



Staff Report to the Zoning Administrator

Application Number: **04-0208**

Applicant: Northwest Signs, Attn: Jeff Frank

Date: October 15, 2004

Owner: Norman L. Bei

Agenda Item #: 6

APN: 025-082-26

Time: After 11:00 a.m.

Project Description: Proposal to erect two additional illuminated wall mounted signs, 12 square feet each, on the east and west sides of an existing professional/administrative office building located on a corner. A 20 square foot sign exists on the south side of the building.

Location: Property located at the northeast corner of Mission Drive (3110 Mission Dr.) and Soquel Drive.

Permit Required: Variance, Minor Variation to 99-0559 and 04-0136

Staff Recommendation:

- Approval of Application 04-0208, based on the attached findings and conditions.
- Certification that the proposal is exempt from further Environmental Review under the California Environmental Quality Act.

Exhibits

- | | |
|---|---|
| A. Sign Details and Project plans | E. Assessor's parcel map |
| B. Findings | F. Zoning, General Plan, and Location map |
| C. Conditions | G. Letter from Applicant |
| D. Categorical Exemption (CEQA determination) | |

Parcel Information

Parcel Size:	9,888 square feet
Existing Land Use - Parcel:	Bank
Existing Land Use - Surrounding:	Commercial Uses and Professional/Administrative Offices
Project Access:	Mission Drive
Planning Area:	Live Oak
Land Use Designation:	C-O (Professional and Administrative Offices)

County of Santa Cruz Planning Department
701 Ocean Street, 4th Floor, Santa Cruz CA 95060

Zone District: PA (Professional and Administrative Offices)
 Supervisorial District: 1 (District Supervisor: Jan Beautz)
 Within Coastal Zone: ☐ Inside ☒ Outside
 Appealable to Calif. Coastal Comm. ☐ Yes ☒ No

Environmental Information

Geologic Hazards: N/A – existing building
 Soils: N/A – existing building
 Fire Hazard: N/A – existing building
 Slopes: N/A – existing building
 Env. Sen. Habitat: N/A – existing building
 Grading: N/A – existing building
 Tree Removal: No trees proposed to be removed
 Scenic: Mapped in a visual resource area but not visible from Highway *One*
 Drainage: Existing drainage adequate
 Traffic: N/A – no change in use
 Roads: Existing roads adequate
 Parks: Existing park facilities adequate
 Archeology: Not mapped/developed site

Services Information

Inside Urban/Rural Services Line: ☒ Yes ☐ No
 Water Supply: City of Santa Cruz
 Sewage Disposal: County Sanitation
 Fire District: Central Fire
 Drainage District: Zone 5

Analysis and Discussion

The subject property is located on the northeast corner of the intersection of Soquel Drive and Mission Drive in the Live Oak Planning Area. The 0.23 acre parcel contains a two story **3,617** square foot office building, which meets all of the development and site standards for the PA (Professional and Administrative Offices) zone district. Construction of the office building was approved under Commercial Development and Master Occupancy Permit 99-0559 and is consistent with the site's Professional and Administrative Office (C-0) General Plan designation.

Change of Occupancy Permit **04-0136** approved a commercial bank as an initial occupant of the office building. At that time, a sign plan containing a 20 square foot illuminated wall mounted sign and a 12 square foot pedestrian-oriented sign was approved. The current proposal eliminates the pedestrian-oriented sign from the sign plan and includes two wall mounted signs, 12 square feet each (1 foot high by 12 feet long), for the east and west sides of the building.

County Code Section 13.10.581(a) allows for one business sign and one small pedestrian-oriented sign and states that a Variance to allow more than one business sign may be justified by

special circumstances such as location on a corner, limited visibility, or unusually large size of a structure. Because of the east-west orientation of the rectangular office building, the existing south-facing sign is of limited visibility to drivers approaching from the east and can not be seen from the north. The two proposed signs are identical in design to the existing sign and are intended to make the building visible to drivers traveling along Mission Drive and to westbound traffic along Soquel Drive. As with the existing sign, the two additional signs are proposed to incorporate low-intensity internal illumination into the burgundy lettering.

According to the County Code, the total allowable sign area for a building is based on a fraction of the width of the building along the front and street sides. Based on the size of the existing building, and because the project site is not adjacent to any residentially zoned parcels, the maximum 50 square feet of signage is allowed. The total area of the approved sign and the two additional proposed signs is 44 square feet.

