



City of Oregon City

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Staff Report

File Number: PC 19-037

Agenda Date: 4/23/2019

Status: Draft

To: Historic Review Board

Agenda #: 3.

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 approval with conditions.

BACKGROUND:

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 four total new signs:

- A new wall sign placed above the entryway. The proposed height of the sign is 3 feet 7 inches and the length is 8 feet 9 inches, for a total of 31 square feet. 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.
- A new projecting sign on the corner of the building. The sign projects about 5 feet out from the building.
- Two new 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 marquee style wall sign; these concerns 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 recommends that the bulbs around the perimeter of the sign, which give the sign a theater aesthetic, be removed or replaced with a different feature.

The placement of the wall sign along 7th Street sign is very close to red brick detailing, including 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. Staff recommends that any signs on the 7th Street facade should be placed to leave at least three inches between the edge of the sign and the red brick detailing.

The internal illumination of the sign may also be an item of concern. While internally illuminated cabinet signs are not compatible on historic properties, the internally lit reader board is different from a typical modern cabinet sign, and is historically found in the 1920s era. For this reason, the internal illumination may be acceptable in this case.

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: