

RESOLUTION NO. 2022-007

**A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF PACIFICA
APPROVING SIGN PERMIT S-135-21 FOR A MASTER SIGN PROGRAM AT 580 CRESPI
DRIVE (APN 022-162-390), AND FINDING THE PROJECT EXEMPT FROM THE
CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA).**

Initiated by: David Ford, All Signs Services (“Applicant”).

WHEREAS, an application has been submitted for a master sign program at 580 Crespi Drive (APN 022-162-390) (File No. 2021-024); and

WHEREAS, the project requires approval of a Sign Permit for the Master Sign Program, because the property meets the definition of a multi-unit development per Pacifica Municipal Code (PMC) Section 9-4.2902(ag); and

WHEREAS, the project requires Planning Commission approval of a Sign Permit for a freestanding sign per PMC sec. 9-4.2906(b); and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission approved a sign program for the site in August 1979 under Site Development Permit PSD-237-79 and a Planning Commission-approved master sign program may not be changed without Commission approval per PMC sec. 9-4.2907(b); and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission of the City of Pacifica did hold a duly noticed public hearing on April 18, 2022, at which time it considered all oral and documentary evidence presented, and incorporated all testimony and documents into the record by reference.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Planning Commission of the City of Pacifica as follows:

1. The above recitals are true and correct and material to this Resolution.
2. In making its findings, the Planning Commission relied upon and hereby incorporates by reference all correspondence, staff reports, and other related materials.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Planning Commission of the City of Pacifica does hereby make the finding that the project qualifies for Class 1 and 11 exemptions under CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 and 15311, as described below, applies to the project:

15301. “Class 1 consists of the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former use. The types of “existing facilities” itemized below are not intended to be all-inclusive of the types of projects which might fall within Class 1. The key consideration is whether the project involves negligible or no expansion of use. Examples include but are not limited to:

- (a) Interior or exterior alterations involving such things as interior partitions, plumbing, and electrical conveyances;”

15311. “Class 11 consists of construction, or placement of minor structures accessory to (appurtenant to) existing commercial, industrial, or institutional facilities, including but not limited to:

(a) On-premise signs;”

The project includes the establishment and implementation of a master sign program to an existing commercial development. The MSP would result in minor exterior alteration of an existing private structure, involving no expansion of existing use. The on-premise signs are minor structures accessory to the existing commercial facilities. Additionally, none of the exceptions applicable to a Class 1 and 11 exemptions in Section 15300.2 of the CEQA Guidelines apply, as described below.

- Sec. 15300.2(a): This exception does not apply to the Class 1 exemption. Furthermore, there is no evidence in the record that the project would impact an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern in an area designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, State, or local agencies.
- Sec. 15300.2(b): There is no evidence in the record that cumulative projects of the same type would occur within the same place to create a significant cumulative impact.
- Sec. 15300.2(c): There is no evidence that the activity would have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.
- Sec. 15300.2(d) through (f): The project is not proposed near an officially designated scenic highway, does not involve a current or former hazardous waste site, and, does not affect any historical resources. Therefore, the provisions of subsections (d) through (f) are not applicable to this project.

Because the project is consistent with the requirements for Class 1 and Class 11 exemptions and none of the exceptions to applying Class 1 and 11 exemptions in Section 15300.2 of the CEQA Guidelines apply; therefore, there is substantial evidence in the record to support a finding that the project is categorically exempt from CEQA.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Planning Commission of the City of Pacifica does hereby make the following findings pertaining to Sign Permit S-135-21:

Freestanding Sign (PMC sec. 9-4.2906(b))

- A freestanding sign is necessary for the business or businesses located on the premises to achieve a reasonable degree of identification.*

Discussion: The proposed freestanding sign would replace the existing freestanding sign and would be 8’-0” tall by 8’-0” wide, which will provide the center visibility along Crespi Drive. Most of the business frontages on the site are not highly visible from Crespi Drive due to the layout of the development and the narrow lot shape. The freestanding sign would provide an identification landmark for the property along Crespi Drive which is necessary for the businesses located on the premises, especially those located near the south portion of the site, as well as to distinguish the entry to the site from other developed sites along this portion of Crespi Drive.

ii. *The sign is consistent with the intent and provisions of this article.*

Discussion: The MSP is consistent with the provisions of Article 29 of Chapter 4 of Title 9 of the PMC. The designs of the proposed signs are consistent with PMC Section 9-4.2910(b), which states “a sign permit shall not be issued by the Planning Administrator unless the subject sign is found to be consistent with the applicable design criteria contained in the City's adopted Design Guidelines.”