Project Setting

The bank is located in the Soquel Drive commercial corridor and is surrounded by commercial businesses and administrative and medical offices. Adjacent Commercial properties include a 7-11 mini-market and liquor store/deli to the east, medical offices to the north and west, and an Erik's Deli, florist, and United Rentals to the south. Several businesses along Soquel Drive, including three in the immediate vicinity (the 7-11 mini-market, Erik's Deli, and United Rentals), have free-standing and wall-mounted illuminated business signs. The mini-market and liquor store also incorporate illuminated window signage.

Design Review & Scenic Resources

Because the proposed project involves new commercial construction, it is subject to the County Design Review Ordinance. The design of the signs was reviewed for compliance with this ordinance and was approved as being consistent with the area and use. The proposed burgundy letters, black trim, and low intensity illumination are consistent with the character of the building and identical to the existing sign on the south side, just slightly smaller in scale. The signs will be located on walls which contains no other architectural design features.

The parcel is incorrectly mapped as part of the Highway One Scenic Corridor on the County's General Plan/Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan (GP/LCP) Visual Resources Map. The parcel is not visible from Highway One and is not subject to the regulations regarding visual resource areas.

Conclusion

As proposed and conditioned, the project is consistent with all applicable codes and policies of the Zoning Ordinance and General Plan/LCP. All findings and conditions remain valid as approved for Commercial Development and Master Occupancy Permit 99-0559, and Change of Occupancy Permit 04-0136. Please see Exhibit "B" ("Findings") for a complete listing of findings and evidence related to the above discussion.

Staff Recommendation

- APPROVAL of Application Number **04-0208**, based on the attached findings and conditions.
- Certification that the proposal is exempt from further Environmental Review under the California Environmental Quality Act.

Supplementary reports and information referred to in this report are on file and available for viewing at the Santa Cruz **County** Planning Department, and are hereby made a part of the administrative record for the proposed project.

The County Code and General Plan, as well as hearing agendas and additional information are available online at: www.co.santa-cruz.ca.us

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Development Permit Findings

1. That the proposed location of the project and the conditions under which it would be operated or maintained will not be detrimental to the health, safety, or welfare of persons residing or working in the neighborhood or the general public, and will not result in inefficient or wasteful use of energy, and will not be materially injurious to properties or improvements in the vicinity.

This finding can be made, in that the signs will improve public health, safety, and welfare as they give drivers more time to identify and react to the location of the building. The project site is located in an area designated for commercial uses. Construction of the signs will comply with prevailing building technology, the Uniform Building Code, and the County Building ordinance to insure the optimum in safety and the conservation of energy and resources.

The proposed signs will not deprive adjacent properties or the neighborhood of light, air, or open space, in that the existing professional/administrative office building meets all current setbacks that ensure access to light, air, and open space in the neighborhood.

2. That the proposed location of the project and the conditions under which it would be operated or maintained will be consistent with all pertinent County ordinances and the purpose of the zone district in which the site is located.

This finding can be made, in that the proposed location of the signs on an existing professional/administrative office building and the conditions under which they will be operated or maintained will be consistent with all pertinent County ordinances and the purpose of the PA (Professional and Administrative Offices) zone district in that the primary use of the property will continue to be a bank and the building meets all current site standards for the zone district. The total area of all three signs (one existing, two proposed) is 44 square feet, which is less than the 50 square foot maximum allowed by the County Code.

The proposal has been evaluated according to the Site, Architectural and Landscape Design Review ordinance for the purposes of determining compatibility with the surrounding area and adjacent uses. The proposed burgundy letters, black trim, and low intensity illumination are consistent with the character of the existing building and the surrounding commercial businesses and administrative and medical offices.

3. That the proposed use is consistent with all elements of the County General Plan and with any specific plan which has been adopted for the area.

This finding can be made, in that the commercial use is consistent with the use and density requirements specified for the Professional and Administrative Office (C-0) land use designation in the County General Plan and the use is not proposed to change as a result of this application.

The professional/administrative office building is located in an area designated for similar commercial uses, as required by General Plan Policy 8.5.1 (Concentrate Commercial Uses). A specific plan has not been adopted for this portion of the County.

4. That the proposed use will not overload utilities and will not generate more than the acceptable level of traffic on the streets in the vicinity.

This finding can be made, in that the current proposal adds two small signs to an existing professional/administrative office building. The proposed project will not generate any additional traffic nor will it adversely impact existing roads and intersections in the surrounding area.

