



City of Seattle

Department of Planning and Development

Diane M. Sugimura, Director

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

Application Number: 3014701
Applicant Name: Shawn Bowen
Address of Proposal: 301 NE 103rd St

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

Land Use Application to allow a projecting sign face mounted on a commercial structure.

The following approval is required:

Special Exception – to allow a projecting sign in an NC3 zone, pursuant to Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) 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

Thornton Place is a development located in the Northgate area, south of Northgate Mall. The development occupies the majority of the block bounded by 3rd Ave NE, 5th Ave NE, NE 103rd St and NE 100th St. The site includes several three to six-story mixed-use, commercial, and residential buildings, reviewed under Master Use Permit #2401519.

The proposed signage would be located on the north façade of the northwest building at the southeast corner of 3rd Ave NE & NE 103rd St. The westerly portion of the Thornton Place development, including the building proposed for the sign is zoned NC3-125 (Neighborhood Commercial with a 125' height limit). The easterly portion of the development



has a parking garage and five tenant spaces, in addition to the Regal Cinemas Movie Theater. Additional retail spaces are located on the ground floor of the residential buildings along NE Thornton Place (the internal circulation drive). Development in the vicinity consists of commercial and residential uses.

Proposal Description

The proposed multi-tenant sign is a two sided, internally illuminated metal cabinet measuring 29' tall by 3' wide by 6'5" deep. The north cabinet face will have a lexan face with graphics designating "Thornton Place" (2' by 29', or 58 sq.ft.); while west and east cabinet faces (6'5" x 29', or 186 sq.ft. each) will have lexan faces with 8 dividers; allowing for future graphics for tenants. The sign would be mounted at a distance of 21' above grade and extend to 50' above grade, projecting 7'½" from the face of the building.

SMC 23.55.030 regulates signs in NC3 zones. The proposed sign is an internally illuminated projecting sign. The code allows a multiple business center to have one multi-tenant sign for each 300 lineal feet of street frontage, or portion thereof. The subject building occupies substantial frontage on two streets (about 250' on 3rd Avenue and 200 feet on NE 103rd Street), so would allow for two multi-tenant signs. The maximum size allowed for each face of a multi-tenant sign is 300 s. f. and the signs are well within this limit.

However, the code only provides for free-standing multi-tenant sign, not building-mounted signage. Thus, the proposed signage requires a special exception.

Public Notice and Comment Period

The public comment period for this project ended on March 6, 2013. The Land Use Application information is available at the Public Resource Center located at 700 Fifth Ave, Suite 2000¹.

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. 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.

Special Exception Criteria

Conditions and desired characteristics are codified in SMC Sections 23.55.040.A and 23.55.040.B, respectively. The 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;*

¹ <http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/PRC/LocationHours/default.asp>

The style of the development with buildings built near the property line does not leave room for multi-tenant freestanding pole signs. The proposed projecting sign design is more in keeping with the architectural character of the development and allows the signs to be close to the street and sidewalk where they are viewable by vehicles and pedestrians, as well as contributing the streetscape and building façade.

The historical master plan included a roof sign, “Thornton Place” as well as the “Regal Cinema” projecting sign, and the two multi-tenant signs proposed as part of this application. Several of these signs were included in the design review drawings with MUP #2401519. The historical signage plan shows an effort to create visual harmony between the signs, streetscape and building facades. These primary signs nicely frame the structure, blending with the masonry detailing, storefront windows, metal framing and other materials of the façade. The cabinet will be painted silver to match the building framing.

The overall signage plan coordinates with architectural elements of the building structure to create a consistent design theme.

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;

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;

The proposed sign measures 29’ tall and projects 7’ ½” from the face of the building. This fits with the scale of the building, which is roughly 100’ tall. The placement of the sign starting at 21’ and extending to 50’ above ground provides visibility from a distance while not being out of scale with the streetscape and pedestrian environment. Individual tenants will have their own building façade signage which will be more oriented to pedestrians as they walk along the sidewalk in front of the building.

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

The proposed sign identifies some of the street level businesses within the development. Its placement adds to the street level environment on NE 103rd St, as well as being visible from further away.

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

The sign would be visible from NE 103rd St. The location of the sign near the main entrance to the internal circulation roads is appropriate and will help orient pedestrians and motorists to the location of tenants in the buildings.

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

The projecting signs are internally illuminated box signs mounted with brackets into the upper building level. 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.

DECISION – SPECIAL EXCEPTION

Approved.

CONDITIONS

None.

Signature: _____ (signature on file) Date: May 9, 2013
Colin R. Vasquez, Senior Land Use Planner
Department of Planning and Development

CRV:bg

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