

Title:	ACGC 2 nd and E Multi-Story Building Master Sign Permit
Project:	Master Sign Permit SGNM-24-1
Location:	339 2 nd Street (aka 337 2 nd Street)
APN:	001-052-004
Applicant:	ACGC Inc.
Property Owner:	Northern Humboldt Property Development LLC Co
Purpose/Use:	A Master Sign Program for a multi-story building.
Application Date:	February 15, 2024
General Plan:	C-RC – Core Retail Commercial
Zoning:	CW – Commercial Waterfront
CEQA:	Exempt under §15301, Existing Facilities
Staff Contact:	Alexandra Gonzalez, Assistant Planner
Recommendation:	Hold a public hearing; and Adopt a resolution finding the project is exempt from CEQA, and conditionally approving the application.
Motion:	"I move the Design Review Committee adopt a resolution finding the project is exempt from CEQA, and conditionally approving the Master Sign Permit at 339 2 nd Street (APN 001-052-004)."

Figure 1: Location Map

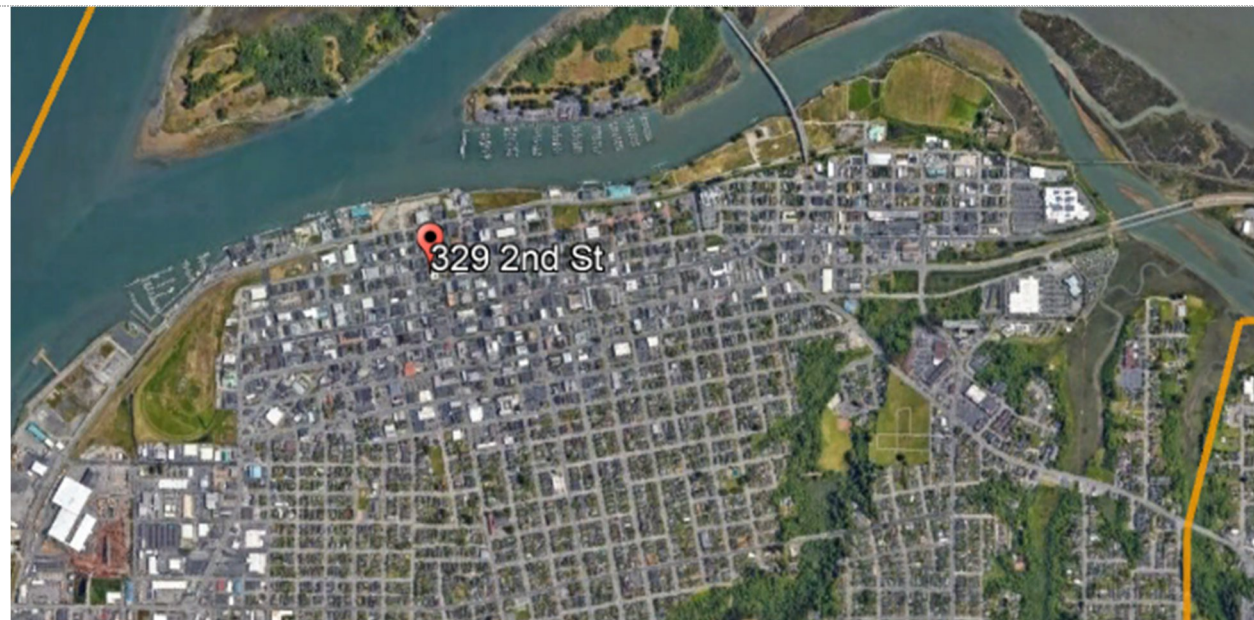
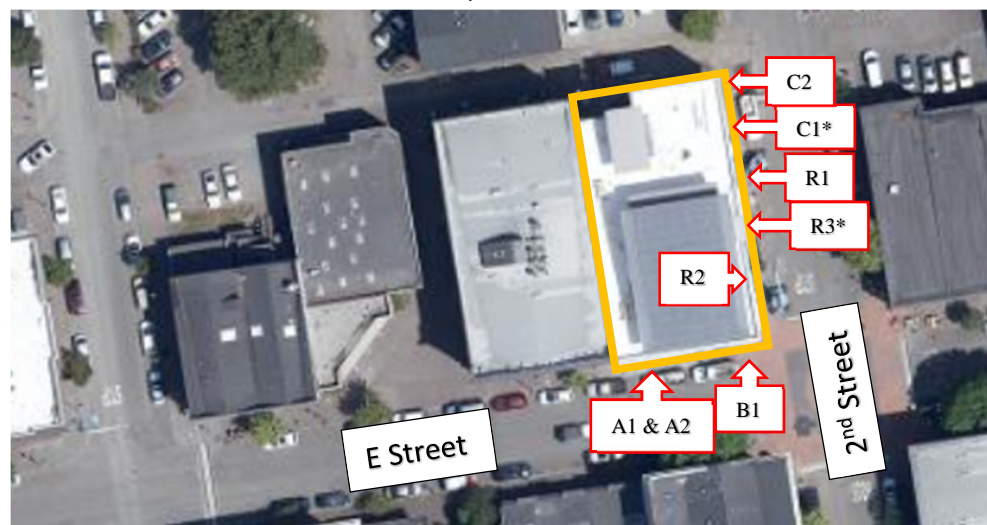


