



March 27, 2025

Sunset Arts & Advertising Subcommittee Briefing Memo Current and Historic Preservation Planning

8760 Sunset Boulevard

Sunset Arts & Advertising

Subcommittee Members: Erick J. Matos, Chair
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Project Planner:	Jennifer Davis, (Current and Historic Preservation Planning)
Administrative Specialist IV:	David Gillig (Current & Historic Preservation Planning)

Proposed Billboard Application: The purpose of this meeting is to give initial feedback on design aspects of the second design proposal for a billboard structure at this location. This includes a two sided, full-motion animated billboard. This site currently has no billboards.

Applicant's Team:

Media Company

Big Outdoor

Architect

Office Untitled (OU)

Applicant Representative

Jeff Seymour, Seymour Consulting Group,
on behalf of owner: Mutato Muzika, LLC

Sunset Boulevard Design Excellence Review and Award

A key prerequisite of the new billboards authorized by the Sunset Boulevard Off-Site Signage Policy (the "Policy") was to demonstrate a high level of creativity and design innovation, sustainable approaches to development and technology, marketability, and effective application of design excellence principles. This design excellence was determined by a screening and award process that spanned from November 2019 to June 2020. Once selected, applicants were "awarded in concept" and determined to be eligible to apply for a billboard application, and to then satisfy the adopted billboard policy, and negotiate a development agreement to allow for and regulate the new billboards.

The design principles of the Policy build on the existing creative energy of the Sunset Strip to provide for new and modified off-site signage that synthesizes advertising, urban design, architecture, public art, entertainment, and the latest in billboard technology.

All proposals were reviewed to ensure they met the following principles: design excellence (including clarity, cohesiveness, and timelessness), innovation, compatibility with the context of the Strip, sustainability, economic development, and community benefits. Top-scoring submissions were granted a “concept award,” which made their initial proposal eligible to file for the Development Agreement and entitlement application. See Section 2 of the Sunset Boulevard Off-Site Signage Policy [Sunset Boulevard Off-Site Signage Policy](#) and the Round 1 design excellence awards at [Round 1 Design Excellence](#) for more details. After the competitive vetting process, the City selected 21 projects in Round 1.0, of which 18 have proceeded through the approval process. This application is part of the remaining Round 1.0 projects.

Project Summary

This project was previously reviewed by the Subcommittee on October 10, 2024. The proposed project reviewed at that time consisted of a new 1,000 square foot, single-faced full-motion animated billboard positioned adjacent to the sidewalk at the northwest corner of the site at 8760 Sunset Boulevard and pedestrian improvements along the front plaza area. It was a metal-cladded, cylindrical billboard structure positioned on the site to have minimal impact on the historic building – the Mutato Muzika building, which currently houses the entertainment company of Mark Mothersbaugh. Originally built in 1967 by Dr. Richard Alan Franklyn, a well-known cosmetic surgeon, its historic name is “The Beauty Pavilion.” The billboard advertising side faced only west and the back of the billboard structure, with a perforated decorative pattern, faces east. The sides of the cylinder – between the sign face and decorative pattern – were to be solid metal cladding.

The summary of feedback received from that review included:

1. Design of Billboard:

- a. Consider glare impacts and anti-reflective coating.
- b. Preferred a design with more distinctive rings, less solid, more open. Maximize the cuts – to imply the overlap of concentric rings and make it more 3D. An open to make it less enclosed. More open, less restricted.
- c. Unbroken surfaces or panels of billboard need more openness or perforation.
- d. Design is unfinished and needs more detail.
- e. Cylindrical structure on a post does not complement the building. Consider other shapes or sizes.
- f. Design falls a little flat compared to the amazing building. Maybe on right path but needs more creativity, expression, etc.
- g. Don't want billboard design to take away from the unique building.
- h. Preferred dynamism and expression of the original concept award.
- i. For cylinder use a matte, non-reflective material.
- j. Can the surface treatment be like a film (like the back of Apple[™])- so that distributes light and avoids glare?
- k. Opportunity to move it towards iconic nature of building – make it more architectural.
- l. Questions regarding vertical structure at the sidewalk.
- m. There is an opportunity for color of the building to be in the billboard. Play off it. Green may not be a good idea - the building may not always be green.
- n. Perhaps make it more architectural and unique and less minimalist.
- o. “Coke” can shape approach is not preferred.

