



# Historic Resources Board Architectural Review Board

## Staff Report

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**Agenda Date:** June 5, 2013 (HRB)  
June 6, 2013 (ARB)

**To:** Historic Resources Board  
Architectural Review Board

**From:** Elena Lee  
Senior Planner

**Department:** Planning and  
Community Environment

**Subject:** **2080 Channing Avenue (aka - 2170 W. Bayshore Rd.) [13PLN-00166]:**  
Request by John Tze, on behalf of Ho Holdings No. 1, LLC for Architectural Review of a master sign program for the Edgewood Plaza Shopping Center. Environmental Assessment: Exempt from the provisions of CEQA (15301) upon Historic Resources Board determination that the project complies with the Secretary's Standards for Rehabilitation. Zone District: Planned Community (PC 5150).

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Historic Resources Board (HRB) review the proposed master sign program, including the re-facing of the original Edgewood Shopping Center monument sign, under Standard 9 of the Secretary's Standards for Rehabilitation (compatibility with the historic Edgewood Shopping Center), and provide their final comments regarding the signage to the Architectural Review Board.

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.

### **BACKGROUND**

#### **Project History**

The site was the subject of a Planned Community Rezoning approved in 2012 to update the existing grocery building, rehabilitate one smaller historic retail building, relocate and rehabilitate the second historic retail building, construct a small 9,000 sq. ft. park, and construct ten single family homes. In September 2012, a stop work order was issued because the historic building that was to be disassembled and reconstructed onsite was demolished illegally. On March 4, 2013, the City Council authorized the continued construction of the grocery store, the remaining historic Building 2, six of the homes and other onsite and offsite improvements. The reconstruction of the demolished historic Building 1 is pending the certification of a

Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and an amendment to the Planned Community Zoning. The Planned Community zoning also authorized a slight reorientation of the existing historic monument sign to accommodate parking lot improvements and to provide a better visibility to customers driving along Embarcadero Road. The applicant had provided preliminary sign designs for the historic monument and wall signs during the Planned Community Rezoning process. However, those were schematic proposals only. The drawings had been included for general input on whether the sign design approach was acceptable. No objections to the preliminary designs were expressed during any of the hearings.

Edgewood Plaza is a commercial shopping center built between 1956 and 1958 by Joseph Eichler/Eichler Homes and A. Quincy Jones of Jones and Emmons. The center was originally built with the existing grocery building (1957), two retail buildings (1958), an office building that formerly housed the office of Eichler Homes (1959), and a gas station (1957). The office building and gas station sites are not part of the subject shopping center. Edgewood Plaza is not listed on The National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR), nor on the Palo Alto Historic Inventory. Although this site is not on the City's inventory, because it has been deemed eligible for both registers, it is considered a historic resource. Accordingly, staff is requesting the HRB's input on the historic component of this project. As the center is not on the City's Historic Inventory, the HRB is not required by the City's Municipal Code to make a formal recommendation to the ARB. Given the historic importance of the site, the HRB's comments will be important and helpful during the entitlement process. The HRB's feedback on the monument sign is the most critical component of the review. Per the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), a project is considered to mitigate potential historic impacts to a less than significant level by following the Secretary of Interior's Rehabilitation. The project has been evaluated to confirm compliance and is compatible with the historic shopping center.

### **Master Sign Program and Previous ARB Approval**

The master sign program is intended to create consistent signage that is compatible architecturally and historically for Edgewood Plaza. The Director has separately approved signage for the grocery building (Building 3) following recommendation for Architectural Review approval by the ARB. The approved grocery store signage included the installation of one new halo illuminated wall sign and two illuminated blade or projecting signs. Those signs were designed to be compatible with the mid-century modern Eichler aesthetic that typifies the center. This master sign program includes a proposal to reface the existing historic monument sign, install two new freestanding signs and wall signs for retail buildings. The sign program ensures consistency of the remaining signs with the recently approved grocery store signs.

The shopping center, Eichler's only commercial project, was designed with a distinctive design, which the Planned Community zoning required to be maintained, consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. The buildings consist of a post and beam structure system, 8"x 8" concrete blocks, vertical redwood detailing and large glazed panels. The grocery store, although designed to be compatible with the Eichler design, has been determined to be not historic. The approximately 20,000 sq. ft. grocery building consists of a concrete masonry block base, aluminum storefront system, cement plaster walls and the wood beams indicative of the Eichler design. In addition to the beams, the other retail buildings would also feature a turned

parapet, concrete blocks, vertical redwood siding and tall glazed panels with transom windows. The signs were reviewed with the City's Historic Preservation Planner as well as the City historic consultant, Charlie Duncan of Carey & Company to confirm historic compatibility while still meeting the center's signage needs.

