

**TOWN OF MORAGA
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD MEETING
MINUTES**

JANUARY 13, 2014

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

A regular meeting of the Design Review Board (DRB) was called to order by Chair Helber at 7:00 P.M. in the Moraga Library Meeting Room, 1500 Saint Mary's Road, Moraga, California.

Present: Boardmembers Escano-Thompson, Glover, Kirkpatrick, Zhu, Chair Helber

Absent: None

Staff: Shawna Brekke-Read, Planning Director
Brian Horn, Associate Planner

A. Conflict of Interest

There was no reported conflict of interest.

B. Contact with Applicants

There was no reported contact with applicants.

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no comments from the public.

III. ADOPTION OF THE CONSENT CALENDAR

A. Adoption of Meeting Agenda

On motion by Boardmember Kirkpatrick, seconded by Boardmember Glover and carried unanimously to adopt the Consent Calendar, as shown.

IV. DESIGN REVIEW

A. Massage Envy, 556-560 Center Street

Applicant: Arrow Sign Company, 1051 46th Avenue, Oakland, CA 94601

Proposed Application: Consider Design Review (DRB 25-13) to install a halo illuminated canopy sign on the east elevation of an existing building.

CEQA Determination: Categorically exempt pursuant to Section 15301 of the CEQA Guidelines ("Class 1, Existing Facilities"). (CC, BH)

Associate Planner Brian Horn presented the request for Design Review (DRB 25-13) to install a halo illuminated canopy sign on the east elevation of an existing building. He identified the location of the tenant space for Massage Envy, to be located in three consolidated tenant spaces totaling 54 feet of lineal frontage located between Moraga Jewelers and a vacant space adjacent to the Dollar Tree in an attached building on Center Street, in the Rheem Shopping Center.

The proposed sign would be located on the northernmost frontage facing Center Street. Massage Envy was described as a non-major tenant. The applicant proposed to install a new canopy sign on the shopping center fascia board, to be made of individually raised letters reading *Massage Envy ~ Spa* on a single line of copy, ranging in size from 18 inches to 10 inches in height, measuring 14 feet by 7 3/8 inches in length, with a total sign area of approximately 22 feet. The letters would extend 4 1/2 inches from the fascia board with a sign depth of three inches, to be mounted on 1 1/2 inch standoffs with the letters to be made of aluminum and painted brilliant gold satin on the face and sides, and with the sign to be halo illuminated with light emitting diodes (LED) strips mounted inside the channel letters. The LEDs would illuminate the fascia board behind the sign to create the halo lighting effect. The halo illumination would be conditioned not to exceed five-foot candles at 10 feet distance.

Mr. Horn explained that staff had analyzed the sign application for conformance with the Moraga Municipal Code (MMC), General Sign Regulations, regulations of signage in the scenic corridor, and the Town's Design Guidelines, as detailed in the January 13, 2014 staff report. In order to be consistent with other similar tenants in the Rheem Shopping Center, staff recommended a maximum letter size of 12 inches. For the font type staff recommended that the applicant be allowed to use an alternate font since the *Massage Envy ~ Spa* franchise used the specific lettering as its trademark, but because the applicant had used different fonts, they should either be placed on two separate lines which would result in the individual letters in the first line being reduced to eight inches in height and on the second line with letters four inches in height. As an alternative, the sign copy reading *~ Spa* could be removed from the sign, or all letters in the sign could be on one line and in one font. Staff also recommended that although the submitted plans had shown a green fascia board with a blue hue, Condition 12 required maintaining the green fascia board.

Mr. Horn recommended that the DRB approve the Draft Action Memorandum approving DRB 25-13 pursuant to Section 8.88.280 of the MMC, subject to findings and conditions of approval.

Responding to the DRB, Mr. Horn advised that the landlord had not offered comment on the sign application to staff during the process.

