

City Council

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City of Sebastopol Design Review Board Staff Report

Meeting Date: January 20, 2016
Agenda Item: 9B
To: Design Review Board
From: Jonathan Atkinson, Assistant Planner
Subject: Minor Sign Review
Recommendation: Consider Request
Applicant/Owner: Adam Kliegman/Tombe Realty
File Number: 2016-01
Address: 130 South Main Street: Suite 103
CEQA Status: Categorical Exemption: Section 15311: Class 11
General Plan: Downtown Core
Zoning: CD: Downtown Core

Introduction:

This is a Minor Sign Review application, requesting approval to install one sign for West County Coffee and Wine at 130 South Main Street, Suite 103 in The Nonella Building. This application requires Design Review Board approval because it involves the installation of a sign that has a sign area greater than 25 square feet per Section 17.230.020.A (3) (b) of the Zoning Ordinance.

Project Description:

The application involves the installation of the following sign: One wall sign that measures 1 foot and 11 inches by 18 feet, has a sign area of 34½ square feet, and reads: "West County Coffee & Wine." While West County Coffee and Wine has exterior lighting that illuminates its storefront, the sign does not involve any form of illumination.

Environmental Review:

The application is categorically exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15311, Class 11, which exempts the installation of on-premise signs.

Zoning Ordinance Consistency:

The Nonella Building currently has a sign program, which was adopted in 1988. Sign programs establish signage standards for individual buildings, shopping centers, development areas, and districts. Staff reviewed the sign program and found that it lacks sufficient detail to make a determination in terms of allowable sign area.

The application is subject to the following provisions of the Zoning Ordinance:

Section 17.230.050.A: General Sign Standards and Regulations

(3) The width of a building frontage on a public street or right-of-way, excluding alleys or service ways, shall be used to calculate the allowable sign area.

$$\text{Sign Area} = \frac{\text{Total Allowable Sign Area (based on total building frontage)}}{\text{Number of Tenant Spaces}}$$

The maximum sign area permitted for each tenant at 130 South Main Street is approximately 15 square feet, given that the site has a total building frontage of 204 feet between South Main Street and Burnett Street and has a total of 12 tenant spaces.

$$\text{Sign Area} = \frac{175 \text{ Square Feet}}{12 \text{ Tenant Spaces}} = 15 \text{ Square Feet}$$

The application involves the installation of a wall sign with a sign area of 34½ square feet, which exceeds the maximum allowable sign area for individual tenants. A Sign Exception is required for this provision. This appears to be acceptable, given that West County Coffee and Wine has a more prominent presence than smaller tenants in the building because it is located on South Main Street.

Section 17.230.060 C: Signs Permitted in Commercial and Office Districts

(2) A maximum of 2 window, awning, wall, or fascia business identification signs are permitted for each ground floor use or tenant. One of those 2 signs may be a projecting sign, providing that the sign does not exceed 6 square feet in area or 18” in height, and has a minimum clearance of 7 1/2 ’ above the sidewalk.

The application involves the installation of one sign. The application is consistent with this provision.

Public Comment:

The Planning Department has not received any comments on the application from the public as of writing this staff report.

City Departmental Comment:

The Planning Department has not received any City department comments on the application as of writing this staff report.

Required Findings:

Design Review: Section 17.310.030.B.2 of the Zoning Ordinance establishes the following Design Review Procedure: In considering an application for design review, the Design Review Board, or the Planning Director, as the case may be, shall determine whether:

- a) The design of the proposal would be compatible with the neighborhood or and with the general visual character of Sebastopol.
- b) The design provides appropriate transitions and relationships to adjacent properties and the public right of way.
- c) It would not impair the desirability of investment or occupation in the neighborhood,
- d) The design is internally consistent and harmonious.
- e) The design is in conformity with any guidelines and standards adopted pursuant to this Chapter.

