



**PLANNING DEPARTMENT**

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**DATE:** May 4, 2017

**TO:** Planning Commission

**APPLICANT:** Donna Sole of Sole Soups  
5737 Kanan Road, #210  
Agoura Hills, CA 91301

**CASE NO.:** SIGN-01342-2017

**LOCATION:** 28708 Roadside Drive, Suite H

**REQUEST:** Request for approval of a Sign Permit to install a new building-mounted sign on an existing building, amend an existing approved sign program for the Roadside Plaza shopping center; and to make a finding of exemption under the California Environmental Quality Act.

**ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:** Exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per Section 15311(a) of the CEQA Guidelines.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends the Planning Commission approve Sign Permit Case No. SIGN-01342-2017, subject to conditions, and based on the findings of the attached draft resolution.

**ZONING DESIGNATION:** Commercial Retail Service - Freeway Corridor Overlay - Old Agoura Design Overlay (CRS-FC-OA)

**GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION:** Commercial Retail Service (CRS)

## **I. PROJECT BACKGROUND AND DESCRIPTION**

The applicant, Donna Sole is the owner of Sole Soups, a public eating establishment. The applicant is requesting the approval of a sign permit to install a new sign above her tenant space's building frontage with design standards that would modify the approved sign program for the Roadside Plaza shopping center. The shopping center is located at 28708 Roadside Drive, north of the Vejar Drive/Agoura Road intersection, and south of U.S. 101. The shopping center is bordered by both Roadside Drive and Agoura Road, to the north and south sides of the parcel. Adjacent property uses include an office building to the west and to the east. No commercial development exists on the south side of Agoura Road, across the shopping center, but Vejar Drive provides access to a small, hillside residential development. A sign permit was approved on August 26, 1998 (Case No. 98-SP-027) in the same shopping center for the Yamato Restaurant to provide rust letters, and internally illuminated signage. Later, a sign program was approved in 1999 for the shopping center as part of an exterior remodel (Case No. 99-SP-004), which still applies today. On November 20, 2003, a modification was approved for the addition of a monument/directory sign on Roadside Drive (Case No. 03-SP-064). The request, although not intended to modify the current sign program, would add substantial features that could potentially be used by other tenants, and as such, requires the review of a new sign permit and sign program amendment to be considered by the Planning Commission per Section 9655.6.F of the Zoning Ordinance (Sign Ordinance).

## **II. STAFF ANALYSIS**

The design elements of the proposed sign are different from the approved shopping center sign program, and therefore an amendment to the sign program is required. The proposed design elements require a determination as to whether they are consistent with the other signage currently on-site as well as the building's architecture. If approved, these design elements would become part of the sign program for the center.

Section 9655.6 of the Sign Ordinance provides guidelines when multi-tenant buildings occupy one single parcel to define common sign regulations to achieve a harmonious appearance and for the sign to blend in with the architectural style of the buildings. A sign program was required for the Roadside Plaza shopping center because multi-tenant buildings occupy the same parcel and signs need to be evaluated for the project as a whole for design consistency.

### **A. Site Plan and Buildings**

There are three (3) one-story retail buildings on this 1.97-acre parcel, with two single-tenant buildings and one multi-tenant building. One of the single tenant buildings is sited closest to Roadside Drive and occupied by the restaurant Yamato. The other single-tenant building is closer to Agoura Road and is occupied by a fitness facility, Agoura Fitness. For both of these buildings, the primary frontage faces Roadside Drive. For the multi-tenant building, tenant

spaces face inward to the parking and drive-aisle, away from the streets and across from Agoura Fitness. Access to the parcel is taken from Roadside Drive on the north side and Agoura Road on the south side.

This particular sign program, approved in 1999, sets standards for the on-site tenant signs only. The sign program specifies internally-lit channel letters placed above the tenant spaces, and directly affixed to a stuccoed surface constructed from an ivory Plexiglass face and metal returns and trim caps in a bronze color. The font is specified as Helvetica Medium. The sign program was created as part of the buildings' exterior remodeling project, approved by the Planning Commission under Case No. 99-SPR-004. The program was implemented only for the two rear buildings (multi-tenant and Agoura Fitness) because a previously approved rust-letter sign already existed on the Yamato building. Yamato's rust-letter sign continued to operate at the time of the sign program approval and was not affected by the remodeling. A request in 2003 to add a monument/directory sign was approved near Roadside Drive to help customers find the tenants located in the buildings in the rear of the property. The 48 square-foot sign, designed with seven (7) individually mounted panels, introduced other design features including a high-density urethane material to look like wood carved panels, and external illumination. The design included the ivory for the background and the rust/brown color for the letters and borders of the name plates in an attempt to tie the sign design elements of the building mounted signs to the new monument sign.