Figure 2: Site Map Showing Location of Signs (See Table 1 below for the sign inventory. R1, R2, A2, and C2 are not installed at this time; A1 and B1 are already installed and permitted; and C1* and R3* were installed without a permit)



PROJECT SUMMARY

The applicant is requesting a Master Sign Permit to allow a total of eight signs on a newly-constructed, multi-story, mixed-use building with commercial and residential uses. The applicant has already received an Administrative Sign Permit for four of the ground-floor signs (SGNA-23-14), two of which are canopy signs and are already installed (A1 and B1 [where B1 has since been modified]), and two of which are projecting/blade signs that are not yet installed (A2 and C2). The remaining four signs are not yet permitted and include a newly proposed projecting/blade sign to be installed on the fourth story (R2), a newly proposed wall sign to be installed on the ground floor (R1), and two existing ground-floor canopy signs that were installed without a permit (C1 and R3).

All signs comply with the sign standards found in Eureka Municipal Code (EMC) §10-5.1708 (Sign standards) except two of the four canopy signs (Tenant B/B1 and Tenant D/R3) exceed the allowed sign area per canopy sign, and a sign is proposed above the ground floor (on the fourth story). Therefore, a Master Sign Permit is required per EMC §10-5.1708.3 (Multi-story buildings) and EMC §10-5.1707(f)(iii) which allows transfer of maximum sign area between tenants on a site. All Master Sign Permit applications must include a proposed Master Sign Program that identifies the placement, size, materials, type and general design of all signs located on the site, including both existing and proposed signs. As a result, the subject Master Sign Permit application covers all seven signs, including those already permitted and installed.

Background

The 0.15-acre property is located in the heart of Old Town, and contains a mixed-use building with three ground floor and one fourth story commercial tenant spaces and 13 residential dwelling units. The site is located in the Coastal Zone, within the CW – Commercial Waterfront zoning district, and is designated C-RC – Core Retail Commercial. The property is surrounded by

visitor- and local-serving businesses like Los Bagels Restaurant, Booklegger, and Siren's Song Tavern Bar. The Eureka Boardwalk along Humboldt Bay is located one block north.

As discussed above, the applicant proposes a total of eight signs with variations in sign type and in permitting and installation status. The proposal includes one canopy sign and one blade/projecting sign for ground-floor Tenant A (A1 and A2; Figures 3 and 4); one canopy sign for ground-floor Tenant B, whose sign copy/area has been modified since the approval of the original Administrative Sign Permit to add "Gallery" to it and an open/closed swivel sign (B1; Figure 5); one canopy sign and one blade/projecting sign for ground-floor Tenant C (C1 and C2; Figures 6 and 7); and one fourth-story projecting sign, one ground-floor wall sign, and one ground-floor canopy sign for Tenant D associated with a rooftop restaurant (R1, R2 and R3; Figure 8 and 9). The two ground-floor blade/projecting signs (A2 and C2; Figures 4 and 7) were previously approved with an Administrative Sign Permit, but are not installed, and, per the applicant, will not be installed unless a tenant requests alternative signage.

