



Town of Tiburon

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There would be a total of 12 wall signs, each measuring 9.25 inches tall and 74 inches long. The wall signs would be comprised of black plexiglass with gold vinyl lettering. The signs would read, "Caffe Acri", "Gelato", "Espresso", "Panini", "Capuccino", "Biscotti", "Dolce", "Vino", and "Gelato".

The two hanging blade signs would be oval shaped and comprised of wood. The color of these signs would match the wall signs; gold lettering on black background. The lettering would be engraved in the sign, and the graphics would be painted and made of vinyl. The Hanging signs would read, "Caffe Acri, Tiburon California, Fondato 2003". The blade signs would be double sided with the dimensions of 18 inches tall and 30 inches wide.

ANALYSIS:

Sign Number/Area

A maximum of two signs, per side of frontage on a street, for each place of business may be displayed at any given time according to the Sign Ordinance (Chapter 16A of the Tiburon Municipal Code). Since the subject building has two sides of frontage, a total of four (4) signs would be permitted for this business. The applicant is requesting approval for a total of 14 signs.

The total sign area allowed for businesses is one square foot of signage for each four linear feet of building frontage. The business has approximately 100 feet of linear feet of frontage, when both sides of the building are considered, which would allow 25 square feet of sign area. The proposed hanging signs would be 3.75 square feet each, and the wall signs would be 4.6 square feet each. The total sign area proposed is approximately 63 square feet, which exceeds the standards by 38 square feet.

The applicant is requesting an exception to the sign regulations for both sign number and sign area. Section 16-A6 of the Tiburon Sign Ordinance states that the Design Review Board may grant exceptions to the sign requirements if it makes the following two findings:

1. Exceptional physical circumstances or conditions exist which apply to the site or location under consideration.
2. The exception is not inconsistent with the purpose of this chapter.

The building upon which the signs are proposed to be located is in a primary visual point for residents and visitors in Tiburon. The building and business, because of this location, serve as an anchor for the rest of Main Street. It would appear to be beneficial to have this business readily recognizable by allowing the maximum amount of signs and sign area while staying within the purposes and intent of the Sign Ordinance.

The intent of the Sign Ordinance is to ensure signs are appropriate and compatible with the environment and character of the community, while having the flexibility to encourage variety and good design. The proposed signs are consistent in materials and design as some of the



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other signs found on Main Street. The proposed signs also closely resemble the signs for the previous business, Boudin Bakery.

Sign Design

The design of signs should be reviewed by using the criteria as outlined in the Sign Ordinance and the Downtown Design Handbook. The intent of these criteria is to ensure signs are appropriate and compatible with the environment and character of the community, while having the flexibility to encourage variety and good design. Signs in the downtown area are reviewed especially closely because they are “fundamental contributors to the overall quality and character of the Town.” The Sign Ordinance states that signs should be designed to be consistent with the architecture of the building on which they are located, to be in “harmony” with their surroundings, and to compliment the character of the Town.

Although there is no clear uniform sign material in downtown, many signs are comprised of wood with engraved and/or painted graphics. The materials of the proposed hanging signs would appear to be in harmony with their surroundings. The wall signs on the other hand are comprised of plexiglass with vinyl lettering, which is not a common combination of materials in the downtown area. However, the wall signs are not prominent and would become integrated with the facade of the building rather than function as signs designed to attract business. For this reason, the proposed materials for the signs appear to be consistent with the Downtown Design Handbook and Sign Ordinance.

However, the color scheme of the proposed signs does not appear to be consistent with the Downtown Design Handbook. The application states that the signs would have gold lettering on black background, and the lettering on the wall signs would have a mirror finish. The mirror finish of the lettering could cause the signs to be excessively garish and not compatible with their surroundings.

Along with adopting the Handbook, the Town adopted a color palette for the exterior of buildings. While the approved color palette is primarily intended to guide the painting of buildings and not necessarily signs, the palette can be used as reference for any type of project in the downtown area. It should be noted that there are a few shades of non-mirrored gold included in the approved color palette that could be used for the proposed signs. For reference, the color sample submitted by the applicant and the approved color palette will be made available at the Board meeting.

Public Comment

No public comment has been received regarding the subject application.

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RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board review this project with respect to the Sign Ordinance and the Downtown Design Handbook and determine that the project is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as specified in Section 15301. If the Board is inclined to approve the proposed signs, it is recommended that the Board ensure that the colors for the proposed signs are in closer conformance with the approved color palette associated with the Downtown Design Handbook. If the Board is inclined to approve the signs then it is recommended that the attached Conditions of Approval be adopted.

EXHIBITS:

1. Conditions of Approval
2. Application and supplemental materials dated December 23, 2002.
3. Plans for the proposed signs.

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EXHIBIT 1

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL 1 Main Street FILE #50305

1. This sign permit shall be valid for 90 days following approval, and shall expire and become null and void unless the sign, as approved, is erected prior to that date or unless an extension, filed in writing with the Planning & Building Department, is granted by the Director.
2. The development of this project shall conform to the application dated by the Town of Tiburon on September 5, 2003, or as amended by these conditions of approval. Any modifications to the plans submitted must be reviewed and approved by the Design Review Staff or the Board.
3. The issuance of this sign permit shall not be valid if the approval constitutes a violation of the Town's Sign Ordinance (Chapter 16A of the Municipal Code). No permit presuming to give authority to violate or cancel the provisions of said chapter shall be valid.
4. The Town may at any time make such inspections as necessary to determine whether any sign is in compliance with this approval and other applicable regulations.
5. Permittee shall maintain the sign and all supporting components in good repair and finish. Substantially deteriorated, badly weathered, rusty, or otherwise poorly maintained signs shall be subject to public nuisance abatement or other available remedies.
6. The applicant shall submit a revised color for the wall signs to be approved by the Planning Division, prior to the issuance of a building permit.