The current request is for nine (9) channel letters of 9, 12 and 14 inches high, forming the words "Sole Soups" for a length of seven (7) feet, thereby totaling 11.37 square feet. The channel letters are made of aluminum painted entirely in an ivory color, but reverse lit. The lighting is directed toward the wall instead of showing through the front face of the letter, making the outline of the letters visible, and therefore, the words legible at night. The font is Arial with upper and lower case letters. The letters would be affixed to the stucco surface the same way the existing tenants' channel letters are installed. The proposed sign design and size of the sign complies with the Sign Ordinance, as the tenant is entitled up to 20 square feet since the tenant frontage is 20 feet wide and the sign is only 11.37 square feet. Zoning Ordinance Section 96558.8(B)(1)(a) ("The total aggregate area of a sign for each business or any office building located within one hundred (100) feet of any public or private right-of-way shall not exceed on (1) square-foot of sign area for each foot of primary building frontage"). Furthermore, a sign can include a logo, description and business name, with each having a maximum percentage of coverage. In this case, the sign includes a business name but no logo or description is proposed. The business name can occupy the total square footage allowed for the use. The CRS-FC-OA zone allows reverse lit signs. The tenant space is at a distance of over 80 feet from the south property line and over 230 feet from the closest residential property line, south of Agoura Road. Because the substantial distance to residential properties, and because the sign would be reverse lit (no lighting would come through the face of the letters), no impact is expected as a result of the lighting

on neighboring properties. The sign lighting is conditioned to be turned off after 11:00 pm or the close of business, whichever occurs later, per Zoning Ordinance Section 9655.7.C of the Zoning Ordinance.

#### B. Architectural Design

The sign is proposed with one line of letters, 84 inches long (seven (7) feet long), with three sizes of letters (9 inches, 12 inches and 14 inches) to form the business name. The sign would be centered between two columns to maintain symmetry on the building frontage although the tenant's entrance is not centered between the columns. The tenant's entry door is recessed from the edge of the building and less visible as viewed from the parking lot and drive-aisle. So it was important for the tenant to have signage that the customers could easily identify. The letters would be vertically and horizontally centered on the stuccoed face of the building below the roof line and the sides between the top of the columns consistent with the Architectural Design Standards and Guidelines. Although there are other tenants in the shopping center, only one other tenant has a sign, which is located 140 feet away from the proposed sign. Other tenant spaces have not requested the installation of a sign. No other sign is directly across the drive-aisle at the Agoura Fitness building. The property owner recently repainted the buildings with a darker beige color, with a dark brown border around some of the architectural features, and the columns were clad with a brown stone veneer. The changes give a more rustic look to the center. The ivory color specified in the sign program does not provide a lot of contrast overall but blends in with the building colors and complies with the Sign Ordinance and Sign Design Guidelines. The construction of the sign is different from the other signs as well as its illumination, which would allow the sign to be visible in the evening. The sign is fabricated with formed aluminum letters painted with one color instead of letters made out of three components including a Plexiglass face, a metal return and trim cap (corner piece) with lighting installed inside the letter instead of against the wall. The Sign Design Guidelines specify that signs should be coordinated with the design of the building, the building materials, and overall color scheme. In this case, the sign is integrated with the building architecture in that it is proportional with the available space it is attached to and does not overlap architectural features or any wall penetrations. Although the font style selected is Arial instead of Helvetica, the font styles are similar in design. The font style would allow additional flexibility in designing a larger business name or a sign that could a name, a descriptive and/or a logo. The sign will use the same color as the approved sign program, which will tie this particular sign with the other signs in the center. Overall, the color and the font style remain plain as the existing signage and in keeping with the rustic style of the building.

Approving the Arial font style and the reverse lighting method would become part of the approved sign program of the center and allow other current and future tenants to use those two (2) features, the font style and the construction of the letter with its internal illumination, in their proposal without additional Planning Commission review.

C. Old Agoura Overlay District

Although the shopping center is located on a parcel zoned Old Agoura Design Overlay, it is not located in the Old Agoura Business Center zone a sub-district of the commercial Old Agoura neighborhood, and as such is not required to turn off the sign's lights at 9:30 pm but rather at 11:30 pm per Zoning Ordinance Section 9553.5. Furthermore, internally lit signs are prohibited within the Old Agoura Design Overlay. In this case, the lighting complies with that requirement by being reverse lit instead of internally illuminated and therefore the request would be consistent with the Old Agoura Overlay District.

D. Freeway Corridor Overlay District

The project is located in the Freeway Corridor Overlay district and is subject to the aesthetics requirements imposed on commercial developments along the north and south sides of the freeway. The Roadside Plaza shopping center is an existing project with an approved sign program and the addition of a sign, and the modification to the sign program will not impact these aesthetics requirements imposed on the shopping center. Additionally, the sign lighting will not impact the corridor or adjacent residential development as it faces west and turned away from these properties. The sign lighting is not expected to exceed the maximum one-foot candle illumination requirement at the north and south property lines because of the distance between the location of the sign and the property lines (over 350 and 66 feet) and the lighting projects against a wall and is directed away from the public streets. The project is conditioned accordingly (Condition No. 11). Therefore, the sign would be consistent with the Freeway Corridor Overlay district standards.

