



City of Seattle

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Greg Nickels, Mayor  
**Department of Planning and Development**  
D. M. Sugimura, Director

**CITY OF SEATTLE  
ANALYSIS AND DECISION OF THE DIRECTOR  
OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

**Application Number:** 3009699  
**Applicant Name:** Thomas Bartholomew for Columbia Sportswear Co.  
**Address of Proposal:** 290 Pine Street

**SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION**

Land Use Application to allow a second 36' 10" X 4' 8" projecting sign.

The following approval is required:

**Special Exception** – To allow installation of one 36-foot 10-inch tall by four-foot eight-inch tall projecting sign within 300 feet of another projecting sign for the same use. Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) Section 23.55.040.

**SEPA DETERMINATION:**  Exempt  DNS  MDNS  EIS  
 DNS with conditions  
 DNS involving non-exempt grading, or demolition, or involving another agency with jurisdiction.

**BACKGROUND DATA**

Site and Vicinity Description

The proposal site is located at the northwest corner of the intersection of Pine Street and 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue in Seattle's Downtown Retail Core. The site is developed with an existing mixed-use retail and parking structure. The tenant space is currently occupied by a Columbia Sportswear Company store. The proposal site is located within the boundaries of the Downtown Retail Core (DRC) zone designation, which continues to the north, east and south of the site. A Downtown Mixed Commercial (DMC) zone is located to the west of the site. Development in the vicinity consists of office, retail, hotel, and residential uses.

## Background

On October 13, 2008, the applicant obtained a permit for one 36'10" tall by 4'8" projecting sign on Pine Street (permit 6196453). On January 7, 2009, the applicant submitted a Special Exception application to allow installation of a second 36'10" tall by 4'8" projecting sign on 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue.

## Proposal Description

The proponent proposes to install 36'10" tall by 4'8" projecting sign above the store frontage, attached to the upper story parking garage levels. The sign would be oriented towards the abutting 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue public right-of-way. Pursuant to SMC Section 23.55.034, one projecting sign is permitted for every 300 lineal feet of frontage a proposal site has along a street right-of-way. Because the project has approximately 286.6 lineal feet of frontage only one sign is permitted outright.

## Public Comment

Notice of the application was issued on January 15, 2009. No written comments were offered during the public comment period.

## **ANALYSIS – SPECIAL EXCEPTION**

Pursuant to the requirements of SMC Section 23.55.040, the Director may authorize exceptions to the size, number, height, and depth of projection of on-premises signs. The decision by the Director is made after consultation with the Design Commission. In order for the Director to approve a special exception the proposed project must meet one codified condition and must exhibit at least one codified desired characteristic.

## Design Commission Comment

The project was referred to the Seattle Design Commission and reviewed by the Chair and Design Commission staff. Commission comment is contained in the project file in a letter from the Design Commission dated December 29, 2008. For the purposes of the Design Commission review, comment was based on the overall signage scheme and was further informed by drawings and supporting materials for the original variance application.

The Design Commission recommended approval of a special exception to the sign permit, to accommodate a second projecting sign along the 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue façade to complement the existing projecting sign on Pine Street. The Design Commission recommendation noted, "The presented design complements the recent City and private development efforts along the 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue corridor and does not negatively affect the public realm within the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave environment. There are no other comments to follow the review and the project is accepted as presented."

## Special Exception Criteria

Conditions and desired characteristics are codified in SMC Sections 23.55.040.A and 23.55.040.B, respectively. The proponent's response to conditions and characteristics are summarized below. Codified conditions and characteristics are italicized.

A. *Conditions.*

1. *The proposed sign plan shows an exceptional effort toward creating visual harmony among signs, desirable streetscape features, building facades and other architectural elements of the building structure through the use of a consistent design theme;*

The proposed signage is in keeping with recent 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue improvements, as noted by the Design Commission comments. The proposed sign would complement the existing projecting sign on Pine Street and enhance the 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue façade by providing visual relief in the upper parking garage levels visible from the street. The proposed sign also creates a consistent design theme with neighboring businesses.

- B. *Desired Characteristics. All the following desired characteristics shall be used to evaluate applications for a special exception, and at least one (1) must be met. The proposed sign(s):*

1. *Unifies the project as a whole or contributes positively to a comprehensive building and tenant signage plan;*

Proponent's Response: The proposed sign is consistent with the tenant signage plan.

2. *Is compatible with the building facade and scale of building in terms of size, height and location;*

Proponent's Response: The proposed sign is 36' 10" tall by 4' 8" wide. The bottom of the sign is approximately 22' above the sidewalk. The existing building is approximately 90 feet tall and occupies the entire ½ block bordered by Pine Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, Stewart St, and the alley to the west. The street level of the building includes retail space and parking garage entry. The upper 8 stories are open parking garage levels, clad at the southeast corner by translucent material. The size of the sign is within the City maximum, and is the proposed sign is compatible with the building façade and scale of the building.

3. *Adds interest to the street level environment, while also identifying upper level businesses;*

The proposed sign would add street level interest with the color and design scheme and contribute to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue streetscape. There are no upper level businesses at this corner location that require public awareness on the street.

4. *Helps orient pedestrians and motorists at street-level in the vicinity of the subject building;*

The additional sign would be visible from 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and help to orient pedestrians and motorists in the vicinity of the subject building.

5. *Integrates support fixtures, conduits, wiring, switches and other mounting apparatus into the building architecture to the extent feasible.*

The projected signs are internally illuminated box signs mounted with brackets into the upper parking garage levels. The electrical wiring to illuminate the signage would be located within the support structure for the sign, and connected to the electrical system of the building, not visible from the street level.

Design Commission Comment

The proposed sign has been reviewed by the Design Commission Chair, who noted the design complements recent 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue improvements and does not negatively affect the public realm. The proposed sign would complement the existing projecting sign on the Pine Street façade of the Columbia store, and would provide visual relief in the upper parking garage levels visible from the street. The proposed sign would be in scale with the existing building and would help to orient pedestrians and drivers in the area. Any proposed wiring would not be visible from the street level. The applicant has demonstrated that the proposed sign at this location meets the criteria for a special exception for a sign in the downtown area.

**DECISION – SPECIAL EXCEPTION**

Approved.

**CONDITIONS**

None.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ (signature on file) Date: February 23, 2009  
Shelley Bolser, Senior Land Use Planner  
Department of Planning and Development

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