The City has adopted Design Guidelines which are intended to accomplish the following purposes:

- Ensure at least a minimum standard of design through the application of consistent policies.
- Encourage new construction which exceeds minimum standards and discourage construction which falls short of those standards.
- Provide a framework for review and evaluation of design proposals.
- Implement applicable General Plan and Local Coastal Plan goals and policies.
- Expedite and facilitate the planning permit process.
- Provide direction for design and redesign of projects.

The Design Guidelines are advisory in nature and, unlike zoning, do not contain explicit standards for determining strict compliance. Rather, they address significant elements of project design that, when balanced overall, result in the best possible site layout and building architecture for a project. An applicant may propose a project which complies with some but not all guidelines and the Planning Commission may still find the project consistent with the Design Guidelines. It is up to the Commission's discretion to determine the appropriate balance and relative priority of the guidelines for a particular project when considering whether a project has achieved Design Guidelines consistency.

As conditioned, the proposed improvements at the site are consistent with the City's adopted Design Guidelines related to Commercial Signs.

(a) *All signs should relate to their surroundings in terms of size, height, shape, color, materials, and lighting so that they are complementary to the overall design of the building and site.*

The existing building is painted with a neutral green and beige and is trimmed with wood panels and charcoal grey metal fascia, roll-away doors, awnings, and dark trimmed doors and windows. The freestanding sign would have a wood panel background with charcoal grey lettering to match the trim on the building. The base of the freestanding sign would be covered with stone veneer, which would complement the wood details. The 8'-0" tall freestanding sign would be appropriately sized compared to the 17'-4" height of the adjacent building.

The business wall signs would be charcoal grey cabinet signs with routed cabinet faces backed with acrylic white plastic. The charcoal grey cabinets would blend with the surrounding fascia and awning. The suite ID wall signs would be a routed aluminum panel sign painted charcoal grey to match the business wall signs and building trims.

- (b) Signs should be unobtrusive and convey their message clearly and legibly. Sign copy should not be cluttered with nonessential information.*

The proposed MSP specifies a single line or two lines of copy for business wall signs, which will include the name of the business and possibly a tag line. The applicant has clarified that logos will not be permitted on the business wall signs. The MSP details the spacing of text on business wall signs and the font type and size. The freestanding sign would include the commercial center name and address, as shown on Page 4 of the MSP (Attachment B). The suite ID wall signs would include only the suite number. Window signs would be limited in size and would not clutter the glazed entrance to the business.

- (c) Where internal illumination is used, signs should be designed to illuminate the letters rather than the background.*

The business wall signs for the “A” suites of the development would have interior illumination as detailed on Page 1.00 of the proposed MSP (Attachment B). The business wall signs for the remaining suites would be non-illuminated. The business wall signs would have routed cabinet faces backed with acrylic plastic, which would only allow the routed out letters to be illuminated.

- (d) Sign illumination should not be unnecessarily bright, and should not cause glare or light intrusion onto other signs.*

The business wall signs for the “A” suites of the development would have interior illumination as detailed on Page 1.00 of the proposed MSP (Attachment B). The business wall signs for the remaining suites would be non-illuminated. The routed cabinet faces backed with acrylic plastic will prevent unnecessarily bright sign illumination, glare, or light intrusion.

The proposed freestanding sign will have exterior illumination. A condition of approval would require the property owner to install and maintain the exterior lighting in a manner that is not unnecessarily bright and does not cause glare or light intrusion onto other signs or surrounding properties or the public right-of-way.