E. General Plan Consistency

Staff finds the project will be consistent with the following applicable General Plan goals and policies:

Goal LU-13.2: Well Designed and Attractive Districts. Retail centers and corridors that are well-designed and attractive, providing a positive experience for visitors and community residents, and fostering business activity.

- *Policy LU-13.2 Architecture and Site Design.* Ensure that new development, and the renovation, addition, or remodel of existing buildings in existing commercial centers and corridors complement existing uses and exhibit a high level of architectural and site design quality in consideration of the following principles:
  - Incorporation of signage that is integrated with the building's architectural character and provides meaningful identification.

The size of the sign, its shape, illumination, its proportions, and its colors are compatible with the visual characteristics of the surrounding area so as not to cause depreciation of the value or quality of adjacent properties. The letter faces

are legible under normal prevailing viewing conditions where the sign is to be installed and the sign does not distract from the other signs in the shopping center. The request remains in general compliance with the approved sign program by using a similar graphically designed letter style and a monochrome color scheme.

#### F. Environmental Review

The project has been reviewed pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and has been determined to be Categorical Exempt from the CEQA Guidelines per Section 15311. This exemption includes the addition of accessory structures including signage. No significant environmental impacts are expected from development of this project. No exception to this categorical exemption applies as set forth in Section 15300.2 of the CEQA Guidelines including but not limited to subsection (c) which relates to unusual circumstances that could have a significant effect on the environment.

### **III. RECOMMENDATION**

Based on the foregoing analysis, staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve Sign Permit SIGN-01342-2017, subject to the conditions of approval of the draft resolution.

### **IV. ATTACHMENTS**

1. Draft Sign Permit Resolution with the Conditions of Approval as Exhibit A
2. Vicinity Map
3. Sign Plans
4. Pictures of the Site

Case Planner: Valerie Darbouze, Associate Planner

**RESOLUTION NO. 17-\_\_\_\_\_**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF  
THE CITY OF AGOURA HILLS, CALIFORNIA,  
APPROVING SIGN PERMIT CASE NO. SIGN-01342-2017  
TO INSTALL A SIGN FOR A NEW TENANT LOCATED AT  
28708 SUITE H, AND AMEND THE SIGN PROGRAM OF  
THE ROADSIDE PLAZA SHOPPING CENTER**

THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF AGOURA HILLS, CALIFORNIA,  
HEREBY FINDS, RESOLVES AND ORDERS AS FOLLOWS:

Section I. An application was duly filed by Donna Sole of Sole Soups, with respect to the real property located at 28708 Roadside Drive, Suite H (Assessor Parcel No. 2061-007-053), requesting approval of a Sign Permit (Case No. SIGN-01342-2017) to install one (1) building-mounted sign for the business named Sole Soups and modify the Roadside Plaza Shopping Center's approved sign program (the "Project").

Section II. The project is a request to install a new sign on an existing building and is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), per the CEQA Guidelines Section 15311 (the construction or the placement of minor structures accessory to a commercial facility) particularly Subsection (a). The project which involves the installation of a building mounted sign on a commercial property, would not result in significant impacts to the environment. No exception to this categorical exemption applies as set forth in Section 15300.2 of the CEQA Guidelines, including, but not limited to, subsection (c), which relates to unusual circumstances that could have a significant effect on the environment.

Section III. The Planning Commission of the City of Agoura Hills considered the application at a public hearing held on May 4, 2017, at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers, City Hall, at 30001 Ladyface Court, Agoura Hills, California. Notice of the time, date, place and purpose of the aforesaid hearing was duly given and published as required by state law.

Section IV. Evidence, both written and oral, including the staff report and supporting documentation, was duly presented to and considered by the Planning Commission at the aforesaid public meeting.

Section V. Sign Permit Review. Based upon the evidence presented at the public hearing, including the staff report and oral and written testimony, the Planning Commission finds, pursuant to the Agoura Hills Municipal Code Section. 9655.5.D., that:

A. The proposed sign and amended sign program are consistent with the General Plan and the provisions of the Zoning Ordinance in that the building mounted sign is integrated with the building's architectural character by being placed in an unobstructed area, and centered above the store front. The sign is made up of a single

business name and the simple font style and monochromatic color scheme provide meaningful identification for the business, specifically, for a retail store as called for in Policy LU-13.2 of the General Plan, as viewed from the freeway corridor and Agoura Road. The sign's added features, including the font style and illumination, will continue to be homogeneous with the rest of the on-site signage in that the letters will remain individually-lit and directly mounted to the building facades and the font style will be compatible with other currently approved font style. In addition, the sign complies with applicable design standards because it is not internally illuminated, in accordance with the Old Agoura Design Overlay District, and the sign is less than the maximum permitted size of 20 square feet.