2. Site Improvements:

- a. Questions about *phonoflowers* – can pedestrians walk up to them, control the sounds. Need to prevent garbage being thrown inside.
- b. What is material of *phonoflowers*? Can bronze be used?
- c. Was a landscape architect engaged?
- d. Like the “landscape as canvas” idea.
- e. Interactive displays are great but can be contrived. How to relate that to the landscape?

3. Lighting – will there be up or down lighting?

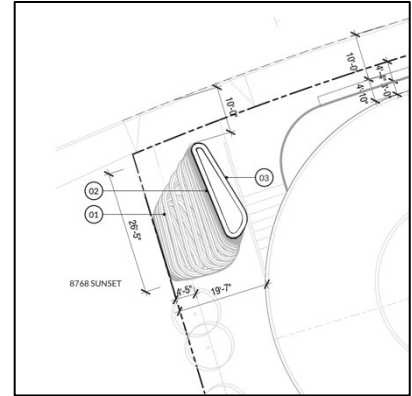


Previously Proposed Billboard Design, October 10, 2024

Proposed Billboard

The applicant team incorporated some of these comments but also felt that a more involved re-design would provide an even better approach and would more effectively address the concerns from the subcommittee. Therefore, the applicant team is now presenting a new approach with a completely different design for the billboard and is now requesting two full motion sign faces. The site improvements remain the same as previously reviewed.

The new proposed design addresses the concerns about shape. It takes inspiration from the concept of “contrapposto” which comes from the Italian renaissance art movement. Contrapposto, or counter pose, literally describes a human figure positioned with most of its weight on one foot while its torso, shoulders, and arms twist off-axis. This inspiration also harkens back to the original forum-like building itself, “The Beauty & Youth Pavilion”. In the shape of the billboard, the design represents a “dynamic imbalance” within the form. (See page 20 of the project plans.)



Proposed Design Concept

The revised billboard structure will feature cladded rings and integrated cove lighting. The structure will be sited so that it is set apart from the cultural resource, providing space that separates the two, even while the billboard structure’s horizontal “bands” mirror the size and spacing of the vertical windows along the façade.

There is currently no billboard at this location. There is one media logo sign that will be on the bottom of the west elevation of the billboard (See pages 37 and 61 of the project plans). The project will be required to add one street tree along Sunset Boulevard. This tree will be shown on the full set of plans brought to the full Planning Commission.

The revised design will reduce off-site advertising obstructions and preserve the historic expression of the existing building, fitting well into the visual landscape of this portion of Sunset Boulevard. Situated along the westerly property line and adjacent to the access driveway, the free-standing structure represents one of the few vertically oriented signs currently in the program. The benefit of this location is visibility and minimization of visual obstructions.

The measurement table below shows the relevant measurements of the proposed billboard in relationship to the existing building.

MEASUREMENT	EXISTING	PROPOSED
Height to top of billboard, measured from grade (allowable height is height of previous or existing static billboard height)	N/A	90'-0"
Height to top of billboard measured from roof surface	N/A	75'-6" (Top of billboard structure) 73'-6" (Top of billboard face)
Distance between top of roof and lower edge of billboard	N/A	28'-6" (Lower edge of sign)
Dimensions of billboard (sign area)	N/A	West Face: Approx. 45'-0"H x 22'-6"W East Face: Approx. 45'-0"H x 22'-6"W
Square footage of sign area (advertising sign area)	N/A	West Face: 1,000 SF East Face: 1,000 SF
Size of billboard frame and sign area together (total)	N/A	90'-0"H x 27'-0"W x 19'-7"D (bounding volume)
Angle of billboard in relationship to Sunset	N/A	East face: 110° (TBC) West face: 80° (TBC)

