



City of Oregon City

625 Center Street
Oregon City, OR 97045
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Staff Report

File Number: PC 19-028

Agenda Date: 4/2/2019

Status: Agenda Ready

To: Historic Review Board

Agenda #: 4a.

From: Kelly Reid

File Type: Planning Item

SUBJECT:

GLUA 19-00005/HR 19-01 Historic Review Board review of alterations to a designated structure at 602 7th Street, the I.O.O.F. Hall

RECOMMENDED ACTION (Motion):

Staff recommends a continuance to the April 23, 2019 meeting. The Board may accept public comment and keep the record open until the next meeting.

BACKGROUND:

A continuance for this item has been requested by the McLoughlin Neighborhood Association.

The City is required by Oregon Revised Statute to grant requests for continuances when made at the first hearing.

The applicant submitted this application to request approval of one projecting sign and two wall signs on the exterior façade of the I.O.O.F Hall at 602 7th Street. The property is located in the McLoughlin Conservation District and is a locally designated structure. The I.O.O.F. Hall was built in 1922. The lodge room is upstairs, while the downstairs is two rentable store fronts. The storefronts have contained a variety of uses over time, including a hardware store for many years, and more recently, a restaurant.

A new restaurant tenant plans to move into the space. The applicant proposes to remove the former restaurant signs and install a new angled projecting sign placed above the entryway. The proposed height of the sign is 4 feet 10 inches, and the width when viewing straight on is 10 feet. When viewing from the side, each sign face is 6 feet 10 inches in length and 33 square feet. The sign projects about 6 feet out from the building. The design of the sign is a marquee that is inspired by theater signs in the 1920s and 1930s. It is internally illuminated with bulbs around the perimeter.

The wall signs are proposed to be placed on the first story west wall of the building, with one above the storefront windows and one above the garage doors near the rear of the building. The wall signs are aluminum with illuminated lettering. Each sign is approximately 2 feet in height and 7 to 8 feet in length.

The Secretary of Interior has published Preservation Brief #25 (Exhibit 4) on signage. The brief includes the following recommendation: "Sign placement is important: new signs should not obscure significant features of the historic building. (Signs above a storefront should fit within the historic signboard, for example.)" In addition, the brief recommends materials characteristic of the building's period and style.

The Secretary of Interior Standards also include that “changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.”

Further guidance can be found in the City’s adopted Guidelines for New Construction, page 60. While these guidelines are meant for new construction, the content may also be helpful in reviewing alteration proposals.

- Internally illuminated cabinet signs are not allowed.
- Wall or projecting signs may be illuminated by concealed sources or by compatible exposed fixtures.
- Panel signs should incorporate applied edge molding to provide depth and a finished look.

Staff finds that the wall signs proposed on the Washington Street façade of the building, can be found to be compatible. The placement of the signs on the blank wall areas of the building does not compete with or conceal any historic features. The signs are made of aluminum with lighting sources concealed. The edges of the signs do not have molding, but the modern style presents a finished appearance.

Staff has concerns about the proposed projecting sign that are also reflected in comments from the State Historic Preservation Office. The marquee style, while of the appropriate era, is very specific to theaters. This building does not have any historic use as a theater, and the sign style may create a false sense of history, which is antithetical to the Secretary of Interior’s Standards previously cited. Staff has provided images of previously used signs on this building that would be more appropriate, and recommends that the design be changed to resemble the previous signs.

The placement of the projecting sign covers a portion of the belt cornice that separates the two floors of the building. The belt cornice is an architectural feature that should not be obscured, per the previously cited guidelines. The size of the sign does not fit within the historic sign board area above the entryway and it overwhelms the entryway, competing with the building’s architecture. Staff recommends that any signs on the 7th Street facade should be placed to leave at least three inches between the top of the sign and the bottom of the belt cornice.

The internal illumination of the sign may also be an item of concern. While internally illuminated cabinet signs are not compatible, the illumination for this sign may be acceptable because an internally lit marquee is different from a modern typical cabinet sign and is historically found in the 1920s era.

Staff also recommends a condition of approval that the signs be affixed to the building in a way that does not damage the building materials.

BUDGET IMPACT:

Amount:

FY(s):

Funding Source:

