

City of Oakland
Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board

STAFF REPORT

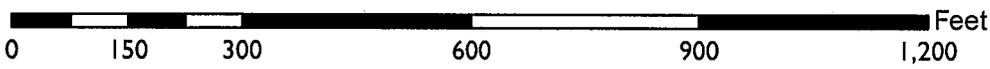
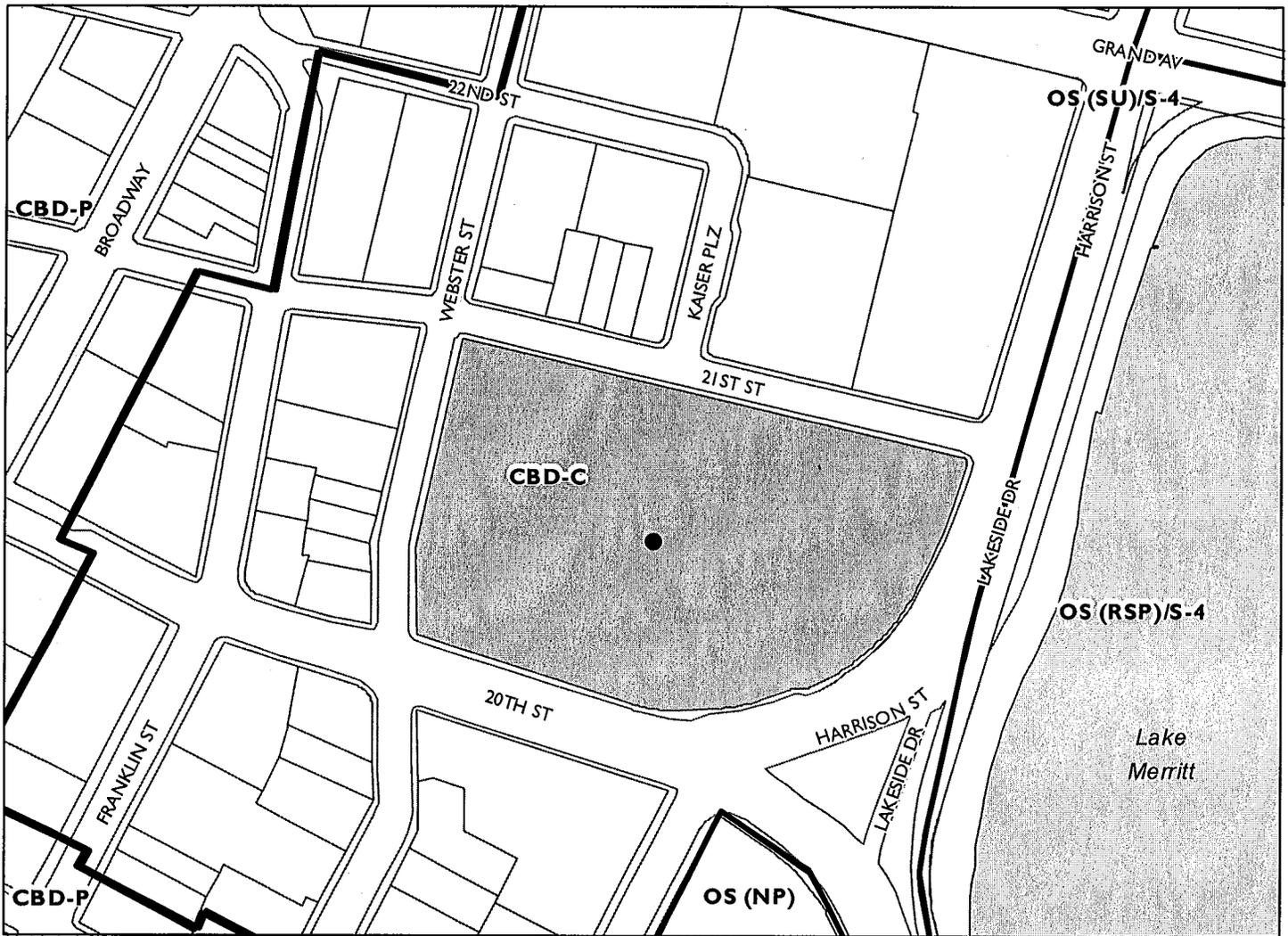
Case File Number: PLN16271

