

#### CITY OF ROSEVILLE PLANNING & REDEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT STAFF REPORT **DESIGN COMMITTEE MEETING JANUARY 18, 2007**

Prepared by: Tricia Stewart, Associate Planner

ITEM IV-A: SIGN VARIANCE - FRY'S ELECTRONICS - 180 N. SUNRISE AVENUE - FILE # 2006PL-

193 (V-000035)

## REQUEST

The applicant requests approval of a Sign Variance to allow an increase in the permitted wall sign area from 200 square feet to 300 square feet and to allow one sign to protrude horizontally more than one foot (1') from the wall to which it will be attached.

> Applicant: Fry's Electronics, Victor Beltran Owner: I Think I Can, Richard Singer

## **SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION**

The Planning Department recommends that the Design Committee:

- A. Adopt the three (3) findings of fact for the Sign Variance; and
- B. Approve the Sign Variance subject to six (6) conditions of approval.

## **SUMMARY OF OUTSTANDING ISSUES**

The applicant is not in agreement with staff's recommendation to deny the portion of the sign variance related to the increase in allowable sign projection. Please refer to page 3 of the staff report for more detail.

#### **BACKGROUND**

Location: The project site is located at 180 North Sunrise Avenue at the intersection of Sierra Gardens Drive and North Sunrise Avenue approximately 500 feet southwest of Lead Hill Road within the Infill Area of the City (see Attachment 1).

Permit History: The Design Review Permit (DRP) for Fry's Electronics was approved by the Planning Commission on December 11, 2002 (DRP 01-17). The DRP permitted a 144,000 square foot building with associated parking, lighting and landscaping. The approved building elevations are provided as Attachment 2 (note that the signs shown on the elevations were not approved as part of the DRP). The Planning Commission's decision to approve the project was appealed to the City Council. On January 24, 2003, the City Council upheld the Planning Commission's approval. On January 25, 2005, a Design Review Permit extension was approved which allowed for a one year extension of the permit. Building permits were issued in December 2005. The project is currently under construction with completion targeted for spring 2007.

### **EVALUATION**

Fry's Electronics is defined as an "individual use" per the provisions of the Sign Ordinance. The Sign Ordinance (Section 17.06.130) permits individual uses, such as Fry's, to have an unlimited number of wall signs provided that the total area of the wall signage does not exceed 20 percent of the building façade, up to a maximum of 200 square feet and the sign height does not exceed two-thirds of the height of the fascia on which it is located.

The applicant proposes to install a total of three (3) wall signs (one sign on the west elevation and two on the east elevation) for a total sign area of 297 square feet. The request exceeds the maximum area permitted by the Sign Ordinance by 97 square feet, requiring approval of a sign variance.

The sign variance is also requested to allow one of the wall signs (Exhibit A, page 1, sign #1) to project horizontally from the wall to which it will be attached by more than one foot (1'). Sign #1, which will be located on the tower feature on the west elevation of the building, would be attached to an aluminum frame that would project horizontally from the tower wall up to four feet ten inches (4'10"). This exceeds the Sign Ordinance standard of one foot maximum projection (Exhibit A, Pages 3 & 4).

As indicated in Exhibit A, a 15 foot monument sign is proposed along the North Sunrise Avenue frontage. The monument sign meets the requirements of the Sign Ordinance and therefore is not a part of the sign variance request.

The Sign Ordinance requires that three (3) specific findings are made in order to approve a sign variance. The required findings for a sign variance are listed below.

- 1. There are exceptional or extraordinary circumstances or conditions applying to the land, building or signs involved which do not generally apply to other land, buildings or signs in the neighborhood.
- 2. The granting of this variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of substantial property rights of the applicant.
- 3. The granting of this variance will not materially and adversely affect the health, safety or welfare of persons in the neighborhood, nor be materially detrimental or injurious to property or improvements in the neighborhood.

**Wall Sign Area:** The applicant requests 297 square feet of wall sign area for the Fry's Electronic building based on the following:

- Project's prominent location along Interstate 80;
- The project is unique in that it has two frontages: Interstate 80 and North Sunrise Avenue;
- Given the size of the building (144,000 square feet) additional wall sign area is warranted; and
- The request is consistent with other large retail and office projects along the Highway 65 and Interstate 80 corridors.