B. The proposed building sign is legible under normal viewing conditions where the sign is to be installed. The sign will be built so as to identify the business clearly during the daytime and nighttime without impacting nearby properties. The building-mounted, reverse-lit sign letters, and the font style are highly legible from the drive-aisle. The content of the sign and the color comply with the Sign Ordinance requirements. The signage contains one color, an attractive font style, simple design, and is lit to the minimum level necessary by using a halo lighting method, all of which minimize impacts to neighboring properties specifically the residential properties located over 200 feet from the project property boundary to the south.

C. The location and design of the proposed sign for the building's front elevation, and its size, shape, illumination, and color are compatible with the visual characteristics of the surrounding area so as not to cause depreciation of the value or quality of adjacent properties. The sign will be in the center of the tenant's space front elevation and will not block the window space, and nor will it compete with any other architectural feature. The revisions to the sign program will allow for future signs to be compatible with the buildings architecture in that it will maintain the same color letters, and will continue to comply with the maximum coverage percentage allotted by the Sign Ordinance. Using a second font style will allow more flexibility in the span of the sign letters, which ultimately will make each tenant sign width more even and equally spaced on the building façade.

D. The proposed sign is consistent with the sign standards of the Sign Design Guidelines in that the sign uses one color, and does not compete with the design of the building, and the type of illumination proposed increases the sign legibility at night without flooding the building façade given that the internal Low Emitting Diodes (LED) lighting method projects light a few inches beyond the letters. Although the construction of the letters and the illumination method differ from the approved sign program, the design elements are in compliance with the Sign Ordinance and are in keeping with the sign program's intent to provide identification for businesses and to be compatible with the building architecture.

E. The proposed sign is consistent with the adopted Sign Design Guidelines in that the dimensions of the sign are in good proportion with the building; the building



sign does not interfere with the store front windows or other architectural features; and the building sign does not exceed the height of the roof line.

Section VI. Sign Program Findings. Based upon the evidence presented at the public hearing, including the staff report and oral and written testimony, the Planning Commission finds, pursuant to Agoura Hills Municipal Code Section. 9655.6.E., that:

A. The sign program complies with the purpose and overall intent of the Sign Ordinance in that the proposed changes would comply with the Sign Ordinance's minimum and maximum development standards for retail tenants in a shopping center, including the maximum distance between signs and the maximum size of a sign over the width of the tenant space. The on-site signage would continue to be aesthetically pleasing, and would allow additional design options for the tenants with various needs.

B. The sign program accommodates future revisions that may be required because of changes in the use or tenants in that the attachment method is the same as the attachment method previously approved. The installation of a reverse-lit sign would have similar attachment requirements to the building as an internally-lit sign would and would not require costly structural modifications to the building. The font style would be similar to the existing font style. The sign program amendment provides additional flexibility to future tenants in defining their identification and how the business is to be viewed.

C. The sign program complies with the standards of the Sign Ordinance in that the sign area, the number of signs, the location and height of the signs will not change as previously approved. The added design features permitted for the proposed building sign including the font style and the reverse lighting method provide reasonable design limitations for a well-designed sign program while allowing additional flexibility and choice of identification to the current and future tenants of the shopping center. This sign program amendment enhances the aesthetics of the shopping center by maintaining compatibility with the existing building-mounted signs, and monument sign.

Section VII. Based on the aforementioned findings, the Planning Commission hereby approves Sign Permit Case No. SIGN-01342-2017, subject to the conditions of approval, attached herein as Exhibit A, with respect to the property described in Section I hereof.

Section VIII. The Secretary of the Planning Commission shall certify to the passage, approval, and adoption of this resolution, and shall cause this resolution and his certification to be entered in the Book of Resolutions of the Planning Commission of the City.

PASSED, APPROVED, and ADOPTED this 4<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2017, by the following vote to wit:

AYES: (0)

NOES: (0)

ABSTAIN: (0)

ABSENT: (0)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Curtis Zacuto, Chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_  
Doug Hooper, Secretary

## Exhibit A

### CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL (Case No. SIGN-01342-2017)

1. This decision, or any aspect of this decision, can be appealed to the City Council within fifteen (15) days from the date of Planning Commission action, subject to filing the appropriate forms and related fees.
2. This action shall not be effective for any purpose until the applicant has agreed in writing that the applicant is aware of, and accepts all conditions of this action with the Planning Department.
3. Except as modified herein, the approval of this action is limited to and requires complete conformation to the approved project plans and conditions of approval reviewed and approved by the Planning Commission on May 4, 2017.
4. It is hereby declared to be the intent that if any provision of this action is held or declared to be invalid, the approval shall be void and the privileges granted hereunder shall lapse.
5. It is further declared and made a condition of this action that if any condition herein is violated, the Permit shall be suspended and the privileges granted hereunder shall lapse; provided that the applicant has been given written notice to cease such violation and has failed to do so for a period of thirty (30) days.
6. Unless the approval is used within two (2) years from the date of City approval, Case No. SIGN-01342-2017 will expire. A written request for a one (1) year extension may be considered prior to the expiration date.
7. The applicant shall reimburse the City for any court and attorney's fees which the City may be required to pay as a result of any claim or action brought up against the City because of the approval of this application. Although the applicant is the real party in interest in an action, the City may, at its sole discretion, participate in the defense of the action, but such participation shall not relieve the applicant of any obligation under this condition.
8. The applicant shall defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the City, its agents, officers, and employees from an against any claim, action or proceeding against the City or its agents, officers, or employees to attack, set aside, void, or annul any approval or condition of approval. The City shall notify the applicant of any claim, action or proceeding and the City

shall cooperate in the defense. The City reserves the right, at its own option, to choose its own attorney to represent the City, its officers, employees, and agents in the defense of the matter at applicant's expense.