February 6, 2017

Location:	300 Lakeside Drive (See map on reverse)
Parcel Number:	008 065200105
Proposal:	Establish a new Master Sign Program for the Kaiser Center
Owner:	The Swig Company
Applicant:	Gensler
Planning Permits Required:	Regular Design Review, Conditional Use Permit
General Plan:	Central Business District (CBD)
Zoning:	Central Business District General Commercial Zone (CBD-C)
Environmental Determination:	Categorically Exempt per CEQA Guidelines Sections 15301, 15331
Historic Status:	Highest Importance (Survey Rating "A"); Contributor to an Area of Primary Importance (Survey Rating "1+")
City Council District:	3
Action to be Taken:	Preliminary Review and Comment Prior to Formal Review
For Further Information:	Contact case planner Matthew Weintraub at (510) 238-6983 or mweintraub@oaklandnet.com

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide information and to request the Board's preliminary review and comment on proposed new signage proposed by a new Master Sign Program for the Kaiser Center, prior to completion and submittal of the final proposed Master Sign Program. At this time, staff requests the Board's preliminary input on eight (8) proposed new signs which are described in the plans and materials included in Attachment A. The Board's preliminary input on the proposed new signage will facilitate development of the final proposed Master Sign Program, which will also address potential future changes to existing signage at the Kaiser Center. Following completion and submittal, staff will request the Board's formal review of the final proposed Master Sign Program on a future date to be determined.



Case File: PLN16271
Applicant: Gensler
Address: 300 Lakeside Dr
Zone: CBD-C

PROJECT SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

Project Site

The subject lot (APN 008 065200105) occupies an entire block bounded by 20th, 21st, Harrison (Lakeside Drive), and Webster streets. The irregularly shaped lot is rectangular with one corner, at 20th and Harrison Streets, clipped and rounded. It is 7.20 acres in area. The surrounding area is developed primarily with medium- to high-density commercial, office and institutional buildings, predominantly constructed in the mid-twentieth century and later. Lake Merritt is located to the east.

Architectural Description

The existing development at 300 Lakeside Drive is the Kaiser Center, a commercial/office complex constructed in 1958-59. It occupies the entire lot. The Kaiser Center design includes four distinct, interrelated building components: a 28-story Office Tower which faces east to Harrison Street/Lakeside Drive and Lake Merritt; a pair of two- and three-story Mall Buildings which face south to 20th Street and west to Webster Street; a parking garage located to the north along 21st Street; and a rooftop park located on top of the Webster Street Mall Building and the parking garage.

The 28-story Office Tower is T-shaped in plan with the stem extending to the interior of the lot, and the wings extending along Harrison Street/Lakeside Drive. The wider, primary façades are composed of horizontal window bands and metal spandrels. The narrower side walls are clad in dolomite panels. The tower is cantilevered over its first story on squared columns. At the Harrison Street/Lakeside Drive elevation, a three-story podium block is cantilevered out from the base of the tower on square columns to form a porte-cochere. At the back of the tower, two similar cantilevered podium blocks extend from the base.

The adjacent two- and three-story Mall Buildings are long, low and rectangular in plan. They form an L-shape with the legs extending along 20th and Webster Streets. The upper stories are clad in dolomite panels and cantilevered out over the ground level, which contains entrances and storefronts. The parking garage fills the ell formed by the interconnected Mall Buildings, behind the Office Tower and fronting 21st Street.

The Kaiser Center is exemplary of Modern architectural style. The complex exhibits characteristic features such as: abstract geometric forms; rectilinear and curvilinear shapes; “floating” building masses; expanses of solid and glazed wall surfaces; grid patterns; vertical fins; horizontal canopies; clean corners and rooflines; integrated landscaping; and use of modern exterior materials such as glass, metal, and rocky aggregate.

Existing and Historic Tower Signage

According to historic plans and photographs (which are included in Attachment B), the Kaiser Center originally included tower signage located prominently at either ends of the tower wings, and on the end wall of the central vertical slab that projects from the back of the tower. The

tower signs were comprised of individual channel letters spelling out "KAISER" on the central slab, and "KAISER CENTER" on the wing slabs, each backed by a field of dolomite wall cladding. While the historic tower signs on the wing slabs are no longer extant, the original "KAISER" sign on the central slab currently appears to be extant, intact and unaltered. The existing historic sign is comprised of individual metal channel letters with painted teal faces and silver returns, currently not illuminated. The sign is 54' wide and 6'-6" feet tall, with a sign area of 378 square feet.

