this report, the above signage will be analyzed in two parts: (1) Main Signage and (2) Accessory / Convenience Signage. The primary purpose of Main Signage is visibility from a street and is listed under number 1 above (Main Signs); the primary purpose of Accessory / Convenience Signage is visibility to the pedestrian and is listed as numbers 2-5 above. Temporary Signs listed as number 6 above may be visible from a street and / or by a pedestrian; however, the sign program is consistent with the PSZC for temporary signage.

Main Signage

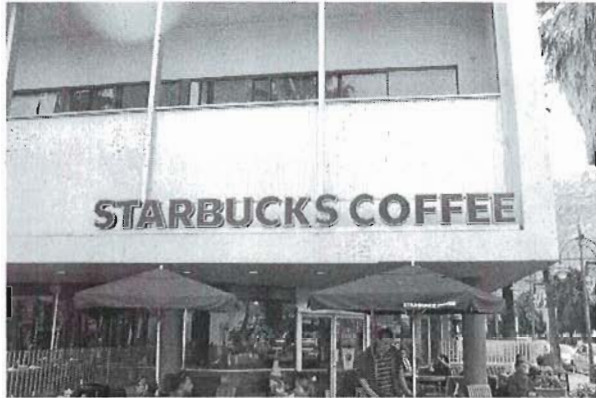
The sign program specifies a wide variety of main signage types that a tenant may use, including projecting and flush-mounted signs. Examples of these signs can be seen in the attached exhibit from the Zoning Code – *Sign Types: Downtown / Uptown*.

The sign program also allows another type of projecting sign called “Individual Letters on Raceway” which is not shown in any of the sign ordinance examples as this type of sign is not specifically permitted by the PSZC. This is one variation that the sign program proposes from the specific limitations of the sign ordinance. The other variation that the sign program proposes is the allowance of higher letter heights and the incorporation of logos for the “individual letters on raceway” and “flush-mounted individual letters” sign types. Staff has analyzed these below.

Projecting, Individual Letters on Raceway: This type of signage is not a specifically permitted type by the Zoning Code. However, this signage type has been approved in the past and currently exists on the east elevation of the building. Examples include the Starbucks and Okura signs that face South Palm Canyon Drive. The applicant is requesting that this be a permitted sign type. Additionally, the applicant is requesting that letter heights be allowed to be sixteen inches, with the first letter capitals allowed at a maximum of eighteen inches, and the ability to incorporate a logo that is not more than twenty-four inches above the individual letters. The closest type of sign that a “Projecting, Individual Letter on Raceway” sign resembles in the PSZC is a flush-mounted individual letter sign. The PSZC permits flush-mounted individual letter signs

at fourteen inches in height, with the first letter capitals allowed at a maximum of sixteen inches, and no additional height is granted above the letters for logos.

Examples of this type of signage can be seen on the east elevation (South Palm Canyon Drive frontage):



Starbucks: Sixteen inch letter heights



Okura: Twelve inch letter heights

Since these types of signs have historically been the primary type of identification for tenants, staff is not opposed to these requests and would recommend that the Planning Commission limit main signage on the east elevation to this type of signage (see Staff's Recommendation for Main Signs below). Staff is also not opposed to the increase in letter heights and incorporation of a logo above the letter height due the nature of the architecture.

Flush-mounted, Individual Letters: The sign program references the Individual Letters on Raceway signage type for design criteria. See previous paragraph for analysis discussion.

Staff's Recommendation for Main Signs

Staff will be recommending that the Planning Commission approve the sign program with more specific and limited guidelines so that main signage is consistent on the building. Since the primary frontage of businesses in the Oasis Commercial Building is on South Palm Canyon Drive and Tahquitz Canyon Way, staff doesn't believe main signage should be permitted on the west and south elevations of the building. A recommendation from staff on the east and north elevations is provided below.

East Elevation: The South Palm Canyon Drive frontage or east elevation has existing main signage that is categorized as "Individual Letter on Raceway" by the Sign Program. Staff will be recommending that this be the only Main Sign type that is permitted on the east elevation of the building. This type of freestanding signage on the east elevation is consistent with signage of the past as shown in the photographs below:



North Elevation: The Tahquitz Canyon Drive frontage or north elevation has existing main tenant signage that is categorized as “Individual Letters” by the Sign Program. Staff will be recommending that this be the only Main Sign type that is permitted on the north elevation of the building.

Accessory / Convenience Signage

The remainder of the program, including Accessory / Convenience Signage, is consistent with other permitted signage by the Zoning Code. However, in order to create consistency, staff believes the sign program should limit the type of Accessory Main Signs permitted.