Sign Exception: Section 17.230.020.B.2 of the Zoning Ordinance states that the Design Review Board may grant a Sign Exception based on the following criteria:

- a) The exception will allow a unique sign of exceptional design or style that will enhance the area or building, or that will be a visible landmark; or
- b) The exception will allow a sign that is more consistent with the architecture and development of the site; or site context; or is appropriate given the nature of the business; or
- c) The granting of the exception will not constitute the granting of a special privilege inconsistent with the sign limitations upon other properties in the same vicinity and Zone District.

Analysis:

West County Coffee and Wine opened in January 2016, and the sign was subsequently installed prior to City approval. Staff informed the applicant upon application submittal that the sign would need to be removed if the Design Review Board does not find it suitable for the site. The applicant understands that this could be a possibility. The Board could find that the sign is suitable for the site in that it does not include internal illumination, which is a Zoning Ordinance and Board preference for signage, especially in the Downtown Core. The Board could also find that the sign is suitable for the site in that it is internally consistent and harmonious, as it contains uniform colors and lettering in terms of font, size, and spacing. The application does require a Sign Exception because it exceeds the maximum allowance for sign area, which is reasonable given the business's prominent location on South Main Street as opposed to smaller tenant spaces in the building.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the Board approve the application based on the facts, findings, and analysis set forth and subject to the conditions of approval contained in this staff report, if there is a consensus that the sign is compatible with the site.

Alternatively, the Board may find that revisions are necessary and a continuance is appropriate. Staff recommends that the Board provide specific direction for redesign to the applicant in the event of a continuance or rationale in the event of a denial.

SIGN PERMIT: 2016-01
West County Coffee and Wine
130 South Main Street: Suite 103
One Wall Sign without Illumination

Findings for Approval:

1. That the project is categorically exempt from the requirements of CEQA pursuant to Section 15311, Class 11, which exempts the installation of on-premise signs.
2. That the project is consistent with the Zoning Ordinance in that it complies with the applicable provisions set forth in the Sign Ordinance with the approval of a Sign Exception.
3. That the Sign Exception will allow a style that will enhance the building and is more consistent with the site context in that the sign is for West County Coffee and Wine, which has a more prominent presence than smaller tenants in the building with its location on South Main Street.
4. That the granting of the Sign Exception will not constitute the granting of a special privilege inconsistent with the sign limitations upon other properties in the same vicinity and Zone District in that the Board has approved large signs when appropriate, and other businesses within the Downtown Core have the ability to request a Sign Exception in the future, if necessary
5. That the project is compatible with the neighborhood and with the general visual character of Sebastopol in that involves a sign that enhances an existing tenant space along Main Street, and is similar in design to several wall signs throughout the community.
6. That the project design provides appropriate transitions and relationships to adjacent properties and the public right of way in that the sign is of a similar size to existing signage along Main Street and is secured to the building's façade, which maintains accessibility for pedestrians.
7. That the project would not impair the desirability of investment or occupation in the neighborhood in that the sign is constructed of durable materials and protected from the elements by an existing awning, helping to ensure that it does not quickly fall into a state of disrepair.
8. The project design is internally consistent and harmonious in that it contains uniform colors and lettering in terms of font, size, and spacing.
9. That the project design is in conformity with guidelines and standards adopted pursuant to the Design Guidelines in that the sign is constructed of natural materials, proportionate to building elements, proportionate to the existing building's dimensions, and does not contain internal illumination.