In addition, there is other existing signage on the property, including street-level and storefront-level signs, and monument directional signs. This other existing signage, which is distinct from the existing historic tower sign and the proposed new tower signs and porte-cochere signs in function and placement, will be addressed in the final proposed Master Sign Program, which is currently under development.

Historic Property Status

The existing property has an Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey (OCHS) Rating of "A1+" and it is listed in the City's Local Register. The "A" indicates that the existing property is of the "Highest Importance" and is clearly eligible for listing to the National Register of Historic Places. The existing property is an outstanding example of an important style, which is Modern. The "1+" indicates that the property is a contributor to an Area of Primary Importance (API), which is the Lake Merritt District. According to the City's district survey form, the 122-acre district "is comprised of Lake Merritt shorelines; Lakeside Park and Peralta Park; the buildings, structures, and objects within those parks; the Lake Merritt Wild Duck Refuge; several public buildings; and various multi-story, multi-unit residential apartment buildings... The District is unified by the lake's presence and by its architectural harmony in the civic buildings and the ca. 1906-1939 multi-unit, multi-story residential buildings featuring Revival and Craftsman architecture." In addition, the district is characterized by the subject Kaiser Center, which is a contributing property to the district, and whose construction date coincides with the end of the district's period of significance of 1870-1958.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

There is currently no Master Sign Program for the Kaiser Center. The application proposes to establish a new Master Sign Program for the Kaiser Center. Under the Planning Code, a Master Sign Program specifies the overall design, configuration, and permitted sizes of signs for a building or complex containing two (2) or more tenant spaces, such as the Kaiser Center. Master Sign Programs identify the permitted sign sizes, materials, colors, placement, construction, method of lighting, and other related sign requirements for the applicable commercial, industrial, or mixed use building or complex. Once a Master Sign Program is approved, sign applications determined to conform to the provisions of an approved Master Sign Program may be processed without further design review; whereas, sign applications determined to not conform to an

approved Master Sign Program may only be granted upon approval of a revision to the original Master Sign Program.¹

The proposed new Master Sign Program, inclusive of existing signage to be retained (508 square feet) and proposed new signage (726 square feet), includes a new total aggregate sign area of 1,234 square feet, which exceeds the current maximum permitted allowable aggregate sign area.² Approval to exceed (or to further exceed) the maximum permitted allowable aggregate sign area may be authorized by approval of a Master Sign Program and a Conditional Use Permit.³ The Conditional Use Permit requirement results in the corollary requirement for Regular Design Review, which is applicable whenever a Conditional Use Permit is required.⁴ The application requires Board review because all cases of Regular Design Review involving a Local Register property in the Central Business District (CBD) zone are subject to review by the Board.⁵

In addition to retaining the existing historic "KAISER" tower sign, the proposed new Master Sign Program for the Kaiser Center would allow the installation of eight (8) new signs on the Office Tower and the appurtenant porte-cochere (labeled as Signs 35-43 in the plans included in Attachment A). The proposal includes adding a pair of new tower signs (Signs 35 and 36), one at each of the side walls of the tower wings, in the same locations where the historic tower wing signs (no longer extant) were previously installed. The new tower wing signs are specified as 4"-thick individual metal channel letters with a silver finish and halo illumination (backlighting). The signs would be 29'-10" wide and 6'-6" tall, with a sign area of 195 square feet each.

Also, the proposed new Master Sign Program would allow the addition of six (6) new signs to the Harrison Street/Lakeside Drive porte-cochere of the Office Tower (Signs 38-43). Like the historic and the new tower signs, the new porte-cochere signs would be installed on the dolomite-clad side walls, which would serve as sign backing. The new porte-cochere signs would be stacked vertically, three to a side, and aligned to the outside boundary of the driveway. Also like the new tower signs, the proposed new porte-cochere signs are specified as 4"-thick individual metal channel letters with a silver finish, halo-illuminated. Each sign would be 16-1" wide and 3'-6" tall, with a sign area of 56 square feet.

The Master Sign Program would regulate the allowable sign locations, types, sizes, materials, and lighting, as described above and more specifically in the plans and materials included in Attachment A. The proposed Master Sign Program would not specifically regulate the allowable fonts, styles, or sign copies of individual signs, in order to allow for signage that expresses individual company identities and appearances.