- (e) A freestanding sign should only be used for shopping centers or when deemed the most feasible means by which a business may obtain a reasonable degree of identification.*

The proposed monument sign would replace the existing freestanding sign and would be 8’-0” tall by 8’-0” wide, which will provide the center visibility along Crespi Drive. Most of the business frontages on the site are not highly visible from Crespi Drive due to the layout of the development and the narrow lot shape. The freestanding sign provides an identification landmark for the property along Crespi Drive which is necessary for the businesses located on the premises, especially those located near the south portion of the site.

- (f) *The height of a freestanding sign should be no higher than necessary for adequate identification and visibility, but in no case should the height of the freestanding sign exceed the height of the principal structure on the site.*

The total proposed height of the freestanding sign is 8'-0", which would provide for visibility from Crespi Drive but is not taller than the existing 17'-4" height of the adjacent building on the site.

- (g) *Monument signs are generally preferred over pole signs. The support or base of a freestanding sign should match or complement the materials and colors of the building. Planting at the base of a freestanding sign is encouraged.*

The freestanding sign would have a wood panel background with charcoal grey lettering to match the trim on the building. The base of the freestanding sign would be covered with stone veneer, which would complement the wood trim.

The front portion of the property contains landscaping. Removal and replacement of the existing freestanding sign would likely impact the surrounding plants. The project, as conditioned, would require the property owner to re-landscape around the freestanding sign to the Planning Director's satisfaction.

- (j) *Signs should never impede pedestrian or vehicular movement or vision.*

The proposed freestanding sign would replace an existing freestanding sign that is positioned perpendicular to the front property line. While the proposed sign would be placed in the same location and in the same orientation as the existing freestanding sign, the 8' wide proposed freestanding sign would be setback further from the front property line compared to the existing freestanding sign. The existing freestanding sign (approximately 14' wide) encroaches into a 5' wide public utility easement (PUE) that runs along the front property line. The proposed freestanding sign would be setback 5' from the front property line and outside of the PUE. Although no visual obstructions of pedestrian or vehicular movement caused from the existing freestanding sign, the increased setback of the proposed freestanding sign would only provide further visibility of pedestrian and vehicular movement along Crespi Drive.

For the reasons above, the proposed signs are consistent with the City's adopted Design Guidelines.

- iii. *The sign does not exceed the square footage set forth in subsection (3) of subsection (a) of this section.*

Discussion: As shown in Table 1 of the staff report, the proposed freestanding sign does not exceed the square footage set forth in PMC Section 9-4.2906(a)(3).

- iv. *The sign does not exceed a height of twenty (20') feet above the sidewalk or paved area over which it is erected.*

Discussion: The proposed freestanding sign is 8'-0" high and would not exceed 20 feet.

Window Sign (PMC sec. 9-4.2906(c))

- v. *Window signs shall be subject to the size limitation of subsection (3) of subsection (a) of this section; however, in no case shall window signs cover more than twenty-five (25%) percent of the total area of all glazed vertical surfaces of a business.*

Discussion: Each business frontage contains at least 70 square feet (sf) of glazed vertical surface. Therefore, the proposed 5.1 sf of window signage does not exceed the square footage set forth in PMC Section 9-4.2906(a)(3) or PMC Section 9-4.2906(c) or PMC Section 9-4.2907(f).

Wall Sign (PMC sec. 9-4.2906(d))

- vi. *Wall signs shall be subject to the size limitation of subsection (3) of subsection (a) of this section; however, in no case shall wall signs exceed ten (10%) percent of the building face to which the signs are attached.*

Discussion: As shown in Table 1 of the staff report, the signs do not exceed the square footage set forth in PMC Section 9-4.2906(a)(3). Additionally, the 17'-4" tall building provides a building face of 316.6 sf to 1,032.12 sf at each business frontage. The 6 sf to 8.25 sf business wall signs in addition to the 4 sf of suite ID wall sign would not exceed 10 percent of the building face (i.e., 31.6 sf to 103.2 sf).