Planning Director Shawna Brekke-Read reported that she had spoken with the Broker for the Rheem Shopping Center and had encouraged submittal of a Master Sign Program for tenant improvements to be presented to the DRB, although that effort had been unsuccessful given the multiple property owners involved in the Rheem Shopping Center.

Mr. Horn reiterated the staff recommendations and acknowledged that another option could be for the applicant to place the sign copy reading *Massage Envy ~ Spa* all in one font.

PUBLIC COMMENTS OPENED

Jocelyn Graham, Arrow Sign Company, 1051 46th Avenue, Oakland, commented that the staff report had been straightforward and she understood the recommendation to reduce the overall height of the letters. She understood the client wanted to retain the sign copy reading *~ Spa*, since it differentiated the sign copy reading *Massage Envy* from *Massage Envy ~ Spa*. She was open to reducing the two lines or having *~ Spa* in the same font as the sign copy reading *Massage Envy*.

In response to the Chair, Ms. Graham commented that she had been aware of the staff concerns with the letter height but not with the secondary copy. She stated that her client would likely prefer the sign copy to be all on one line, in the same height and font.

PUBLIC COMMENTS CLOSED

Mr. Horn clarified that the Uniform Sign Program for the Rheem Shopping Center called for the gold font on the top copy and white on the bottom copy, but had not been identified in the conditions of approval.

Ms. Brekke-Read recommended that Condition 7 of the Draft Action Memorandum be modified to include a new Condition 7(c) requiring the gold leaf font on the top copy with white on the bottom copy. She clarified that if the sign copy was all on one line it would be gold, and if there was a second line of copy it would be required to be white.

Boardmember Escano-Thompson made a motion, seconded by Boardmember Zhu to adopt the Draft Action Memorandum dated January 13, 2014 approving *Massage Envy*, DRB 25-13, subject to the findings and conditions of approval, with the modification to Condition 7(c) as discussed.

On the motion, Boardmember Kirkpatrick sought the approval of a specific sign. He was not confident the applicant would be willing to comply with the staff recommendation to reduce the overall height of the letters and he wanted the DRB to clarify its direction to the applicant.

Boardmember Glover agreed with Boardmember Kirkpatrick's comments and also sought assurance the illumination period was clear, with Mr. Horn advising that the hours of illumination were allowed only during the hours of operation.

Ms. Graham reiterated her client's preference for the sign to consist of one line of copy reading *Massage Envy ~ Spa* in one font type.

Ms. Brekke-Read recommended a further modification of Condition 7 as follows:

Condition 7(a) to read: *Utilize a single font type*
Condition 7(b) to read: *Maximize letter height of 12 inches*

Condition 7(c) to read: Lettering shall be gold leaf

As the maker of the initial motion, Boardmember Escano-Thompson accepted the staff revisions to Condition 7(a), (b), and (c). As the second to the initial motion, Boardmember Zhu also accepted the staff revisions.

On motion by Boardmember Escano-Thompson, seconded by Boardmember Zhu to adopt the Draft Action Memorandum dated January 13, 2014 approving DRB 25-13 for Massage Envy at 556-560 Center Street, subject to the findings and conditions of approval as shown and with the modifications to Condition 7(a), (b), and (c) as discussed. The motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes:	Escano-Thompson, Glover, Kirkpatrick, Zhu, Helber
Noes:	None
Abstain:	None
Absent:	None

Chair Helber identified the 10-day appeal process of a decision of the DRB in writing to the Planning Department.

V. ROUTINE AND OTHER MATTERS

A. 533 Moraga Road Study Session

Applicant: J. Allen Sayles, 1196 Boulevard Way, #11, Walnut Creek, CA 94595

Study Session to receive input from the Design Review Board in establishing a Master Sign Program. (LC, BH)

Associate Planner Horn explained that in September 2012, the DRB had considered a sign application for 533 Moraga Road, a multi-tenant office building, when the DRB had directed the applicant to prepare a Master Sign Program that would provide a coordinated approach to building and tenant signage. The applicant had submitted a Master Sign Program for the property although the content of the Master Sign Program had not expanded significantly on the previously submitted sign application. Planning staff and the applicant had agreed that a study session with the DRB would be beneficial to clarify the parameters of the Master Sign Program.

