



STAFF REPORT

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

April 23, 2024

TO: Honorable Chair and Commissioners

FROM: David Loya, Director of Community Development

PREPARER: Joe Mateer, Senior Planner

DATE: April 17, 2024

TITLE: **Approve Design Review and Sign Permits for Ahmad Façade Improvements at 764 9th Street; File No. 234-018-DR-S**

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the Planning Commission Chair open the public hearing, receive a staff report and public comments, and consider approving the Design Review and Sign Permits by adopting: a California Environmental Quality Act §15301, Class 1, Existing Facilities environmental review exemption, and then 2) the Action with Findings of Approval, Conditions of Approval, and the approved plans.

INTRODUCTION:

The applicant is proposing to remodel a former bar into a restaurant. Design Review and a Sign Permit are reviewable by the Planning Commission for the exterior façade improvements to an existing commercial structure in the Arcata Plaza Historic District. The proposed improvements include window and door revisions, new siding, exterior signs, lighting, and other exterior finishes. The Planning Commission's Action (Attachment A) would authorize the proposed façade improvements as shown in Exhibit 3 of Action.

DISCUSSION:

The applicant requests design review approval for the exterior alterations to an existing, vacant commercial building on the north side (9th St.) of the Arcata Plaza. The project includes interior improvements to add a commercial kitchen to convert the former bar to a restaurant with a bar. A restaurant is a permitted land use activity in Central Commercial zoning districts.

The exterior improvements add raised cutout panels over new fiber cement panel siding. The raised cutout panels will create definition, shadows, and texture to the exterior of the building. Existing brick façade details will be refreshed with paint. In addition, the existing overhang above the front door remains. Two new windows are proposed on the front building elevation that visually connect the buildings' interior with the Plaza. Although not visible from the street, new sky lights will provide natural light to the buildings' interior.

A new, outdoor dining area is proposed at the rear of the property that is currently used for parking and storage. A new eight-foot-high fence located about three feet from the alley will provide screening for the diners. A new backlight sign about 32 square feet in size is proposed on the front

building elevation. A small menu sign near the front entrance and a small identifying sign on the rear fence are also proposed.

Conditions of Approval are included to ensure any new exterior roof mounted equipment is screened from public views areas. Conditions also require the removal of any unused equipment, or utilities to minimize clutter. Other Conditions of Approval address light pollution from the outdoor lights and signs.

Staff recommends the Commission adopt the environmental review exemption, proposed Action including the Findings of Approval and Conditions of Approval to approve the exterior alterations.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

As further discussed in the Findings of Approval, the project qualifies for a California Environmental Quality Act §15301, Class 1 Existing Facilities, environmental review exemption.

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Action, Findings, Conditions, Plans (PDF)