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## Architectural Review Board

### Staff Report

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**Agenda Date:** May 2, 2013

**To:** Architectural Review Board

**From:** Elena Lee  
Senior Planner

**Department:** Planning and  
Community Environment

**Subject:** **180 El Camino Real [12PLN-00064]:** Request by Fergus, Garber, Young Architects, on behalf of the Leland Stanford Junior University, for a Minor Architectural Review of façade improvements and signage for a commercial recreation use for Soulcycle at the Stanford Shopping Center. Zone District: CC (Community Commercial). Environmental Assessment: Exempt from the provisions of CEQA, 15301 (Existing Facilities).

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#### **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Architectural Review Board (ARB) recommend the Director of Planning and Community Environment approve the proposed project based upon the Architectural Review Findings (Attachment A) and conditions of approval (Attachment B) attached to the staff report.

#### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The project is a façade remodel of an existing one story tenant space (plus a partial mezzanine) and the installation of signage to establish a commercial recreation use, “SoulCycle” at the eastern portion of the Stanford Shopping Center. The storefront is approximately 24 feet 1 ½ inches in length and faces El Camino Real across a surface parking lot. The vacant tenant space was most recently occupied by Hlaska, a retail tenant. Adjacent stores are the “Pink Berry” store to the right and “The Body Shop” to the left. This façade remodel is presented to the ARB for its review and recommendation because significant changes are proposed for a substantial frontage along El Camino Real and the proposed signage, although consistent with the City’s sign ordinance, is not consistent with the Stanford Shopping Center Master Sign Program. Associated with this Architectural Review application is a request for a Conditional Use Permit. The proposed use is considered commercial recreation, which may only be approved via a conditional use permit in the Community Commercial (CC) zoning district. The proposed use is compatible with the shopping center and adequate parking is provided.

#### **DISCUSSION**

##### Façade Improvements

The project would involve the removal of an existing awning and storefront system and refinishing of the remainder of the façade. The proposed elevation would consist of an approximately 9-foot tall glass and white aluminum frame store front system, with a bi-part sliding door system having fixed sidelights. On either side of the sliding door system would be display windows that measure 9 feet

tall by 5 feet 1 ½ inches wide. Directly above these windows, a white wood frame and aluminum header would be installed. The upper part of the storefront is proposed to be finished with plaster. The height of the façade is being increased by one foot, as measured to the top of the taller parapet. In the center of the new plaster façade, an approximately 13 feet tall by 20 feet wide plaster finished plywood box is proposed to be mounted. The additional plywood façade is proposed to be approximately 6 inches in depth and would be illuminated by a perimeter cove with continuous LED lighting. All of the plaster is proposed to be painted a soft white (RAL #9003). A 3/4 inch aluminum reveal and top cap are proposed to finish the edges. The proposed new storefront finishes reflect a limited color palette. The majority of the façade would be painted white. Accent colors would be provided by the gray wall sign and white, yellow and gray vinyl graphics in the storefront. Although the proposed storefront is significantly more streamlined in appearance from adjacent storefronts, its proportions are consistent with and do not detract from the neighboring tenants. A color and material sample board will be provided at the ARB hearing.

### Signs

The signage proposal includes one primary wall sign and window signage. The wall sign would be located at the top of the building and would consist of cutout letters on the additional plywood façade. The wall sign would measure 1 foot 6 inches in height and 12 feet ¼ inch in length for a total of 18.03 square feet. The sign would be externally illuminated with concealed LED lighting at the base of the sign, directly in front of the recessed plywood panel that forms the body of the sign letters. The cutout letters would have depth of 1 foot 3/8 inches and would be a cool gray color (Pantone #11C).

The applicant also proposes additional vinyl window graphics and signage. They would consist of a 17.5-square foot yellow and gray bicycle wheel on the right, a white band extending along the entire bottom of the store front and text covering a 2-square foot area on the far left stating, in dark gray letters, "SOULCYCLE".

The Stanford Shopping Center is subject to both the City's Sign Ordinance and a master sign program. While the signs conform to the City's Sign Ordinance in terms of maximum size, they would not conform to the Center's master sign program. The program stipulates only one wall sign per storefront and limits the letter height to 10 inches. The proposed letter height would be 18 inches, exceeding the maximum height by 8 inches. The master sign program also prohibits window signs unless they are safety graphics. The shopping center management has approved of the proposed signage. Signage that is compliant with the City's Sign Ordinance but not the master sign program can be approved if recommended by the Architectural Review Board. There have now been several signs, approved through the ARB process, that do not meet the master sign program. Recent shopping center sign approvals recommended by the ARB include signs with letter heights of approximately 16 inches, and storefronts having more than one sign per storefront.

Staff is concerned about the location of the proposed wall sign relative to the heights of the adjacent tenant signage. As illustrated on page A240 of the plan set, the tenants along this frontage have various signs at different heights. Staff would recommend that the proposed wall sign be lowered so that it is more in line with the adjacent signage, and has placed a draft

condition reflecting staff recommendation (condition of approval #6) for ARB consideration of the project's compatibility with recent ARB approvals.

