



Scenic Pacifica
Incorporated Nov. 22, 1957

PLANNING COMMISSION Staff Report

DATE: August 7, 2017

FILE: S-125-17
CDP-386-17

ITEM: 2

APPLICANT: Todd Mros
Ramsay Signs, Inc.
9160 SE 74th Ave.
Portland, OR 97206

OWNER: Nasser Elsalhi
FPA/WC Lands End, LLC
2082 Michelson Dr., 4th Floor
Irvine, CA 92612

PROJECT LOCATION: 100 Esplanade Ave. (APNs 009-023-070 and 009-024-010)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Remove four (4) existing monument signs and replace with four (4) new monument signs in the same locations under a new Master Sign Program.

SITE DESIGNATIONS: General Plan: High Density Residential
Zoning: R-3/ C-Z (Multiple-Family Residential / Coastal Zone Combing District)

RECOMMENDED CEQA STATUS: Class 2 and 3 Categorical Exemptions, Sections 15302 and 15303 of the CEQA Guidelines

ADDITIONAL REQUIRED APPROVALS: None. Subject to appeal to the City Council.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Approve, as conditioned.

PREPARED BY: Bonny O'Connor, Assistant Planner

STAFF NOTES

Table 1. Zoning Standards

Standards	Required	Existing	Proposed
APN 009-023-070			
Esplanade Ave. Street Frontage	50 ft.	501 ft.	No Change
Sign A Area	375 sf maximum	24 sf	23.5 sf
Palmetto Ave. Street Frontage	50 ft.	508 ft.	No Change
Sign C Area	381 sf maximum	36 sf	43 sf
APN 009-024-010			
Esplanade Ave. Street Frontage	50 ft.	448 ft.	No Change
Sign B Area	336 sf maximum	32 sf	26 sf
Palmetto Ave. Street Frontage	50 ft.	380 ft.	No Change
Sign D Area	285 sf maximum	32 sf	43 sf
Note:			
1. PMC Section 9-4.2906(a)(3) Except as otherwise provided in this section, the total permitted sign area for any building shall not exceed seventy-five hundredths (.75 or ¾) square foot of signage per one foot of lineal street frontage.			

A. General Plan, Zoning, and Surrounding Land Uses

The site is zoned R-3/ C-Z (Multiple-Family Residential / Coastal Zone Combing District), which allows for multi-unit residential developments. The project site’s General Plan land use designation is High Density Residential, which allows for an average of 16 to 21 dwelling units to the acre. The site is surrounded by high density residential on the north and south sides. The Pacific Ocean is located to the west of the site and Highway 1 is located to the east of the site.

B. Project Description

The Oceanaire Apartments, previously known as Lands End Apartments, located at 100 Esplanade, is proposing to demolish four monument style freestanding signs that identifies the property as 'Lands End Apartments' and construct four new monument style freestanding signs in the same locations under a new master sign program (MSP). The new signs would identify the property as Oceanaire Apartments.

The proposed MSP details the sign criteria for the multifamily residential development (Attachment C). The MSP includes design intent, general requirements, construction requirements, and main entrance sign requirements (Sign A) and secondary sign requirements (Signs B through D). The MSP requires that the signs provide uniformity within the apartment complex, are made with materials that are coastal

compatible, do not visually obstruct traffic, and are maintained to the City’s satisfaction. The signs allowed under the MSP would be one-sided, freestanding signs of various heights and lengths (see Table 2). The sign bodies would include some interior illumination, but the MSP would also allow for ground illuminations as the City approves. Approximate locations of the signs are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Approximate Sign Locations