Mr. Horn described the background of the previous approvals for the Conditional Use Permit and Monument Sign for the property at 533 Moraga Road, the 2012 Sign Permit Application, and the Master Sign Program Application, as outlined in the January 13, 2014 staff report. He also identified discussion items staff would like the DRB to discuss regarding the current Master Sign Program application taking into consideration the direction provided by staff to the applicant in the completeness review, and providing direction on the standards to be included in the Master Sign Program. He asked that the DRB review the current Master Sign Program application, provide direction to the applicant and staff on the additional elements that should be included in the Master Sign Program, and opine on the discussion items staff had outlined in the staff report.

In response to the DRB, Mr. Horn reiterated that the applicant's submittal for a Master Sign Program in November 2013 had been deemed incomplete with additional items requested by staff. An incompleteness letter had been sent to the applicant on December 19 and December 24, 2013 requesting the additional information necessary to move forward with the Master Sign Program, as detailed in the staff report.

J. Allen Sayles, 1196 Boulevard Way, #11, Walnut Creek, identified himself as the Architect for the project located at 533 Moraga Way. He understood the purpose of the study session was to discuss a possible solution to reach the goals for a Master Sign Program. He described the building at 533 Moraga Road at 13,000 square feet of office space, 8,000 square feet of covered parking above, and 2,000 square feet of deck. He noted that as part of the plan check review with the Building Department, the building had been determined to be a 25,000 square foot building. He clarified that when he had originally submitted for building permit approval, and in speaking with the former Planning Director, he was uncertain how the building would be occupied in that a certain percentage of retail and office had been proposed although commercial or professional office tenants could be possible. After the building had been approved and prior to its construction, a request had been submitted to the Town to condominiumize the building into eight commercial spaces in that there would be no residential uses.

Mr. Sayles commented that in his last communication with staff the direction to the applicant was to show the area where the signs would be located and their approximate size. He was uncertain of the number of tenants in the building that would desire signs in that most of the tenants either owned or had a lease/option to purchase the space, and most did not want signage. The two or three tenants that did want signs needed good quality signs for the businesses to do well. He commented that it was not unusual for professional buildings where a retail tenant had a large sign and the commercial tenant had a small or logo sign.

Mr. Sayles did not want to see eight signs on the building, and although the building façade could handle it, that was not the goal. The front façade of the building was one story with a certain mass, scale in height, stepped back, with the front elevation having a long thin band ideal for some form of lettering, or lettering with a logo. He described the side view of the building as having three distinct masses, all stepped back and stepped up creating opportunities for different signage areas.

Mr. Sayles suggested locations for possible signs, did not want to get into the trap of the Rheem Shopping Center, did not like the signage program for that center, and identified potential areas where signage may be possible on the building at 533 Moraga Road. He did not ask for approval of the different areas, rather he wanted to see the individual tenants request approval of signage in a specific area. He spoke to the ever changing technology for signage and would rather not commit to specific signage materials but consider signage on a case-by-case basis. He suggested it would be unfair to pre-commit a tenant to a specific sign color, shape, and size other than an approximate area to place a sign.

Mr. Sayles expressed a preference for internally-illuminated signage and offered photographic examples of what he considered to be good signage located in the Lafayette and Moraga communities.

