

**WALNUT CREEK DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION  
RESOLUTION NO. 2530  
DESIGN REVIEW APPLICATION NO. Y04-111  
The Mercer Mixed-Use Project  
Retail Sign Program and Exterior Building Signage  
1615 - 1699 N. California Blvd.**

Effective February 1, 2007 Unless Appealed Prior to that Date

Section 1. Background.

1. On January 17, 2007, the Walnut Creek Design Review Commission held a public hearing to consider a request for approval of a proposed retail sign program and other exterior building signage for the mixed-use project known as "The Mercer" located at 1615-1699 N. California Blvd.
2. On November 1, 2006 and in subsequent meetings, the Design Review Commission Sign Subcommittee (T. Bassett, M. Lopez) reviewed the proposed signage for this project with the applicants and staff and made recommendations for modifications. At the January 3, 2007 meeting, the Sign Subcommittee indicated that the proposed sign program, as revised, could be forwarded to the full Design Review Commission for review with a recommendation for approval.
3. On May 4, 2005, the Walnut Creek Design Review Commission held a public hearing on a request for final design review approval of Design Review Application No. 04-111 for the Mercer mixed-use project located in the 1600 block of N. California Blvd and adopted Resolution No. 2474.
4. On February 4, 2003, the Walnut Creek City Council approved Resolution No. 03-5 adopting a Mitigated Negative Declaration, a tree removal permit and drip-line encroachment permit, a General Plan Amendment and Rezoning to a Planned Development designation.
5. This project is categorically exempt from the requirements of CEQA under Class 1 of the Guidelines and Processing procedures for the Review of Projects for the City of Walnut Creek.
6. This project is consistent with the General Plan and zoning and other City development standards that regulate development on this site. The project requires Design Review Commission approval of the retail sign program, building identification signage and parking garage signage for two garage entries (Trinity Avenue and Cole Avenue).
7. The majority of the retail signs will be located in the area directly above the storefront entry doors located along N. California Blvd. The two corner retail spaces may also have signage fronting onto Trinity Ave. and Cole Ave. Each in-line retail tenant space has wall signage, an integrated blade sign that projects from the wall sign, and limited window signage. The retail space at the corner of Trinity Ave. and N. California Blvd will likely be occupied by a restaurant user. That space includes additional signage opportunities.
8. Design Review Findings, Section 10-2.4.1206 . No Design Review approval may be granted unless the following findings (where applicable) are made:

---

A. The plan is consistent with the General Plan, any applicable Specific Plan and this Chapter.

**The proposed signage for the building and future retail tenant is consistent with the General Plan and any other applicable regulations in that the signs are properly scaled and positioned to provide good identity for both pedestrians and drivers. The signage is appropriate and contemporary in style, corresponding well to the architecture of the Mercer development. The retail sign program provides a sufficient flexibility to reasonably accommodate future tenants while still requiring a high quality of sign design.**

B. The approval of this plan is in the best interest of the public health, safety and general welfare. **The proposed signage will enhance the appearance of the building and provide identity and information to the tenant and the retail user.**

C. General site considerations, including site layout, open space and topography, orientation and location of buildings, vehicular access, circulation and parking, setbacks, height, walls, fences, public safety and similar elements have been designed to provide a desirable environment for the development.

**The sign program and other building signs will assist in way-finding for the general public and provide direction to the various retail locations and into the Mercer residential area and parking facility. The installation of attractive and compatible signage will help create a desirable environment for this project and the development within and surrounding it.**

D. General architectural considerations, including the character, scale and quality of the design, the architectural relationship with the site and other buildings, building materials, colors, screening of exterior appurtenances, exterior lighting and signing and similar elements have been incorporated in order to ensure the compatibility of this development with its design concept and the character of adjacent buildings.

**The sign program and other building signage is of an attractive and contemporary design which complements the Mercer project building and this area of the downtown district. The signage will be of a high quality, with an emphasis on individual letter halo-lit sign panels. It will include blade signs for all tenants, addressing the need for both vehicular user and pedestrian signage.**

E. General landscape considerations, including the location, type, size, color, texture and coverage of plant materials, provisions for irrigation, maintenance and protection of landscaped areas and similar elements have been considered to ensure visual relief, to complement buildings and structures and to provide an attractive environment for the enjoyment of the public.

**Not applicable to this approval.**

F. Compliance with all provisions of Chapter 8 (Preservation of Trees on Private Property) of Title 3 (Public Safety) of this code.

---

**No trees are affected by the proposed sign program. The lighting design will highlight the focal element tree in the restaurant area planter.**

G. Where fine art work has been proposed, general consideration of category, form, scale, durability, siting and similar elements have been incorporated to complement the surroundings.

**The Mercer project includes a public art element. The Design Review Commission has approved the location of the art element in the area to the south of the Mercer lobby entry doors along the N. California Blvd. frontage. The Bedford Gallery Advisory Committee will approve of the design of the public art element.**

9. Based on the evidence presented at the meeting the Design Review Commission hereby resolves that:
  - a. This Commission makes the findings as outlined under Section 10-2.4.1206, Chapter 2 (Design Review), Title 10 of the Walnut Creek Municipal Code for the reasons stated in numbers 1. through 8. above.

Section 2. Decision. Based on the findings as set forth above, this Commission hereby grants approval of Design Review Application No. Y04-111 (Sign Program) as shown on the plans labeled "Exhibit A of Design Review No. Y04-111-Sign Program" and "Exhibit B of Design Review No. Y04-111-Sign Program" subject to the following conditions:

1. The property shall be developed substantially the same as shown on the plans labeled "Exhibit A of Design Review No. Y04-111-Sign Program" and "Exhibit B of Design Review No. Y04-111-Sign Program".
2. The design of the 3 foot by 10 foot projecting sign that may be located on the patio column at the corner (restaurant) storefront at Trinity Ave./N. California Blvd. shall be reviewed and approved by Design Review Commission Sign Subcommittee at the time specific signage is proposed for that tenant. Other signage for that tenant may be approved at staff level if consistent with the adopted sign program.
3. The location and content of the parking lot counter and associated signage shall be reviewed and approved by City staff prior to occupancy of the residential or commercial elements of the Mercer project.
4. The exterior lighting as part of the signage as shown in Exhibits A and B shall be well-maintained in working condition. After installation, planning staff shall have the authority to direct modifications to any lighting element on this project which creates excessively bright areas or results in off-site light trespass.

Section 3. Effective Date. This resolution shall take effect on February 1, 2007 unless appealed prior to that date.

PASSED AND ADOPTED ON January 17, 2007 by the Walnut Creek Design Review Commission at a regular meeting thereof upon motion by Commissioner Lopez and seconded by Commissioner Bassett.

Ayes: Bassett, Lopez, Kremin, Gorny, Kilian

Noes: None

Absent: None

Abstain: None

/s/ VICTORIA WALKER, Secretary  
Walnut Creek Design Review Commission