

**CALISTOGA PLANNING COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT**

To: Calistoga Planning Commission
From: Samantha Thomas, Associate Planner
Meeting Date: August 11, 2021
Subject: **Sign Permit Application for Mark + Michiko at 1400 Lincoln Avenue**

ITEM

Consideration of a sign permit application for Mark + Michiko.

KEY ISSUE

- Interior illuminated signage under an existing canopy, with LED light emanating from the white acrylic.
- Internally lit signs require Planning Commission approval

BACKGROUND

1 Mark + Michiko at 1400 Lincoln Avenue has applied for a sign permit for the glassblowing
2 showroom space. The signage is made of two-sided materials, aluminum and acrylic, and
3 would utilize interior illumination via LED lights displaying “Mark + Michiko” and their logo
4 under the existing canopy, emanating from the white acrylic. The sign would be 35.83
5 inches wide by 17.72 inches high by 4 inches deep for a total area of approximately 4.5
6 square feet. Placement is proposed above the front door perpendicular to the sidewalk
7 on Lincoln Avenue. The applicant worked with the sign maker to make the lighting as
8 unobtrusive and natural as possible. The graphics of the
9 sign would be similar to the rest
10 of the applicant’s branding.
11

12 While sign permits are
13 generally reviewed at staff
14 level, there are some types of
15 sign permits that either are
16 required to go to the Planning
17 Commission for review, or
18 which are unique and staff
19 elects to refer to the Planning
20 Commission for the final
21 decision. In this case, due to
22 the LED and interior
23 illuminated sign proposed,
24 review by Planning
25 Commission is required.



Proposed sign for Mark + Michiko

26 **DISCUSSION**

27 Zoning Code

28 Review of this application is subject to Chapter 17.58, Signs and Advertising, of the
29 Zoning Code. The purpose of this chapter is to:

30 (A) provide standards for the regulation of signs in order to promote and protect
31 the public health, safety and welfare;

32 (B) provide for signage that effectively presents a business name or message for
33 public convenience, while also preserving and enhancing the scenic beauty of
34 Calistoga as an economic asset; and

35 (C) prevent excessive and confusing signs which can result in visual clutter and
36 increase hazards to pedestrians and motorists. (CMC 17.58.010)

37 The Sign Code does not specifically address LED signs like those proposed here.
38 However, “neon and interior illuminated signs” may only be approved by the Planning
39 Commission (CMC Section 17.58.060.B(11)). Under CMC Section 17.58.060.A, the
40 Planning and Building Director may also refer any sign permit application to the Planning
41 Commission for review. The LED and interior lighting necessitates such a referral in this
42 case.

43 In terms of design requirements for neon and interior illuminated signs, Section 17.58.070
44 says that:

45 *A. For neon signs, their design shall be required to complement the*
46 *architectural character of the building and adjoining structures relating to*
47 *design, light intensity, color and other similar design characteristics, and*
48 *shall not be illuminated when a business is closed...).*

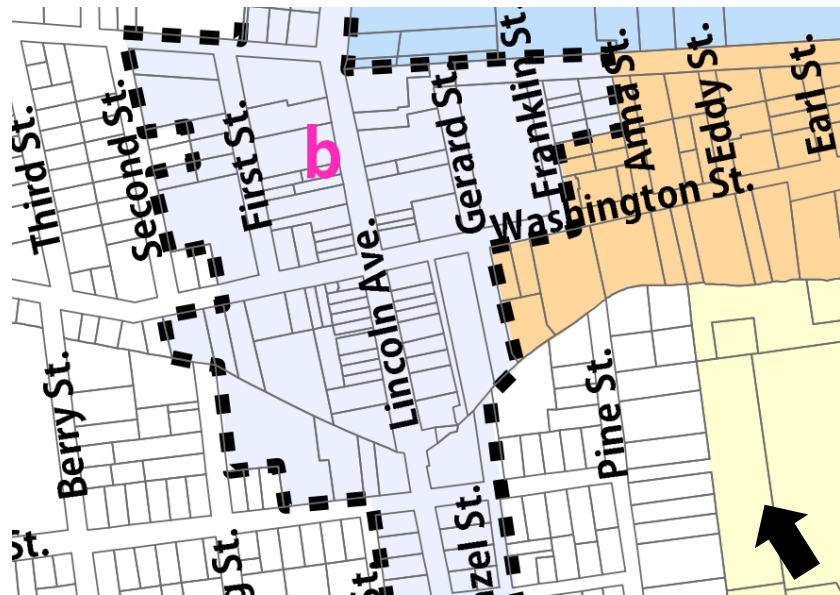
49 *B. For interior illuminated signs, their design shall be required to*
50 *complement the architectural character of the building and adjoining*
51 *structures relating to design, light intensity, color and other similar design*
52 *characteristics.*

53 In order to maintain and enhance Calistoga’s small-town character and the urban design
54 quality of the City, development in the DC: Downtown Commercial Zoning District is to be
55 guided by relevant policies of the General Plan’s Community Identity Element and the
56 character areas, gateways and entry corridors of the Land Use Element.

57 Calistoga General Plan

58 The Community Identity Element of the General Plan states that “attention to urban
59 design criteria can help ensure that future development fits within the existing built
60 environment and permit the continued growth of Calistoga in a manner which maintains
61 its existing small-town atmosphere. Landscaping, signage, traffic and noise all play a key
62 role in enhancing the quality of life.”

63 The subject property is
64 located in the Downtown
65 Character Area's Historic
66 District. The Historic
67 District is intended to
68 clearly define Calistoga's
69 community heritage of a
70 small town lined with
71 pedestrian oriented
72 shopping and services for
73 visitors. One of the
74 objectives of the Historic
75 District is that "All
76 development within the
77 Historic District shall
78 respect and draw
79 inspiration from the
80 architectural language of
81 the Historic District."



Downtown Character Area – Historic District (in light blue)

82 The General Plan also features 'Dark Sky' policies. Objective OSC-5.4 is to "minimize
83 obtrusive glare and wasted energy from excessive nighttime lighting and preserve views
84 of the nighttime sky." Additionally, development should "be designed to respect and
85 enhance Calistoga's small-town rural character and the natural environment" (LU P3-
86 1).

87 At issue for the Planning Commission is whether the proposed signage, particularly the
88 LED lighting emanating from the white acrylic is in accordance with the various policies
89 of the General Plan and Urban Design Plan, as well as the Zoning Ordinance.

90 **RECOMMENDATION**

91 Staff recommends that the Planning Commission discuss the proposed sign design
92 application and either approve, approve with conditions, or decline to approve the
93 application. A draft resolution with conditions of approval is attached.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Vicinity Map
2. Draft Resolution with Conditions of Approval
3. Application Materials