

# CITY OF LA CAÑADA FLINTRIDGE

## DESIGN COMMISSION MINUTES DECEMBER 18, 2014 MEETING

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** Vice-Chair Hoopes called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.
- II. **ROLL:** Vice-Chair Hoopes, Commissioners Balcazar and King.  
Absent: Chair Moldafsky and Commissioner Roberts
- III. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** The Flag Salute was recited.
- IV. **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:** There were no comments.
- V. **CONSENT CALENDAR:** Minutes – 11/20/2014 Design Commission meeting  
M/S/C King/Balcazar to adopt minutes. 3-0
- VI. **CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS:** None.

Commissioner Roberts arrived at 7:38 a.m.

### VII. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

Consulting Architect/Planner Cantrell announced that the applicant for Item A had not arrived, but that applicants for Items B and D were present. Vice-Chair Hoopes called for a motion to reorder the agenda to allow absent applicants to arrive for their items. M/S/C King/Balcazar to reorder agenda.

- A. **964 Foothill Boulevard: Partners Trust**  
Design Review 14-14  
Revision to approved wall sign

(The item was the last to be heard on the reordered agenda in order B-C-D-A. Commissioner King returned from her recusal on the previous item.)

Consulting Architect/Planner Cantrell gave an overview of the request to modify a wall sign previously approved by the Commission, resulting from a change to the company's corporate logo. The sign currently in place is in fact a placeholder since the company trade dress has been changed. The bottom of the top line of copy would be aligned with the reveal running across the entire fascia.

Two options were submitted - channel or halo. The halo option depended on the introduction of a panel, finished to match the fascia, which provided a surface for an even halo effect despite the fascia's slight reveal.

Mr. Cantrell displayed the drawings of the submitted signs along with a copy of the company's logo as shown on their website. He noted that the stroke widths had apparently been increased in order to accommodate the internal illumination. Mr. Cantrell stated that the elegance of the actual logo was lost in the translation, with the slash in particular becoming inappropriately dominant. He recommended approval of a metal sign reflecting the actual logo as seen online, externally illuminated.

Vice-Chair Hoopes stated that it is difficult to act without the applicant in attendance. Consulting Architect/Planner Cantrell responded that the Commission could approve the sign as recommended by staff, with the applicant having the option to return at the next meeting if the decision is unacceptable. He added that he believed that the use of an externally illuminated metal sign matching their actual logo was in their interest, and he did not expect a further review.

Commissioner Roberts stated that the building is special because of its prominent location and history, so that there is an obligation to try to make it the best it can be. He favored staff's suggestion relative to the submittal, and stated strong objection to internal illumination. He added that pinned letters with gooseneck lighting would work and that he could approve it as recommended by staff.

Vice-Chair Hoopes asked if Commissioner Roberts had any thoughts about the slash. Mr. Roberts responded that he is amenable to the slash as a trademark item. He added that he was more concerned with alignment of pinned letters on the uneven fascia, and would have to account for unevenness with letters of varying depth.

Commissioner King stated that she liked the idea of the pinned letters and gooseneck lights. She stated support for the font/copy per logo with even letters -- flush on the bottom and pinned along the top fascia.

M/S/C Roberts/Balcazar to approve the sign per staff's recommendation with the 'Partner' copy to be pinned and 'Trust' to be flush-mounted to allow a single plane of copy and slash, and with two black gooseneck lights, either new or relocated with the fascia patched and finished as needed. 4-0

- B. 1929 Verdugo Boulevard: Rock Dog & Cat**  
Design Review 14-24  
New wall sign

Consulting Architect/Planner Cantrell gave an overview of the request to install a new illuminated wall sign consisting of copy and a central logo. He stated that the tenant space has a strong arch as at the Starbuck's at the other end, and noted that the sign is aligned with the main entry driveway.

