

**CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS
CPED – PLANNING DIVISION
HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT**

FILE NAME: 821-837 Marquette Avenue, Foshay Tower

DATE OF APPLICATION: March 7, 2008

APPLICANTS: Charlene Roise, Hess, Roise and Company on behalf of Foshay Hotel LLC,
(612) 338-1987

PUBLICATION DATE: April 4, 2008

DATE OF HEARING: April 8, 2008

END OF APPEAL PERIOD: April 18, 2008

HPC SITE/DISTRICT: Foshay Tower, Individual Landmark

CATEGORY: contributing

CLASSIFICATION: Certificate of Appropriateness for signage

STAFF INVESTIGATION AND REPORT: Molly McCartney, (612) 673-5811

A. BACKGROUND:

This item has been continued from the March 25th, HPC meeting. At that meeting, staff recommended to the HPC to continue the item two cycles, until the April 22nd, HPC meeting because more information had been requested of the applicants, even though the item had been noticed for public hearing. Staff had requested full elevation plans, material samples, and night rendering. While the original application submittal did meet the basic requirements for a Certificate of Appropriate, staff had proceeded with the public hearing notice, however, during the review period, staff realized that more information would be needed for an informed staff and Commission decision.

Because the public hearing had been noticed, testimony was presented by the applicants about the project and the submittal process. A motion to continue the item two cycles was not seconded; however, a motion to continue the item one cycle to the April 8th HPC was seconded and the motion was approved. The actions from that meeting are attached to this report.

The applicants were not able to submit the requested material to staff and have asked that the item be continued to the April 22, 2008, HPC meeting. Attached to this report is a letter requesting the continuance.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff is requesting a continuance to the April 22, 2008, HPC meeting for further review and analysis of the requested application materials.

B. PROPOSED CHANGES:

The applicant is proposing to add signs for two new uses and retain signs for the existing restaurant use. Proposed signs for the “W” Hotel will include two projecting signs and two wall signs. Proposed signs for a new restaurant called “Prohibition” include three projecting signs. Keys Café will retain the awning signage.

The proposed signage for the new “W” Hotel includes a projecting sign at the corner of the building, a projecting sign from the awning at the Marquette Avenue entrance and two bronze plaques at the Marquette entrance. The proposed signage for the restaurant includes a projecting sign at the corner of the building and two projecting signs at the restaurant entrance on Marquette Avenue.

Two projecting blade signs at the corner will identify the hotel and restaurant. The hotel sign is a “W” shaped blade sign that will be approximately 25 ft 4 in from the ground, at the second story of the building.. This proposed sign is 3 ft 2 in by 2 ft 4 in and will project 4 ft from the building. The cabinet will be made of aluminum and acrylic with internal red LED illumination. The proposed restaurant sign has the text “Prohibition” vertically will be approximately 22 ft 1 in from the ground. This proposed sign is 1 ft 8 in by 7 ft 9 in and will project less than 4 ft from the building. The cabinet is also made of aluminum and acrylic with internal red LED illumination. Both signs will be attached to a permanent mounting plate that is installed at mortar joints on the building. These signs are overall consistent with the Design Guidelines for installation, materials, and size, however, they are not consistent with the regulations that call for projecting signs to be 14 ft in height or less.

The projecting sign from the hotel awning will be similar in size and design as the corner “W” sign. The proposed sign is 3 ft 6 in by 2 ft 6 in and will be made of aluminum and acrylic with internal red LED illumination. The sign will hang from the awning and be approximately 13 ft 8 in from the ground in height.

The two bronze signs at the Marquette entrance will flank the doors and be 7 ft in height. The signs are 18 in by 18 in and will identify the W Hotel. These signs are consistent with the Design Guidelines specifications for signs on historic landmarks.