Master Sign Programs (PMC sec. 9-4.2907)

- vii. *In addition to the other provisions of this article, signs requiring a sign permit shall be subject to the design criteria for signs contained in the City's adopted Design Guidelines.*

Discussion: As further described in Section 4.A.ii of the staff report, the proposed signs would be consistent with the City's adopted Design Guidelines.

- viii. *Each sign in the master sign program shall be compatible in character and in quality of design with other signs in the program.*

Discussion: The City has encouraged the improvement of sign design and quality throughout the City, where possible. While the use of wall cabinet signage is discouraged due to its low quality appearance compared to preferred channel letters signs, the applicant has described that the use of channel letters along the metal fascia would require replacement of the entire fascia segment every time the sign is changed as the fascia can't be patched and painted. Considering the level of repair that would be necessary to change a channel letters sign and because the mounted cabinets signs would include a routed cabinet face and structure that would blend in with the surrounding fascia and awning, the City found the proposed cabinet signs acceptable.

The MSP also proposes to back the routed cabinet face with a flat piece of white acrylic. In response to a staff inquiry, the applicant has detailed that push through acrylic letters in the

cabinet sign would result in an increase of approximately \$1,800 to the proposed sign price. The applicant has noted they do not want to burden the unit owners with the increased cost.

Many small and local business owners in the City have found it financially feasible to install channel letter signs. Additionally, the City finds that the dimension and detail added by the push through letters to the cabinet signs are a reasonable alternative to improve the sign design and quality, and that the depth provided by the push through letters is necessary to achieve compatibility with the 1" depth of the letters on the proposed freestanding sign. Therefore, a condition of approval is included to revise the MSP to include push through letters in the business wall signs.

The sign types detailed in the MSP, as conditioned, are all compatible in character and quality of design. The freestanding sign would complement the colors and materials of the building. The business wall sign materials would be aluminum and would include unified and complementary colors, themes, and fonts. As conditioned, each of the signs would have complementary design features and require the use of similar coastal compatible materials.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Planning Commission of the City of Pacifica approves Sign Permit S-135-21 for a Master Sign Program at 580 Crespi Drive (APN 022-162-390), subject to conditions of approval included as Exhibit A to this resolution.

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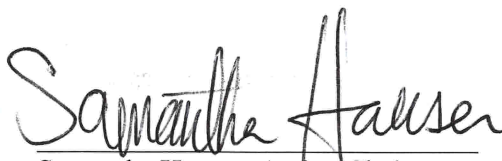
Passed and adopted at a regular meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Pacifica, California, held on the 18th day of April, 2022.

AYES, Commissioners: DOMURAT, FERGUSON, GODWIN, HAUSER, WRIGHT


NOES, Commissioners: N/A

ABSENT, Commissioners: BERMAN, LEAL

ABSTAIN, Commissioners: N/A


Samantha Hauser, Acting Chair

ATTEST:


Christian Murdock, Acting Planning Director

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

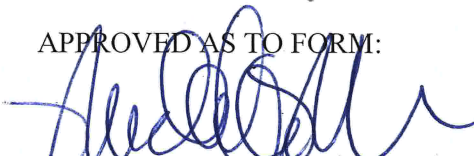

Michelle Kenyon, City Attorney

Exhibit A

Conditions of Approval: Sign Permit S-135-21 for a Master Sign Program at 580 Crespi Drive (APN 022-162-390)