5. That the proposed project will complement and harmonize with the existing and proposed land uses in the vicinity and will be compatible with the physical design aspects, land use intensities, and dwelling unit densities of the neighborhood.

This finding can be made, in that the proposed signs are located in the Soquel Drive commercial corridor and are surrounded by commercial businesses and administrative and medical offices of various architectural styles. The proposed signs and the existing professional/administrative office building are consistent with the land use intensity and density of the neighborhood, which includes several businesses with free-standing and wall-mounted illuminated signs. Additionally, the colors on the proposed sign complement the wall and trim colors on the building and are identical to the existing sign.

6. The proposed development project is consistent with the Design Standards and Guidelines (sections 13.11.070 through 13.11.076), and any other applicable requirements of this chapter.

This finding can be made, in that the proposed signs will be of an appropriate scale for the building and type of design that will enhance the aesthetic qualities of the surrounding properties. The signs will not have a visual impact on scenic resources in the surrounding area. The parcel is not part of the Highway One Scenic Corridor and is not subject to the regulations regarding visual resource areas.

Variance Findings

1. That because of special circumstances applicable to the property, including size, shape, topography, location, and surrounding existing structures, the strict application of the Zoning Ordinance deprives such property of privileges enjoyed by other property in the vicinity and under identical zoning classification.

This finding can be made, in that the property is located on the corner of Soquel Drive and Mission Drive and additional business signs are necessary to identify the building to drivers approaching from multiple directions. County Code states that more than one business sign may be considered for properties located on a corner or subject to limited visibility. Because of the east-west orientation of the rectangular office building, the existing south-facing sign is of limited visibility to drivers approaching from the east. A sign on the west side of the building identifies the business to drivers traveling south along Mission Drive, and a sign on the east side of the building provides visibility to westbound drivers approaching the building along Soquel Drive.

Many surrounding businesses have multiple illuminated identification signs. Strict application of the Zoning Ordinance to this parcel would deprive the property owners of enjoying the same development privileges as other property owners in the vicinity under identical zoning classification. Instead of incorporating the pedestrian-oriented sign approved under 04-0136, the three wall-mounted signs provide better identification of the building to the public and comply with the maximum allowable sign area.

2. That the granting of the variance will be in harmony with the general intent and purpose of zoning objectives and will not be materially detrimental to public health, safety, or welfare or injurious to property or improvements in the vicinity.

This finding can be made, in that the proposed signs will improve public health, safety, and welfare as they give drivers approaching the building more time to identify and react to the location of the building before arriving at the Mission Drive/Soquel Drive intersection. The proposed sign plan is in harmony with the general intent and purpose of zoning objectives in that the total area of the signs is 44 square feet, less than the 50 square feet allowed by County Code Section 13.10.581. The County's Urban Designer approved the design of the signs as consistent with the requirements of the Design Standards and Guidelines in that they provide adequate and attractive identification in harmony with the area and design of the building. The signs are located in a developed commercial corridor which contains many other pedestrian-oriented and wall-mounted illuminated signs.

3. That the granting of such variances shall not constitute a grant of special privileges inconsistent with the limitations upon other properties in the vicinity and zone in which such is situated.

This finding can be made, in that the property is subject to special circumstances as it is located on a corner and the single identification sign is not visible to drivers approaching from the north

or east. Additional signs are necessary to identify the building to drivers approaching from multiple directions and to provide a level of visibility comparable and in proportion with other businesses in similar situations.

The size and design of the identification signs is consistent with the requirements of the Design Standards and Guidelines in that they provide adequate and attractive identification in harmony with the area and design of the building. The total area of all three signs (one existing, two proposed) is less than the 50 square feet allowed by County Code Section 13.10.581 and therefore no greater than the sign area allowed other businesses. The signs are located in a developed commercial corridor in which most businesses utilize multiple identification signs.