Staff's Recommendation for Accessory Main Signs

Staff will be recommending that the Planning Commission approve the sign program with more specific and limited guidelines for Accessory Main Signs. The Sign Program permits the following types:

- a. Projecting Signs
 - i. Blade / Arcade Signs
 - ii. Awning / Umbrella Signs
- b. Flush-Mounted Signs
 - i. Signs on Glazing
 - ii. Individual Letters
 - iii. Fascia Panel Signs

Section 93.20.09(B)(1) of the PSZC states, “*all businesses within a single building or complex of buildings shall use the same type.*” Staff was unable to find records that indicate which of the above signage have been used on the building. Since the building has business frontages that are recessed into the building, staff will be recommending that the Planning Commission limit this type of signage to Signs on Glazing. This will provide functional identification to pedestrians, minimize the signs’ impact on the building architecture, and allow uniformity of the Accessory Main Signs.

REQUIRED FINDINGS

Definition of an Historic Site.

Section 8.05.020 of the Municipal Code provides the definition of a historic site as follows:

(a) *Historic Site.*

A historic site is any real property such as: a building; a structure, including but not limited to archways, tiled areas and similar architectural elements; an archaeological excavation or object that is unique or significant because of its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship or aesthetic effect and:

- 1. That is associated with events that have made a meaningful contribution to the nation, state or community; or*
- 2. That is associated with lives of persons who made meaningful contribution to national, state or local history; or*
- 3. That reflects or exemplifies a particular period of the national, state or local history; or*
- 4. That embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction; or*
- 5. That presents the work of a master builder, designer, artist, or architect whose individual genius influenced his age; or that possesses high artistic value; or*
- 6. That represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or*
- 7. That has yielded or may be likely to yield information important to national, state or local history or prehistory.*

Staff has evaluated the sign program and notes that second floor tenants will not have any signage facing the street on the second floor. This will limit the impact the signage has on the upper portions of the building. Also, with staff's recommendation to the Planning Commission, the main signage will be limited to "Individual Letter on Raceway" and "Individual Letters", as defined by the Sign Program, on the east and north elevations, respectively. No main signage will be located on the west elevation of the building. (A pedestrian directory would be allowed on the east side of the building.) Therefore, the project will not be detrimental to the overall historic nature and setting of the Oasis Commercial Building.

Staff believes the distinctive architectural elements of the building and site will not be compromised, and implementation of the sign program as recommended by staff will not be a detriment to the overall aesthetic look of the property. Staff has concluded that the new sign program will not affect the historic designation of the site, and recommends that the HSPB issue a certificate of approval.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

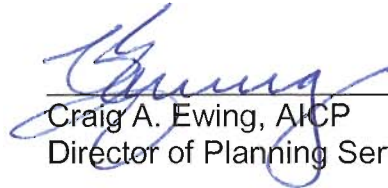
This project is categorically exempt from environmental review per Section 15311(a) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines.

NOTIFICATION

There are no public notification requirements for this application.



David A. Newell
Associate Planner



Craig A. Ewing, AICP
Director of Planning Services

ATTACHMENTS

1. Sign Types: Downtown / Uptown
2. Sign Program
3. Site Photographs



Oasis Building Sign Program
121 South Palm Canyon Drive
Palm Springs, CA 92262

Prepared by Escalante Architects
 www.EscalanteArchitects.com
 760.323.1935

Located in the City of Palm Springs Redevelopment Project Area, the Oasis Building is located at the center of the City's historic downtown. The area is well known as one of the region hub for tourism. The downtown is known for a diverse range of high



Example of Blade Sign

Oasis Building Sign Program

OASIS BUILDING SIGN PROGRAM

quality restaurants, boutiques and retail establishments found no where else in the world.

The area is accessible to pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles. As a result of this unique location; building signage which must be visible to bicyclists, vehicles and pedestrians, many of whom are first time visitors to the City. Because the signage must assist our visitors in orienting themselves during their short visits, the building's signage must be easy to read, well lit, and of ample size to be visible to drivers and pedestrians unfamiliar with the area

Implicit in this sign program is the fact that signage for the Oasis Building will be of the highest quality.

Objective: The Oasis Building sign program will provide a system of way finding for pedestrian and vehicular traffic, while complimenting the architecture of the Oasis Building.

The Oasis Building Sign Program consists of the following elements:

A. Main Sign

Each business shall be limited to one (1) Main Sign type from the following signage types.

1. Projecting Signs

a. Blade/Arcade Signs

The following requirements pertain to blade or arcade signs when used.

- i. Maximum volume shall be 16 square feet in area. Signs shall not exceed four feet in any direction.
- ii. Acceptable materials include metal and glass.
- iii. The lowest point of the sign must be seven feet above any pedestrian walkway.