As listed in Table 1: Sign Inventory below (and included in the applicant's plans in Attachment 3), the east building wall (facing E Street) will include the following signs:

- (1) an externally-illuminated "Rooftop Japanese Restaurant and Bar" projecting sign on the fourth story (proposed, not installed);
- (2) an externally illuminated "Rooftop Japanese Restaurant and Bar" wall sign on the ground floor near the primary entrance to the new restaurant (proposed, not installed);
- (3) a metal "Rooftop Japanese Restaurant and Bar" cut out letter canopy sign on the ground floor at the primary entrance to the new restaurant (installed without permits);
- (4) a metal "Tulip" cut out letter canopy sign on the ground floor (installed without permits); and
- (5) a "Tulip" projecting blade sign on the ground floor (permitted, not installed).

The south building wall (facing 2nd Street) will include the following signs, all on the ground floor:

- (6) a metal "Good relations" cut out letter canopy sign (permitted, installed);
- (7) a metal "ACGC inc." "Gallery Open" cut out letter canopy sign (permitted, installed and has since been modified); and
- (8) a wooden projecting sign (permitted, not installed).

Figure 3: Street view of Tenant A canopy sign (A1) (Good Relations) taken March 07, 2024 (permitted, installed)



Figure 4: Proposed design for the ground-floor projecting blade sign for Tenant A (A2) (permitted, not installed)



Figure 5: Ground floor canopy sign for Tenant B (B1) which was administratively approved, installed, and modifications to add Gallery and open/closed swivel are proposed



Figure 6: Street view of Tenant C canopy sign (C1) (Tulip) installed without a permit, taken March 07, 2024



Figure 7: Proposed design for the ground-floor projecting blade sign for Tenant C (C2) (Tulip) (permitted, not installed)

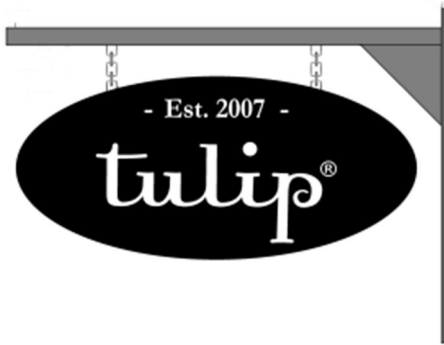


Figure 8: Proposed design for the ground-floor wall and third-floor projecting blade sign for Tenant D (Rooftop restaurant) (R1 and R2) as submitted by applicant (proposed, not installed)



Figure 9: Tenant D canopy sign (R3) (Rooftop Japanese Restaurant and Bar) installed without a permit



Table 1: Sign inventory (Sign ID below correlates with Sign ID in applicant plans found in Attachment 3)

Sign Inventory						
Sign ID in plans	Type	Status	Copy (message conveyed)	Total Area (sf)	Illumination?	Deviation?
R1	Wall	Proposed - Not installed	Rooftop Japanese Restaurant and Bar (Tenant D)	9 sf	Yes - External	No
R2	Projecting/blade (4 th story)	Proposed - Not installed	Rooftop Japanese Restaurant and Bar (Tenant D)	9 sf	Yes - External	No

R3	Canopy	Installed without permits	Rooftop Japanese Restaurant and Bar (Tenant D)	8.49 sf	No	Yes - See Attachment 2 for full details
A1	Canopy	Approved Administratively - Installed	Good relations (Tenant A)	6.71 sf	No	No
A2	Projecting/blade	Approved Administratively - Not installed	Copy face to be submitted if installed	9.5 sf	No	No
B1	Canopy	Approved Administratively - Installed, and modifications proposed	ACGC Inc + company logo + Gallery and Open/Closed swivel (Tenant B)	9.51 sf	No	Yes - See Attachment 2 for full details
C1	Canopy	Installed without permits	Tulip (Tenant C)	6.88 sf	No	No
C2	Projecting/blade	Approved Administratively - Not installed	Tulip (Tenant C)	5 sf	No	No