Mr. Cantrell expressed admiration for the refinement of the sign and its relation to the arch as a complementary shape that gave the impression of an emblem. He noted the refinement of the whimsical collar tag doubling as an ampersand and of the entire emblem being pinned from the wall for a halo effect. Mr. Cantrell also noted that the subcopy is necessary for the public to understand the nature of the business, but that its location between the emblem and the arch interrupted the flow between those two complementary shapes. He recalled having considered placing the subcopy above for that reason, but that it would have been too awkward and prominent. He also stated that placing the subcopy within the arch in some manner could be a good solution, but that it was expanding the project's scope and was not necessary for positive findings. He also noted that the subcopy would be black during the day and off-white at night, contrary to the submitted information.

Vice-Chair Hoopes confirmed that the subcopy would be black.

Commissioner Balcazar suggested that the logo could be dropped and hung within the arch like Starbucks. Mr. Cantrell agreed, aside from the large open fascia area that would be left over the arch. Commissioner Balcazar commented that the logo would be too close to the cornice, and Mr. Cantrell responded that the elevation drawings should be consulted rather than the photo simulation.

Vice-Chair Hoopes commented that the arrangement of elements was good as proposed, but that the emblem was a bit tough to read. He noted that this concern did not preclude positive findings.

Mr. Cantrell announced the presence of the applicant.

Vice-Chair Hoopes opened the public hearing.

Bob Hackin, sign expediter, introduced himself and solicited questions.

Commissioner Roberts asked if the business is a franchise. Mr. Hackin was unsure. Mr. Roberts stated that corporate sign packages often include adaptations for different conditions such as arches.

Commissioner Roberts noted that the logo's legibility would be less than optimal. Mr. Hackin stated that this was a reason that its display should be prominent, as proposed.

Commissioner King asked about enlarging the logo for more emphasis. Mr. Cantrell stated that she should refer to the submitted elevation drawing, showing its ample size.

Commissioner King confirmed that the 'dog and cat' copy was white, not gray.

Commissioner Roberts stated that he was not sure about the fit of the sign and subcopy, and that the Commission was trying to make sure that this is the most visible and legible option for the applicant. He voiced the wish that the logo could be larger, but appreciated the small size of the copy which could not be further reduced.

M/S/C Roberts/King to approve the sign as submitted. 4-0

**C. 510 Foothill Boulevard: Foothill Tile and Stone**  
Design Review 14-25  
New wall sign

Planner Gjolme briefly reviewed the request for a new non-illuminated wall sign composed of blue pinned letters and a small logo. He noted that the sign is of simple composition and content, with individual pin-mounted letters, nonilluminated and 2 inches deep. It is the fourth sign to come for review in the recently remodeled shopping center. The single line of copy would be offset by the square logo on the left side. Maximum letter height would be 18 inches, with the overall span 12'-6". The sign would comply with code. Mr. Gjolme reported that staff regarded the project as precise and attractive, with nuance indicative of the business. He noted that the pinned letters at first glance looks etched.

Mr. Gjolme noted the compressed letters at the end of "Foothill" and between the "n" and "e" of "stone", which could affect legibility at a distance. He remarked that it is part of the trademark, but that very minor spacing or stroke widening might help. He reiterated that the sign was simple, and not internally illuminated, stating that it helped achieve variety at the center.

Commissioner Roberts confirmed the color sample.

Vice-Chair Hoopes opened the public hearing.

Arbi Manukian, sign contractor, brought color and material samples. He noted that it would be made of precision board. Vice-Chair Hoopes confirmed that the sample's thickness matched that of the sign. He asked if the font is custom, and Mr. Manukian replied that it is the same as the other store in Pasadena, adding that the spacing will be increased.

Vice-Chair Hoopes stated that the spacing is strange but legible, and praised the nature of the sign as reminiscent of chisel-point lettering from the past.

Mr. Hoopes closed the public hearing.

Commissioner King stated her admiration of the sign as very different, and agreement with the wider spacing. Commissioner Balcazar concurred.