¹ Planning Code Section 17.104.070 (A), (C).

² According to Planning Code Section 17.104.020 (B) (1), the maximum aggregate area of display surface of all Business, Civic, and Residential Signs on any one lot shall be one (1) square foot for each one (1) foot of lot frontage in the case of an interior lot, or one-half (0.5) square feet for each one (1) foot of lot frontage in the case of a corner lot (which yields a potential maximum aggregate sign area of 1,115 square feet for the subject corner lot); except that, the total amount of aggregate sign area shall not exceed two hundred (200) square feet on any one property.

³ Planning Code Section 17.104.070 (B).

⁴ Planning Code Section 17.136.040 (A) (2).

⁵ Planning Code Section 17.136.055 (C) (1) (e).

In addition to allowing the proposed new tower signs and porte-cochere signs, as described above and in Attachment A, the final proposed Master Sign Program will address potential future changes to street-level and storefront-level signage at the Office Tower and the Mall Buildings. The final proposed Master Sign Program may identify one or more potential new or changed sign locations at the street and/or storefront levels; it may recommend long-term adjustments to existing signage at the street and/or storefront levels; and it may address other types of signs such as wall signs and monument signs.

The remainder of this report focuses on analyzing the proposed new tower wing signs and porte-cochere signs, as described in plans and materials included in Attachment A, for consistency with applicable codes, regulations, and standards.

GENERAL PLAN ANALYSIS

According to Policy 2.4 (b) of the Historic Preservation Element of the General Plan: "Alterations or New Construction involving Landmarks or Preservation Districts will normally be approved if they are found to meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties or if certain other findings are made [that the project will not adversely affect the Landmark or Preservation District]." Although the subject project does not involve a designated Landmark or Preservation (S-7) District, it does involve an OCHS-rated property of the "Highest Importance", and which is a contributing property to an API, a historically or visually cohesive area or property group appearing eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, and which may also merit consideration as a Preservation (S-7) District.

Accordingly, staff has analyzed the compatibility of the project with the subject resource and the API according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, which acknowledge the need to alter or add to a historic property (or district) to meet continuing or changing uses while retaining the property's (or district's) historic character. Staff's preliminary analysis is presented below (with the Rehabilitation Standards shown in *italicized text* and followed by individual responses). Staff's analysis is preliminary in nature and is subject to change pending submittal of the final proposed Master Sign Program, as well as additional information that may be received by the Board and/or the public.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

- 1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.*

Response: The existing property will continue to function as a retail/office complex with commercial signage, which is its historic purpose. The installation of new signage to the exterior of the existing building, including in locations where signage was previously located, would require minimal physical changes to the property, and would facilitate continued commercial use.

- 2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.*

Response: In order to install new signs, minor alterations to the existing wall cladding would occur, which may involve drilling and/or attaching structural and/or lighting elements for individual channel letters in small isolated areas on the existing wall cladding. The work would not destroy or remove any existing dolomite wall panels; and the areas of work and the appurtenant new structural and/or lighting elements would generally be concealed by the attached new channel letter signage.

- 3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.*

Response: The proposed new signage is referential to and compatible with the subject property's historic signage in location and design, and is therefore not conjectural. The new signage would be an authentic addition to the ongoing physical record of the building's time, place, use, and historical development.

- 4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.*

Response: The proposed addition of new signage to the tower wings would reverse a change that previously occurred – which was the removal of historic tower wing signage that previously existed and which provided character – which is not a change that has acquired significance in its own right or that would warrant preservation.

- 5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.*

Response: The proposed installation of new signs on the existing building – which would affect small areas of existing wall cladding in the locations of new sign installation – would retain and preserve the vast majority of the existing dolomite panel cladding intact; and it would not affect the overall distinctiveness of the dolomite material or the character of the property.

- 6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.*

Response: There are no known deteriorated or missing features that are proposed to be repaired or replaced. The project includes new signage that is similar to, but not exact

replacement of, non-extant tower wing signs, as substantiated by historic architectural plans and photographs.

7. *Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.*

Response: The proposed new sign installation would involve minor, isolated physical intrusions to the existing dolomite wall cladding. When completed, the intrusions would be patched and concealed, which would be minor alterations that do not constitute "damage" to any individual panels or to the overall feature.