Applicable Regulations

Per EMC §10-5.1708.3 (Multi-story buildings), the sign standards in Tables 17-2 through 17-10 (in EMC §10-5.1708 [Sign standards]) apply only to ground-floor tenants and uses. Signs for tenants and uses located above the ground floor are allowed only with a Master Sign Permit that establishes sign standards for the entire site, and also allows for the transfer of maximum sign areas between tenants on a site. The purpose of the Master Sign Permit is to provide a coordinated approach to signage for large, multi-tenant, and multi-story sites/buildings. The proposed Master Sign Permit will not only authorize the forth-story projecting blade sign, but will authorize all currently existing and proposed signs (including the two proposed canopy signs that exceed the allowed sign area), and any future signs, under a Master Sign Program for the entire site.

EMC §10-5.1707.7 specifies signs located in the Coastal Zone are subject to the requirements of Article 29 (Coastal Development Permit [CDP] Procedures) and new signs must be sited to (1) avoid and minimize obstruction of scenic views and scenic coastal areas as defined in EMC §10-5.2944.1 (Scenic Coastal Areas), and (2) protect the scenic and visual qualities of coastal areas. Because two of the proposed signs (for the rooftop restaurant; one on ground-floor wall and one fourth-story hanging blade sign) are externally-illuminated, they are required to comply with the illumination standards in EMC §10-5.1709.8 to ensure lighting does not produce glare that creates a public nuisance or hazard for motorists or pedestrians.

The proposed project involves development in the Coastal Zone; however, the signs are exempt from the need for a Coastal Development Permit pursuant to EMC §10-5.29303(b) (Improvements to Structures) because all of the signs are attached to the building wall and none of the exceptions to the exemption listed in Title 14, §13253 apply.

Lastly, the Design Review Committee may require modifications to the proposed Master Sign Program including limits on allowed sign types, height, area, dimensions, placement, materials, and other sign design features. All signs on the site are subject to the requirements of the approved Master Sign Program standards as listed in Table 2 below which is included as a condition of approval, while any aspect of the signs not addressed by the program shall comply with the sign standards in EMC §10-5.1708. Future signs consistent with the approved program are allowed with an Administrative Sign Permit; however, signs inconsistent with the approved program and any applicable sign standards in EMC §10-5.1708 will require an amendment to the program or a modification of inconsistent signs.

Table 2: Master Sign Program Standards Specific to 339 2nd Street

Master Sign Program Standards for ACGC 2 nd and E Multi-Story Building	
Signs above the ground floor	Each floor above the ground floor may be treated as its own tenant frontage and is subject to the same code standards as ground-floor tenant frontages.
Signs along residential frontages	Residential zoning district standards apply to residential frontages.
Transfer of maximum sign area between canopy signs	The total sign area of all canopy signs combined onsite must be smaller than the total canopy fascia area. For example, the total canopy fascia area of all four existing canopies combined is approx. 37 sf, and the total sign area of all four canopy signs combined is approx. 31.6 sf.
Required design features	The design of any new/modified building signs must exhibit a similar character to each other and incorporate the architectural elements found on the building (e.g. similar in color pallet, materials, typography, etc.) to the satisfaction of Development Services - Planning.
Any proposed modifications to existing signs or new signs must be consistent with the standards above as well as any sign standards in EMC Article 17 not included above. Any proposed sign changes inconsistent with the Master Sign Program will require an amendment to the Program, to the satisfaction of Development Services – Planning.	

ANALYSIS

To approve a Master Sign Permit, the Design Review Committee must make all of the following seven findings:

1. Allowed signs are consistent with the General Plan, Zoning Code, and any applicable specific plan or area plan adopted by the City Council;
2. The Master Sign Program features a unified and coordinated approach to the materials, size, type, placement, and general design of signs proposed for a project or property;
3. If deviations from sign standards in EMC §10-5.1708 (Sign standards) are proposed, the deviations are necessary to accommodate the unique signage needs of the site;
4. Allowed signs comply with all applicable standards in this section, unless specific deviations are allowed by the Master Sign Program;
5. The allowed signs will not adversely impact the public health, safety, or general welfare;

6. The allowed sign sizes are proportionate to the building and site where they are located;
and
 7. The number, placement, design, and material of the allowed signs are compatible with the architectural design of buildings on the site.
1. Allowed signs are consistent with the General Plan, Zoning Code, and any applicable specific plan or area plan adopted by the City Council.