Mr. Sayles suggested consideration of internally-illuminated signs that were scaled down, and artistic. He sought a total of four signs on the building. Responding to the DRB, he acknowledged that awning signs had not been considered for the building. He did not want signs that would be two different colors, with heavy cast brackets on the side of the building, and commented that when the DRB had last discussed possible signage for the building in September 2012, he had not been present but understood there had been concerns with signage obstructing the architectural elements of the building. He identified a three-quarter inch step, with any signage to be placed in a panel area, and if found acceptable and if the band was an issue, suggested the signs could be moved down and attached to the building. He identified an area where the signage could be placed but which would work only for a cabinet sign that would be out of the architectural element altogether. He also identified the existing landscaping, a PG&E transformer, and a sprinkler control for the landscaping, and explained that the landscaping had been pruned to provide screening.

Mr. Sayles suggested that any signage could be visible as one pulled out of the shopping center and traveled up and down the street, which would work well but not allow a business to survive with the art of the sign speaking more to the project than to anything else. He wanted each applicant to have the opportunity to present their ideas and potential business logos, and wanted to establish areas for future signage on the building, which he identified, and which would give the tenants something to work with. He also recognized that the Town's Sign Ordinance would change over time and that the sign business had changed dramatically.

Julia Hoang, DDS, stated she was one of the tenants in the building, and identified an area above the garage where two pillars were located and where she had placed a two-foot high banner reading *Seasons Greetings*, which was not easily visible or readable. She commented that many people were not aware of the location of the building and some of her clients had been unable to easily locate her office.

Boardmember Glover found the band element at the front of the building to be a distraction and not very attractive, and while a fan of businesses, he sought a subtle monument sign in the front. He suggested that the lobby of the building could also accommodate signage.

Mr. Sayles opposed the use of multiple names on a monument sign which would not be easily readable. He was uncertain a monument sign should announce the business but could help people find the address.

Boardmember Glover also pointed out that while the existing landscaping on the property could be managed, the trees located adjacent to 533 Moraga Road were large and could not be managed.

Mr. Sayles advised of an agreement with the Moraga-Orinda Fire District (MOFD) regarding the adjacent area to the building at 533 Moraga Road, the landscaping of which had been taken over by the subject property. He described the trees on the adjacent property as in a growth transition phase that could be thinned over time to offer vertical translucency where the side wall of the building could be used for signage.

Mr. Sayles asked that the use of that side wall of 533 Moraga Road adjacent to the neighboring trees be allowed as a possible area for signage.

Howard Goldenburg, 101 Hillside Avenue, Piedmont, Business Partner with Mr. Sayles for the property at 533 Moraga Road, identified an area of the building wall which was void of architecture and where signage could be accommodated. If there was a height differential, signs could be placed on poles with the trees on the other side able to be thinned.

Boardmember Zhu recognized the need to provide the owner and tenants the ability to propose signage. He wanted to preserve the architectural style of the building, did not want to see a crowding of cabinet or box signs on the building which would shadow the architecture, and expressed a preference for individual lettering rather than cabinet signage.

Boardmember Glover questioned whether an illuminated sign would help the tenants and suggested that signage visible in the daytime would be more acceptable.

Dr. Hoang reiterated that her patients had not been able to find her office easily given the lack of signage. She emphasized the financial burden to open a business from scratch, noted she planned to be a presence in Moraga for years, and wanted residents to know that she was in the building. She did not want her clients to have to rely on the Internet to find the building. She added that many of her clients had complained about the lack of signage and she wanted signage to identify her presence in that corner of the building above the garage. She noted that at one time she had a banner placed on the pillars reading *Lamorinda Dental Care*, although the banner had been temporary and had been removed.

Dr. Hoang also responded to a recommendation to use only individual letters and no cabinet signage, commenting on the limitation in the area of the building where her office was located. She identified a preferred area between the garage and railing which had a three-quarter inch ledge that would not accommodate individual lettering for a sign. In working with Arrow Sign Company, she had proposed signage on a subtle white board which could be placed in the overhang area.

Boardmember Zhu reiterated his recommendation for individual lettering given the desire to preserve the beautiful architecture and given the limited space for cabinet signs.

