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Architectural Review Board

Staff Report

Agenda Date: May 16, 2013

To: Architectural Review Board

From: Elena Lee
Senior Planner

Department: Planning and
Community Environment

Subject: **180 El Camino Real [13PLN-00024]:** Request by Anderson Sign, on behalf of the Board of Trustees of the Leland Stanford Junior University, for Architectural Review of new signage and a Sign Exception for a projecting sign for Brooks Brothers at the Stanford Shopping Center. Zone District: CC (Community Commercial). Environmental Assessment: Exempt from the provisions of CEQA, 15301 (Existing Facilities).

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 for the installation of two illuminated walls signs, one non-illuminated projecting (blade) sign, and window signs for the existing tenant, Brooks Brothers. The store is located at the western perimeter of the Stanford Shopping Center. The store's façade consist of glass storefront windows and transom windows along the top. This project has been brought before the ARB because the storefront has a frontage measuring over 105 feet and faces Sand Hill Road, a public street.

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, the wall sign would not conform to the Stanford Shopping Center's master sign program. The proposed projecting sign does conform to both the City's Sign code and the master sign program. The program stipulates only one sign per storefront and limits the letter height to 10 inches. The Sign program also prohibits window signage except for safety graphics. The shopping center management has approved of the proposed signage. There have now been several signs, approved through the ARB process, that do not meet the master sign program. 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. Recent shopping center sign approvals recommended by the ARB include letter heights of greater than 10 inches and more than one sign per storefront.

DISCUSSION

Window/Wall Sign

The applicant proposes the installation of two halo illuminated channel letter wall signs, consisting of bronze finished aluminum letters, to be located directly above the entry at the left side of the Sand Hill elevation and above the corner entry located towards the right. Each wall sign would have a maximum height of 6 inches and a width of 8 feet 3 ¼ inches. The channel letters would measure 1 inch deep. The applicant also proposes nine sets of a vinyl window graphic and text to be placed at the bottom of each set of windows. They would consist of a 6 ½ inch tall by 5 ¾ inch wide logo and the name of the store (Brooks Brothers) in 7 inch tall by 2 feet 9 ½ inch wide black text. The proposed wall sign square footage is within the maximum allowed by the Sign Ordinance. However, the Center Master Sign Program prohibits window signs. Staff believes that the proposed sign is appropriate in design, scale and size for the subject building. The color and material sample board will be available for review at the ARB hearing.

Blade/Projecting Sign

The project also includes a non-illuminated blade sign that would be located at the southwest corner of the storefront, under the existing awning. The proposed blade sign is a double faced aluminum sign, painted silver with the tenant's logo in black and white vinyl and 5 ¾ inch tall by 2 feet 3 7/8 inches wide black vinyl letters spelling the store's name on both sides. The sign would measure 2 feet in height and 2 feet 10 inches wide. The Sign Ordinance allows projecting signs to have a maximum size of 3 square feet and the Master Sign Program allows a maximum size of 4 square feet. Accordingly, a Sign Exception and ARB approval are required for the projecting sign because it measures just over 5 square feet. Staff believes that given the size of the frontage and setback from the Sand Hill Road, the proposed projecting sign is supportable.

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 and Sign Exception Findings
- B. Draft Conditions of Approval
- C. Project Plans (Board members only)

COURTESY COPIES

Anderson Sign
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, Brooks Brothers

File No. 13PLN-00024

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, in that the proposed project is consistent with:
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. 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 in that the design is compatible with the architecture of other areas within the mall.
- 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 space will be designed in a consistent manner with other remodeled areas of the mall.
- 6) The design is compatible with approved improvements both on and off the site in that the space is compatible with the newly designed and original spaces 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, 7-11 and 12-15 are not applicable to the project.

ATTACHMENT A
SIGN EXCEPTION FINDINGS
ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD STANDARDS FOR REVIEW
180 El Camino Real (Brooks Brother)
File No. 13PLN-00024

- (1) *There are exceptional or extraordinary circumstances or conditions applicable to the property involved that do not apply generally to property in the same district in that the building is part of an existing shopping center and is a fairly large existing building with the public facing frontage set significantly back from the street. The projecting sign provide additional appropriately scaled signage for a large building and allow customers to easily identify the entry. While the wall sign provides identification from the street, the projecting sign provides identification within the site for pedestrians.*

- (2) *The granting of the application is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right of the applicant and to prevent unreasonable property loss or unnecessary hardships in that the visibility of signage is important for a retail business to be easily identifiable and to attract customers. The proposed projecting sign locations are logical locations for the signs and most effectively identify the business to both drivers and pedestrians given the setback and size of the building.*

- (3) *The granting of the application will not be detrimental or injurious to property or improvements in the vicinity and will not be detrimental to the public health, safety, general welfare or convenience in that the placement and appearance of the projecting signs do not pose safety hazards nor do they detract from the subject building or surrounding properties. The signs will not be detrimental to public health, safety, general welfare or convenience.*

ATTACHMENT B
CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL
180 El Camino Real (Brooks Brothers)/File No. 13PLN-00024

PLANNING DIVISION

1. The project shall be implemented and shown on the plans dated received May 8, 2013 on file with the City of Palo Alto Planning Division except as modified by these conditions of approval.
2. A copy of the ARB approval letter shall be printed on the plans submitted for building permits (if required).
3. The two wall signs shall utilize halo illumination.
4. The projecting sign shall not be illuminated.
5. Construction activities and all noise producing equipment shall comply with Chapter 9.10 (Noise) of the Palo Alto Municipal Code.
6. During construction, the site shall be kept clear of debris on a daily basis.
7. All landscaping located around the building shall be protected and maintained.