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

The project would be an alteration to an existing facility and new construction not exceeding 10,000 square feet qualifying for a Class 3 Categorical Exemption per section 15301 of the California Environmental Quality Act.

**ATTACHMENTS**

- A. Architectural Review Findings
- B. Draft Conditions of Approval
- C. Project Plans (Board members only)

**COURTESY COPIES**

Fergus, Garber, Young  
Simon Property Group

**Prepared by:** Elena Lee, Senior Planner

**Reviewed by:** Amy French, AICP, Chief Planning Official

**ATTACHMENT A**  
**FINDINGS FOR APPROVAL**  
**ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD STANDARDS FOR REVIEW**  
180 El Camino Real, Soulcycle  
File No. 13PLN-00064

The design and architecture of the proposed improvements, as conditioned, furthers the goals and purposes of the ARB ordinances as it complies with the Architectural Review findings, as required in Chapter 18.76.020 of the PAMC.

- 1) The design is consistent and compatible with the applicable elements of the city's Comprehensive Plan, particularly: Policy L-18: Encourage the upgrading and revitalization of selected Centers in a manner that is compatible with the character of surrounding neighborhoods; Policy L-26: Maintain Stanford Shopping Center as one of the Bay Area's premiere regional shopping centers. Encourage any new development at the center to occur through infill, including development on existing surface parking lots; and Policy B-22: Work with Stanford University to ensure that the Stanford Shopping Center is sustained as a distinctive, competitive, high quality regional shopping center.
- 2) The design is compatible with the immediate environment of the site, namely, with the architecture of other storefronts within the Stanford Shopping Center.
- 3) The design is appropriate to the function of the project in that it accommodates a retail use while encouraging the pedestrian attributes of the mall.
- 4) In areas considered by the Board as having a unified design character, the design is compatible with such character, in that the remodeled storefront will be consistent with other recently remodeled storefronts within the mall.
- 6) The design is compatible with approved improvements both on and off the site; both with the newly designed storefronts and original storefronts still in place in the mall.
- 12) The materials, textures, colors and details of construction and plant materials are an appropriate expression to the design and function and whether the same are compatible with the adjacent and neighboring structures, landscape elements and functions in that the materials are of high quality and appropriately express the use of the space. The space incorporates similar details and colors of the surrounding spaces while still maintaining a unique design.

ARB standards #5, 8-11 and 13-15 are not applicable to the project.

**ATTACHMENT B**  
**CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL**  
180 El Camino Real (Soulcycle)/File No. 13PLN-00064

**PLANNING DIVISION**

1. The project shall be implemented and shown on the plans dated received April 24, 2013 on file with the City of Palo Alto Planning Division except as modified by these approval conditions.
2. A copy of the ARB approval letter shall be printed on the plans submitted for building permits.
3. Construction activities and all noise producing equipment shall comply with Chapter 9.10 (Noise) of the Palo Alto Municipal Code.
4. During construction, the site shall be kept clear of debris on a daily basis.
5. All landscaping located around the building shall be protected and maintained.
6. The wall sign shall be lowered so it is better aligned with the adjacent tenant signs. Cycle layout appears to leave inadequate aisle space between the two exits.

**FIRE DEPARTMENT**

7. Cycle layout appears to leave inadequate aisle space between the two exits. Applicant should verify that Building Inspection Services does not view this as an accessibility or egress violation.

**UTILITIES ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING**

8. The applicant shall comply with all the Electric Utility Engineering Department service requirements noted during plan review.
9. Applicant/Developer must notify Utilities Engineering (Electric) if the proposed renovation/change of use has any impact on the existing electrical service size, voltage, or location. If there are any changes, the Utilities will provide comments and/or conditions along with any applicable fees and cost estimate.

**UTILITIES WATER, GAS, WASTEWATER**

10. This space does not currently have separate water and gas meters. Separate metering of this space will require the applicant to submit improvement plans for utility construction and a completed water-gas-wastewater service connection application - load sheet for City of Palo Alto Utilities. The plans must show the location of all the new meters and underground mains connected to the meters including backflow preventers.

11. The applicant shall be responsible for installing and upgrading the existing utility mains and/or services as necessary to handle anticipated peak loads. This responsibility includes all costs associated with the design and construction for the installation/upgrade of the utility mains and/or services.
12. An approved reduced pressure principle assembly (RPPA backflow preventer device) is required for all existing and new water connections from Palo Alto Utilities to comply with requirements of California administrative code, title 17, sections 7583 through 7605 inclusive. The RPPA shall be installed on the owner's property and directly behind the water meter within 5 feet of the property line. RPPA's for domestic service shall be lead free. Show the location of the RPPA on the plans.
13. Utility vaults, transformers, utility cabinets, concrete bases, or other structures can not be placed over existing water, gas or wastewater mains/services. Trees may not be planted within 10 feet of existing water, gas or wastewater mains/services or meters. New water, gas or wastewater services/meters may not be installed within 10' of existing trees. Maintain 10' between new trees and new water, gas and wastewater services/mains/meters.