Chair Helber sought the creation of a Master Sign Program that did not identify locations on the building but parameters for potential signage, which would allow the signage to be approved at the staff level once an approved Master Sign Program was in place. He recommended that the DRB provide direction to staff on each of the discussion points, as identified in the January 13, 2014 staff report.

As to the maximum number of signs allowed, Mr. Sayles suggested there would likely never be more than four signs on the building. He sought areas to be identified on the building where signage could be possible.

Based on a show of hands as to whether signs would be appropriate at all on the building as opposed to a monument sign, Ms. Brekke-Read identified support from three Boardmembers for a sign on the building.

On the question of potential locations for signage on the building, Boardmember Kirkpatrick characterized the building as a professional building not a shopping center. He did not recommend signs on the monument sign with the address of 533 Moraga Road since those signs would not be readable given the speed of traffic.

Boardmember Glover did not support signage on the south facing side of the building and suggested the best solution as the west/front façade. He stated that he could support four signs on the front elevation.

Chair Helber stated he could support signage at the opening to the garage although he sought a sign smaller in size than three feet which spanned the cornice detail, as recommended by Mr. Sayles. He did not like signage hanging below the band space at the front elevation which would not be attractive, but would support lowering the façade to fill that space, build a wall, and then install a sign in that area.

Mr. Goldenburg asked for consideration of one sign above the front entrance and identified the location where three additional signs could be located on the building. He did not want to see three signs along the front elevation.

Boardmember Zhu did not want signage to take up all of the space on the front elevation where the long thin band was located. He could support two individual signs side-by-side which were proportional on the front façade.

Boardmember Kirkpatrick recommended west facing signage, reiterated his concerns with the banding at the front elevation, and expressed support for a total of four signs.

Boardmember Escano-Thompson stated that she could support one west facing sign at the front elevation, one sign above the garage, and one sign to be located at the short piece on the south facing elevation adjacent to the garage.

Boardmember Zhu recommended that signage could be considered on the south side, the true side of the building [side of the garage].

Chair Helber did not want to see two signs on the garage entrance and then another sign on the south side of the entrance although he could support one sign at the west elevation that had all of the fenestration, or one sign on the south side of the garage entrance and one on the left side of the garage entrance, for a total of three signs.

Boardmember Zhu supported one sign at the front elevation and another three signs on the band area at the front elevation with no signage on the side of the garage.

Chair Helber was not certain that three signs on the west façade would be appropriate.

On the discussion, Dr. Hoang stated that Mr. Sayles had convinced her to consider signage reading *Lamorinda Dental Care* on one line of copy with a rendition having been prepared by Arrow Sign Company. If the sign was required to be three feet in depth, her sign would only take up a third to a half of the wall area near the balcony near her tenant space. She suggested it would take up 10 to 15 feet at most. She was not concerned that signage would take up too much space of the area at the front elevation given the size of the building.

Boardmember Glover supported all west facing signage, was not opposed to one sign on the front elevation for the dentist office, and supported four signs in recognition that one sign would have to be south facing.

As to the size of the signs, the consensus of the DRB was to support signage that was 12 inches wide, 12 feet in length, in the area of the building of the center arched window, with individual letters preferred; that the elevation with the fenestration signage would be no higher than 24 inches; and consider a maximum of 24 inches and an average of 12 inches for the area over the garage; with no consensus of whether to have a halo lit or cabinet sign for the area over the garage.

Chair Helber restated the consensus of the DRB for a maximum height of 24 inches but a predominant height of 10 inches; with the depth of the signs to be consistent; with the average applicable to the over-the-garage sign. He recommended that the applicant take into consideration the DRB's comments and submit a Master Sign Program whereby future applications that complied with the Master Sign Program may be approved at the staff level. He was not opposed to providing some flexibility and could support a small sign in the elevation of the building with all of the windows at the front no higher than one foot, six inches.

