

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE DESIGN COMMISSION  
OF THE CITY OF LA CANADA FLINTRIDGE  
HELD ON SEPTEMBER 16, 2010**

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Vavoulis called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.
- II. **ROLL:** Present were Commissioners Hoopes, Moldafsky, Roberts and Tobias, Director of Community Development Stanley, Planners Gjolme and Clarke and Assistant Planner Parinas.
- III. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** The Flag Salute was recited.
- IV. **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:** There were no comments.
- V. **CONSENT CALENDAR:**
  - A. **Minutes** – July 1, 2010, July 15, 2010 and September 2, 2010 meetings. The minutes of July 1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> were approved unanimously with changes. The September 2, 2010 minutes were approved unanimously with no changes.
- VI. **PUBLIC HEARINGS:**
  - A. **Design Review 10-17;** Doctors of USC; 1751 Foothill Blvd.; new monument and wall signs.

Planner Clarke gave an overview of the request, which involved a new angled monument sign and wall sign.

Chairman Vavoulis inquired if the overall size of the sign complied with code standards given its design.

Planner Gjolme explained that the design of the sign expands the concept of a double sided monument sign, which are allowed by code, by slightly angling the respective sides of the sign. The “V” shape still provides two sign fields; one visible from the east and one from the west. The issue is the angle at the apex of the “V”, which given its acuteness, still resulted in a double-sided sign, rather than an oversize sign with dual fields visible from the front. There is no specific code language that addresses this design issue, but staff’s position was that the sign met both the spirit and language of the code. Confirmation of this by the Commission was, however, still sought in conjunction with the review.

Chairman Vavoulis confirmed that the wall sign would be illuminated.

Commissioner Moldafsky confirmed that the wall sign is proposed on the south elevation of the building.

Chairman Vavoulis asked the Commission if they had further questions.

Commissioner Hoopes was concerned about the placement of the monument sign in the existing planter area. The scale of the sign shown in the aerial photo did not appear to be consistent with the size of the planter area. He could not tell exactly how large the sign was in relation to the planter. He felt the sign is larger than the red marker indicated on the aerial.

Chairman Vavoulis stated he was concerned with the uncertainty of how the sign will fit within the existing planter.

Commissioner Hoopes noted that if the sign was sited per the representation in the aerial photo, the overall height could be an issue considering the slope at the front of the planter.

Stan Roble - Ultra Signs - explained that the location of the existing monument sign is relatively flat. The new sign would be similarly located, with confirmation by the building inspector.

Commissioner Hoopes asked if the hedge at the front of the curb would be removed.

Mr. Roble confirmed removal but noted that new landscaping is proposed, per the discretion of the Design Commission if desired.

Commissioner Roberts felt that the new sign would not be affected by the site's slope toward Foothill Blvd. since it would be built behind the top of the slope.

Commissioner Hoopes noted approximately 1 foot of fall over the course of the planter. This could be flattened with minimal effort.

Commissioner Roberts clarified that the stucco used for the sign will match the building. He further inquired about the exact composition of the sign.

Mr. Roble stated that the sign's background would be stucco with routed letters through the respective panel fields.

Commissioner Roberts was concerned that seams between the stucco panels might be visible.

Mr. Roble noted that a light colored high quality stucco would be used and did not think the seams would be visible when viewed from more than 10 feet away.

Commissioner Hoopes confirmed that the sign will not delaminate.

Commissioner Roberts inquired about future tenant changes and the issue of matching stucco color after longer periods of time have elapsed.

Mr. Roble noted the stucco is light to begin with and does not fade to the extent of being noticeable for approximately 10 years.

Chairman Vavoulis asked if there were any comments or objections to the design and angle of the sign.

Commissioner Hoopes stated that he liked the design as submitted.

Commissioner Hoopes preferred reverse channel aluminum letters to be used for the wall sign.

Mr. Roble stated the tenant would be agreeable to the revision.

Commissioner Hoopes confirmed that the USC maroon color would be used.

Commissioner Roberts was concerned with the potential for multiple signs on the wall for future tenants in the building.

Commissioner Tobias inquired about how much area for future signage is available for the building.

Planner Clarke explained that area allowances are based on the frontage length of the building and that ample area for signage was still available.

Mr. Roble noted that a sign program is not proposed at this time. Any new sign would require individual review and approval by the Commission.

Chairman Vavoulis commented that perhaps the number of wall signs could be addressed at this time.

Planner Gjolme explained that the Commission cannot restrict or limit what the Sign Ordinance allows. Two walls signs are allowed for the building, with a possibility of a 3<sup>rd</sup>, and those signs would be reviewed upon submittal and approved or denied depending on the Commission's position on the required findings.

