



CITY OF ST. HELENS PLANNING DEPARTMENT

MEMORANDUM

TO: Planning Commission acting as Historic Landmarks Commission
FROM: Jennifer Dimsho, Associate Planner
RE: New Illuminated Projecting Sign 161 St. Helens Street
DATE: May 6, 2025

In April, Clark Signs applied for a Sign Permit to install a new internally illuminated projecting sign at 161 St. Helens Street. This property was most recently approved for a new convenience store with Site Development Review SDR.2.25.

Being in the Riverfront District (RD) zone, signage is subject to review by the Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC) pursuant to SHMC 17.32.172(7). I have included excerpts from the [Architectural Design Guidelines](#) relevant to new signage as attachments to this memo. The HLC's recommendation will be incorporated into the sign permit decision by staff.

The Guidelines state "neon is acceptable, though can be restricted in size, if it does not obscure architectural detail or overly illuminate display windows. Neon lights should have an authentic period or handcrafted look and should not flash or otherwise vary in display." There are also a few existing projecting neon signs downtown including the theater, City Hall, and Molly's Market.

In the historic photo of S. 1st Street from 1930, the use of projecting signs was very common.

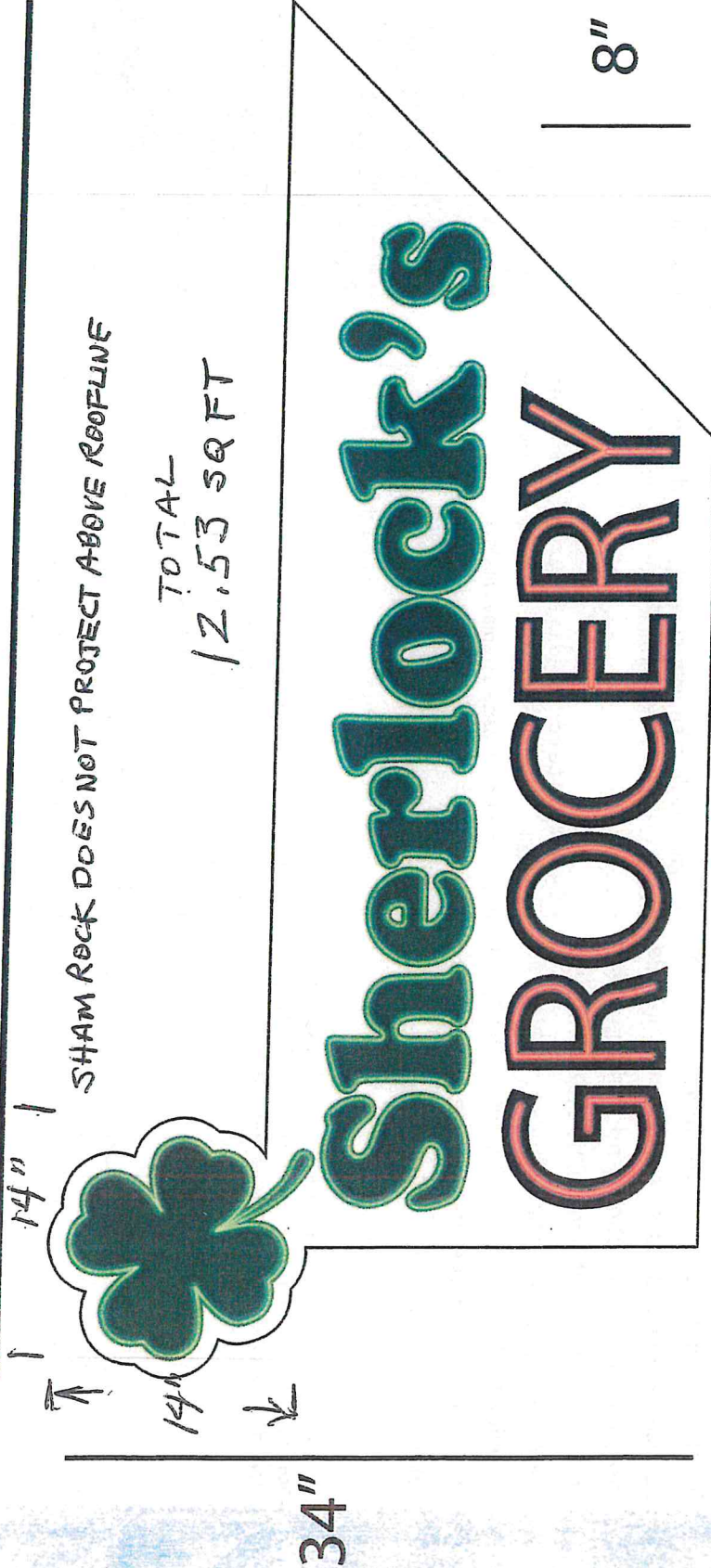
In terms of the size of the sign, the sign code caps projecting signs at 20 sq. ft. per sign face or 12% of the building elevation. This new proposed sign is only 12.5 sq. ft., or approximately 1.6% of the building elevation. The code also requires that the sign projects no further than 8' from the building face and that no portion of the sign projects above the roofline. These will be conditions of approval.

Attached: *Applicant's Materials (4 pages)*
Architectural Design Guidelines Excerpts (3 pages)



Sherlock's
GROCERY

73"



42"

Grocery
Clover and Sherlock's

Clear Red Single Tube
Double Tube Green

Project Desc. _____
Dimensions _____
Drawing # _____
Revision _____

Customer

Client Approval

Please Sign Here
Date

Clark Signs Co.
Original Designs, concepts and
specifications are exclusive to Clark
Signs Co.
This use of these concepts to
produce similar signs without
permission from Clark Signs Co. is
forbidden and can be prosecuted.



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4.3 EXISTING BUILDINGS

Signs should be maintained; signs that are historically represented in photographs may be replaced given compliance with other sign regulation. Murals can be maintained or recreated based on evidence, or created to honor building history.

- Honor historic uses of the structure by investing in mural refurbishment or depicting historically accurate ads, commercial displays, or logos previously displayed on the building.

4.4 NEW CONSTRUCTION

Sign materials should be durable and easy to maintain.

- Appropriate sign materials include painted or carved wood; carved wooden letters; epoxy letters; galvanized sheet metal; slate, marble, or sandstone; gold leaf; gilt; painted, stained, or sandblasted glass; clear and colored acrylic; neon; or stained glass.
- Lighting external to the sign surface with illumination directed toward the sign is preferred. Internally lit signs are generally discouraged.
- Light level should not overpower the façade or other signs on the street.

- The light source should be shielded from pedestrian view.

- Neon is acceptable, though can be restricted in size, if it does not obscure architectural detail or overly illuminate display windows. Neon lights should have an authentic, period or hand crafted look, and should not flash or otherwise vary in display.

- Lettering styles should be proportioned, simple, and easy to read. In most instances, a simple typeface is preferred over a faddish or overly ornate type style.

- As a general rule, the letterforms should occupy no more than 75% of the total sign panel.

4.5 FREESTANDING SIGNS

The standards herein shall apply to freestanding signs as applicable.

- As an independent feature, a freestanding sign should incorporate architectural features of the building it serves or otherwise complement the historic and cultural significance of the area and be sensitive to architectural patterns and features of Olde Towne.
- If freestanding sign will serve an existing building that is not compatible with the architectural patterns and features of Olde Towne, it should not reflect those incompatible features, but be compatible on its own.