The two projecting signs at the restaurant entrance will be similar to the “Prohibition” projecting sign in material, size, height, and text. The height of these projecting signs is consistent with the Prohibition sign at the corner. The signs will also be attached to a permanent mounting plate that is installed at mortar joints on the building. These signs are generally consistent with the Design Guidelines, except for height and the number of overall signs allowed per use.

The proposed signs on the pedestal differ from the Guidelines in the number of signs allowed the height allowed for projecting signs. The number of signs allowed per use by the Design Guidelines limits signage to two signs per use or principal building entrance. In this case, the Foshay Tower has three ground floor tenants, the W Hotel, the Prohibition restaurant and the existing Key’s Café. The W Hotel has a total of four signs (two projecting and two wall signs), and Prohibition has three projecting signs.

Historical documentation supports the increase in number of signs and height of signs. Historic photos provided by the applicants and staff documents previous signage at the building, including wall and projecting signs. In the past, projecting and wall signs have been installed at the Foshay Tower at

heights greater than what is allowed under the current Design Guidelines. In addition, the number of signs on the building greatly exceeds the number proposed by the applicants. While the historic signs may appear to be sign clutter, these pictures show the traditional sign locations on the pedestal of the Foshay Tower. Also, the proliferation in signs on the pedestal has typically relaxed any demand to place signage on the tower of the building, with the exception of the “Foshay” sign at the pinnacle. The Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the National Park Service have commented that any signs on the tower would jeopardize the federal tax credit approval process. Future proposals for tower signage at the municipal level should require approval by these organizations prior to submittal.

C. GUIDELINE CITATIONS:

Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings:

1. In General:

- a. *Sign message:* All signs, except window signs, real estate signs, project information signs, auxiliary signs, temporary signs and portable signs, are limited to the name and address of the establishment.
- b. *Historic signs:* Maintenance or restoration of existing historic signs is encouraged and should not be counted in number of allowable signs.
- c. *Number of signs:* Each principal building entrance that faces a public street, or each ground floor principal use, whichever is less, is allowed two signs. A corner lot with a principal entrance on each street is allowed two signs per street frontage. The two signs may be a combination of one wall sign, one projecting sign, one ground sign, one banner, and awning signage. However, a property may not have both a projecting sign and a ground sign. Only one of the signs should be illuminated, except that banners and awning signs should never be illuminated. Awning signs are limited to ground floor awnings and are subject to the specific guidelines for awnings and awning signs. Parking lot signs are subject to the specific guidelines for signs accessory to parking lots.
- d. *Location of building signs:* Wherever possible, signs should be placed in traditional sign locations including the storefront sign band area. Signs should not obscure or damage architectural features including windows, doors, pilasters, columns and historic signs. Building signs should be located only on the primary façade of the building adjacent to the street and should be no higher than fourteen (14) feet, except as otherwise provided in the specific guidelines for wall signs.
- e. *Color:* Sign colors and materials should be compatible with the colors of the building and its surroundings. Day-glo, light reflecting or fluorescent colors or materials are not allowed.
- f. *Installation:* Sign installation should have a minimal impact on the building and to the extent practical allow the building to be returned to its original condition if the sign is removed. Existing signboards and sign frames should be reused to limit drilling new holes into masonry. Wall signs should be attached to the building through the mortar joints. Projecting signs should be attached to a permanent mounting plate. Awnings should be attached to window or door frames and should never damage masonry.
- g. *Illumination:* Signs may be illuminated externally, internally, or by neon. Plastic face covers should not be placed on illuminated signs. All illuminated building signs should connect to a permanent mounting plate located near the entrance. Electrical conduit should be installed through the

permanent mounting plate. Not more than one brick should be damaged by the installation of the permanent mounting plate. Electrical conduit and any lighting fixture should be attached to the sign and not the building wall.

