



*CITY OF ROSEVILLE
PLANNING & REDEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT STAFF REPORT
DESIGN COMMITTEE MEETING SEPTEMBER 21, 2006*

Prepared by: Ron Miller, Assistant Planner

ITEM II-C: SIGN VARIANCE – 7451 FOOTHILLS BOULEVARD – NWRSP PARCEL 18 (BATCH RETAIL BUILDINGS 1 & 2) – FILE# 2006PL-138 (V-000031).

REQUEST

The applicant requests approval of a Sign Variance to allow two (2) wall signs per retail tenant where one (1) wall sign is the maximum number permitted by the Sign Ordinance.

Applicant: Borges Architectural Group, Inc., Adam O. Lovern
Property Owner: Batch Pleasant Grove, L.P.

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

The Planning Department recommends that the Design Committee take the following actions:

- A. Adopt the three (3) findings of fact for approval of the Sign Variance;
- B. Approve the Sign Variance with three (3) conditions of approval;

OUTSTANDING ISSUES

There are no outstanding issues associated with this request. The applicant has reviewed and is in agreement with all recommended conditions of approval.

BACKGROUND

The project site, known as Pleasant Grove Pavilions, is located on the southeast corner of Foothills and Pleasant Grove Boulevards (see Attachment 1). The 2.03-acre site is known as Parcel 18 of the Northwest Roseville Specific Plan (NWRSP) area and includes two (2) retail buildings. Building B1 backs up to Foothills Boulevard, and Building B2 backs up to Pleasant Grove Boulevard. (see Exhibit A) The storefronts for these buildings face the parking area at the interior of the site.

On December 28, 2004, a Planned Sign Permit Program (PSPP) was approved for Pleasant Grove Pavilions that established guidelines for the quantity, height, area, and location of all signs for center. (See Exhibit B) The PSPP specifies that tenants within the building are permitted two wall signs each, provided that the cumulative area of wall signage does not exceed 200 square feet *per building*. This is consistent with the maximum quantity and area permitted by the Sign Ordinance for pad buildings. The applicant and property owner were aware of the quantity and area restrictions.

At the time the PSPP was approved (which was prior to the completion of the project), the two buildings were classified as "Freestanding Pad Buildings," which are defined as buildings within a building complex not attached to a major tenant. Since the project had not been completed, it was unknown how many tenants would occupy the buildings. Freestanding pad buildings are typically occupied by up to four to six tenants, which was assumed for the subject buildings. As such, the Freestanding Pad Building classification seemed most appropriate at the time.

Since then, more tenants than previously anticipated have occupied the building. In retrospect, the buildings should have been considered neither major tenants (uses occupying more than 40,000 s.f.) nor freestanding pad buildings. Uses that are not considered either a major tenant or freestanding pad building are permitted one sign and the sign area is restricted to 70% the length of the tenant's front façade up to a maximum of 200 square feet per tenant. Nevertheless, based on the best available

information at the time, the buildings were classified as freestanding pad buildings and were allowed two signs per tenant, with a maximum area of 200 square feet per building.

It is the property owner's responsibility to allocate signage to tenants as leases are signed. In this case, the property owner has allocated more than the 200 square feet permitted by the Sign Ordinance and existing PSPP. The property owner has requested that the City modify the classification of the buildings from "freestanding pad buildings" to "uses that are neither major tenants nor freestanding pad buildings" (RMC 17.06.230.A.4) in order to eliminate the 200 square foot per building limitation. Staff agrees with the property owner that the building and tenant space configuration is more similar to in-line retail buildings and a different classification is warranted. However, in-line retail tenants are only permitted one sign, unless located on a corner of a building. Some tenants within the buildings have already been permitted two wall signs, consistent with the existing PSPP. Rather than require the tenants to remove the second signs, the applicant has requested a Sign Variance to allow two signs per tenant.

It will also be necessary modify the PSPP for Pleasant Grove Pavilions to reflect the change in signage criteria, which is included as a Condition of Approval.

EVALUATION

The applicant's request for a sign variance cites that allowing only two hundred square feet of wall signage per building, regardless of number of tenants or amount of square footage available for lease, is too restrictive, particularly for larger multi-tenant, in-line shop buildings that, due to design considerations, have their backs facing major streets, with entrances to tenant spaces facing away from the street. Whether or not the applicant believes this standard is too restrictive, the current Sign Ordinance prescribes the maximum limitation for wall sign area at 200 square feet.

Per written letter from the applicant (Attachment 2), the retail project is complete and nearing full occupancy, with signs installed and operational for each current tenant. Building B1 has a current total of 370.15 square feet of wall signage and Building B2 has a current total of 340.63 square feet of wall signage. This square footage reflects combined square footage of both front (parking lot elevation) and the rear (street elevation) signage. Since this square footage already exceeds the maximum allowable under the Sign Ordinance and PSPP (if the buildings are classified as Freestanding Pad Buildings), additional tenants will not be allowed signage, which, according to the applicant, is not an acceptable condition to prospective building tenants.