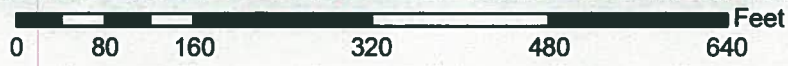
9. No lights on or within any sign shall be illuminated after 11:30 p.m. or close of business each day, whichever occurs last.
10. The sign shall be maintained in a neat and attractive, well-maintained condition. The display surface of the sign shall be kept clean, neatly painted and free from rust, cracking, peeling, corrosion or other states of disrepair.
11. The new sign lighting shall comply with the requirement of a maximum of one-foot candle of illumination measured at all property lines.

END

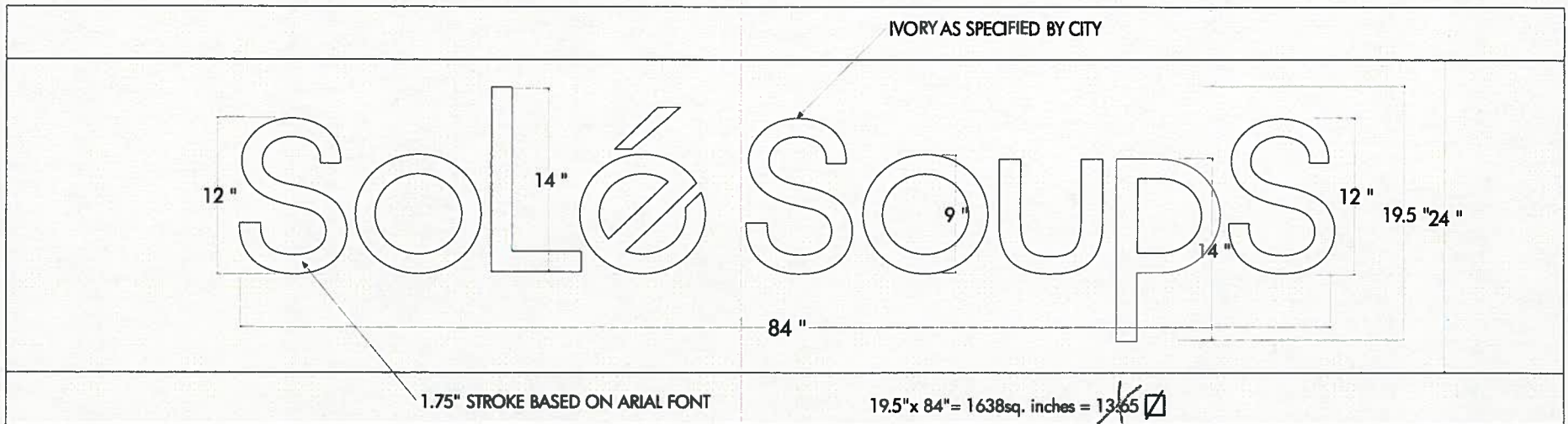
# City of Agoura Hills

Sign Permit Case No. SIGN-01342-2017

Vicinity/Zoning  
Map



SHOP DRAWING FINAL  
13.65sq.



WHITE LED LIT REVERSE CHANNEL LETTERS

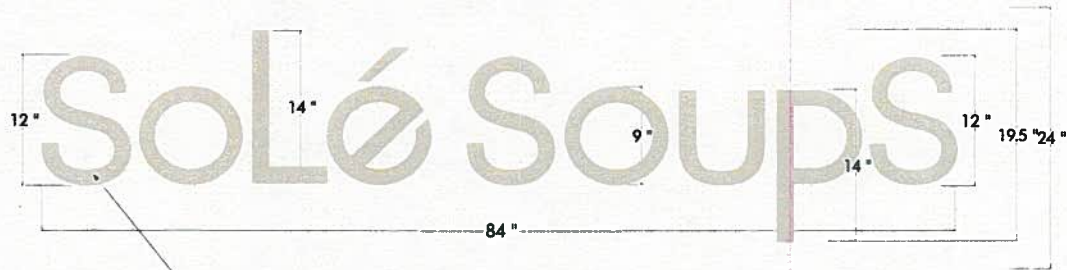


ATTENTION: VALERIE DARBOUZE



# shop plan/agoura hills

12" ivory color reverse lit SloanLED channel letters w/3" returns  
lexan backplates, aluminum spacers, see attachment detail.  
electrical connected to existing box