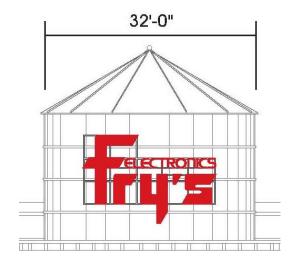
The Design Committee has previously acknowledged that additional wall sign area may be appropriate for large buildings located adjacent to Highway 65 and Interstate 80. The Design Committee has approved similar sign variance requests along Fairway Drive and North Sunrise Avenue for an increase in wall signage, including Wal-Mart, Target, Lowe's, Sam's Club, Home Depot, and Toy's R Us/Costco. All of these uses are large floor plate users (greater than 100,000 square feet). On average, 329 square feet of wall sign area was approved (ranging from 323 to 380 square feet) for these uses.

The large size of the Fry's Electronics building (144,000 square feet) and the unique location of the project site (Interstate 80 visibility and frontage on North Sunrise Avenue) represents extraordinary circumstances that do not generally apply to other retail and office projects in the City. Granting the variance will help preserve the property rights of the applicant and will maintain consistency with other projects along the Highway 65 and Interstate 80 corridors and as such would not grant a special privilege. Lastly, staff

believes that the additional wall sign area will not affect the health, safely or welfare of persons in the neighborhood, nor be materially detrimental or injurious to property or improvements in the neighborhood.

Staff would like to note that the sign located on the tower feature will be reduced in height by approximately one foot (1'). The Sign Ordinance limits sign heights to two-thirds the height of the building fascia that the sign is located on. As currently designed, the height is exceeds this requirement by approximately five percent. Staff has included this change as Condition #3 and the applicant is in agreement with this requirement.

**Sign Projection:** As a component of the Sign Variance request, the applicant seeks approval to allow one of the signs to protrude horizontally almost five feet from the wall to which it will be attached. The sign would be located on the east elevation of the building on the face of a fifty-nine foot (59') tower feature (see Exhibit A, page 2, east elevation).



4'10'

Figure 1: Tower with Proposed Sign (frame-mounted)

Figure 2: Tower with proposed sign (frame-mounted) in plan view

The sign would be constructed of individual illuminated channel letters that would be attached to an aluminum frame with horizontal and vertical bars painted to match the tower. The frame would be affixed to the center of the tower. Where the sign attaches to the tower, the total projection would be one foot. However, as illustrated in Figure 2 above, the sign would project almost five feet (4'10") at its outer edges due to the radius of the tower. It is staff's opinion that the sign (as designed) is not architecturally compatible with the building and that reasonable alternatives are available for consideration, including pegmounting individual letters, manufacturing individual channel letters to match the radius of the tower, or placing the sign somewhere else on the building, all of which will be discussed in greater in the Alternatives Section of the report. The applicant is not in agreement with any of the alternatives mentioned above. The applicant's justification letter is provided as Attachment 3.

**Alternatives:** As noted above, alternatives are available for the applicant to pursue that would not require approval of a variance. The alternatives are as follows:

• Peg-mounting: Peg-mounting individual letters would allow the aluminum frame component of the sign to be removed, which staff believes would result in a sharper appearance and would also minimize the sign's projection from the tower, consistent with the Sign Ordinance requirements. At staff's request, the applicant has provided an exhibit illustrating how the sign would look if it were attached to the tower via peg mounting.



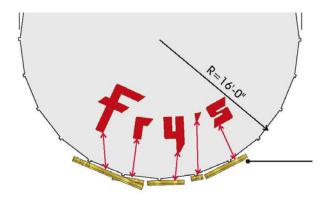


Figure 3: Peg-mounted (Note: Letters shown, as laid flat on a tight radius will appear shortened at ends.

Figure 4: Peg-mounted sign in plan view.