8. *Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.*

Response: The proposed installation of new signs on the existing building would not involve any ground disturbance and would not have the potential to affect any existing archeological resource, if present.

9. *New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.*

Response: The proposed installation of new signs would involve minor alterations to isolated areas of existing wall cladding, which would not be considered destruction. The new signs would be compatible with the historic sign type, which is individual metal channel letters affixed directly to the exterior wall surfaces. The new signs are proposed to be located where historic signage was previously installed (at the tower wings), and in new locations that are compatible with the historic schema, which is signage mounted on the narrower side walls of the building volumes with existing dolomite cladding as sign backing. All of the proposed new signs would be visually subordinate to the existing historic tower signage by virtue of being smaller and less prominently located than the existing historic tower sign. The new signage would be differentiated from the old by use of solid silver finishes, which would be compatible with, yet distinct from, the painted teal faces and silver returns of the historic sign.

10. *New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.*

Response: If necessary in the future, the proposed new signage could be entirely removed by reversing the installation, and the relatively small areas of work could be repaired and restored to their current conditions and appearances, without affecting the essential form or integrity of the property and its environment.

In summary, the proposed project is found to be consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, and with Policy 2.4 (b) of the Historic Preservation Element of the General Plan.

ZONING ANALYSIS

In the following zoning analysis, the responses to the findings are preliminary in nature and are subject to change pending submittal of the final proposed Master Sign Program, as well as additional information that may be received by the Board and/or the public.

Conditional Use Permit Criteria

According to Planning Code Section 17.104.070 (B), a Master Sign Program application which would deviate from the normally required sign standards (such as the subject application) shall be processed as a Conditional Use Permit. According to Planning Code Section 17.134.050, a Conditional Use Permit shall be granted only if the proposal conforms to all of the following general use permit criteria, as well as to any and all other applicable use permit criteria (with the criteria shown in *italicized text* and followed by individual responses):

- *That the location, size, design, and operating characteristics of the proposed development will be compatible with and will not adversely affect the livability or appropriate development of abutting properties and the surrounding neighborhood, with consideration to be given to harmony in scale, bulk, coverage, and density; to the availability of civic facilities and utilities; to harmful effect, if any, upon desirable neighborhood character; to the generation of traffic and the capacity of surrounding streets; and to any other relevant impact of the development.*

Response: The proposed new signage would be appurtenant and complimentary to the existing retail/office commercial development and to other nearby existing properties in the Central Business District zone. It will be compatible with and comparable to existing commercial signage in the neighborhood.

- *That the location, design, and site planning of the proposed development will provide a convenient and functional living, working, shopping, or civic environment, and will be as attractive as the nature of the use and its location and setting warrant.*

Response: The proposed new signage would be thoughtfully located and designed to enhance and match with the existing architectural character of the property and the environment.

- *That the proposed development will enhance the successful operation of the surrounding area in its basic community functions, or will provide an essential service to the community or region.*

Response: The proposed new signage would facilitate and support the continued commercial retail and office use of the property.

- *That the proposal conforms to all applicable regular design review criteria set forth in the regular design review procedure at Section 17.136.050.*

Response: The proposed new signage conforms to the Regular Design Review criteria as explained below.

- *That the proposal conforms in all significant respects with the Oakland General Plan and with any other applicable guidelines or criteria, district plan or development control map which has been adopted by the Planning Commission or City Council.*

Response: The proposed new signage is appurtenant to the existing commercial use, which is compatible with the underlying General Plan land use designation of Central Business District. The proposed new signage is also compatible with the Historic Preservation Element by virtue of being consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, as described above.

- *For proposals involving a One- or Two-Family Residential Facility: If the conditional use permit concerns a regulation governing maximum height, minimum yards, maximum lot coverage, or maximum floor area ratio, the proposal also conforms with at least one of the following additional criteria:*
 - ❖ *The proposal when viewed in its entirety will not adversely impact abutting residences to the side, rear, or directly across the street with respect to solar access, view blockage and privacy to a degree greater than that which would be possible if the residence were built according to the applicable regulation, and, for conditional use permits that allow height increases, the proposal provides detailing, articulation or other design treatments that mitigate any bulk created by the additional height; or*
 - ❖ *At least sixty percent (60%) of the lots in the immediate context are already developed and the proposal would not exceed the corresponding as-built condition on these lots, and, for conditional use permits that allow height increases, the proposal provides detailing, articulation or other design treatments that mitigate any bulk created by the additional height. The immediate context shall consist of the five (5) closest lots on each side of the project site plus the ten (10) closest lots on the opposite side of the street (see illustration I-4b); however, the Director of City Planning may make an alternative determination of immediate context based on specific site conditions. Such determination shall be in writing and included as part of any decision on any conditional use permit.*

Response: The proposal does not involve a one- or two-family residential facility.