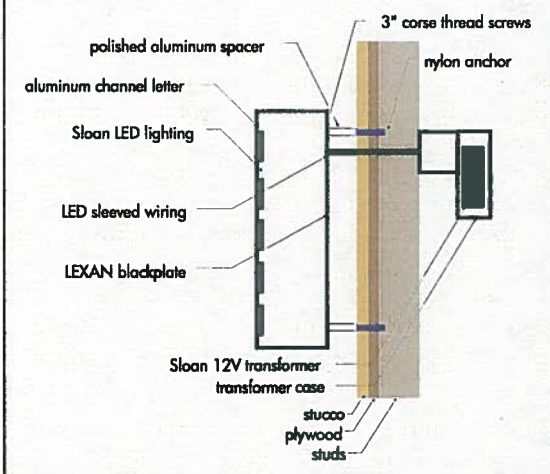
19.5"x 84" = 1638sq inches = 13.65 sq ft

WHITE LED REVERSE CHANNEL LETTERS



4/5 attachment locations per letter

## side view/attachment plan



sign letters will not exceed 12" protrusion from stucco face  
max weight of each letter is 3lbs.

MORIARTY SIGN COMPANY

Signs911

BEIGE STUCCO BUILDING SUBSTRATE

BROWN BUILDING MOULDING

IVORY AS SPECIFIED BY CITY

12" 14" 9" 12" 19.5" 24" 14" 84"