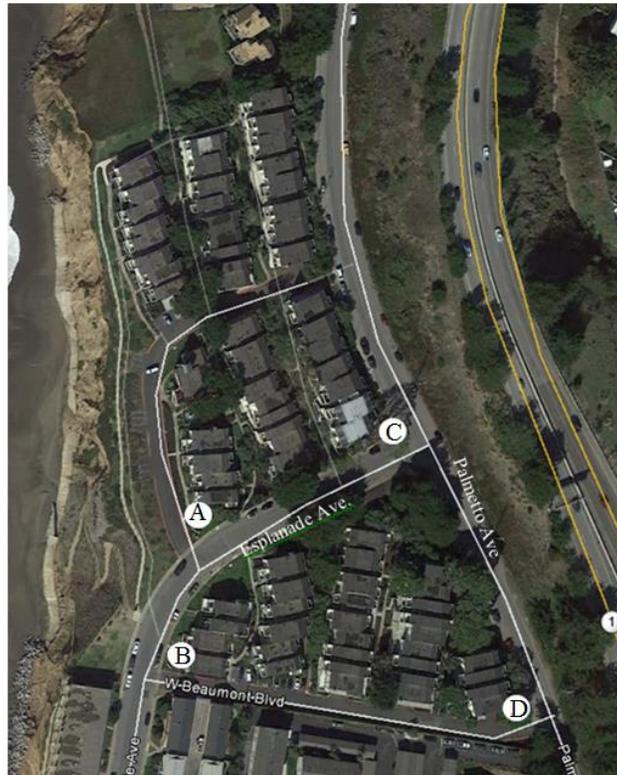


Table 2. Proposed Sign Specifications

	Height	Length
Main Entrance Sign (Sign A)	4’-8”	15’-0”
Secondary Sign (Sign B)	3’-6”	9’-0”
Secondary Sign (Signs C and D)	4’-3”	9’-0”

C. Municipal Code

The applicant’s proposal requires approval of a MSP as the site is a multi-unit residential development. The Commission may approve the MSP after making the following findings

PMC Section 9-4.2906(b)

- i. A freestanding sign is necessary for the business or businesses located on the premises to achieve a reasonable degree of identification; and
- ii. The sign is consistent with the intent and provisions of this article; and
- iii. The sign does not exceed the square footage set forth in subsection (3) of subsection (a) of this section; and
- iv. The sign does not exceed a height of twenty (20') feet above the sidewalk or paved area over which it is erected.

PMC Section 9-4.2910

- v. In addition to the other provisions of this article, signs requiring a sign permit shall be subject to the design criteria for signs contained in the City's adopted Design Guidelines.
- vi. A sign permit shall not be issued by the Planning Administrator unless the subject sign is found to be consistent with the applicable design criteria contained in the City's adopted Design Guidelines.

PMC Section 9-4.2907(c) and (d)

- vii. Each sign in the master sign program shall be compatible in character and in quality of design with other signs in the program.
- viii. More than one freestanding sign is necessary for reasonable identification.

Additionally, the proposed project would require a Coastal Development Permit as the demolition of existing signs and construction of new signs would be considered development within the Coastal Zone. The Commission may approve the Coastal Development Permit after making the following findings:

- i. The proposed development is in conformity with the City's certified Local Coastal Program; and

- ii. Where the Coastal Development Permit is issued for any development between the nearest public road and the shoreline, the development is in conformity with the public recreation policies of Chapter 3 of the California Coastal Act.

D. Required Findings

- i. In order to approve the sign permit (S-125-17), the Planning Commission must make all of the following findings:

1. *A freestanding sign is necessary for the business or businesses located on the premises to achieve a reasonable degree of identification; and*

Discussion: The freestanding signs are necessary for the multi-unit apartment complex to achieve a reasonable degree of complex identification, address identification, and contact information for perspective renters. Window or wall mounted sign alternatives would not provide the same reasonable degree of identification due to the size parcels and setback of the buildings from the street.