In addition, according to Planning Code Section 17.104.070 (B), a Conditional Use Permit for a Master Sign Program may only be granted upon determination that the proposed sign program conforms to the all of the following additional use permit criteria:

- *That the proposal will be of a quality and character appropriate to the Commercial, Industrial, mixed use building or complex.*

Response: The proposed new signage, which is based on historic signage of the existing property, is compatible with the historic and architectural character of the existing commercial building.

- *That the building facade and other walls will be considered and treated as a whole, and in relationship to adjoining buildings.*

Response: The proposal includes using expanses of the existing dolomite wall cladding as sign backing, consistent with the existing property's Modern architectural design and its existing and historic signage.

- *That all Signs will be harmonious with the architectural design of the building and adjacent buildings, and will not cover or detract from a building's significant architectural features.*

Response: The proposed new signage would be consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, which ensures that it is harmonious and compatible with the building's significant architectural features.

Regular Design Review Criteria

According to Planning Code Section 17.136.050 (A), demolition of the subject building may be granted only if the proposal conforms to the following Regular Design Review criteria for residential facilities:

- *That the proposed design will create a building or set of buildings that are well related to the surrounding area in their setting, scale, bulk, height, materials, and textures.*

Response: The proposal will enhance and be compatible with the existing character of an architecturally significant building.

- *That the proposed design will protect, preserve, or enhance desirable neighborhood characteristics.*

Response: The proposal will preserve and enhance the existing characteristic of Modern-style channel letter signs, which is a defining and desirable characteristic of the existing architectural resource.

- *That the proposed design will be sensitive to the topography and landscape.*

Response: The proposed new signage is sensitive to the existing commercial development, which in turn is sensitive to the existing flat topography and shoreline landscape of the site.

- *That, if situated on a hill, the design and massing of the proposed building relates to the grade of the hill.*

Response: The project site is not situated on a hill.

- *That the proposed design conforms in all significant respects with the Oakland General Plan and with any applicable design review guidelines or criteria, district plan, or development control map which have been adopted by the Planning Commission or City Council.*

Response: The proposed design is consistent with the policies of the Historic Preservation Element of the General Plan and the Planning Code, as described in this report.

Also, according to Planning Code Section 17.136.050 (C), additions or alterations (including new construction within historic districts) may be granted for Local Register Properties (including properties located within an API) that are not Landmarks or located in the S-7 or S-20 Zone only if the proposal conforms to the following criterion:

- *The proposal will not substantially impair the visual, architectural, or historic value of the affected site or facility. Consideration shall be given to design, form, scale, materials, texture, lighting, landscaping, signs, and any other relevant design element or effect, and, where applicable, the relation of the above to the original design of the affected facility.*

Response: The proposed new signage would be consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, which ensures that it is harmonious and compatible with the building's significant architectural features and its overall architectural character.

Special Design Review Criteria in Relation to CBD Zone

According to Planning Code Section 17.136.055 (B) (2), approval of applications located within the Central Business District (CBD) Zone and in an API, and which require Regular Design Review approval, may be granted only upon determination that the proposal conforms to the following additional criteria:

- *Any proposed new construction is compatible with the existing API in terms of massing, siting, rhythm, composition, patterns of openings, quality of material, and intensity of detailing.*

Response: The proposed new signage is compatible with the specific characteristics and overall character of the existing property, which is a contributor to the API; therefore, the proposed new signage is compatible with the API.

- *New street frontage has forms that reflect the widths and rhythm of the facades on the street, and entrances that reflect the patterns on the street.*

Response: The proposed new signage is scaled to accentuate the existing building forms and façades, as well as to be comparable in sizes and locations to existing historic signage. The proposed new porte-cochere signage is designed to accentuate the relationship of the porte-cochere to the roadway system, by aligning with the internal driveway and by being visually prominent from the roadway.