Conditions of Approval

Exhibit A: Sign Details, 1 sheet, prepared by Northwest signs, dated August, 2004.
Project Plans, 12 sheets, prepared by Steven A. Elmore, dated November, 2001

- I. **This** permit authorizes the construction of two wall-mounted signs, 12 square feet each, containing low-intensity illumination on an existing commercial building where a 20 square foot wall-mounted sign exists for a total sign area of about 44 square feet. Prior to exercising any rights granted by this permit including, without limitation, any construction or site disturbance, the applicant/owner shall:
 - A. Sign, date, and return to the Planning Department one copy of the approval to indicate acceptance and agreement with the conditions thereof.
 - B. Obtain a Building Permit from the Santa Cruz County Building Official.
- II. Prior to issuance of a Building Permit, the applicant/owner shall submit plans for review and approval by the Planning Department which are in substantial compliance with the plans marked Exhibit "A" on file with the Planning Department. The final plans shall include the color and finish of all materials for Planning Department approval. Any color boards must be in **8.5"** x **11"** format.
- III. All construction shall be performed according to the approved plans for the Building Permit. Prior to final building inspection, the applicant/owner must meet the following conditions:
 - A. All inspections required by the building permit shall be completed to the satisfaction of the County Building Official.
 - B. Pursuant to Sections 16.40.040 and 16.42.100 of the County Code, if at any time during site preparation, excavation, or other ground disturbance associated with this development, any artifact or other evidence of an historic archaeological resource or a Native American cultural site is discovered, the responsible persons shall immediately cease and desist from all further site excavation and notify the Sheriff-Coroner if the discovery contains human remains, or the Planning Director if the discovery contains no human remains. The procedures established in Sections 16.40.040 and 16.42.100, shall be observed.

IV. Operational Conditions

- A. All internal illumination for the approved signs shall continue to be low intensity.
- B. Signs shall be maintained according to the approved colors and materials in Exhibit A.
- C. In the event that future County inspections of the subject property disclose noncompliance with any Conditions of this approval or any violation of the County Code, the owner shall pay to the County the full cost of such County inspections, including any follow-up inspections and/or necessary enforcement actions, up to and including permit revocation.

Minor variations to ~~this~~ permit which do not affect the overall concept or density may be approved by the Planning Director at the request of the applicant or **staff** in accordance with Chapter 18.10 of the County Code.

Please note: This permit expires two years from the effective date unless you obtain the required permits and commence construction.

Approval Date: _____

Effective Date: _____

Expiration Date: _____

Don Bussey
Deputy Zoning Administrator

Karen McConaghy
Project Planner

Appeals: Any property owner, or other person aggrieved, or any other person whose ~~interests~~ are adversely affected by any act ~~or~~ determination ~~of~~ the Zoning Administrator, may appeal the act or determination to the Planning Commission in accordance with chapter 18.10 of the Santa Cruz County Code.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

The Santa Cmz County Planning Department has reviewed the project described below and has determined that it is exempt from the provisions of CEQA as specified in Sections 15061 - 15332 of CEQA for the reason(s) which have been specified in this document.

Application Number: 04-0208

Assessor Parcel Number: 025-082-26

Project Location: 31 10 Mission Drive

Project Description: Proposal to construct a second illuminated sign on an existing building.

Person or Agency Proposing Project: Northwest Signs, Attn: Jeff Frank

Contact Phone Number: (831) 469-8208

- A. ☐ The proposed activity is not a project under CEQA Guidelines Section 15378.
B. ☐ The proposed activity is not subject to CEQA as specified under CEQA Guidelines Section 15060 (c).
C. ☐ **Ministerial Project** involving only the use of fixed standards or objective measurements without personal judgment.
D. ☐ **Statutory Exemption** other than a Ministerial Project (CEQA Guidelines Section 15260 to 15285).

Specify type:

E. ☒ **Categorical Exemption**

Specify type: Class 1. Existing Facilities (Section 15301)

F. Reasons why the project is exempt:

minor alteration of existing public or private structures

In addition, none of the conditions described in Section 15300.2 apply to this project.

Karen McConaghy, Project Planner

Date: _____

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POR. SEC. 9, T.11S., R.1W., M.D.B. & M. Tax Area Code 25-08
 96-103 34 36PM38 SERENATA COURT 975
 CONDOMINIUM 3639 DR 329 42 10/14/83