2. *The sign is consistent with the intent and provisions of this article; and*

Discussion: The MSP is consistent with the provision of Article 29 of the PMC. The design of the proposed signs is consistent with the PMC Section 9-4.2910(b), which states “a sign permit shall not be issued by the Planning Administrator unless the subject sign is found to be consistent with the applicable design criteria contained in the City’s adopted Design Guidelines.” The Design Guidelines do not address signs in residential development; however, it does provide guidance for signs in commercial development. The proposed MSP is consistent with applicable sections of the Commercial Sign section of the City’s adopted Design Guidelines as further discussed below:

- (a) *All signs should relate to their surroundings in terms of size, height, shape, color, material, and lighting so that they are complementary to the overall design of the building and site.*

The proposed MSP would require signs to provide uniformity to the apartment complex. The design and construction requirements in the MSP would require all signs to have a similar design theme and a professional appearance. Sign colors would need to complement the existing building colors.

(b) Signs should be unobtrusive and convey their message clearly and legibly.

The criteria of the MSP would ensure that sign copy is clear and legible as the MSP details font size and spacing minimums. Copy for the proposed signs would propose signs would only include the complex name, address and contact information.

(d) Sign illumination should not be unnecessarily bright, and should not cause glare or light intrusion into other signs or premises. [...] Internal illumination should feature low intensity lamps.

Interior illumination of the sign is proposed. Condition of Approval No. 4 would require the applicant to provide specifications of the low intensity illumination to confirm that the lighting would not be unnecessarily bright or cause glare or light intrusion prior to issuance of the building permit.

(e) A freestanding sign should only be used for shopping centers or when deemed the most feasible means by which a business may obtain a reasonable degree of identification.

See response to Section D.i.1 of this staff report.

(g) Monument signs are generally preferred over pole signs. The support or base of a freestanding sign should match or complement the materials and colors of the building or buildings with which it is associated. Planting at the base of a freestanding sign is encouraged.

The MSP would include monument signs and would require the color of the signs to complement existing building color. Condition of Approval No. 2 would require a final landscaping plan for the sign areas detailing low growing plants along the sign frontage to ensure continued address identification.

The proposed sign is consistent with the Article 29, Signs, of the PMC as described above and throughout this staff report.

3. *The sign does not exceed the square footage set forth in subsection (3) of subsection (a) of this section; and*

Discussion: As shown in Table 1 of this staff report, the proposed signs do not exceed the square footage set forth in PMC Section 9-4.2906(a)(3).

4. *The sign does not exceed a height of twenty (20') feet above the sidewalk or paved area over which it is erected.*

Discussion: As shown in Table 2, the monument signs allowed under the MSP would not exceed 20 feet.

5. *In addition to the other provisions of this article, signs requiring a sign permit shall be subject to the design criteria for signs contained in the City's adopted Design Guidelines.*

Discussion: See response to Section D.i.2 of this staff report.

6. *A sign permit shall not be issued by the Planning Administrator unless the subject sign is found to be consistent with the applicable design criteria contained in the City's adopted Design Guidelines.*

Discussion: See response to Section D.i.2 of this staff report.

7. *Each sign in the master sign program shall be compatible in character and in quality of design with other signs in the program.*

Discussion: The three design variations detailed in the MSP are all compatible in character and quality of design. Each of the signs would have complementing colors, design features, and requires the use of similar non-corrosive materials.

8. *More than one freestanding sign is necessary for reasonable identification.*

Discussion: As shown in Figure 1, the apartment complex is located on two parcels and has multiple street frontages and entrances.

- ii. In order to approve the subject Coastal Development Permit (CDP-386-17), the Planning Commission must make the two findings required by PMC Section 9-4.4304(k). The following discussion supports the Commission's findings in this regard.

1. *The proposed development is in conformity with the City's certified Local Coastal Program.*

Discussion: The City's certified Local Coastal Program includes a Local Coastal Land Use Plan (LCLUP) that contains policies to further the City's coastal planning activities. The proposed project is consistent with many of these policies, as discussed below.

- Coastal Act Policy No. 2: *Development shall not interfere with the public's right of access to the sea where acquired through use or legislative authorization, including, but not limited to, the use of dry sand and rock coastal beaches to the first line of terrestrial vegetation.*

The proposed project will not interfere with the public's right of access to the sea. The signs would help appropriately identify the property which may improve accessibility by creating an accurate landmark near public access ways. Therefore, the project will not impact or otherwise interfere with the public's right of access to the sea.