OASIS BUILDING SIGN PROGRAM

iv. The bracket design shall be integrally planned and detailed. Brackets shall be consistent throughout their use on the building.

b. Awning Signs

i. Letters shall be a maximum height of 14 inches and located on any front face of valance element of any awning. The sign area shall not exceed twenty (20) percent of any awning, with a maximum sign area equal to One (1) square foot of signage per linear foot of awning width,

ii. A logo may be incorporated into the sign, with additional sign area allowed; provide the total sign area does not exceed thirty(30)percent of the total awning area with a maximum of one and a half (1 ½) square feet per linear foot of awning width.

iii. Letters or logos must be sewn or silk screened onto awnings in an approved contrasting color.

iv. Each awning that is separated by a distance of at least eight (8) inches may contain an identical sign except the size of the sign shall be determined by the width of each separate awning. The combination of such signs shall be deemed as one (1) sign for the purpose of this section.

c. Individual Letter on Raceway

The following criteria shall apply when individual letters are used:



Existing Sign #1

i. Individual letters shall not exceed sixteen (16) inches in height, with the first letter capitals allowed at a maximum of eighteen (18) inches.

ii. Signs using individual letters shall not exceed in length two thirds (2/3) the overall length of the storefront.

iii. Signs shall not exceed a maximum sign area of one (1) square foot per linear foot of building frontage with a maximum of area of fifty (50) square feet.

iv. A logo may be incorporated in the sign, with additional sign area allowed; provided that the logo does not extend more than 24" above the highest individual letter.

2. Flush-Mounted Signs

a. Signs on Glazing

Lettering and logos may be applied directly onto glazed areas according to the following requirements:

i. Signs on glazing shall be limited to the first floor of the building.

ii. Letters are to be a maximum height of ten (10) inches.

iii. The total area of the sign shall be no greater than forty (40) percent of the total glazed area upon which it is applied or fifteen (15) square feet, whichever is smaller.

iv. Acceptable sign techniques are sandblasted or etched glass, professionally painted lettering, professionally and custom fabricated and applied vinyl, metal leaf and stained glass.

v. Each glazed area on either side of a customer entrance may contain an identical sign. The combination of such signs shall be deemed as one (1) sign for the purpose of this section.

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b. Individual letters

i. See Section 1.c Above.

c. Exposed neon

Exposed neon signs may only be used in conjunction with food and entertainment uses; where used, the following criteria shall be met:

i. Performance requirements (See Section 93.20.10 (6) of the Sign Ordinance)

ii. Signs shall not exceed a maximum area of one square foot per linear foot of building frontage with a maximum area of fifty (50) square feet.

d. Fascia Panel/Plaque signs

The following requirements apply:

i. The length of the Fascia Panel /Plaque shall be a maximum of two thirds (2/3) of the width of the overall storefront.

ii. The height of the individual letters shall not exceed fourteen (14) inches, with the first letter capitals a maximum of sixteen (16) inches.

iii. The fascia panel/plaque finish shall be integrated with the storefront design.

iv. Individual letters shall not exceed seven (7) inches in depth from the face of the surface upon which they are mounted.

v. Acceptable materials include cast stone,

metal, wood panels with individual metal and wood letters, neon and custom ceramic tile.

vi. Letters shall not be closer than six (6) inches from the edge of the fascia panel/plaque.

vii. The Fascia panel/plaque shall not exceed a maximum area of one square foot per lineal foot of building frontage with a maximum area of fifty square feet.

Height

The top of the sign shall not project above the building roof line.

B. Accessory and Convenience Signs

Each separate type of business may select one (1) type of accessory sign from the following types of signage types.

1. Projecting Signs

a. Blade/Arcade Signs

i. Maximum volume allowed is nine (9) square feet. The sign shall not exceed three (3) feet in any one direction. The volume dimensions used shall not include the bracket or suspension structure.

ii. Acceptable materials include painted, polished and patina metal painted and stained wood, glass and inlaid stone.

iii. The lowest point of the any blade/ arcade signs must be seven (7) above any pedestrian walkway.

iv. The bracket design shall be integrally planned and detailed and shall be highly ornamental in nature. Brackets shall be consistent throughout their use.

v. One (1) blade arcade sign may be located at each customer entrance where this type of sign is also not located as the main sign.



Existing Sign #2

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b. Awning/Umbrella Signs

The face of an awning or umbrella which does not contain a main sign may contain an accessory/convenience sign according to the following criteria:

- i. Letters shall be a maximum of four (4) inches and located on a vertical face or any valance element of the awning or umbrella. The sign area shall not exceed four (4) square feet.
- ii. A logo may be incorporated in the sign, with additional sign area allowed: provided the total sign area does not exceed six (6) square feet.
- iii. Letter and logos shall be sewn or silk screened onto the awnings or umbrella in an approved contrasting color.
- iv. Each awning or umbrella that is separated by a distance of eight (8) inches may contain an identical sign. The combination of such signs shall be deemed as one (1) sign for purposes of this section.
- v. Signs on umbrellas may contain only the name and logo of the business to which they relate.

