



City of Seattle

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: 3012483
Applicant Name: Robert George for Signtech
Address of Proposal: 4501 University Way NE

SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL

Land Use Application to allow the installation of seven awning signs for Chase Bank.

The following approval is required:

Special Exception – to allow the number of business establishment signs to exceed the quantity allowed by code (SMC 23.55.040).

SITE AND VICINITY

Site Location: The site is located on the northwest corner of NE 45th St. and University Way NE in Seattle’s University District.

Zoning: Neighborhood Commercial 3. Northeast 45th and University Way NE are designated as principal pedestrian streets. Standards for signs are found in Section 23.55 of the Seattle Municipal Code (SMC).

Parcel Size: The site consists of two platted lots, each measuring 40 ft. by x 103 ft. The existing building has multiple tenants; the proposed signs are for one of the building tenants (Chase Bank), with street frontage of approximately 85 ft. x 35 ft. according to submitted plans.



Existing Use: The space to be occupied by the bank was previously occupied by a used book store. Other tenants in the building include (or recently included) a coffee shop, a hair salon, and a frozen desserts shop.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The subject tenant space is currently undergoing tenant improvements to accommodate the proposed bank tenant. Improvements will include increased transparency (i.e. windows) on NE 45th St. and removal of the existing canopy to be replaced by awnings on both street frontages. Two ATMs are proposed, one on each street frontage; each machine will have a 'Chase' sign directly above it. Another sign (to read "Chase") is proposed to replace the sign at the corner of the building.

The recently installed will provide the backdrop for the seven proposed awning signs. Each awning will have one sign consisting of one word formed by seven-inch tall aluminum letters placed on a light channel (existing). Five signs will be placed on the NE 45th St. side of the building, and two on University Way NE.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

The public comment period ended on August 17, 2011. No comments were received.

SPECIAL EXCEPTION ANALYSIS

Pursuant to SMC Chapter 23.55 this request for modification to sign code requirements must be evaluated against the criteria shown in italics below.

SMC 23.55.040 Special exception for signs in commercial and downtown zones.

The Director may authorize exceptions to the regulations for the size, number, type, height and depth of projection of on-premises signs in neighborhood commercial, commercial, downtown office core, downtown retail core, downtown mixed commercial and downtown harborfront zones as a special exception pursuant to Chapter 23.76, Procedures for Master Use Permit and Council Land Use Decisions, except that no special exception may be authorized for a sign using video display methods. When one (1) or more of the conditions in subsection A of this section have been met, the characteristics described in subsection B of this section shall be used to evaluate the merits of the proposal. Proposals must also meet the intent of the Sign Code as specified in Section 23.55.001, Intent. An exception shall not be granted for roof signs or signs prohibited in Section 23.55.003. In downtown zones, the Director shall consult with the Seattle Design Commission before issuance of the special exception decision.

A. *Conditions. One (1) or more of the following conditions shall be met:*

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;*

2. *The proposed sign plan will preserve a desirable existing design or siting pattern for signs in an area;*
3. *The proposed sign plan will reduce views of historic landmarks designated by the Landmarks Preservation Board no more than would be permitted by a sign permitted outright without a special exception.*

The proposed awning signage uses a consistent theme for the tenant; the letters are simple aluminum single word messages each with seven-inch tall letters and each are situated separately on a blue awning. The proposal creates visual harmony for the large frontage of one of the street-level tenants in a larger building located on a corner site. As proposed, the sign plan meets Condition #1.

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;*
2. *Is compatible with the building facade and scale of building in terms of size, height and location;*
3. *Adds interest to the street level environment, while also identifying upper level businesses;*
4. *Helps orient pedestrians and motorists at street-level 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 proposed signage unifies the identification of the associated street-level tenant and helps orient pedestrians and motorists as to its location and the services provided. The proposed signage is compatible with the building façade and scale in that it is simple and does not demand attention or compete with the building's interesting design elements. The awnings and lighting bars serve to generally integrate wiring and conduits with the building façade by presenting a clean, uncluttered location for the proposed signage. Thus, the proposed signage is consistent with Characteristics #1, 2, 4, and 5.

DECISION

The proposed Special Exception to allow the increase in nonconformity to the sign code is Granted.

CONDITIONS

None required.

Signature: _____ (signature on file) Date: October 27, 2011
Cheryl Waldman, Supervising Land Use Planner
Department of Planning and Development

CW:bg

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