The current request is to allow the retail tenants two wall signs each. The two buildings are located at the landscape setback on Pleasant Grove and Foothills Boulevards. The entrances to the retail buildings are oriented toward the internal parking field. In an effort to enhance the streetscape appearance and eliminate the "sea of parking" in front of traditional strip centers, the City encourages site designs that place buildings at the setback line. While achieving the City's design objectives, this also places building tenants at a disadvantage by internally orienting the building entrances and associated signage. Strict application of the Sign Ordinance in this case could result in a competitive disadvantage compared to other more "traditional" retail centers.

Similar Variance requests have been approved throughout the City, most recently the Stone Point retail project that backs to Eureka Road. The proposed signs are architecturally compatible with the buildings and must comply with all other Sign Ordinance requirements with respect to size, length, and height. Approval of the Variance will not adversely affect the health, safety or welfare of persons in the neighborhood.

The applicant has submitted photographs showing existing signage, and simulations of proposed signage. (see Attachment 3) Staff has reviewed the photographs and visited the site, and concurs with the applicant's belief that the existing and proposed signage is compatible with the building architecture and

does not create a negative visual impact on the buildings or site. Signage for future tenants will be consistent with the existing PSPP with respect to size and design.

FINDINGS

In accordance with the provisions of the Sign Ordinance, three (3) specific findings must be made in order to approve a Sign Variance. The required findings for a Sign Variance are listed below and are followed by an evaluation.

1. *There are exceptional or extraordinary circumstances or conditions applying to the land, building or signs involved which do not generally apply to other land, buildings or signs in the neighborhood.*

The Sign Ordinance provides standards for commercial centers related to sign quantity, size and placement. Typically, the Sign Ordinance criteria are most applicable to older, more traditional strip centers and building complexes that have site designs with buildings located away from the street. While the applicant has created the appearance of a self-induced hardship by allowing signage in excess of that permitted by the Sign Ordinance and PSPP, staff believes that the unique design of the center (which orients internally and away from the street frontage) provides an exceptional or extraordinary circumstance that does not generally apply to other buildings in the neighborhood.

2. *The granting of this variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of substantial property rights of the applicant.*

As noted in this report, other Variance requests have been approved for similar circumstances throughout the City. For the reasons cited throughout this report, staff finds that the granting of the variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of substantial property rights for the center.

3. *The granting of this variance will not materially and adversely affect the health, safety, or welfare of persons in the neighborhood, nor be materially detrimental or injurious to property or improvements in the neighborhood.*

The wall sign materials and colors are designed to be compatible with surrounding buildings. As discussed previously, the variance for wall signage is warranted due to the special circumstances involving the building orientation. Staff finds that the additional wall signs will not affect the health, safety or welfare of persons in the surrounding neighborhood, nor be materially detrimental or injurious to property or improvements in the neighborhood.

Sign Variance Conclusion

Given the orientation of the buildings with relationship to the street frontage, staff believes that there are extraordinary circumstances, as discussed above, that apply to Pleasant Grove Pavilions that warrant additional signage. Granting the variance will help preserve the property rights of the applicant, and will not be inconsistent with other projects having similar site and design factors. The increased signage will not adversely affect, nor will it be detrimental to persons or property in the neighborhood.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION

The project is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15311(a), which exempts the construction of on-premise signs, and pursuant to Section 304 of the City of Roseville CEQA Implementing Procedures.

RECOMMENDATION

The Planning & Redevelopment Department recommends that the Design Committee take the following actions:

- A. Adopt the three findings of fact, as stated in the staff report for approval of the SIGN VARIANCE – 7451 FOOTHILLS BOULEVARD – NWRSP PARCEL 18 (BATCH RETAIL BUILDINGS 1 & 2) – FILE# 2006PL-138 (V-000031).
- B. Approve the SIGN VARIANCE – 7451 FOOTHILLS BOULEVARD – NWRSP PARCEL 18 (BATCH RETAIL BUILDINGS 1 & 2) – FILE# 2006PL-138 (V-000031) with three (3) conditions of approval.

Conditions of Approval – Sign Variance 2006PL-138 (V-000031)

1. This Sign Variance is approved as shown in Exhibits A and B and as conditioned or modified below. (Planning)
2. The applicant shall submit change pages for the existing PSPP for Pleasant Grove Pavilions to reflect the modifications for wall signage approved by this Sign Variance. Said change pages shall be submitted to and approved by the Planning and Redevelopment Department prior to approval of any sign permit for additional wall signage. (Planning)
3. A Sign Permit is required prior to installation of any sign. (Planning)

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Vicinity Map
2. Applicant's Justification Letter
3. Photographs of Existing and Proposed Signage

EXHIBITS:

- A. Site Plan
- B. Building Elevations - Sign Locations – (2 pages)

Note to Applicant and/or Developer: Please contact the Planning Department staff at (916) 774-5276 prior to the Committee meeting if you have any questions on any of the recommended conditions for your project. If you challenge the decision of the Committee in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues which you or someone else raised at the public hearing held for this project, or in written correspondence delivered to the Planning Director at, or prior to, the public hearing.