Planning Commission Meeting of April 18, 2022

Planning Division

1. Development shall be substantially in accord with the plans entitled “Pacifica Commerce Center Tenant Signage Criteria 580 Crespi Drive – Pacifica California March 21, 2022” received by the City of Pacifica on March 23, 2022, except as modified by the following conditions.
2. Prior to the installation of any new signs, the applicant shall make the following modifications/additions to the master sign program and shall submit the revised master sign program for review and approval by the Planning Director.
 - a. Add to Page 5.02 and Page 5.04 under Key Notes a statement that logos are not permitted.
 - b. Add to Exhibit 3 “Two Line Layout” on Page 5.02 the 9’ Not to Exceed (NTE) detail to match the detail shown on Exhibit 1 on the same page.
 - c. Add an exhibit to show the “Two Line Layout” on Page 5.04, to match the detail shown in Exhibit 3 on Page 5.02, as revised by this condition.
 - d. Revise Key Note 5 on Page 5.02; Key Note 12 on Page 5.03; Key Note 5 on Page 5.04; Key Note 11 on Page 5.05 that signage should include push through channel letters.
 - e. Add under the heading “Submittal and Permits” on Page 3.00 the following statement “Signage inconsistent with this Master Sign Program shall require approval from the Landlord and Planning Commission prior to installation.”
3. The property owner shall install and maintain the exterior lights associated with the monument sign shown on page 4.00 of the master sign program in a manner that is not unnecessarily bright and does not cause glare or light intrusion onto other signs or onto other properties or the public right-of-way to the satisfaction of the Planning Director or designee.
4. The property owner shall install at the subject site only those signs depicted in the master sign program. Any other signs not part of the master sign program are prohibited except for temporary signs authorized by the Pacifica Municipal Code.
5. Prior to the final for the building permit associated with the freestanding sign, the applicant shall install and replace landscaping around the freestanding sign to the satisfaction of the Planning Director or designee. Landscaping shall contain species that are drought-tolerant, coastal compatible, and mostly native. All landscaping shall be maintained in a healthful condition.
6. The property owner shall maintain its site in a fashion that does not constitute a public nuisance and that does not violate any provision of the Pacifica Municipal Code.
7. All outstanding and applicable fees associated with the processing of this project shall be paid prior to the issuance of a building permit.
8. Prior to issuance of a building permit, Applicant shall clearly indicate compliance with all conditions of approval on the plans and/or provide written explanations to the Planning Director’s satisfaction.

9. The Applicant shall indemnify, defend and hold harmless the City, its Council, Planning Commission, advisory boards, officers, employees, consultants and agents (hereinafter "City") from any claim, action or proceeding (hereinafter "Proceeding") brought against the City to attack, set aside, void or annul the City's actions regarding any development or land use permit, application, license, denial, approval or authorization, including, but not limited to, variances, use permits, developments plans, specific plans, general plan amendments, zoning amendments, approvals and certifications pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act, and/or any mitigation monitoring program, or brought against the City due to actions or omissions in any way connected to the Applicant's Project ("Challenge"). City may, but is not obligated to, defend such Challenge as City, in its sole discretion, determines appropriate, all at Applicant's sole cost and expense. This indemnification shall include, but not be limited to, damages, fees and/or costs awarded against the City, if any, and costs of suit, attorney's fees and other costs, liabilities and expenses incurred in connection with such proceeding whether incurred by the Applicant, City, and/or parties initiating or bringing such Proceeding. If the Applicant is required to defend the City as set forth above, the City shall retain the right to select the counsel who shall defend the City. Per Government Code Section 66474.9, the City shall promptly notify Applicant of any Proceeding and shall cooperate fully in the defense.

Building Division

10. The project requires review and approval of a building permit by the Building Official. Applicant shall apply for and receive approval of a building permit prior to commencing any construction or installation of signage, including but not limited to the freestanding sign and all wall signs.

Engineering Division

11. Construction shall be in conformance with the City of Pacifica Storm Water Management and Discharge Control Ordinance and San Mateo Countywide Storm Water Pollution Prevention Program. Best Management Practices shall be implemented and the construction BMPs plans sheet from the Countywide program shall be included in the project plans.
12. Roadways shall be maintained clear of construction materials, equipment, storage, and debris, especially mud and dirt tracked onto the roadways. Dust control and daily road cleanup will be strictly enforced. Install stabilized entrance/exits so no dirt is tracked to the roadway.
13. No private structures, including but not limited to walls, curbs, and fences shall encroach into the public right-of-way.

END