Commissioner Roberts felt that brushed gold pinned letters were more appropriate since the monument sign is readily visible and accomplishes the goal of tenant identification. An oil bronze color would also work.

Mr. Roble was agreeable to the oil bronze color.

Chairman Vavoulis directed the discussion to landscaping.

Commissioner Roberts felt a more detailed site plan and landscape plan was needed at this time.

Commissioner Hoopes thought the sign could be approved at this time with the understanding that a revised site and landscape plan would return to the Commission for review and approval at a later date.

Commissioner Tobias clarified that approval for both signs could be granted in order to expedite the request.

Mr. Roble appreciated the Commissions efforts to approve the signs in order to allow fabrication and installation.

Commissioner Tobias suggested that staff work with a member of the Commission to confirm the monument sign's location within the planter.

M/S/C Roberts/Hoopes to approve the request subject to - wall sign composed of non-illuminated pinned letters in an oil rub bronze color to match the window mullions; location and font style as submitted; color sample provided at a later date for the Commission's approval; overall monument sign concept approved with the location of the sign confirmed by staff and Commissioner Hoopes; revised site and landscape plan with precise location of the monument sign and electrical utilities provided at a later date for Commission review and approval; monument sign shall provide 6 total panels for 3 tenants. Approved. 5-0.

**B. Design Review 10-18;** JoAnn Fabrics and Crafts; 2160 Foothill Blvd.; new monument sign.

Assistant Planner Parinas gave an overview of the request, which involved construction of an externally lit monument sign.

Commissioner Moldafsky commended Miss Parinas on a good presentation.

Commissioner Roberts confirmed that a white aluminum field with green routed letters would be used.

Chairman Vavoulis questioned if the brick base for the sign tied in with anything else onsite.

Commissioner Roberts noted that base could be painted white to better blend with the building. He also felt the base should be widened to give a better visual sense of support for the sign.

Commissioner Tobias felt a painted white base would be impaired by dirt and future maintenance efforts.

Commissioner Hoopes supported a natural brick base.

Chairman Vavoulis questioned the use of brick given its lack of correlation with the building.

Commissioner Tobias questioned whether a sandblasted sign would work better.

Commissioner Roberts mentioned the possible use of a stucco field.

Commissioner Hoopes' issue was the height of the base. He felt an 18" base worked better than the 1-foot base proposed. The sign needs to be higher to accommodate a slight grade change along the base.

Commissioner Roberts was concerned with the extent of the white field at the top and bottom of sign. He felt it was excessive and de-emphasized the sign copy.

Chairman Vavoulis commented that the base could be raised to 18" in height, with the field height adjusted as needed per the sign maker's discretion.

Applicant Kelly Ingram noted that the overall height of the sign is 5 feet, below the 6-foot code maximum, and that there was room for modification as needed.

Commissioner Roberts again noted the extent of the white field and felt the sign should be more rectangular in shape. He supported a 3'-6" field and a 1-foot to 18" base height.

Commissioner Roberts stated that one species should be used in the planter since the site has had numerous issues with maintenance.

Charles Rojas - landscaper - agreed with the suggestion of one species and preferred a low-water usage evergreen species. He noted that new irrigation would be installed as part of the project.

M/S/C Hoopes/Moldafsky to approve the request subject to - base height increased by 6" to accommodate N/S grade change; sign cabinet/field height reduced by 6" for an overall height of 5 feet; junipers to be installed in the planter along the west side of the sign only; brick base to be used; length and depth of base to be increased by 4 inches. Approved 5-0.

**C. Design Review 10-16; Chico's; 707 Foothill Blvd.; new wall and blade signs.**

Planner Gjolme gave an overview of the request, which involved replacing two existing wall signs and blade signs with comparably sized and located signs.

Commissioner Roberts inquired if white back-lighting would be used.

Applicant Jeff Reich confirmed white back lighting would be used for the reverse channel letters of the new wall signs.

Commissioner Roberts asked only because the original signs were approved with purple back lighting that did not achieve the desired look/effect.

Commissioner Hoopes felt the proposal was an improvement to the overall look of the building. His only issue was the white color used for the blade sign fields. He inquired if the Commission thought the pure white was too bright and if perhaps an off-white field color would be more appropriate.

Commissioner Tobias did not mind the pure white since the blade signs were very small and not prominently viewed.

The Commission concurred.

M/S/C Tobias/Roberts to approve the request as submitted. Approved 5-0.

**VII. OTHER BUSINESS:** There was no other business.

**VIII. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS:**

Commissioner Roberts noted that he would email staff photos of trees in front of Pier One Imports. They have been excessively trimmed and look awful.

Director of Community Development Stanley responded that all trees on commercial property were protected and that the matter would be handled by code enforcement.

**IX. COMMENTS FROM STAFF:**

There were no comments.

**X. ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:42 am.