50PM58
1/26/90

45PM8
2/28/85

7MB69
8/25/72

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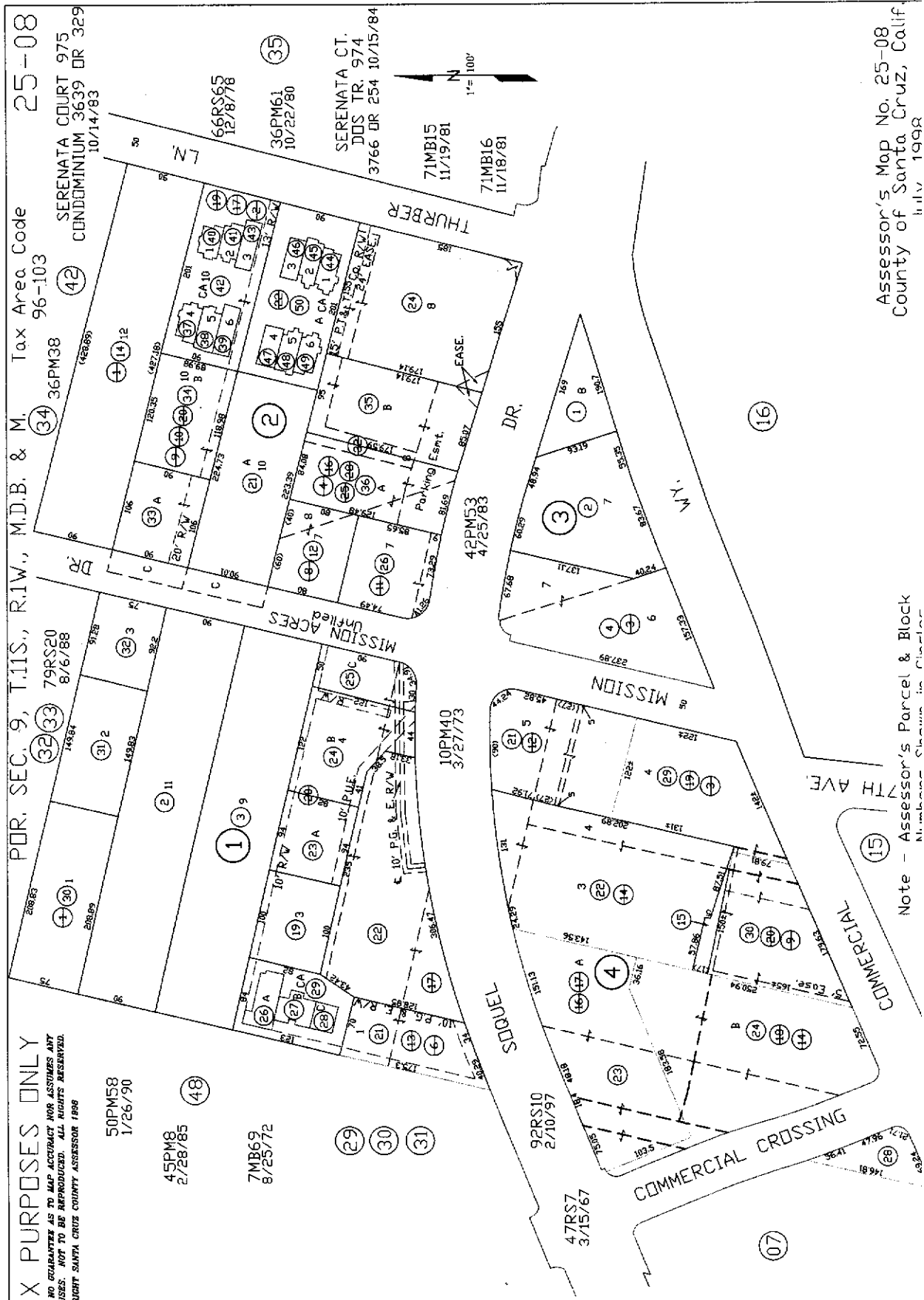
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10/30/67