1.75" STROKE BASED ON ARIAL FONT

19.5"x 84"= 1638sq. inches = 13.65

SIGN LOCATION AS SPECIFIED BY OWNER & TENANT

WHITE LED REVERSE CHANNEL LETTERS



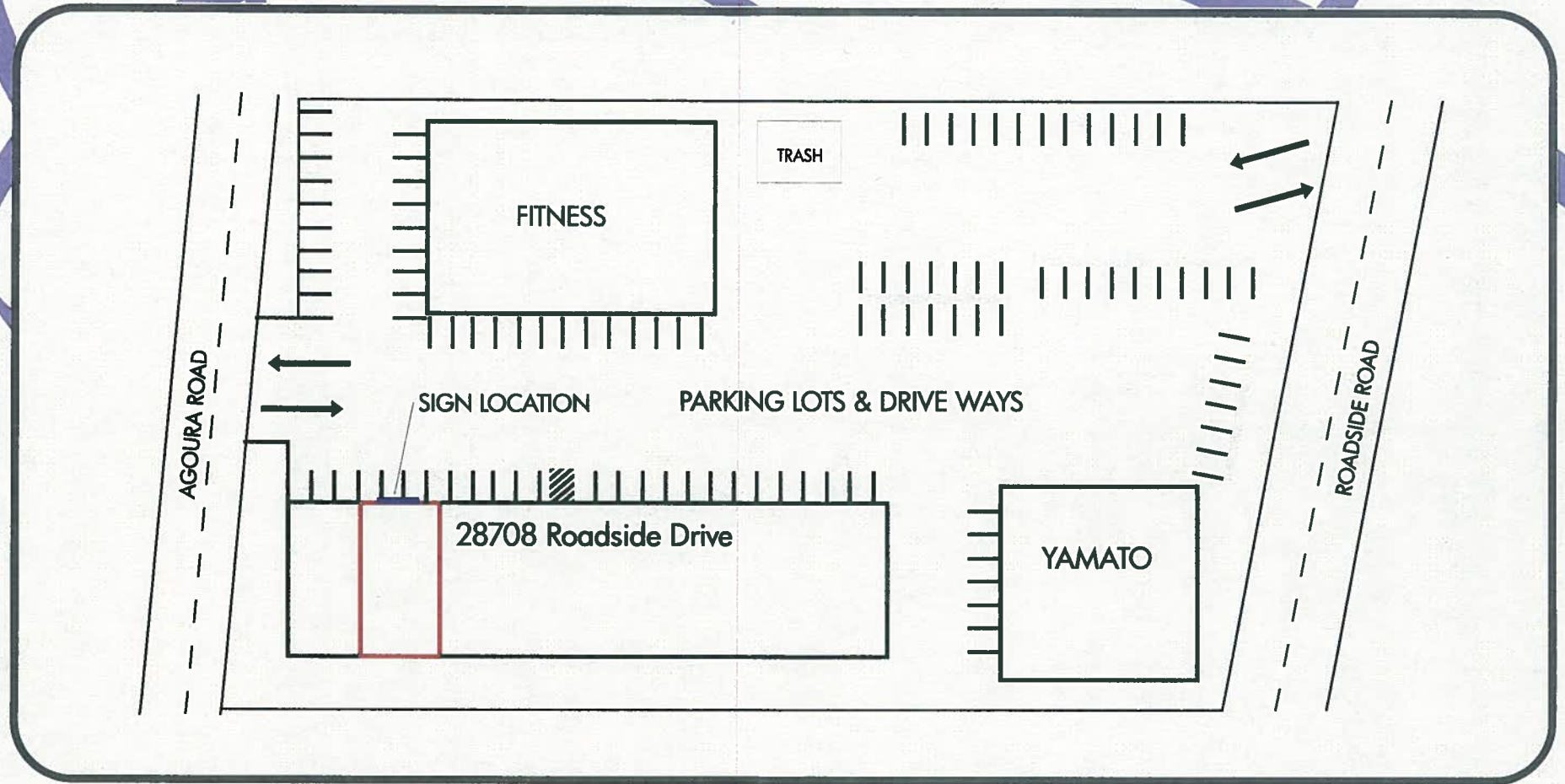


SOLÉ SOUPS

MORIARTY SIGN COMPANY

Signs911

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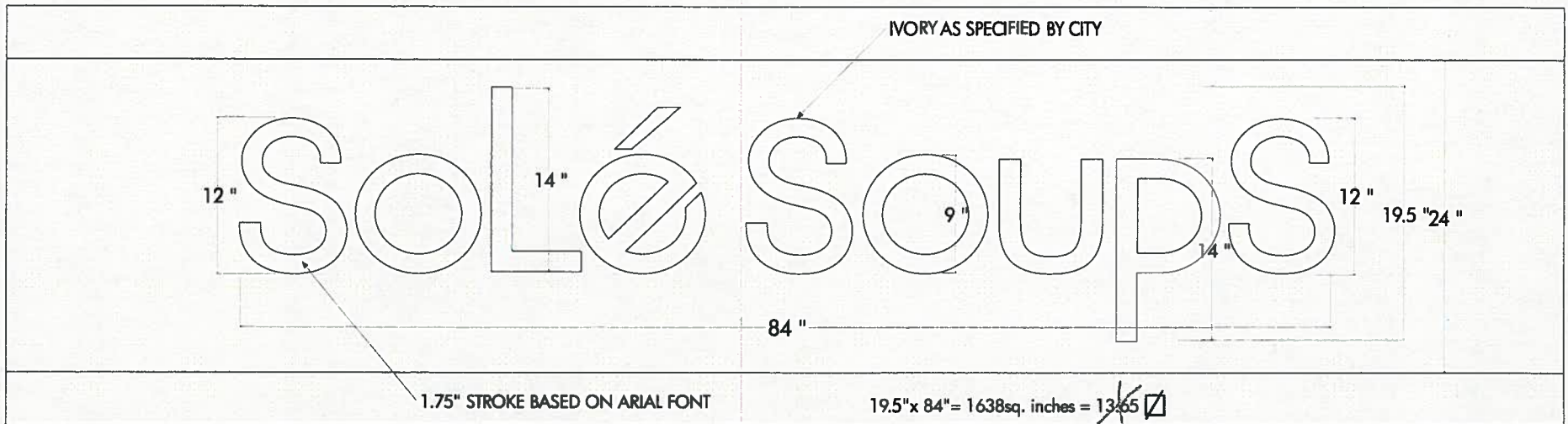
**SIGN PERMIT CASE NO. SIGN-01342-2017**







SHOP DRAWING FINAL  
13.65sq.



WHITE LED LIT REVERSE CHANNEL LETTERS

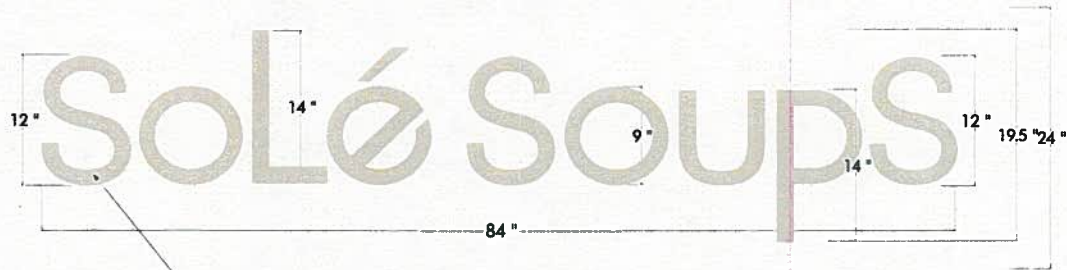


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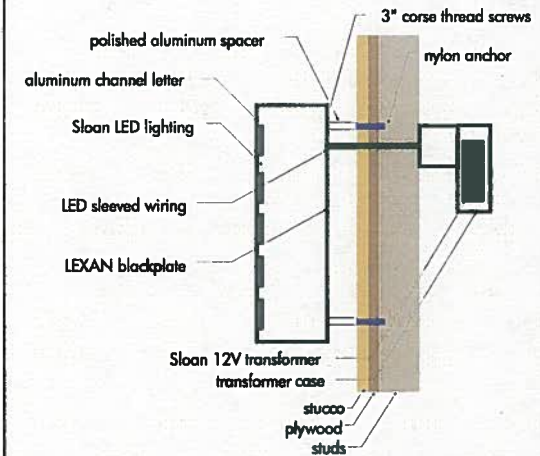
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WHITE LED REVERSE CHANNEL LETTERS



4/5 attachment locations per letter

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sign letters will not exceed 12" protrusion from stucco face  
max weight of each letter is 3lbs.

