

Planning Commission Staff Report

May 8, 2013
Item 6.c.

SUBJECT: Appeal of P12-1771

APPLICANT: Pacific Neon Company on behalf of Blackhawk Network

PROPERTY OWNER: 6220 Stoneridge Mall Investors LLC

PURPOSE: Appeal of the Zoning Administrator's denial of an application for Sign Design Review to install two wall-mounted signs at 6220 Stoneridge Mall Road.

GENERAL PLAN: Retail/Highway/Service Commercial/Business and Professional Offices

ZONING: Planned Unit Development – Commercial-Office District

LOCATION: 6220 Stoneridge Mall Road

EXHIBITS:

- A: Draft Conditions of Approval
- B: Project Plans stamped "Received February 28, 2013" and Applicant's Letter stamped "Received March 26, 2013"
- C: Zoning Administrator's Denial Letter dated March 11, 2013
- D: Location and Noticing Maps

BACKGROUND

Pacific Neon Company, on behalf of Blackhawk Network, would like to install two wall-mounted signs on the upper-façade of the building at 6220 Stoneridge Mall Road. The subject building is part of the Pleasanton Corporate Commons development and is subject to a comprehensive sign program. The signs proposed for Blackhawk Network do not adhere to the sign program and, therefore, the applicant submitted for a Sign Design Review application. The applicant was not willing to make the changes requested by staff to adhere to the parameters in the sign program. Therefore, the Zoning Administrator denied the sign application and the appeal of this denial is before the Planning Commission for consideration.

SITE AND BUILDING DESCRIPTIONS

The subject site is located within the Pleasanton Corporate Commons development, which is generally bounded by Interstate Highway 680 to the east, BART and the Stoneridge Corporate Plaza development to the north, Stoneridge Mall to the west and multi-family residences directly to the south. Figure 1 provides photographs of the site, and the subject building is identified with the red circle.



FIGURE 1: Vicinity Map

The Pleasanton Corporate Commons development consists of four office buildings, each five stories tall. The subject building (6220 Stoneridge Mall Road) and the building directly to the south, 6230 Stoneridge Mall Road, are closer to Interstate 680 than the other two buildings (6200 and 6210 Stoneridge Mall Road).

Figure 2 shows photographs of the subject building and the existing Blackhawk Network signs on the north and west façades.