The subject property has land use and zoning designations of Core Retail Commercial (C-RC) and Commercial Waterfront (CW). The intent of the C-RC designation is to promote intensive retail commercial uses and to maintain the compactness of the retail area in the Core Area. The purpose of the CW zoning designation is to protect and provide for nearshore development of recreational, visitor-serving, and commercial uses. The existing four-story, mixed-use building is located in the heart of Old Town (a Historic District), a City center for tourism, recreation, leisure activities, and shopping. The building provides one new rooftop restaurant and bar on the fourth story, residential dwelling units on the second and third stories, and two retail spaces and an office on the ground floor. The projecting blade sign on the fourth story and the associated wall sign and canopy sign on the ground floor (signs R2, R1 and R3 respectively) are intended to bring attention to the only rooftop restaurant in Eureka, which is a new unique visitor-serving use. The other canopy and projecting blade signs complement the architecture of the existing building, are aesthetically pleasing, of appropriate scale, and harmonious with surrounding buildings, many of which have projecting blade signs. All of the signs are intended to support a mix of commercial development (retail and office) that enhances the commercial vibrancy between Eureka's central business district and Humboldt Bay. For these reasons, the proposed signs support, and therefore are consistent with, the purposes of the C-RC/CW land use/zoning designations.

The applicant only proposes one deviation from the sign standards in EMC §10-5.1708 (Sign standards) (relating to maximum area per canopy sign) which are only applicable to ground-floor signs, and the rooftop projecting blade sign complies with ground-floor sign standards even though it is not a required to do so. Furthermore, a review of the Local Coastal Program shows the proposed signs do not conflict with any of the certified policies, and no specific or area plan has been adopted by City Council in this area. Therefore, all of the signs in the proposed Master Sign Program are consistent with the General Plan and Zoning Code.

2. The Master Sign Program features a unified and coordinated approach to the materials, size, type, placement, and general design of signs proposed for a project or property.
6. The allowed sign sizes are proportionate to the building and site where they are located.
7. The number, placement, design, and material of the allowed signs are compatible with the architectural design of buildings on the site.

There is only one large, multi-story building on the site. The overall architectural style of the building is of modern design with a mix of traditional elements like transparent storefronts oriented to the street frontage and nestled into the spaces created by a series of structural bays,

which respects the historic scale and design of surrounding older, more traditional buildings located near it. The façade is broken up by different wall projections and materials and features a combination of dark and muted tones. Because the building is located in the heart of Old Town, the City's premier visitor-serving commercial district where the speed-limit is 25-mph, a pedestrian environment is provided with 12-foot-wide sidewalks therefore, the smaller sizes of all of the signs are compatible with the slower vehicle traffic speed and the walkable nature of Old Town. Considering the site includes a rooftop restaurant, the fourth-story externally-illuminated projecting blade sign is proportionately sized and positioned to be visible from the street. (Findings 6 and 7)

The general design of all of the signs includes elements of natural wood, metal and muted tones, similar to the architectural style of the building. The four canopy signs depicting the business names are all placed above the main entrance of their respective businesses, and are all made of metal with a cut-out letter design and no illumination. Only two of the four canopy signs slightly exceed the maximum sign area (sign B1 by 1.27 sf and sign R3 by 0.25 sf), and all of the signs do share similar design features and therefore can be considered a unified and coordinated approach in material and placement on the building. The new projecting sign on the third floor/fourth story, and the ground-floor wall sign, each associated with the new rooftop restaurant, are identical in design and illumination. Although they do not share the same design features as the canopy signs, they still use black and muted tones, which creates consistency in the general design of the all of the signs on the building. The two proposed projecting signs (A2 and C2) are not installed, but by design, the structural elements (i.e. mounting features and copy face backdrop) consist of black and muted tones, and therefore will also be in harmony with the other proposed signs if and when they are installed. (Finding 2)

For all these reasons, the proposed Master Sign Program features a unified and coordinated approach to the materials, size, type, placement, and general design of signs for a multi-story, mixed-use building.

