



Town of Tiburon

STAFF REPORT

All three signs would be comprised of wood with painted letters. The color of the front wall sign and the portable sign would be green letters on a beige background. The color of the rear wall sign would be beige letters on a green background. The sign copy on the wall signs would read "Baobab Gallery & Gifts". The portable sign would read "Baobab Gallery & Gifts; Sculptures, Baskets, Candles, Fabrics, Dolls; Unique Gifts from Zimbabwe & Africa".

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). The Ordinance also states that a third sign may be permitted if determined to be necessary for the reasonable visibility of the business. The applicant is requesting approval for a total of three 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 23 feet of linear feet of frontage, which would allow 5.75 square feet of sign area. The proposed front wall sign would be 2 square feet, the rear wall sign would be 8 square feet, and the portable sign would be 4 square feet. The total sign area proposed is approximately 14 square feet, which exceeds the standards by 8.25 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 location of the business is in a relatively small space on Ark Row. The small amount of store frontage diminishes the applicant's ability to have adequate visibility for the business. The store also fronts on the public parking lot at the rear of the building. The rear elevation of the building is not considered in the calculation for allowed sign area; however, the rear of the building is visible to the public and would be an important location for a sign. The proposed rear wall sign brings the proposed sign area and number of signs over what is allowed according to the 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 material, size, and design as several other signs found on Main Street.



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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 the downtown area, many signs are comprised of wood with painted graphics. The materials of the proposed signs would appear to be consistent with this pattern.

The portable sign should be carefully considered by the Board. The Sign Ordinance states that portable signs should be used sparingly, but may be allowed where deemed appropriate. Portable signs should also remain on private property and not within the public right-of-way or sidewalk. This is important because portable signs, if neglected, can encroach on the public walkway, or create general clutter on the streetscape. The Board has approved portable signs for the following businesses on Main Street: Windsor Vineyards, Main Street Deli, and Rooney’s.

Public Comment

No public comment has been received regarding the subject application.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board review this project with respect to 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 determines that the proposed signs are consistent with the Sign Ordinance and Downtown Design Handbook, it is recommended that the Board approve the application with the attached Conditions of Approval.

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 90 Main Street FILE #50304

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 portable sign shall only be on display during regular business hours.