Plaza Enhancements

All billboard projects are required to provide meaningful public realm enhancements that actively engage and augment the pedestrian experience along Sunset Boulevard. This billboard project proposes two components to a new pedestrian plaza in the front of the building. A "paint by number" landscape plan, or "landscaping as painting," surrounds the plaza which contains three sculptural "phonoflowers." These "phonoflowers" project the sound of plants (or other option as discussed below). The surrounding landscaping will change colors as the seasons change. The plaza enhancements include increasing the width of the sidewalk to 10 feet, replacing and moving back the short wall and handrail along the edge of the repositioned plaza area. The height and slope of the new wall and railing will mirror that of the previous one. The existing driveway from Sunset, at the easternmost portion of the property, will be eliminated and the area will be landscaped.

As stated by the architect, the plaza improvements "envision Mutato Muzika as a living artwork where nature, music, and artistic expression converge to create a media-activated public space on Sunset Boulevard." The landscaped area is inspired by Burle Marx's "landscape as canvas"

The site plan for 8760 Sunset shows a large, irregularly shaped lot bounded by Sunset Boulevard to the north and 8752 Sunset to the east. The plan includes a central parking area (04) and a large landscaped area (05) with various plantings and paths. Key features include:

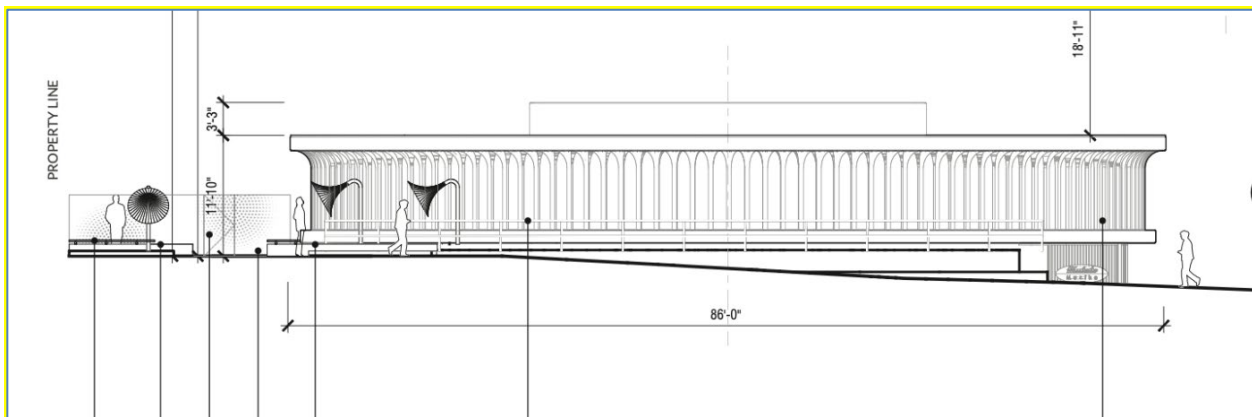
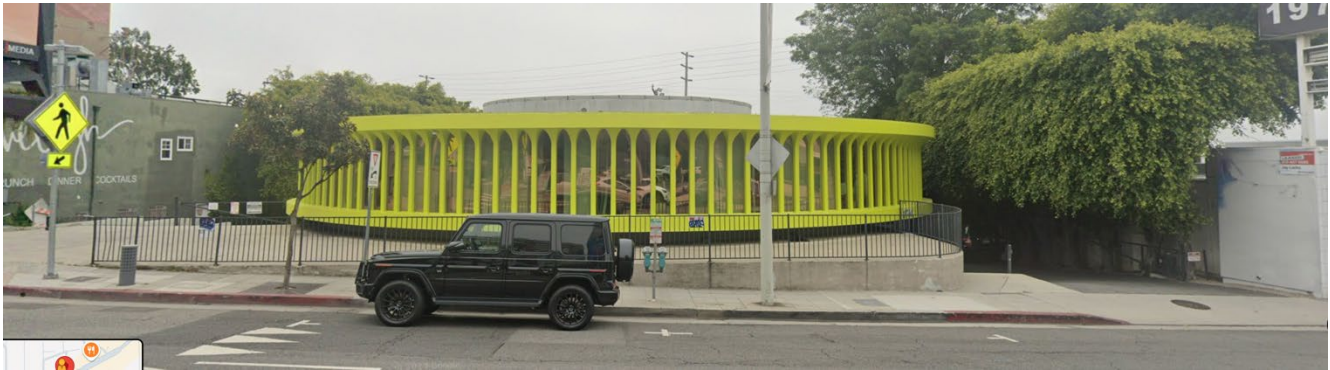
- Billboard:** A large rectangular area (01) on the west side of the lot, adjacent to Sunset Boulevard.
- Landscape as Canvas:** A large, curved landscaped area (05) along the south and east sides of the lot, featuring various plantings and paths.
- Phonoflowers:** A circular landscaped area (02) on the east side of the lot, adjacent to 8752 Sunset.
- Plaza:** A paved area (03) on the east side of the lot, adjacent to the Phonoflowers.

