

Town of Tiburon STAFF REPORT

AGENDA ITEM D1



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TO: **DESIGN REVIEW BOARD**

FROM: **PLANNING MANAGER WATROUS**

SUBJECT: **1651 TIBURON BOULEVARD; FILE # 50509**
SIGN PERMIT FOR INSTALLATION OF NEW SIGNS FOR AN EXISTING
HOTEL AND RESTAURANT (THE LODGE AT TIBURON)

MEETING DATE: **AUGUST 18, 2005** _____

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PROJECT DATA

ADDRESS: 1651 TIBURON BOULEVARD
OWNERS: LARKSPUR HOSPITALITY COMPANY
APPLICANT: FORMA (ARCHITECT)
ASSESSOR'S PARCEL: 058-171-87
FILE NUMBER: 50509
LOT SIZE: 2.36 ACRES
ZONING: NC (NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL)
GENERAL PLAN: NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL
FLOOD ZONE: C
DATE COMPLETE: JULY 29, 2005

PRELIMINARY ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION

Town Planning Division Staff has made a preliminary determination that this proposal would be exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as specified in Section 15311.

PROPOSAL

The applicant currently under construction on a recently approve upgrade and expansion of an existing hotel and restaurant (the Lodge at Tiburon) located at 1651 Tiburon Boulevard. As part of this project, the applicant wishes to install new signage for the hotel and restaurant. The proposed signage is described as follows:

- A 1.5' x 19' sign above the *porte cochere* stating "The Lodge at Tiburon," consisting of aluminum letters backed by rusted metal in the shapes of the lettering. A smaller (6' x 0.5') sign below the main lettering would note "A Larkspur Hotel."



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- A 1.5' x 11' sign above the restaurant entrance stating "Three Degrees," with the same materials as the hotel entrance sign. A 3' x 0.5' sign below this would state "Patio Dining."
- A 3' x 4' sailboat logo sign, consisting of rusted metal with an aluminum backing, would be attached to the elevator tower.
- A 9 foot tall main entry freestanding sign, with sign area of 7' x 3', would be installed adjacent to the main entry driveway. This sign would be fabricated of rusted steel, with aluminum letter stating "The Lodge at Tiburon," a cutout in the shape of the sailboat logo, and white painted lettering giving directions to the restaurant, registration area and valet parking. The sign would have a stone faced base.
- Two other freestanding directional signs are proposed, with materials to match the entry sign. These signs would be 4 feet tall, with sign area for each of 3.33' x 2.33'. One sign is proposed in the street right-of-way adjacent to the western driveway, with the other onsite adjacent to the eastern driveway. Each sign would have directions to the main hotel entrance, the restaurant and the hotel meeting rooms.

Lighting for each of the signs would utilize indirect lighting, likely with small spot lighting from below or behind the signs.

The total signage proposed for this restaurant would be 98.1 square feet. As the subject building has 312.5 feet of frontage facing a public street, the sign allowance for this building would be only 78.1 square feet. The proposed signage would exceed the amount permitted under the Tiburon Sign Ordinance by 20.0 square feet (25.6%).

ANALYSIS

Design Issues

The types and materials of the proposed signs appear to be consistent with the Downtown Design Guidelines. These guidelines state that the metal and stone materials are appropriate, as would be the indirect lighting. Signs above building entrances are encouraged, and monument signs are recognized for Tiburon Boulevard.

The overall size and number of the signs above the entrances to the hotel and restaurant appear to be appropriate, given the lengthy property frontage and the overall scale of the buildings on the site. The location and number of the monument signs also appears to be appropriate, particularly given the multiple entrances to the property and the changes being made to the interior circulation.

However, the size of the monument signs appears to be somewhat excessive. The 9 foot height of the main entry sign and 4 foot height of the directional signs are larger than most signs



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along Tiburon, particularly when compared to other nearby signs, such as the freestanding sign for Bell Market. Each of the signs also contains substantial unused space around the lettering on each face, which also makes the signs appear to be too large for their purposes. The location of the northern directional sign at a height of 4 feet also creates potential line of sight issues for vehicles leaving that driveway attempting to see cars coming from the left along Tiburon Boulevard. Combined with the request for an exception to allow additional sign area, it is recommended that the Design Review Board review the application to determine if the monument signs should be reduced in size.

Zoning

Section 16A-6 of the Tiburon Sign Ordinance states that the Design Review Board may grant exceptions to the signage requirements if it makes the following two findings:

1. Exceptional physical circumstances exist which apply to the site or location under consideration; and
2. The exception is not inconsistent with the purpose of the Sign Ordinance.

As noted above, the subject property has substantial frontage on Tiburon Boulevard, and has three separate access points. Confusion over the different driveways, and the fact that the applicant is in the process of altering the long-standing interior circulation pattern on the site, create exceptional physical circumstances applicable to the subject property.

In general, the proposed signs are consistent with “basic principles of good design” which are described as part of the purpose of the Tiburon Sign Ordinance under Section 16A-1. The size of the monument signs would not necessarily be considered to be “visual blight” to be avoided under that same code section, but, if considered to be larger than most other freestanding signs in the vicinity, might be considered to not be “appropriate and compatible with the environment and character of the community.”

Public Comment

To date, no letters have been received regarding the proposed project.

RECOMMENDATION

The Board should review this project with respect to the Tiburon Sign Ordinance and determine that the project is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as specified in Section 15311. If the Board finds the design of the proposed signs to be consistent with the applicable sections of the Sign Ordinance and can approved the requested exception, then Staff recommends that the attached conditions of approval be applied.

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ATTACHMENTS:

1. Conditions of approval
2. Application and supplemental materials
3. Submitted plans

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CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

1651 TIBURON BOULEVARD

FILE #50509

1. This permit approves signs for the business located at 1651 Tiburon Boulevard (The Lodge at Tiburon). The total area of the sign displayed at any one time shall not exceed 98.1 square feet. The development of this project shall conform with the application dated by the Town of Tiburon on July 21, 2005, or as amended by these conditions of approval. Any modifications to the plans of August 8, 2005, must be reviewed and approved by the Design Review Board.
2. Prior to erection of the signs, permittee shall obtain all building, electrical, or structural permits required by the Town's adopted Uniform Building Code or Electrical Code.
3. The issuance of this sign permit shall not be valid if the approval constitutes a violation of the Tiburon Sign Ordinance (Chapter 16A of the Tiburon 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 signs 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. This sign permit shall be valid for 90 days following approval, and shall expire and become null and void unless the signs, as approved, are erected prior to that date, unless an extension, filed in writing with the Planning Department, is granted by the Planning Director.
7. This approval shall be used within three (3) years of the approval date, and shall become null and void unless a building permit has been issued.
8. If this approval is challenged by a third party, the property owner/applicant will be responsible for defending against this challenge. The property owner/applicant agrees to defend, indemnify and hold the Town of Tiburon harmless from any costs, claims or liabilities arising from the approval, including, without limitations, any award of attorney's fees that might result from the third party challenge.