- Coastal Act Policy No. 24: *The scenic and visual qualities of coastal areas shall be considered and protected as a resource of public importance. Permitted development shall be sited and designed to protect views to and along the ocean and scenic coastal areas, to minimize the alteration of natural landforms, to be visually compatible with the character of surrounding areas, and, where feasible, to restore and enhance visual quality in visually degraded areas. New development in highly scenic areas such as those designated in the California Coastline Preservation and Recreation Plan, prepared by the Department of Parks and Recreation and by local government, shall be subordinate to the character of its setting.*

The signs will be located on a site with existing multi-family residential development on the property. The signs will complement the existing building and provide uniformity to the apartment complex. Additionally, the signs would not exceed above 4'-8" feet in height. Therefore the proposed project would not disrupt existing views to and along the ocean and scenic coastal areas, and will continue to be visually compatible with the character of surrounding areas.

2. *Where the Coastal Development Permit is issued for any development between the nearest public road and the shoreline, the development is in conformity with the public recreation policies of Chapter 3 of the California Coastal Act.*

Discussion: The project site is located atop the bluff in the West Edgemar/ Pacific Manor District in Pacifica. The proposed signs would not change the existing residential use of the property and therefore would not impact the property's conformity with the public recreation policies of Chapter 3 of the California Coastal Act.

E. CEQA Recommendation

Staff analysis of the proposed project supports a Planning Commission finding that it qualifies for a categorical exemption from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The project qualifies for Class 1 and 3 exemptions under CEQA Guidelines Section 15301(i)(1) and 15303(a), as described below, applies to the project:

15302. Replacement or Reconstruction

Class 2 consists of replacement or reconstruction of existing structures and facilities where the structure will be located on the same site as the structure replaced and will have substantially the same purpose and capacity as the structure replaced [...].

15303. New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures

Class 3 consists of construction and location of limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures; installation of small new equipment and facilities in small structures; and the conversion of existing small structures from one use to another where only minor modifications are made in the exterior of the structure.

The proposal to replace four existing monuments signs with new signs in the same locations and approval of MSP that would allow for the construction of small structures is within the scope of Class 2 and 3 categorical exemptions. Additionally, none of the exceptions applicable to a Class 2 and 3 exemptions in Section 15300.2 of the CEQA Guidelines apply, as described below.

- Sec. 15300.2(a): There is no evidence in the record that the project would impact an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern in an area designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, State, or local agencies.
- Sec. 15300.2(b): There is no evidence in the record that cumulative projects of the same type would occur within the same place to create a significant cumulative impact.

- Sec. 15300.2(c): There is no evidence that the activity would have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances. .
- Sec. 15300.2(d) through (f): The project is not proposed near an officially designated scenic highway, does not involve a current or former hazardous waste site, and, does not affect any historical resources. Therefore, the provisions of subsections (d) through (f) are not applicable to this project.

Because the project is consistent with the requirements for a Class 2 and Class 3 exemptions and none of the exceptions to applying to a Class 2 and 3 exemptions in Section 15300.2 apply; therefore, there is substantial evidence in the record to support a finding that the project is categorically exempt from CEQA.

COMMISSION ACTION

MOTION FOR APPROVAL:

Move that the Planning Commission finds the project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act; **APPROVE** Sign Permit S-125-17 and Coastal Development Permit CDP-386-17, by adopting the resolution included as Attachment B to the staff report, including conditions of approval in Exhibit A to the resolution; and, incorporate all maps and testimony into the record by reference.

ATTACHMENT LIST:

- Attachment A - Land Use and Zoning Exhibit (PDF)
- Attachment B - Draft Resolution and COAs (PDF)
- Attachment C - Master Sign Program (PDF)