
File #: 16-0438, Version: 1

REPORT TO HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION

SUBJECT

File #: 2015-7117

Location: 151 S. Murphy Avenue (APN: 209-06-008)

Applicant / Owner: Nick Gera (Applicant/Owner)

Proposed Project:

LANDMARK ALTERATION PERMIT for minor exterior building modifications that include repainting the building and the removal and replacement of existing awnings, storefront windows and the main front entrance door along the Murphy Avenue street frontage.

Reason for Permit: A Landmark Alteration Permit is required for exterior modifications to buildings in the DSP-2 Local Landmark District.

Project Planner: Cindy Hom, (408) 730-7411, chom@sunnyvale.ca.gov

Issues: Design Consistency with the Murphy Avenue Design Guidelines.

Recommendation: Approve with conditions.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant is requesting a Landmark Alteration Permit to allow minor exterior modifications to the building at 151 S. Murphy Avenue located within the Murphy Station Heritage Landmark District and the Downtown Specific Plan Area (Block 2). The project proposes exterior façade changes that include:

- Repainting the building with a natural gray color and a black accent color for the trim;
- Removal of a metal bracket detail at the parapet level;
- Replacement of existing awnings with a new black canvas awning that incorporates a sign logo for Metro City Restaurant and Bar; and
- Replacement of the existing glass door and transom windows with a new 24-foot wide lift and slide bi-fold door unit.

A Landmark Alteration Permit is required for any exterior modifications to buildings in the Local Landmark District. Architectural review in the district is the responsibility of the Heritage Preservation Commission.

Background

Previous Planning Projects related to Subject Application: • 1988-0382 - Amendment to previous Landmark Alteration Permit to allow for various architectural changes. Approval granted on 12/20/88. • 1987-0500 - Amendment to previous Landmark Alteration Permit to revise second floor addition to rear portion of the building. Approval granted on 2/18/87. • 1986-0487 - Landmark Alteration Permit and Use Permit approved on 10/15/86 to expand and remodel building. • 1979-0649 - Miscellaneous Plan Permit approved in 7/1/79.	Yes
Neighborhood Preservation Complaint	No
Deviations from Standard Zoning Requirements	None

Architecture

The one and two-story stucco building has a simple building form and flat roof. The storefront elevation has a one-story profile on South Murphy Avenue and a two-story profile on the rear elevation that faces the parking lot and Frances Avenue. Currently, the building is articulated with stucco walls, glass storefront doors and windows, angular awnings along the front and rear elevations and a metal bracket element at the parapet level.

The tenant space is being renovated for a new restaurant named Metro City Restaurant and Bar. The purpose of the exterior modifications is to update the exterior and incorporate the restaurant branding. As mentioned, the proposed changes include the following:

- Repainting the building with a natural gray color and a black accent color for the trim;
- Removal and replacement of an existing storefront awning located on the front elevation and two smaller awnings located on the rear elevation at the first and second floor levels. The awnings will be replaced with new black canvas awning incorporated with a sign logo; and
- Removal and replacement of existing storefront windows/doors along the street front elevation with a 24-foot wide lift and slide bi-fold door unit.

ANALYSIS The proposed exterior modifications are not considered significant and therefore do not require additional historic analysis. The general form of the building will remain as it currently exists.

Applicable Design Guidelines and Policy Documents The following design guidelines from the Murphy Avenue Design Guidelines are applicable to the project:

1. Storefront Areas: The typical storefront consists of a recessed entry with splayed sides. Display windows with metal sash run the full width of the façade with transom windows and/or a signage band above. Almost universally, transom windows were an important storefront element, serving as signage area and providing additional light inside. Transom windows which have been covered over or painted should be opened up again. The sunlight is beneficial for the interior, and the exterior appearance of the façade is improved by restoration of this original design feature.