3. If deviations from sign standards in EMC §10-5.1708 (Sign standards) are proposed, the deviations are necessary to accommodate the unique signage needs of the site;
4. Allowed signs comply with all applicable standards in this section, unless specific deviations are allowed by the Master Sign Program.
5. The allowed signs will not adversely impact the public health, safety, or general welfare.

All seven ground-floor signs comply with the applicable standards for wall, and projecting signs found in EMC §10-5.1708 (Sign standards) except two of the four canopy signs (Tenant B/B1 and Tenant D/R3) exceed the allowed sign area per canopy sign. The rooftop projecting blade sign complies with ground-floor sign standards even though it is not a required to do so with approval of a Master Sign Permit. Therefore, the two requested deviations are to allow a sign above the ground floor for a new restaurant located on the fourth story and allow the transfer of the max area per canopy sign between tenants on the site. The deviation from the maximum area per canopy sign is necessary to allow Tenant B to include their business name, a graphic, and art gallery text (exceeding the maximum sign area by 1.27 sf), and to allow Tenant D to include an artistic graphic in addition to the business name (exceeding the maximum sign area by 0.25-sf).

The total canopy fascia area of all four existing canopies combined is approx. 37 sf, and the total sign area of all four canopy signs combined is approx. 31.6 sf, therefore there is sufficient canopy fascia area between all tenants on the site to allow the canopy signs for Tenants B and D to exceed their individual maximum sign area. (Finding 3)

EMC §10-5.1709.3. (Maximum number of sign types) allows no more than three different sign types on a site without approval of a Master Sign Permit, and the project proposes three sign types (wall, projecting/blade, and canopy) meeting this standard. The proposed signs also comply with standards in EMC §10-5.1704 (Prohibited signs), EMC §10-5.1709.7 (Materials), and EMC §10-5.1709.9 (Vertical and horizontal clearance). Because two of the new signs are externally-illuminated, they must conform to the illumination standards in EMC §10-5.1709.8 to ensure lighting does not produce glare that creates a public nuisance or hazard for motorists or pedestrians. Also, the project is conditioned to obtain applicable building permits to ensure the signs are appropriately attached to the building. As a result, the proposed Master Sign Program will meet all of the applicable sign standards and will not adversely impact the public health, safety, or general welfare. Any modifications to the signs under this Master Sign Program that are consistent with the standards as listed in Table 2 above are allowed with an Administrative Sign Permit, while any aspect of the signs not addressed by the program shall comply with the sign standards in EMC Article 17 or require a modification to this Master Sign Permit. (Findings 4 and 5)

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The City of Eureka, as Lead Agency, has determined the proposed project is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), pursuant to §15301, Existing Facilities, Class 1 of the CEQA Guidelines which consists of the minor alteration of existing private structures involving negligible or no expansion of use. As there is no proposed expansion to the existing building or use of the property, the project is exempt from the CEQA.

CONCLUSION

Staff has provided findings which support the approval of a Master Sign Permit to allow tenant signs above the ground floor in combination with the allowed signs on the ground floor, and to allow the transfer of maximum sign areas between canopy signs, with the condition that any proposed modifications or new signs are allowed with an Administrative Sign Permit if they are consistent with Table 2: Master Sign Program Standards for 339 2nd Street described above, as well as any sign standards in EMC Article 17 not included in the allowed deviations. Any proposed sign changes inconsistent with the Master Sign Program will require an amendment to the Program.

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Public notification consisted of mailing notice to property owners within a 300-foot radius of the site, and posting notice on the project site, and City's website and bulletin boards, on or before March 15, 2024 for the project to be heard by the Design Review Committee at their regular meeting on March 27, 2024. Due to the applicant's requested modifications to the proposed signs, the Committee acted to continue the project to the next regular meeting on April 10, 2024.

STAFF CONTACT

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planning@ci.eureka.ca.gov; (707) 441-4211

DOCUMENTS ATTACHED

Attachment 1: Design Review Committee Resolution
Attachment 2: Sign standards and proposed deviations
Attachment 3: Applicant submitted material