4. Guidelines for Specific Types of Signs:

a. Wall Signs:

- i. Location. Wall signs should be located between the first and second floor and should not be higher than fourteen (14) feet, except where the historic sign band is higher. Wall signs should not conceal architectural features or obstruct openings.
- ii. Size. Wall signs should be no more than two (2) feet high and thirty-two (32) square feet in area and should not extend outward from the building more than eight (8) inches.
- iii. Materials. Wall signs may be constructed of wood, metal, painted fiberglass or painted plastic.
- iv. Installation. Wall signs should be attached to the building through the mortar joints. If illuminated, a wall sign should be placed adjacent to or over a permanent mounting plate for electrification. Electrical conduit and lighting fixtures should be attached to the top of the wall sign, and should not be attached to the building. Wall signs should not be painted directly on the surface of the building, except as part of the maintenance or restoration of an existing historic sign.

b. Projecting Signs:

- i. Location. Projecting signs should be located near a building entrance and should not be higher than fourteen (14) feet. Projecting signs should not conceal architectural features or obstruct openings, and should not be suspended from the soffit.
- ii. Size. Projecting signs should be no more than twelve (12) square feet in area and should not project more than four (4) feet from the building. The thickness of a projecting sign should not exceed eight (8) inches.
- iii. Materials. Projecting signs may be constructed of wood, metal, painted fiberglass or painted plastic.
- iv. Installation. Projecting signs should always use a single permanent mounting plate.

e. Awnings and Awning Signs:

- i. Location. Awnings should fit within the window or door opening.
- ii. Number of awnings. The number of awnings may not exceed the number of window or door openings.
- iii. Number of awning signs. Awning signs are limited to ground floor awnings. There should be no more than one sign per awning. Awning signs should be no more than six (6) square feet in area. Where there are multiple awning signs on a building, all signs should be located in the same or similar position on the awnings.
- iv. Materials. Awnings should be constructed of coated or uncoated cloth fabric.
- v. Installation. Awning hardware should be attached to the window or door frame and should never damage masonry. Awnings should not be attached to or cover any part of the building wall.
- vi. Illumination. Awnings and awning signs should not be illuminated.
- vii. Awning shape. Awnings should project downward and outward from the openings in straight lines unless they are reflecting the curved shape of the opening. The projection of an awning should be less than its height. An awning drop or skirt should not exceed twelve (12) inches.

D. FINDINGS:

1. The Foshay Tower is a designated Local Landmark and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The exterior and first floor lobby are locally designated.
2. The applicant is proposing to add signs for two new uses and retain signs for the existing restaurant use. The proposed signs include four projecting signs and two wall signs.
3. The proposed signage for a new “W” Hotel includes a projecting sign at the corner of the building, a projecting sign from the awning at the Marquette Avenue entrance and two bronze plaques at the Marquette entrance. The proposed signage for the restaurant includes a projecting sign at the corner of the building and two projecting signs at the restaurant entrance on Marquette Avenue.
4. The projecting signs at the corner of the building meet the Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings or “*Guidelines*” for the installation method, materials and size. However they are not consistent with the regulations that call for projecting signs to be 14 ft in height or less.
5. The projecting sign from the Marquette hotel entrance awning meets the *Guidelines* for the installation method, materials, height and size.
6. The bronze wall sign flanking the Marquette hotel entrance are consistent with the *Guidelines* for materials, height and size.
7. The projecting signs from the restaurant entrance are consistent with the *Guidelines*, except for height and the number of overall signs allowed per use.
8. Historical documentation of traditional sign locations on the Foshay Tower supports the increase in number of signs per use as well increasing the height of the proposed signs. Historical photographs document previous signs at heights greater than what is allowed under the current *Guidelines*. Allowing the increased signage on the pedestal mitigates the demand to place signage on the tower of the building, with the exception of the “Foshay” sign at the pinnacle.
9. The propose sign package will not be detrimental to the historic integrity of the Foshay Tower.

E. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the HPC adopt staff findings and **approve** a Certificate of Appropriateness for signage, subject to the following conditions:

1. Final drawings including plans, elevations and details shall be reviewed and approved by CPED-Planning staff.