Analysis: The existing storefront windows run the full width of the front façade and consist of dark glazing which give the appearance of blacked out windows. The replacement of the dark storefront window and door unit with new bi-fold doors with clear glazing would be in keeping

with the above design guideline. The new bi-fold doors would open up the tenant space to the street and provide additional light and visual penetration. The installation of the bi-fold doors at the storefront in conjunction with the potential for outdoor dining opportunities would contribute to activating Murphy Avenue and creating an inviting commercial space. As conditioned, any future outdoor seating shall be subject to the approval of a Miscellaneous Plan Permit.

2. Colors: Every effort should be made to coordinate all the colors which make up a building's façade, including awnings and signage.

Analysis: The proposed modifications are in keeping with the above design guideline because the black colored awnings with painted red sign logo are coordinated with the gray building and black trim color. The color scheme and materials are simple and do not overwhelm the building by being too busy, too loud or monochromatic. The color scheme and materials also reinforces the simple commercial architectural style of the building. The red, white and black color on the sign logo provides visual distinction to the building façade which is encouraged by the Murphy Avenue Design Guidelines. Other buildings on Murphy Avenue have used dark/rich colors in recent years and would be compatible with the surrounding buildings.

3. Awnings: Many of the Murphy Avenue buildings were designed to have retractable 45-degree angle awnings stretching the length of the storefront display windows or across the length of the facade.

Analysis: The project also entails the replacement of the existing awning with black canvas material that utilizes the same frame. As such, the awning maintains the same shape, size and visual character of the Murphy Avenue Landmark District and therefore, consistent with the above design guideline.

4. Signage: Traditionally, signage for Murphy Avenue was placed on the valance of the awning within the bands above below transom windows and almost always appeared on the storefront windows. The Murphy Avenue Landmark District encourages storefront signs to be carefully designed to reflect the special quality of the establishment, to fit in with the architecture of the building, and harmonized with the general character of Murphy Avenue.

Analysis: The project is consistent with the above design guideline because the signage is incorporated on the awning and centrally located over the storefront area. The applicant is proposing a similar awning sign on the rear elevation. Staff recommends limiting the sign logo to the lower awning on the rear elevation to maintain design continuity with other awning signs as a condition approval. The signage is limited to the business identification consisting of the business name and logo only. The awning sign is consistent with other establishment along Murphy Avenue like Pure Lounge, Vino Vino and Roberto's Cantina. The proposed sign area complies with the Sunnyvale Sign Ordinance in terms of sign height, copy height and sign area as summarized in the Table 1 below:

Table 1: Sign Requirements

Sign Criteria	Required	Proposed	Complies
Sign Area	.66 square feet per lineal feet of street frontage; maximum of 200 square feet.	68.80 sq. ft.	Yes
Sign Height	Cannot extend above the roof line	Incorporated on Awning located below parapet wall	Yes
Copy Height	6-inch minimum 48-inch maximum	Overall height of 27-inches	Yes

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The project is categorically exemption from further environmental review pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Class I, Section 15301 (Existing Facilities). The proposed modifications do not cause a significant change to the building and therefore, do not warrant additional historic analysis as they are limited to cosmetic changes to the exterior façade of the building. The general form of the building shall remain as it is currently.

FINDINGS

Staff is recommending approval for the Landmark Alteration Permit based on the attached Findings (Attachment 2).

PUBLIC CONTACT

237 notices were sent to surrounding property owners and residents adjacent to the subject site in addition to standard noticing practices, including advertisement in the Sunnyvale Sun Newspaper and on-site posting. No letters or calls were received from the public by staff.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve the Landmark Alteration Permit with the recommended Conditions in Attachment 3.
2. Approve the Landmark Alteration Permit with modifications.
3. Deny the Landmark Alteration Permit.

RECOMMENDATION

Alternative 1: Approve the Landmark Alteration Permit with the recommended Conditions in Attachment 3.

Prepared by: Cindy Hom, Assistant Planner
Reviewed by: Amber Blizinski, Principal Planner

ATTACHMENTS

1. Vicinity and Noticing Maps
2. Recommended Findings
3. Recommended Conditions of Approval
4. Project Plans
5. Site Photographs

6. Colors and Materials Exhibit