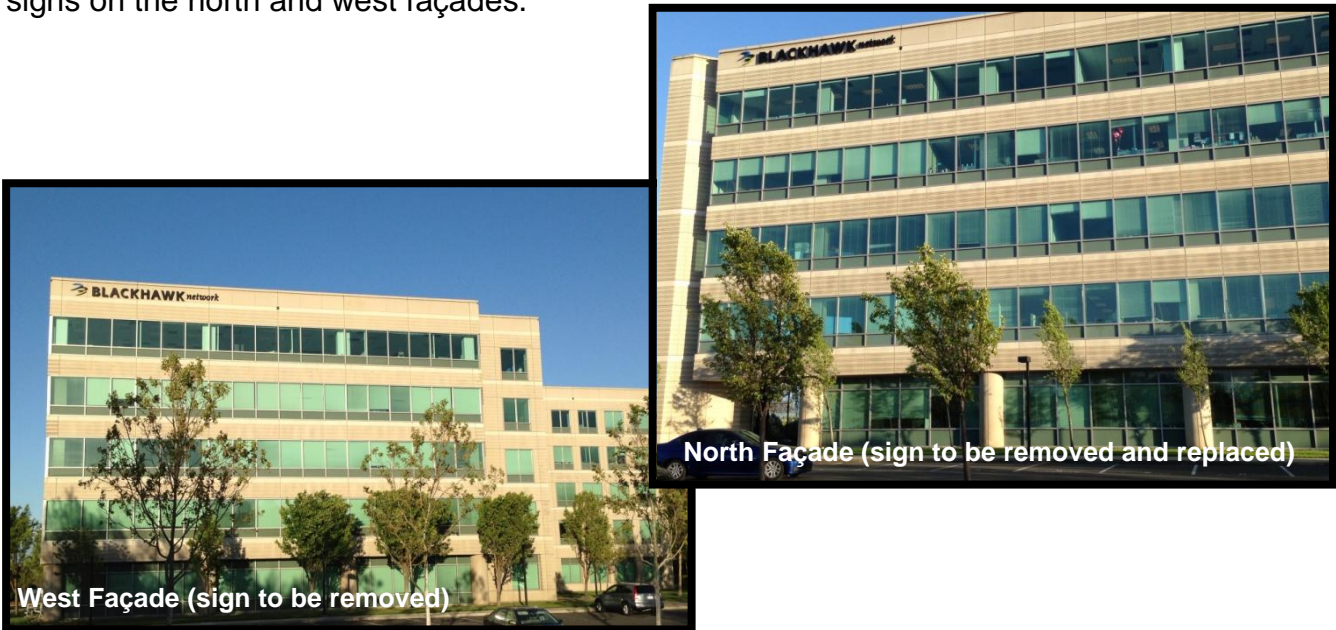


FIGURE 2: Building Photographs

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project proposal consists of the following components:

1. Removal of two existing Blackhawk Network signs, one on the north façade and another on the west façade;
2. Installation of two signs for Blackhawk Network, one on the north façade, and another on the east façade.

Figure 3 shows the site plan and identifies the signs to be removed. “A” and “B” refer to locations of the proposed signs.