M/S/C Roberts/King to approve the sign with increased spacing per staff recommendation. 4-0

**D. Flintridge Preparatory School: 4543 Crown Avenue**  
Design Review 14-26  
New monument sign

Commissioner King recused herself due to involvement with the school.

Consulting Architect/Planner Cantrell gave an overview of the request to replace an existing monument sign with an updated sign of simpler design and improved composition. He noted that plants had not been specified, but that the simple and elegant design would be attractive regardless of what is planted at its base. He recommended positive findings.

Vice-Chair Hoopes asked about the material; Mr. Cantrell replied that concrete is proposed.

Commissioner Roberts confirmed with Mr. Cantrell that the footing would be below grade, and that the letters would be metal with a dark bronze finish.

Nick Adams-Wright, representative of Flintridge Preparatory School, explained that board-formed concrete and dark metal would be used to match the siding and letters on the building.

Commissioner Roberts confirmed that it would be a painted finish to match the building.

Vice-Chair Hoopes confirmed that the building is poured concrete and that the entire footing was below grade per the plan.

Commissioner Roberts stated that flush mounted letters might make more sense than pin-mounted, given their exposure to damage on the low sign. Mr. Adams-Wright stated that flush-mounted letters would have better oblique visibility.

Commissioner Balcazar noted that the letter height would accommodate planting along the base of the sign.

Vice-Chair Hoopes noted that the letters match others signs on the property, and he remarked that the sign made sense as submitted. Commissioner Balcazar further noted that the sign would offer improved visibility.

M/S/C Roberts/Balcazar to approve the project, with the option of using flush-mounted letters. 3-0-1 (King recused)

Commissioner King returned to the meeting.

**VIII. OTHER BUSINESS:** none

**IX. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS:**

Commissioner Roberts reported a large video display within the Partner's Trust building, stating that it looks like a digital sign. He pondered what it would be like moved closer to the window.

Director Stanley noted that if it's at least 3 feet away from the window it's exempt from review or regulation.

Consulting Planner/Architect Cantrell stated that such displays are now inexpensive and yet it did not seem to be a widespread concern. He asked if it has been a problem in other cities. Commissioner Roberts mentioned a bakery on Green Street in Pasadena; Mr. Cantrell stated that such an example could be very helpful.

Director Stanley noted that Planner Gjolme would be working on sign ordinance revisions and this concern could then be considered for regulation.

Commissioner Roberts noted that it didn't occur years ago but does now.

Vice-Chair Hoopes stated that he and Commissioner King were on the Mayor's workshop on Zoning Code revisions, and have been meeting to discuss various changes. He noted that at the next meeting, January 9, commercial regulations will be discussed. He invited thoughts from his fellow Commissioners.

Commissioner King asked when La Canada Imports would be returning for review. Planner Gjolme stated that he believed that a solution has been reached, but not formalized yet. It would use two wood panels similar to at 7Eleven, with painted or engraved copy. They would be rustic and organic signs, tied in w 7Eleven. He expected Commission review in January. He noted that the applicant did not want pictographs.

Director Stanley stated that the City we shouldn't back down in assuring attractive signage in Old Town, and that it should be as close as possible to 7Eleven. He noted that the applicant is still under code enforcement so he can be held to bringing the resubmittal in as soon as possible.

Commissioner Roberts reported that he had attended a meeting of the La Canada High School paint color committee and found that they were receptive to alternatives.

Commissioner Balcazar asked about a time limit for temporary banners, referring to the donut shop. Director Stanley answered that the code allows up to 30 days for grand opening banners, which applies also to initial temporary signs. He stated that the City's sign sweep is due soon. Planner Gjolme reported that three signs previously approved at the center had been installed and looked quite good.

Director Stanley wished the Commission a merry Christmas, and noted that the not going to have an election, with City Council appointments to come in March.

Commissioner Roberts confirmed the January 15 special meeting to deal with the streetscape manual.

**X. COMMENTS FROM STAFF:** None

**XI. ADJOURNMENT** M/S/C Roberts/King to adjourn at 8:41 a.m. 4-0