The plan also shows various other areas and features, including a parking area (06) on the west side, a landscaped area (07) on the north side, and a landscaped area (08) on the east side. Dimensions and other details are provided throughout the plan.

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The plaza itself will contain bench seating and be finished with gray, 4" thick narrow modular pavers. The benches should be carefully designed to promote the types of activity desired. Contrasting the concrete sidewalk, the pavers will help distinguish the private plaza from the sidewalk. Alternating colors or paving or the introduction of creative patterns would further help mark the plaza as a unique place. Lighting of the plaza should be soft and subdued but account for nighttime safety considerations.

As a welcomed revision to the property, the applicant team has researched the historic entry sequence into the building and plans to recreate the original by removing a later addition and bring back the wall height and geometry as well as the original guardrail.



Approval under the Billboard Policy

The proposed billboard is permitted under the Sunset Boulevard Off-Site Signage Policy (the "Policy"), Chapter 8 of the Sunset Specific Plan, which governs the location, type, and standards for new billboards on Sunset Boulevard.

This is a new billboard granted a design excellence award under Round 1 of the Sunset Arts & Advertising Program. The proposed billboard exceeds the height limit for this site and therefore is an alternative standards project under the Policy.

The Policy ensures that all lighting and operations are addressed. The applicant will be providing lighting and operations details that will cover:

- hours of operation;
- luminance (amount of light emitted from billboard);
- illuminance (light falling on a given surface from billboard);
- digital sign control and transitions;
- visual comfort and contrast control; and
- the use of renewable energy.

The application includes a viewshed/sightline analysis to show the proposed billboard project in context with existing billboards, proposed billboards and cultural resources. The billboard design was revised to reduce obstruction of the existing tall wall and billboard to the east.

Pursuant to this Policy, every billboard is subject to a development agreement which details the public benefits derived from each new billboard. Those public benefits, among others, include:

- Minimum annual payments - there will be substantial annual payments based on value and capital costs.
- Alternative standards request benefit – this is required due to the project being over the height limit for this site.
- Requirement that building remains occupied - or significant payment increase are required.
- Requirement to use the latest in green energy practices and to conduct periodic technology updates.
- Requirement for City Content and Public and Arts Programming.
- The property will be brought forward for local historic designation, which will be required prior to issuance of a certificate of occupancy for the billboard itself.

Next Steps:

The proposed billboard project will next require review and recommendation from the Historic Preservation Commission. Thereafter, a recommendation will be required from Planning Commission on a development agreement, zoning map amendment, and sign permit and will be part of the application package brought forth for review to the full Planning Commission. Thereafter the City Council reviews all permits and the development agreement for final approval.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. SAASC Memo from October 10, 2024
- B. Project Plans