## DISCUSSION

### **Purpose**

A master sign program is intended to provide design standards for all signage on the subject site to follow, and to streamline the approval process. This ensures a certain level of design and consistency. If a master sign program were to be approved, ARB review would not be required for signs that meet the criteria – only staff level review would be required as a part of Building Permit review. The sign program would allow a streamlining of the design review process for the applicant, ensuring predictability for both the City and the applicant.

### Historic Monument Sign

As discussed above, the existing historic monument sign was approved to be located within the same general area, rotated to be parallel with Embarcadero Road to allow for better visibility and to facilitate the redesign of the parking lot. An image of the original sign is provided on the third page of the plan set. The monument sign's frame has been placed in its new, previously approved location, although actual signage has not been installed pending approval of a new sign program. The double sided monument sign would consist of:

- 1) a 35-foot 10-inch tall 9 feet wide metal frame to be refinished in a muted moss green color (SW 6173 Cocoon),
- 2) an approximately 130 sq. ft. tall trapezoidal aluminum marquee panel to be installed at the top of the frame,
- 3) three aluminum sign panels to be installed between below the marquee sign, and
- 4) a 33 feet wide, 2 feet tall horizontal sign at the base of the monument sign that will feature the historic metal "Edgewood Plaza" identification sign. The shopping center identification sign would be composed of a metal panel either in clear aluminum or painted an off white color (Sherwin Williams 7049 Nuance) and the original historic "Edgewood Plaza" metal letters refinished in bronze. This horizontal sign panel would also be supported by a 4-inch, secondary metal post, similar to the original panel.

The Master Sign Program would allow a marquee sign at the top in the shape of a trapezoid, typical of 1950's signage and similar to the original "Lucky" sign. The aluminum cabinet sign would, at its maximum, measure 21 feet wide at the top, 16 feet wide at the bottom, 7 feet tall and 2 feet deep. The lettering and/or logo would be required to be no larger than 70% of the area of its sign panel. The current proposal would be to place a sign for the grocery tenant (The Fresh Market) at the top of the historic sign as shown on page 12 of the plan set. The tenant signs below the marquee sign have been changed and are now proposed as shown on page 4 of the plan set and are discussed in the following section. The sign would, at 114 sq. ft., be slightly smaller than the maximum that would be allowed. The aluminum cabinet would be green with white letters that spell out "The Fresh Market" and these letters would be internally illuminated. The green background would be required to be opaque enough so that only the letters would be illuminated. Staff has some concern about the proportion of the letters relative to the overall sign

area. Staff has included for the HRB's and ARB's consideration condition number 9 to reduce the letters by 10% to allow for more space around the letters.

The applicant is also proposing three additional panels below the Fresh Market marquee sign for Chase Bank and other tenants not yet identified. The sign panels would be attached to the metal frame along the sides and a minimum of 10 inches of space would be provided between the panel and the frame, preserving the open look of the original sign while still allowing for more current signage requirements. The lowest tenant sign panel would be large enough to provide space for four tenant names. The upper two panels each would measure approximately 6 feet wide and 3 feet, 4 inches tall for a total sign area of 20 sq. ft. The lowest panel would measure 6 feet wide and 4 feet 10 inches tall for a total sign area of 29 sq. ft. Each sign panel would be approximately 24 inches in depth. The colors of the sign would be required to be compatible with the approved colors of the shopping center and with the Eichler design, while allowing for individual tenant identity. A color and material sample board will be available for review at the hearing.

The applicant has also provided on page 13 of the plan set elevations for the panel proposed for the Chase Bank to provide context. If approved, the size of this panel sign would be reduced to 6 feet wide and 3 feet, 4 inches tall, as proposed in the Master Sign Program. Staff believes that, as proposed, the historic sign is appropriately designed and consistent with the Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation. Per Standard 9, new additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall avoid destroying the historic materials that characterize the property. New work, while differentiated from the old, shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the site.

#### Monument Signs

The applicant proposes two double sided, internally illuminated, metal cabinet monument signs to serve as directories. One directory sign is proposed at the St. Francis Driveway. The second directory sign is proposed to be located at the primary Embarcadero Road driveway, near the historic sign. Each directory sign would measure 84 inches wide, 36 inches tall and 10 inches in depth. Each side would consist of five aluminum sign panels with white polycarbonate borders and satin black stand-offs at the corner of each sign. The center panel would be for the grocery store, The Fresh Market, and would measure 3.19 sq. ft. The four other panels to be placed on either side of the center panel would be approximately 2.33 sq. ft. in size each. The lettering and logo would be limited to 70% of the area of its sign panel. The site's address in metal lettering would be placed at the bottom center of the sign. Similar to the historic sign, only the letters of each sign would be illuminated, as show-through copy. The background would be opaque so that the light would not be visible. The frame of the sign would be finished in a muted moss green color (SW 6173 Cocoon), similar to the historic sign. These monument signs have been designed to be low profile so as to not detract from the overall look of the center.