2. Flush-mounted signs

a. Signs on Glazing.

Letters and logos may be applied directly onto glazed areas, which do not also contain a main sign, according to the following requirements

- i. Signs on glazing shall be limited to the first floors of buildings.
- ii. Letters are to be a maximum height of ten (10) inches.
- iii. The total sign area shall be no greater than six (6) square feet.
- iv. Acceptable sign techniques are sandblasted or etched glass, professionally and custom fabricated and applied metal leaf and stained glass.
- v. Each glazed area on either side of a customer entrance may contain an identical sign. The

combination of such signs shall be deemed as one (1) sign for the purposes of this section.

b. Individual Letters

The following criteria will apply when individual letters are used.

- i. When used as accessory/convenience signs, such signs shall be limited to the first floors of the buildings.
- ii. Letters are to be a maximum height of twelve (12) inches.
- iii. The total sign area shall be no greater than six (6) square feet.

c. Fascia Panel Signs

The following requirements apply.

- i. The height of the fascia panel shall not exceed sixteen (16) inches.
- ii. The fascia panel design and finish shall be integrated with the storefront design.
- iii. Individual letters shall not exceed one (1) inch in depth from the face of the surface upon which they are mounted.
- iv. Acceptable materials include cast stone and wood panels with individual metal and wood letters, neon and custom ceramic tile.
- v. Letters shall not be closer than one and one-half (1½) inches from the edge of the fascia panel.
- vi. Sign area shall not exceed a maximum of six (6) square feet.

C. Pedestrian Directory

The directory will identify the businesses located within the building. The directory will not exceed six square feet. (See Existing Signs below)

D. Attraction Boards by Nightclubs, Cabarets and Theaters

In addition to other signs usage, businesses which offer entertainment shall be allowed one (1) attraction board to advertise such entertainment. The maximum size of the board for a nightclub or cabaret shall not exceed twenty (10) square feet.

E. Customer Convenience Signs

1. Open/Closed signs: One square feet per street entrance
2. Service Signs: One sign not more than two (2) square feet
3. Menu Boards: Maximum display size of six (6) square feet per face shall be allowed; such signs shall be professionally designed and constructed.
4. Hours/Day: Two inch letter height per line.

F. Temporary Signs/ Banners

Temporary signs and banners may be approved pursuant to the provisions of the Sign Ordinance.

Summary of Existing Signs

1) Okura

Location: Facing Tahquitz Canyon Drive (North)
 Sign Type: Individual Letters, Internally Illuminated acrylic faced channel letters standoff mounted on bottom raceway.
 Sign Area: 9.24 square feet
 Dimensions: 12" x 9.1"

2) Starbucks

Location: Facing Tahquitz Canyon Drive (North)
 Sign Type: Individual Letters, Internally Illuminated acrylic faced channel letters standoff mounted on bottom raceway.
 Sign Area: 20 square feet
 Dimensions: 12" x 20'

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3) Starbucks

Location: Facing Palm Canyon Drive (East)
 Sign Type: Individual Letters on Raceway, Internally Illuminated acrylic faced channel letters standoff mounted on bottom raceway.
 Sign Area: 32 square feet
 Dimensions: 16" x 24'

4) Okura

Location: Facing Palm Canyon Drive (East)
 Sign Type: Individual Letters on Raceway, Internally Illuminated acrylic faced channel letters standoff mounted on bottom raceway.
 Sign Area: 9.24 square feet
 Dimensions: 12" x 9.1'

5) Pedestrian Directory

Location: Facing South
 Sign Type: Pedestrian Directory
 Sign Area: 6 square feet
 Dimensions: 2' x 3'



Existing Sign #3



Existing Sign #4



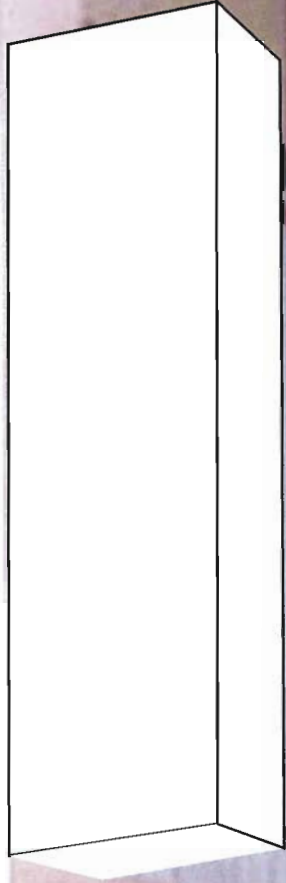
Existing Sign #5 (Pedestrian Directory)

Procedure for Sign Approval

1. Meet with City staff to submit sign application.
2. City staff review of proposed sign for consistency with Oasis Building Sign Program.
3. Approval by City staff.



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