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3/8/90

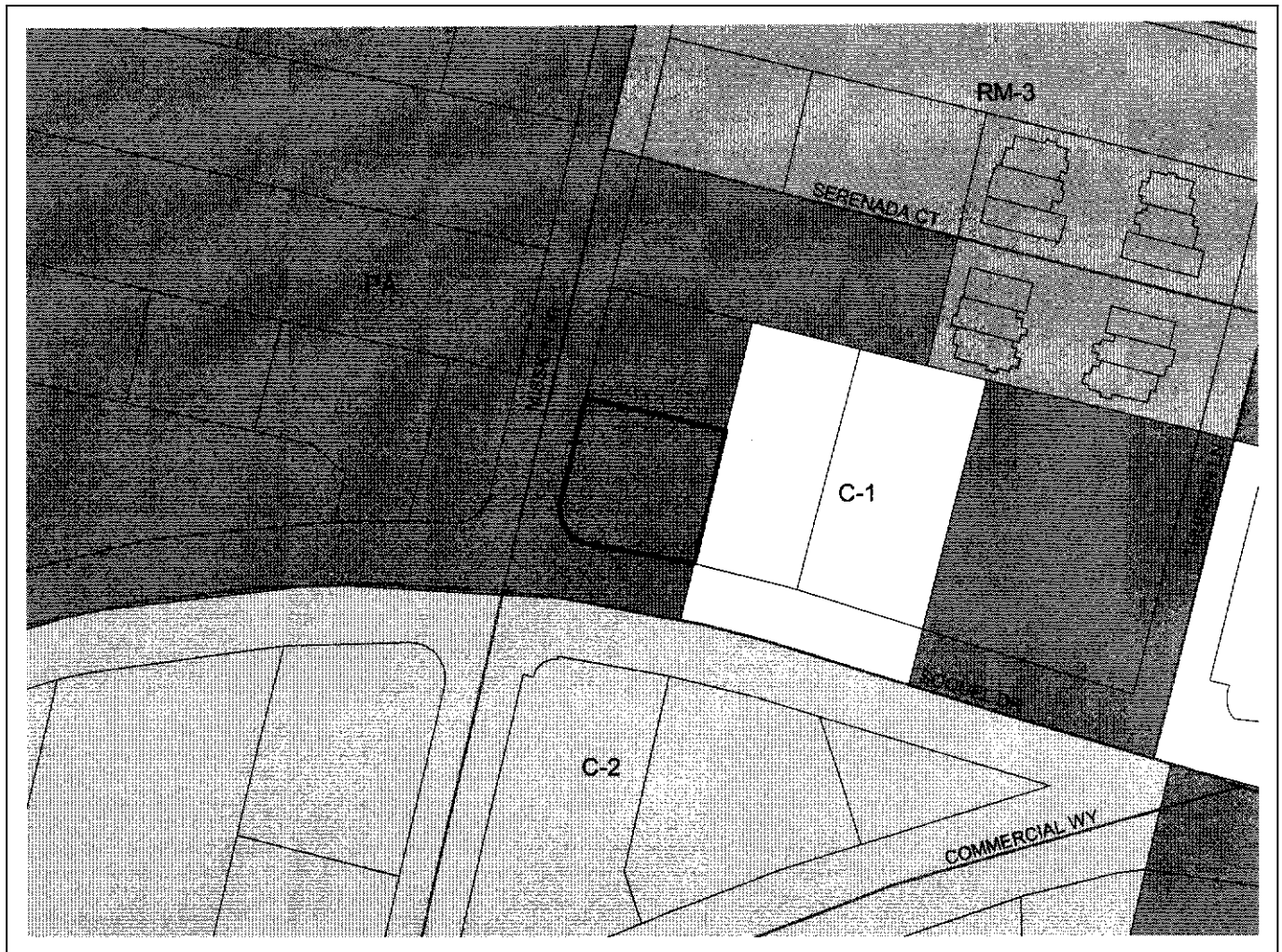
Notwithstanding to whom these maps are
 sold, the Assessor's Office shall not be
 liable for any errors or omissions
 herein.