#### Blade/Projecting Sign

The master sign program also includes two internally illuminated blade signs that would be located on the southwest corner of the grocery building over each main entry door. These two signs have already been approved with the Fresh Market signage and are also proposed to be incorporated into

the Master Sign Program. The double faced aluminum signs, with a maximum size letter size of 9 sq. ft., would measure 3 feet 3 inches in height and 3 feet and 6 inches wide, for a total of 12.25 square feet. A condition of approval was included requiring that only the letter or logo would be illuminated. Staff believes that given the size of the building and setback from the streets, that the proposed projecting signs are supportable.

### Wall Signs

The applicant proposes two types of wall signs for each tenant of the commercial buildings; both types would comply with the Sign Code and would not need any sign exceptions with respect to maximum wall sign area. The first sign type would be an aluminum sign mounted under the canopy, with a 2-inch thick metal raceway, metal standoffs, and acrylic backing where there are distinctive overhangs. The channel letters would be made of metal and halo-illuminated with white LED lights. The sign would have a maximum height of 22 inches and a width of approximately 16 feet, with letter and/or logo heights of 18 inches. As shown on page 13 of the plan set, one of these signs would be for a Building 2 tenant Chase Bank. The Chase Bank sign would measure 22 inches tall and 105 inches (8 ft. 2 ¼") tall. Most of the signs would be under the canopy mounted type. The second sign type would be a wall mounted sign where there is no overhang. The wall mounted signs would be channel letters, metal signs, halo-illuminated with white LED lights. The letters would be 18 inches tall and together, 16 feet wide at most. The sizes would ultimately be dependent upon the size of each tenant's frontage but would not exceed these numbers to ensure an appropriate balance. Plan set pages 15-16 illustrate how the building may appear with multiple tenant signs.

One 107 sq. ft. halo-illuminated, aluminum channel letter sign was approved for the Fresh Market. The sign would have a maximum height of approximately 2 feet 8 inches and a width of 40 feet and 4 inches. The channel letters would measure 3 inches deep and would be offset 1 and ½ inches from the wall. The proposed wall sign area is within the maximum allowed by the Sign Ordinance. The sign was reviewed by the historic preservation planner to confirm that the sign, although not located on a historically significant building, would be compatible with the adjacent historic buildings. The two color schemes for the wall sign would consist of (1) an off white (Sherwin Williams 7049 Nuance) if the tenant has a dark lettering or (2) a plum brown color (Sherwin Williams 6272 plum) if the tenant has a lighter lettering. Staff believes that the proposed sign types are compatible in design, scale and size for the shopping center. The signs are architecturally compatible with the Eichler buildings and the signs already approved for the grocery building.

### **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 upon the Historic Resources Board determination that the project complies with the Secretary's Standards for Rehabilitation.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

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

**COURTESY COPIES**

John Tze, Ho Holdings No. 1 LLC

**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**  
2170 Bayshore Road (Edgewood Plaza Master Sign Program)  
File No. 13PLN-00166

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. The proposed signage was designed to be compatible with the scale of the shopping center while respecting the nearby residential neighborhood.
- 2) The design is compatible with the immediate environment of the site in that the design is compatible with the architecture within Edgewood Plaza.
- 3) The design is appropriate to the function of the project in that it accommodates a retail use and is compatible with the pedestrian attributes of Edgewood Plaza.
- 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 Edgewood Plaza.
- 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 Edgewood Plaza.
- 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 13-15 are not applicable to the project.





**ATTACHMENT B**  
**CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL**

2170 Bayshore Road (Edgewood Plaza Master Sign Program)  
File No. 13PLN-00166

**PLANNING DIVISION**

1. The project shall be implemented as shown on the plans dated received May 30, 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 project must comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation of historic resources.
4. All wall signs shall utilize halo illumination.
5. Only the letter/logo portion of the monument and projecting signs shall be illuminated.
6. The new monument sign placed at the Saint Francis driveway shall be placed so that it is at least 6 feet away from the driveway curb at its farthest point.
7. Construction activities and all noise producing equipment shall comply with Chapter 9.10 (Noise) of the Palo Alto Municipal Code.
8. During construction, the site shall be kept clear of debris on a daily basis.
9. All landscaping located around the building shall be protected and maintained.
10. The letters for the Fresh Market marquee sign shall be reduced by 10%.

Ongoing Condition

11. Each tenant shall conform to the provisions of the Master Sign Program, as illustrated in the plans dated received May 30, 2013. Signs that are consistent with the Master Sign Program shall require only a building permit with Planning approval. Any variation from this program would need to be approved via the Architectural Review process.