Chair Helber also identified the consensus for signage that was predominantly 12 inches at the front, up to 18 inches for a very small portion, and 24 inches for the garage entrance elevation, up to 10 inches predominant; with support for internally-illuminated signage. He did not want to prohibit cabinet signs outright given that sign technology may allow better signage opportunities than halo lit signage.

Ms. Brekke-Read recommended that Mr. Horn work with Mr. Sayles to prepare a potential Master Sign Program to be brought back for DRB consideration at a future meeting.

As to the inclusion of a monument sign in the Master Sign Program, there was DRB consensus that more signage not be added to the monument sign. As to the design of the signage, by consensus the DRB did not want to restrict the applicant to only incorporating signage with the Spanish-style architectural details of the building; did not restrict the signage to a specific font or style; but that the signage be compatible with the building architectural style. It was also the consensus of the DRB to encourage the option to be open for future signage technology and not specifically prohibit the use of cabinet signs.

On the question of the maximum number of signs, Ms. Brekke-Read advised that three DRB Boardmembers supported four signs, with staff to work with the applicant on the length of the signs over the garage.

Chair Helber looked forward to the future submittal of a Master Sign Program to be reviewed and approved by the DRB.

B. Consider Amending Design Review Board 2014 Meeting Schedule

Ms. Brekke-Read presented the amended DRB meeting schedule for 2014, and acknowledged the recommendation for DRB meetings to be held once a month, with the next meeting scheduled for February 10, 2014.

Chair Helber recommended that the amended 2014 DRB meeting schedule be amended with an additional column to identify the dates when applicants should submit materials in order to meet the dates for distribution of packets and scheduled meeting dates.

Ms. Brekke-Read, added, when asked, that the recent amendments to the Moraga Municipal Code (MMC) for Design Review had proven helpful to staff. She asked that the DRB make a motion to approve the Amended DRB 2014 Meeting Schedule, meeting dates.

On motion by Boardmember Kirkpatrick, seconded by Boardmember Escano-Thompson to approve the Amended Design Review Board 2014 Meeting Schedule meeting dates, as shown. The motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes:	Escano-Thompson, Glover, Kirkpatrick, Zhu, Helber
Noes:	None
Abstain:	None
Absent:	None

Boardmember Escano-Thompson identified an error in the date for packet distribution for the DRB meeting scheduled for February 10, with staff to correct the error.

C. Planning Commission Liaison Report - Comprelli

Planning Commission Chair Comprelli reported that the Planning Commission had met on January 6, 2014 and had held a public hearing on the SummerHill Homes Camino Ricardo 26-lot subdivision with a lengthy discussion of the various project entitlements, specifically the proposed park area and bridge across Laguna Creek. He briefly detailed the Planning Commission discussions and vote to approve the project subject to numerous findings and conditions.

Ms. Brekke-Read added that there had been design changes to the Camino Ricardo project after it had been reviewed by the Planning Commission on December 16, 2013, and the Planning Commission's approval of the project also included a recommendation for Town Council approval of a Development Agreement (DA) to be considered by the Town Council at its first and second meetings in February.

VI. REPORTS

A. Design Review Board

There were no reports from the Design Review Board.

B. Staff

Ms. Brekke-Read welcomed Mr. Horn to the Planning Department and advised that the Department now had a full complement of planning staff. She also reported that the Planning Department had received an application from the Bruzzone family for remedial grading at the Moraga Country Club lots and that staff had deemed the application to be incomplete. In addition, the Via Moraga Project was scheduled to be presented to the DRB soon and the Hetfield Estates and Rancho Laguna II projects were scheduled to be submitted to the Planning Commission for consideration of Tentative Map approvals.

The DRB welcomed Mr. Horn to the Town of Moraga.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

On motion by Boardmember Kirkpatrick, seconded by Boardmember Glover and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at approximately 9:50 P.M.

A Certified Correct Minutes Copy



Secretary of the Planning Commission