Note - Assessor's Parcel & Block
 Number shown in circles







Assessor's Map No. 25-08
 County of Santa Cruz, Calif.
 July 1998

Zoning Map



200 0 200 400 600 Feet

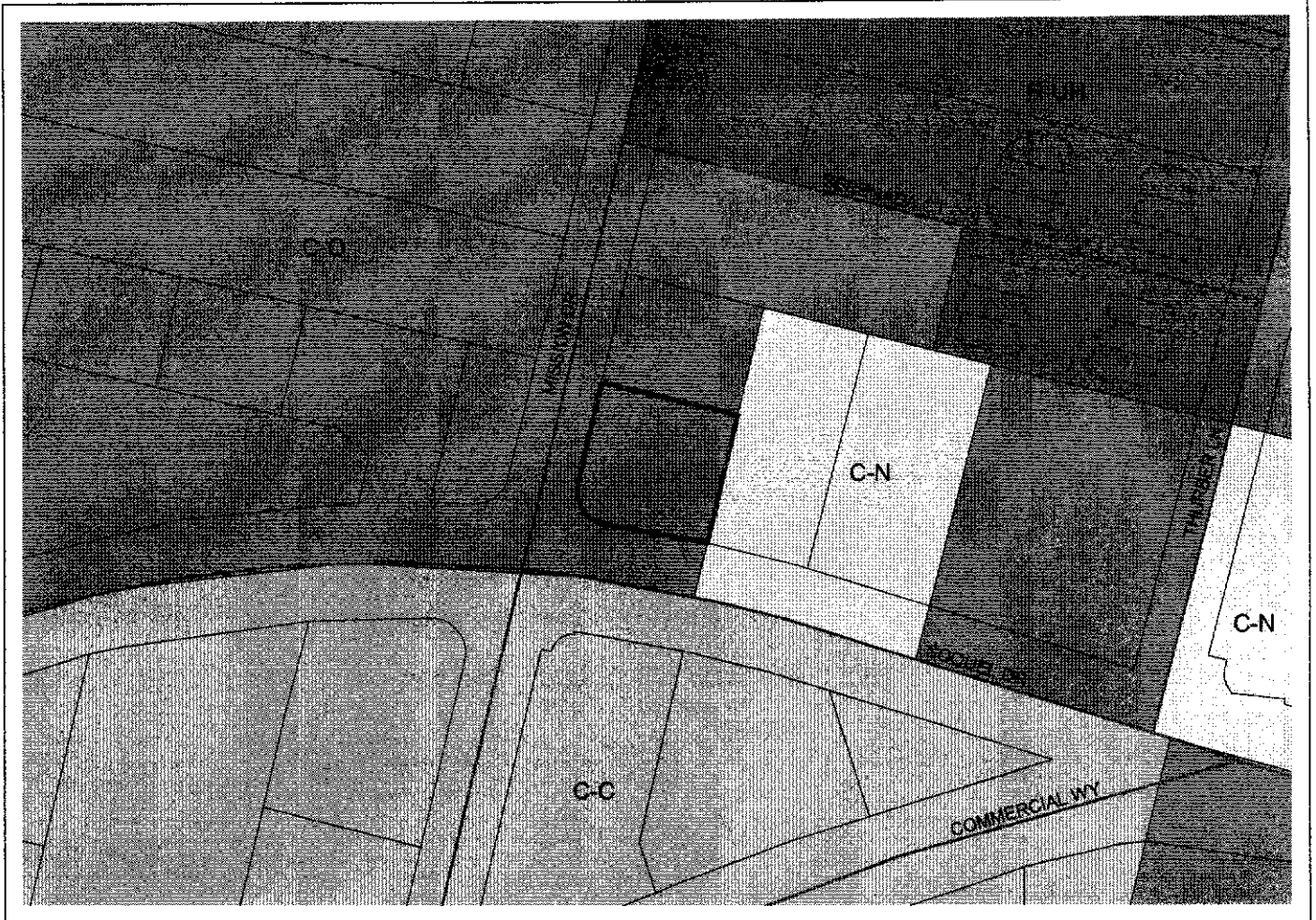
Legend

-  APN 025-082-26
-  Streets
-  RM
-  C-1
-  C-2
-  PA









Map created by Santa Cruz County
Planning Department:
May 2004

General Plan Map



200 0 200 400 600 Feet

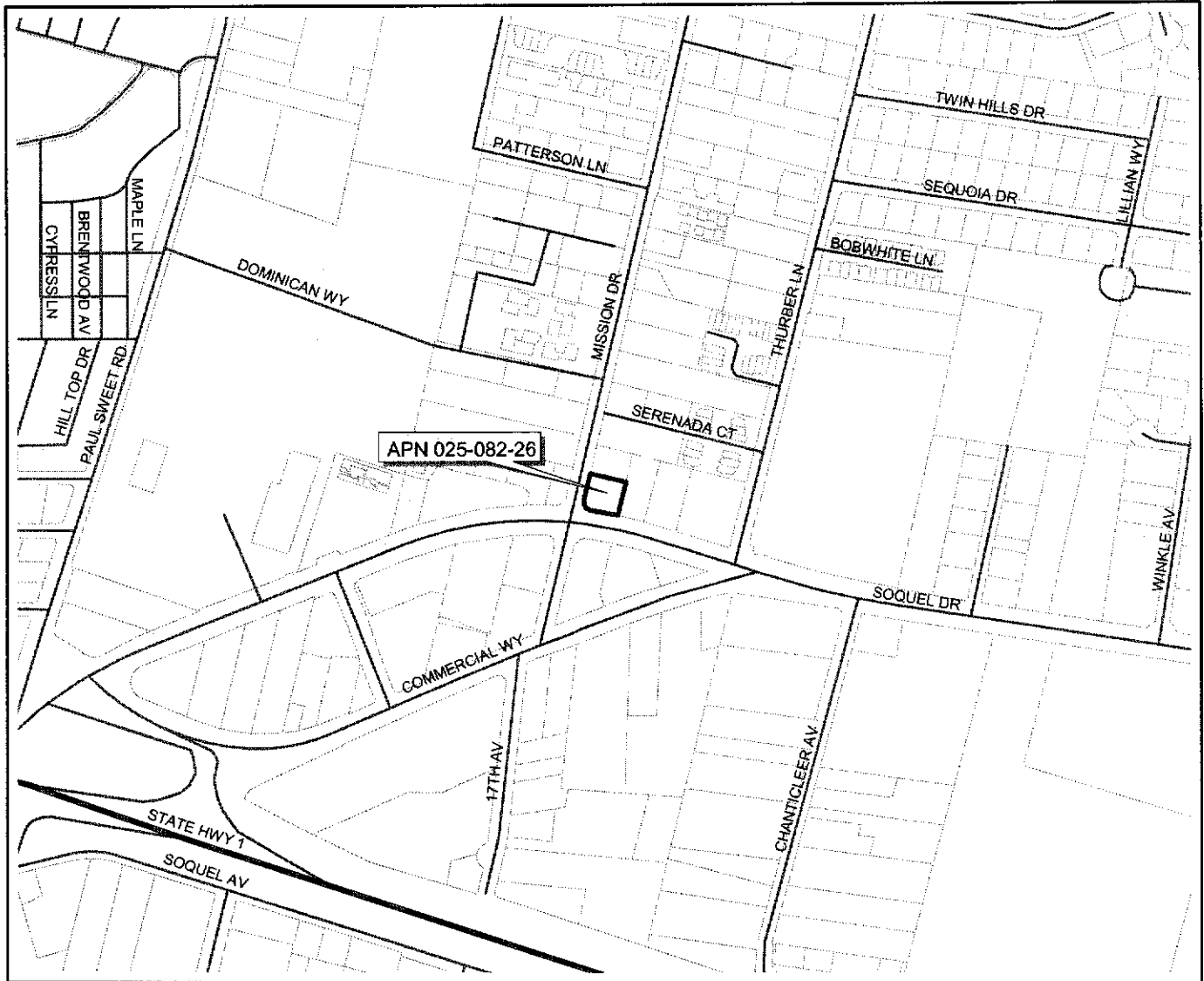
Legend

-  APN 025-082-26
-  Streets
-  Community Commercial
-  Neighborhood Commercial
-  Office Commercial
-  Residential - Urban High Density



Map created by Santa Cruz County
Planning Department:
May 2004

Location Map



1000 0 1000 Feet

Map created by Santa Cruz County
Planning Department:
May 2004





www.northwestsigns.com

County of Santa Cruz
Planning Department
701 Ocean Street, 4th Floor
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Applicant: Northwest Signs

Re: Variance @ 3110 Mission Drive, Santa Cruz
APN # 25-082-26

Dear Committee-

We are applying for a Variance on behalf of our client, Community Bank. Community Bank has recently moved into the building at 3110 Mission Drive and have a permit for one sign on the South Elevation - as per permit # 00137513.

As you can see in the submitted sets of plans, the building is located on the corner of Mission Drive and Soquel Drive. In hopes to appeal to the traffic coming from the West and the East on Soquel Drive and all traffic on Mission Drive, Community Bank would like to have an additional sign on the West Elevation as well as one on the East Elevation.

Community Bank would like all of the signs to be internally illuminated as they are concerned about very poor visibility during daylight savings hours. Another concern is that the West bound traffic won't see their building until it's too late which creates the possibility of future incidents with braking traffic. The last concern is that the internally illuminated signs in the shopping center on the East side of the Community Bank building will drown out the visibility of the sign on the East Elevation - especially in the dark.

In addition, it should be noted that directly across the street at 1664 Soquel Drive, Erik's Deli has two attached signs on their West and North Elevations as well as one monument sign. All of their signage is facing the traffic coming from the West and the East on Soquel Avenue.

In closing, we are asking that Community Bank be allowed to have one additional sign on their West Elevation and one additional sign on their East Elevation.

Please do not hesitate to call with any questions that you might have. Thank you.


Jeff Frank
Northwest Signs