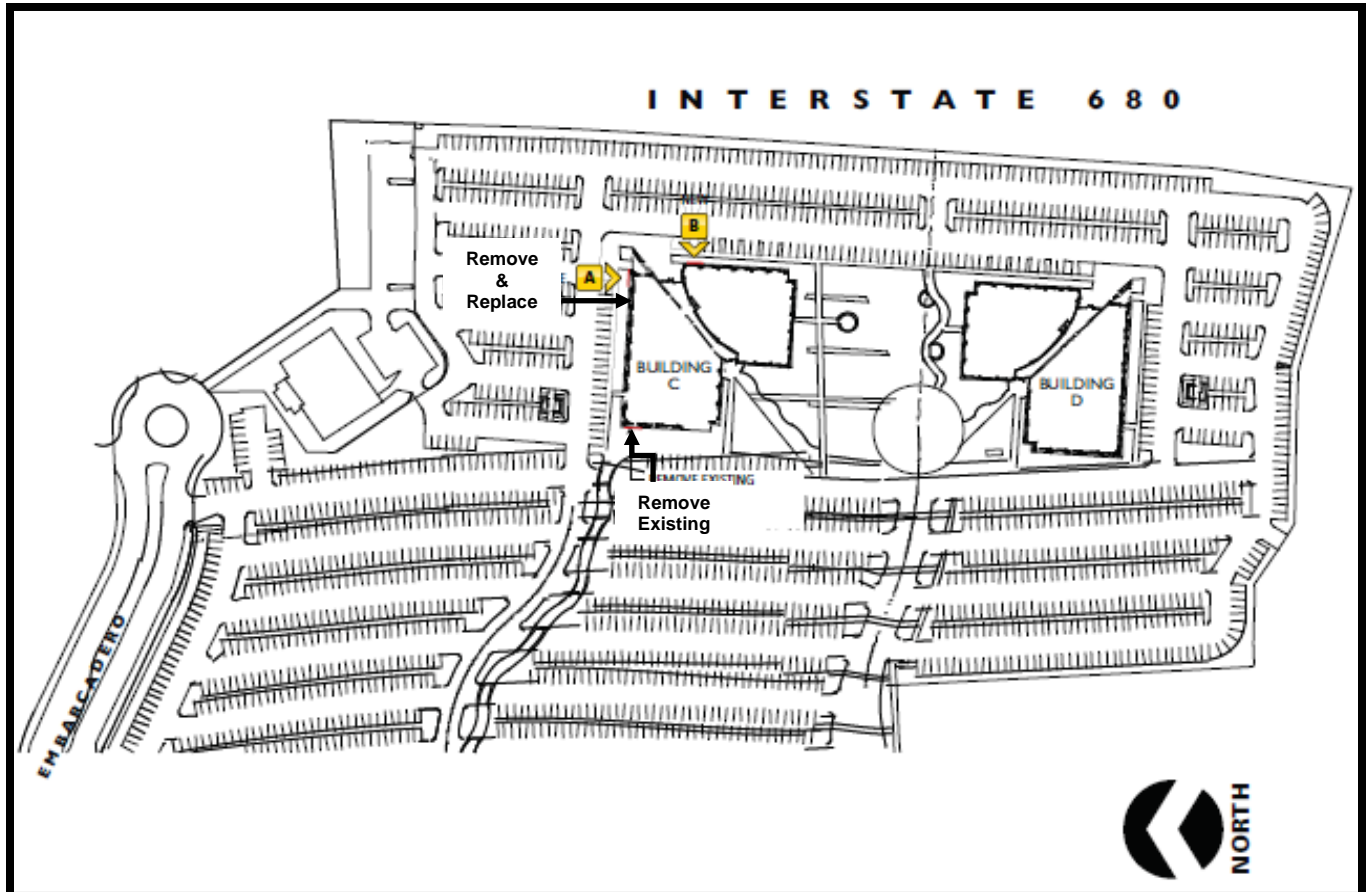


FIGURE 3: Site Plan

The proposed signs for each façade are the same and consist of a logo 3-feet 8-inches tall by 4-feet-10-inches wide and text reading, “Blackhawk Network” in double-stacked copy and all capital letters. The word “Blackhawk” is proposed to be 2-feet tall and the word “Network” is proposed to be 1-foot tall, and both words would be 18-feet 10-inches long and vertically centered with the height of the logo. Including the logo, the sign is proposed to be 24-feet-4-inches long. The text consists of acrylic channel letters coated with vinyl film and is proposed to be internally illuminated such that during the day the letters appear black and when illuminated at night, appear white. The logo is also proposed to have a clear acrylic face with vinyl film and be internally illuminated.

Figure 4 shows the dimensions of the proposed signage and a photo montage of the proposed signs on the building.



FIGURE 4: Proposed Sign and Elevations

ANALYSIS

The Pleasanton Corporate Commons development has an approved sign program (approved in May of 2004) that establishes permitted sign types (tenant directory/identification monuments, tenant upper façade identification signs, and tenant lower façade identification signs) and criteria for each sign type.

The proposed signs do not meet the sign program and subsequent modifications for Pleasanton Corporate Commons in that:

1. the signs are proposed to be internally-illuminated where halo illumination is required;
2. the signs are not located between the reveal lines of the upper façade (please refer to Figure 5 for a diagram that shows this area);
3. stacked copy is not permitted;
4. the total sign height is proposed to be 44-inches where a maximum of 30-inches is permitted; and
5. a letter depth of 5-inches is proposed where a maximum depth of 3-inches is permitted.



FIGURE 5: Reveal Area

Staff is willing to support an exception to the sign program criteria by allowing a maximum logo height of 44-inches and 5-inch letter depth. However, staff finds that the other deviations from the approved sign program criteria, particularly the internal illumination and the location of the sign where it is not located between the reveal lines of the upper façade, will result in an overall appearance that is inconsistent with the other signs within the development and therefore less attractive.

The applicant has indicated that the sign as proposed is consistent with the current corporate identity of Blackhawk Network which has stacked letters and that the internally illuminated letters are more visible from Interstate 680. However, the intent for signage on office buildings is to not have it be brightly illuminated. The sign program for the subject development requires that signs be illuminated only between 7:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m. The applicant's letter filed with the appeal is attached in its entirety as part of Exhibit B.

If the Planning Commission is inclined to approve the signs without meeting the sign program, staff suggests that the following parameters for the subject signs be considered:

1. The size of the sign would still exceed the 30-inch maximum established by the sign program, and stacked copy would be permitted, but the sign size would be reduced such that it fits within the reveal lines, which are 34.5-inches apart. For example, the logo could be 30-inches, the word "Blackhawk" could be 18-inches tall, the word "Network" could be 9-inches tall, leaving 3-inches for a gap between the words and 2.25-inches from the reveal lines. Another option would be for the logo to be 33-inches, the word "Blackhawk" to be 20-inches, the word "Network" be 10-inches, leaving a 3-inch gap between the two words and 0.75-inches from the reveal lines; and
2. Both the letters and logo would be halo illuminated instead of internally illuminated channel letters.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notices regarding the subject appeal and related public hearing were mailed to the surrounding property owners within a 1,000-foot radius of the project site. A map showing the noticing area is attached to this report. The public notice was also published in *The Valley Times*. At the time this report was published, staff had not received comments regarding this appeal.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

This project is categorically exempt from environmental review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines, Section 15311, Accessory Structures, Class 1(a), on-premise signs. Therefore, no environmental document accompanies this report.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission deny the appeal of P12-1771, thereby upholding the Zoning Administrator's denial of the wall-mounted signs. However, should the Planning Commission find that the signs are appropriate, conditions of approval are included with the staff report as Exhibit A.

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