MORIARTY SIGN COMPANY

Signs911

BEIGE STUCCO BUILDING SUBSTRATE

BROWN BUILDING MOULDING

IVORY AS SPECIFIED BY CITY

12" 14" 9" 12" 19.5" 24" 14" 84"

1.75" STROKE BASED ON ARIAL FONT

19.5"x 84"= 1638sq. inches = 13.65

SIGN LOCATION AS SPECIFIED BY OWNER & TENANT

WHITE LED REVERSE CHANNEL LETTERS

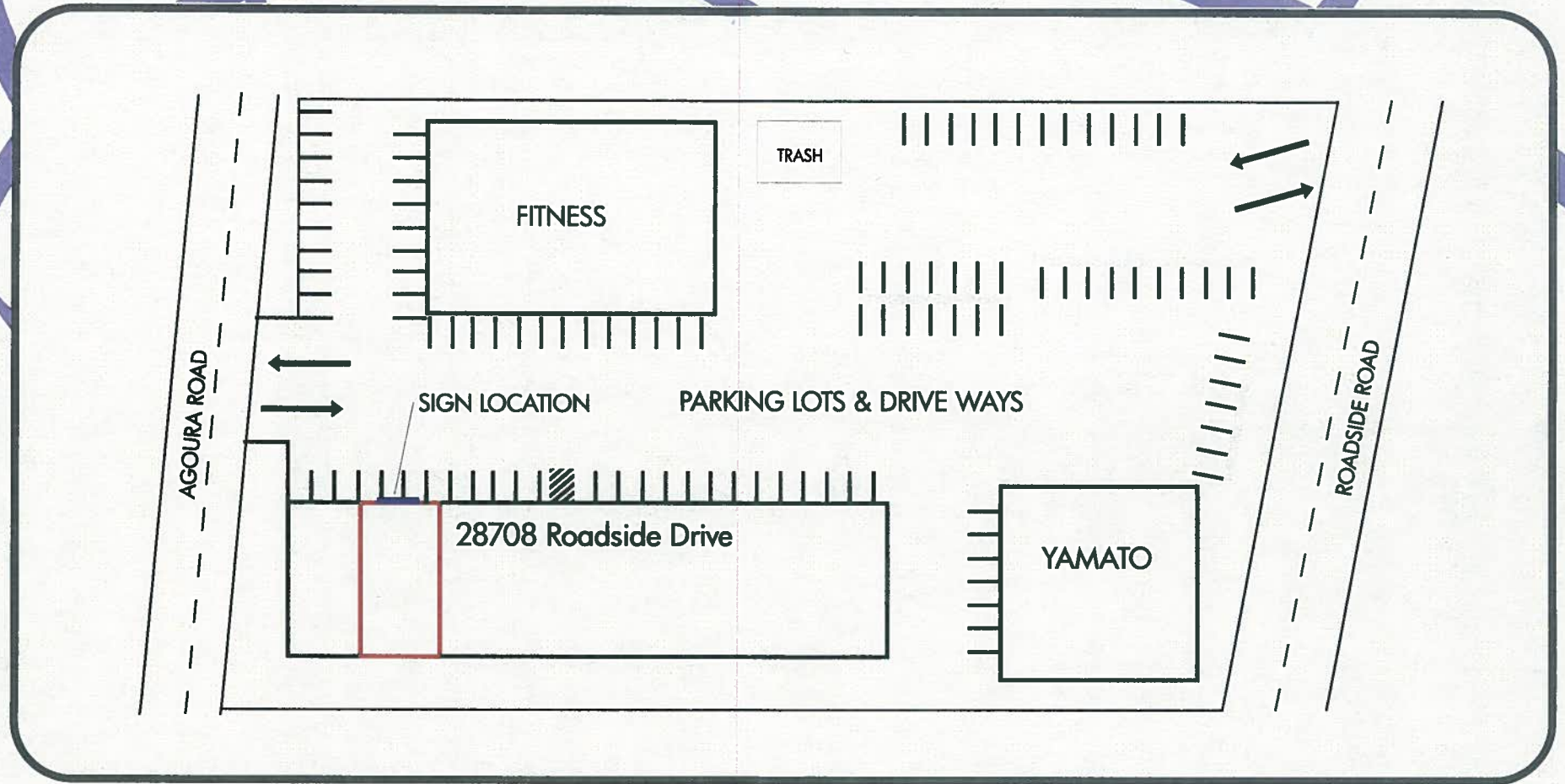


SOLÉ SOUPS

MORIARTY SIGN COMPANY

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**SIGN PERMIT CASE NO. SIGN-01342-2017**





