

Board of Adjustment

Staff Report - Revised

CASE NUMBER BA16-070 (PLN2016-00785)
LOCATION/ADDRESS: 840 East McKellips Road
COUNCIL DISTRICT: 1
PLANNER: Gordon Sheffield, AICP CNUa, Zoning Administrator
OWNER: Amberwood Business Plaza Condominium Association
APPLICANT: Western Signs and Lighting – Mark Cefalu

REQUEST: *Requesting a Special Use Permit (SUP) for a Comprehensive Sign Plan (CSP) for a group office center in the OC-PAD zoning district.*

SUMMARY OF APPLICANT'S REQUEST

Requesting a Special Use Permit (SUP) for a Comprehensive Sign Plan (CSP) for an office condominium development on the north side of McKellips Road, just east of Horne. As proposed, the Comprehensive Sign Plan would allow: 1) one multiple tenant detached sign adjacent to the street; and 2) one attached sign for each suite that is not adjacent to a street, and 3) two attached signs for each suite located adjacent to the street. All signs would be subject to the specified criteria outlined in the CSP, which includes each attached sign message being composed using individual, reverse pan channel letters.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of case BA16-028, conditioned upon the following:

1. *Compliance with the sign plan submitted, except as modified by the conditions listed below.*
2. *Maximum sign area for attached signs shall be limited to 24-sqft, each.*
3. *Any additional signage not identified with this Sign Plan will require modification to this Special Use Permit.*
4. *Compliance with all requirements of the Development Services Division with regard to the issuance of sign permits.*

SITE CONTEXT

CASE SITE: Vacant – Zoned OC
NORTH: Existing single residence subdivision - Zoned RS-15-PAD
EAST: Existing single residence subdivision - Zoned RS-15-PAD
SOUTH: (Across McKellips) Existing single residence subdivision - Zoned RS-9
WEST: Existing automobile self-service (fueling) station and convenience store - Zoned NC

STAFF ANALYSIS

The applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit (SUP) to establish a Comprehensive Sign Plan (CSP). As a standard, development located in OC zoning districts are permitted two signs per street front, which may be as large as 32-sqft, and if detached, as high as 8-ft. The assumption that is behind this requirement, that office development typically involves a single office, and therefore two signs is adequate, does not provide adequate sign allowances for projects such as this site, which as six office suites sharing parking spaces on a single development site. Providing an allowance for each of the various tenant spaces to have adequate identification assists in wayfinding and directing clients to this location. In addition, the applicant has specified sign criteria that complies with or exceeds the minimum design standards for signs as listed in the Sign Ordinance.

Detached Signs

The proposed Comprehensive Sign Plan (CSP) would authorize one detached sign of 8-ft high and roughly 40-sqft, an increase of 8-sqft over the standard maximum sign area for detached signs in the OC district.

Attached Signs

The applicant has identified four existing attached signs for the development, three that were issued with permits, and one that was not. This sign would bring the three permitted sign into compliance, as the last attached sign issued with a permit was issued in error because developments in OC districts are limited to a maximum of two signs.

As proposed, the sign criteria would allow each of the attached signs to be as large as would be authorized if only one or two attached signs were used, per standard sign ordinance allowances. Considering that the number of allowed attached signs would increase from two to 9, typically staff recommends a smaller allowance for each individual sign to balance the overall increase in sign numbers. The recommended reduction in sign maximum would be from the 32-sqft proposed to a maximum of 24-sqft. This small, 33% reduction to the attached sign allowance for each suite would also be balanced against the small 20% increase in sign area proposed for the detached sign.

Each of the three permitted signs would comply with the proposed 24-sqft maximum by staff. The one non-permit sign would need to be redesigned and a new sign permit issued, based on this CSP (assuming the Board adopted this sign plan).

FINDINGS

1. The CSP establishes consistent detached sign design, size and height for the overall development, and for each of the six individual office suites.
2. The sign criteria specify sign designs that meet or exceed the minimum standards of the Sign Ordinance.
3. The proposed detached sign design is a slight increase over the standard maximum sign area for this zoning district. However, the slightly larger sign area assists with sign legibility, and the sign is intended for use as a multiple tenant identification sign for the entire development.
4. To balance the overall sign allowance that includes an increase from two total signs to ten (9 attached and 1 detached), the recommendation includes a small reduction to the maximum sign area proposed by the CSP, from 32-sqft each to 24-sqft each.

ORDINANCE REQUIREMENTS

Zoning Ordinance, Section 11-19-5 – Definition of Terms:

SPECIAL USE PERMIT (S.U.P.): A discretionary authorization issued by the Zoning Administrator/Board of Adjustment only upon finding, through a public hearing, that the proposed activity permitted by such Special Use Permit is in conformance with the intent of this Code, the General Plan and/or other specified plans or Council policies; and will be compatible with, and not detrimental to, adjacent properties or the neighborhood in general; and may be limited by specific conditions, restrictions, terms or time periods.

Zoning Ordinance, Sec. 11-41-6 – Signs Permitted By Zoning District:

(D) RM-2, RM-3, RM-4, RM-5 and O-C Districts.

1. Two (2) signs per parcel or development not exceeding a combined area of one (1) square foot per each 5 lineal feet of street frontage of the lot or development site. Parcels having frontage on more than one street shall be permitted signage based on each street frontage.
2. No sign shall exceed 32 square feet in area and, if detached, shall not exceed 8 feet in height.
3. Developments in the O-C district shall be permitted at least 24 square feet of sign area.

Zoning Ordinance, Sec. 11-41-8 (D) – Supplemental Provisions:

13. A Comprehensive Sign Plan for a proposed or existing development/building may be approved by the Zoning Administrator/Board of Adjustment in conjunction with the granting of a Special Use Permit under Title 11, Administration and Procedures Chapter of the Mesa City Code. The purpose of a Comprehensive Sign Plan is to provide for the establishment of signage criteria that are tailored to a specific development or location, and which may vary from specific Ordinance provisions. The intent is to provide for flexible sign criteria that promote superior design through architectural integration of the site, buildings and signs.

A Comprehensive Sign Plan shall include the location, size, height, construction material, color, type of illumination and orientation of all proposed signs, either permanent or temporary.

A Comprehensive Sign Plan containing elements which exceed the permitted height, area and number of signs specified in this Chapter may be approved by the Zoning Administrator/Board of Adjustment only upon a finding that:

- (a) The development site contains unique or unusual physical conditions, such as topography, proportion, size or relation to a public street that would limit or restrict normal sign visibility; or
- (b) The proposed or existing development exhibits unique characteristics of land use, architectural style, site location, physical scale, historical interest or other distinguishing features that represent a clear variation from conventional development; or
- (c) The proposed signage incorporates special design features such as logos, emblems, murals or statuary that are integrated with the building architecture.

The construction and placement of individual signs contained in the approved Comprehensive Sign Plan shall be subject to the issuance of sign permits in accordance with 11-41-8 (E).