As noted above and in Attachment 3, the applicant believes that the legibility of the sign would be distorted and the standard Fry's Electronics sign/logo would be compromised. Staff has reviewed this exhibit and does not believe that visibility or legibility is negatively affected, especially since the sign would be located on the fifty-nine foot (59') tower which is a focal point of the building. Staff does not believe a sign variance is warranted for purposes of maintaining a corporate image.

 Flush Mounted Individual Channel Letters: Based on discussions with different sign companies in Roseville and Sacramento staff has determined that fabricating individual letters to fit a radius is a feasible option. Each company called indicated that it is possible to fabricate individual channel letters to fit a curved surface; however, this method would be more expensive than standard flat-backed letters. The companies noted that the cost of the sign would increase with the size of the sign.

Fry's has fabricated signs to fit a curved surface for other Fry's Electronics stores in the past. For example, their Sacramento location on Northgate Boulevard has a sign similar to the proposed sign with the exception that the radius of the fascia is not as tight (Figures 5 and 6). The applicant has indicated that this alternative is not desirable due to cost considerations.



Figure 5: Fry's Electronics sign (Sacramento)

Figure 6: Close up of Fry's Electronics sign (Sacramento)

snown in rigure r (below), the sign could easily be at elevation of the building.



that an alternate

Figure 7: Building – East Elevation

This location is slightly smaller in height (17' tall vs. 19' tall); however, the width of the fascia in the alternate location is wider (44' wide vs. 32' wide). This alternate location would allow for the sign to be flush mounted on a flat surface without the added cost of fabricating curved letters. With this alternative the design would meet the Sign Ordinance requirements related to sign projection. As noted above, the applicant prefers the tower location due to its visibility and is not interested in the alternate location.

Staff does not believe a variance is appropriate or warranted for the projecting sign. While the unique architectural nature of the tower may result in a unique circumstance, it is staff's opinion that reasonable alternatives to the projecting sign exist that do not require approval of a variance, while maintaining the property rights of the applicant.

#### CONCLUSION

Given the size of the Fry's Electronics building and its proximity to Interstate 80, staff believes that an increase in wall sign area is warranted and appropriate in this situation. However, for the reasons discussed above, staff believes that the sign variance to increase the horizontal projection of the tower sign is not warranted and would provide a privilege not enjoyed by similar uses within the City.

# **ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION**

The project is categorically exempt pursuant to Section 15311(a) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, on-premise signs. No further environmental review is required.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

The Planning & Redevelopment Department recommends that the Design Committee take the following actions:

- A. Adopt the three findings of fact, as stated within the staff report, for approval of the SIGN VARIANCE – FRY'S ELECTONICS – 180 N. SUNRISE AVENUE - FILE #2006PL-193 (V-000035);
- B. Approve the SIGN VARIANCE as shown in EXHIBIT A for SIGN VARIANCE FRY'S ELECTONICS 180 N. SUNRISE AVENUE FILE #2006PL-193 (V-000035), subject to six (6) conditions of approval.

### **CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL FOR V-000035**

 The sign variance is approved as shown in Exhibit A and as conditioned or modified below. (Planning)

- 2. The cumulative wall sign area for Fry's Electronics shall not exceed 300 square feet. (Planning)
- 3. The wall sign located on the tower shall not exceed two-thirds the height of the tower fascia; the maximum sign height shall be twelve feet five inches (12'5") tall. (Planning)
- 4. The wall sign located on the tower feature on the east elevation shall not project from the wall to which it is attached by more than one foot (1'). (Planning)
- 5. The monument sign location shall be consistent with applicable setback requirements as required by the Sign Ordinance (Section 17). (Planning)
- 6. A Sign Permit and Building Permit are required prior to installation of any signage. (Planning, Building).

Note to Applicant and/or Developer: Please contact the Planning Department staff at (916) 774-5276 prior to the Committee meeting if you have any questions on any of the recommended conditions for your project. If you challenge the decision of the Committee in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues which you or someone else raised at the public hearing held for this project, or in written correspondence delivered to the Planning Director at, or prior to, the public hearing.

## **ATTACHMENTS:**

- 1. Vicinity Map
- 2. Approved Building Elevations
- 3. Applicant's Justification Letter

### **EXHIBIT:**

A. Sign Exhibits