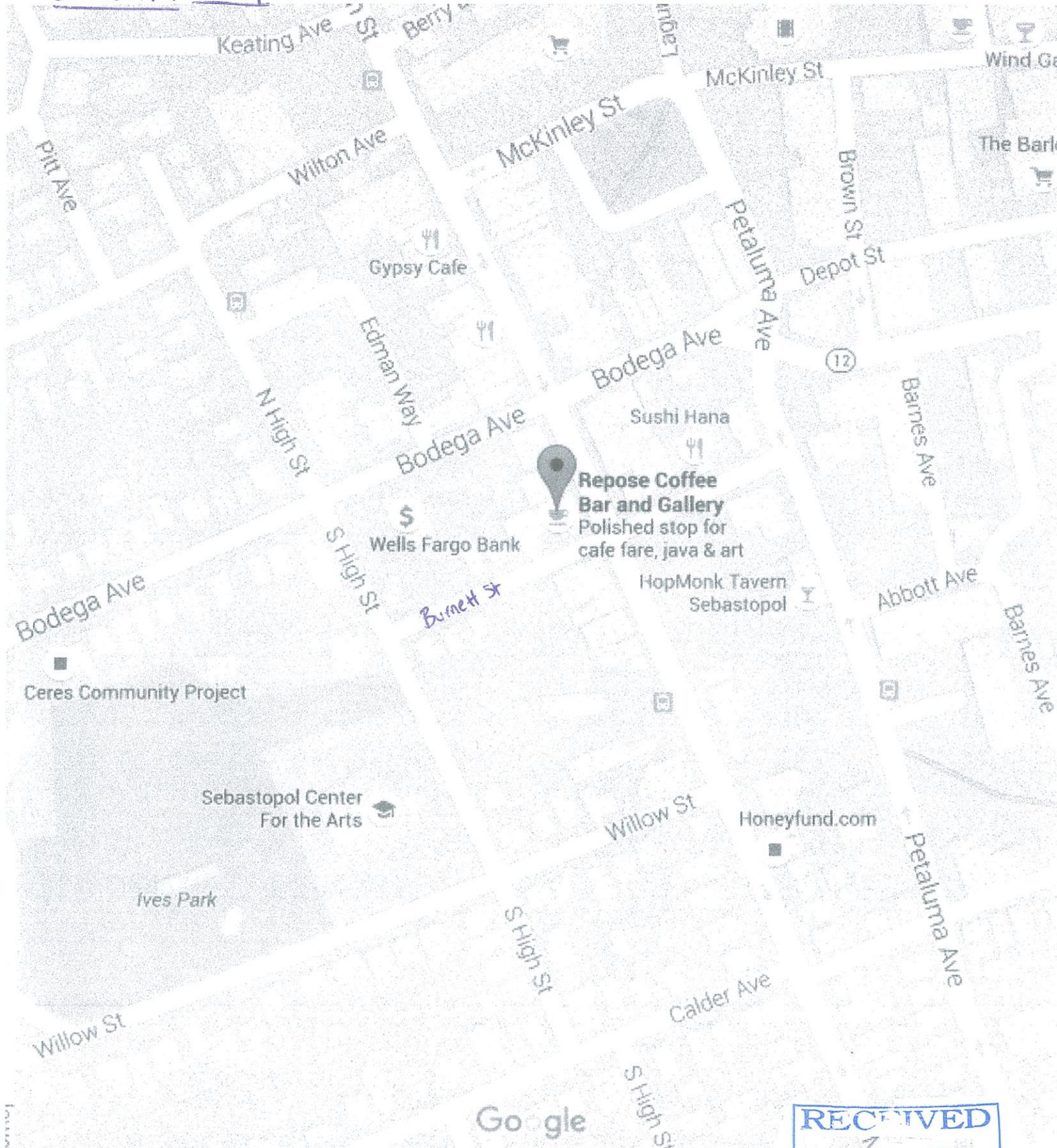
Recommended Conditions of Approval:

1. This Sign Permit is valid for a period of two (2) years. However the applicant may request one one-year extension of this approval from the Planning Director, pursuant to Zoning Ordinance Section 17.250.050. If the sign installation does not occur within the designated time frame, the approval will be considered null and void with no further action required on the part of the City.
2. The sign installation shall be consistent with the application materials date-stamped January 4, 2016. No other signs regulated by the Sign Ordinance shall be installed or displayed without the prior written approval of the Planning Department.
3. An Encroachment Permit may be required prior to sign installation. Please contact the Engineering Department at (707) 823-2151, prior to installation, if work will be performed or materials placed in the public right-of-way.
4. A Building Permit is required for the installation of most signs. Please contact the Building and Safety Department for Building Permit application information at (707) 823-8597.

Attachments:

- Master Planning Application Form
- Location Map
- Site Photographs
- Sign Review Submittal

Location Map



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JAN 04 2015
BY: JA

West County Coffee & Wine

216"

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