- *The proposal provides high visual interest that either reflects the level and quality of visual interest of the API contributors or otherwise enhances the visual interest of the API.*

Response: The proposed new signage matches and reflects the visual and material quality of the existing architectural resource, which is a contributing property to the API, and its existing historic signage.

- *The proposal is consistent with the visual cohesiveness of the API. For the purpose of this finding, visual cohesiveness is the architectural character, the sum of all visual aspects, features, and materials that defines the API. A new structure contributes to the visual cohesiveness of a district if it relates to the design characteristics of a historic district while also conveying its own time. New construction may do so by drawing upon some basic building features, such as the way in which a building is located on its site, the manner in which it relates to the street, its basic mass, form, direction or orientation (horizontal vs. vertical), recesses and projections, quality of materials, patterns of openings and level of detailing. When some combination of these design variables are arranged in a new building to relate to those seen traditionally in the area, but integral to the design and character of the proposed new construction, visual cohesiveness results.*

Response: The proposed new signage is visually cohesive to the existing property and its architectural character, by virtue of matching the characteristics of historic signage.

- *Where height is a character-defining element of the API there are height transitions to any neighboring contributing historic buildings. APIs with a character-defining height and their character-defining height level are designated on the zoning maps.*

Response: According to the Zoning Code Bulletin effective April 16, 2010, height is not a character-defining element of the Lake Merritt District API.

- *For additions (including new construction in historic districts), the proposal meets either: 1) Secretary of Interior's standards for the treatment of historic resources; 2) the*

proposal will not adversely affect the character of the property or API; or, 3) upon the granting of a conditional use permit, and a hearing in front of the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board for its recommendations, a project meets the additional findings below.

Response: The proposed new signage meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, which are design standards recommended by the National Park Service in order to preserve and protect the significance and integrity of existing historic resources that are eligible for listing to the National Register of Historic Places.

- For construction of new principal buildings:
 - ❖ *The project will not cause the API to lose its status as an API.*
 - ❖ *The proposal will result in a building or addition with exterior visual quality, craftsmanship, detailing, and high quality and durable materials that is at least equal to that of the API contributors.*
 - ❖ *The proposal contains elements that relate to the character-defining height of the API, if any, through the use of a combination of upper story setbacks, window patterns, change of materials, prominent cornice lines, or other techniques. APIs with a character-defining height and their character-defining height level are designated on the zoning maps.*

Response: The proposal does not include construction of a new principal building.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

In the following environmental analysis, the proposed determination is preliminary in nature and is subject to change pending submittal of the final proposed Master Sign Program, as well as additional information that may be received by the Board and/or the public.

The project involves a historical resource as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).⁶ The CEQA Guidelines categorically exempt specific types of projects from environmental review. Section 15311, or "Class 11" (Accessory Structures), exempts the construction or placement of on-premise signs accessory to (appurtenant to) existing commercial facilities. Section 15331, or "Class 31" (Historical Resource Restoration/Rehabilitation), exempts projects limited to maintenance, repair, stabilization, rehabilitation, restoration, preservation, conservation or reconstruction of historical resources in a manner consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings (1995), Weeks and Grimmer. Therefore, current analysis indicates that the project is exempt from further environmental review.

⁶ CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5.

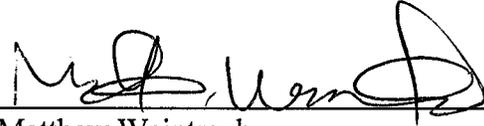
KEY ISSUES

At this time, the key issue that the Board is requested to comment on is the compatibility of the proposed new signage with the existing architectural character and character-defining features of the resource, including its existing historic signage, as well as the surrounding Lake Merritt District API. The Board may comment on the proposed new sign types, materials, locations, lighting, installation, and any other physical aspect of the proposed new signage that may affect or potentially impact the architectural character of the existing property. The Board's input will assist with and facilitate the development of the final proposed Master Sign Program, which will be scheduled for the Board's review at a future meeting date to be determined.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Provide any relevant comments on the design, placement, and construction of the proposed new signage, in order to ensure compatibility with the existing historic and architectural character of the property and its environment.

Prepared by:



Matthew Weintraub
Planner III – Historic Preservation

Reviewed by:



Robert D. Merkamp
Development Planning Manager

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Project Plans
- B. Historic Plans and Photographs