



PLANNING DIVISION
STAFF REPORT

Board of Adjustment

March 1, 2023

CASE No.: **BOA23-00012**

CASE NAME: **2nd Ave Commons**

Owner's Name:	Commons Holdco LLC
Applicant's Name:	Cassandra Baumann, TS&G
Location of Request:	140 West 2 nd Avenue
Parcel Nos:	138-43-001, -002B, -003, -004, -005, -008, -010A, & -012A
Nature of Request:	Requesting a Special Use Permit (SUP) to allow a Comprehensive Sign Plan (CSP) for a residential development
Zone District:	Transect 4 Neighborhood (T4N)
Council District:	4
Site size:	2.5± acres
Existing use:	Residential apartments (under construction)
Hearing date(s):	March 1, 2023 / 5:30 p.m.
Staff Planner:	Jennifer Merrill, Senior Planner
Staff Recommendation:	APPROVAL with Conditions

HISTORY

On **July 14, 1883**, this property became part of the original square mile of the City of Mesa.

On **September 8, 1987**, the City Council approved the Town Center zoning districts and development regulations for the Mesa Town Center area (Case No. Z87-040; Ordinance No. 2254).

On **August 5, 2019**, the Opt-in form was recorded, which rezoned the subject property from DB-1 to T4N (Case No. ZON19-00536).

On **January 7, 2020**, the Planning Director approved a Zoning Clearance for the Cardinal at Mesa, a residential courtyard building type development on the subject property (Case No. ADM19-00528).

On **March 9, 2021**, the Planning Director approved a Zoning Clearance for Second Avenue Commons, a residential courtyard building type development on the subject property (Case No. ADM20-00754).

Two minor modifications to the approved Zoning Clearance were subsequently approved by the Planning Director through an administrative review process (changes to materials/colors, and changes to landscaping).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Background:

The applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit (SUP) for a Comprehensive Sign Plan (CSP) for a new three-story, 144-unit apartment development in the T4N district. The requested CSP would allow two detached illuminated monument signs and one illuminated attached sign for the 2.5+ acre property.

General Plan Character Area Designation and Goals:

The General Plan Character Area for this property is Downtown, with a Transit Corridor overlay. The focus of the Downtown character area is the creation of a pedestrian oriented, transit-rich environment with a lot of activity. The site is also located within the Central Main Street Area Plan, in the Downtown Neighborhood Evolution area. An emphasis is placed on creating a sense of place for the entire area and improving the streetscape along 2nd Avenue. The proposed monument signs include colors inspired by the murals located in downtown Mesa, and the accent color of the buildings. The proposed attached sign is a projecting sign, which also features the building accent colors.

Site Characteristics:

The new three-story apartment buildings are arranged around six courtyard spaces, spanning the distance from Robson to Macdonald along the north side of 2nd Avenue. A single-story leasing and amenity building fronts onto 2nd Avenue near the center of the site. The development is currently under construction. The two proposed monument signs would be located at the southeast and southwest corners of the development, facing the intersections of 2nd Avenue with Macdonald and with Robson. The existing land uses to the west of the site, across Robson, include single-residential, so the monument sign at the southwest corner of the site will not be illuminated between the hours of 11:00pm and sunrise (see condition #2). The land uses to the east of the site include multi-residential and commercial, so the monument sign at the southeast corner of the site could be illuminated throughout the night. The proposed attached sign is projecting from the front of the leasing office.

Surrounding Zoning Designations and Existing Use Activity:

Northwest (Across Robson) DR-2 Residential	North DB-1 Retail & Warehouse Uses	Northeast (Across Macdonald) T5MSF Residences on 1 st Apartments
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West (Across Robson) DR-2 Residential	Subject Property T4N Apartments (currently under construction)	East (Across Macdonald) T5MSF Residences on 1 st Apartments
Southwest (Across Robson and 2 nd Avenue) DR-2 Residential	South (Across 2 nd Avenue) DR-3 & DB-1 Residential & Commercial Uses	Southeast (Across Macdonald) DB-1 City of Mesa Offices

Mesa Zoning Ordinance Requirements and Regulations:

The subject CSP proposes two 27-square-foot, 4-foot, 5-inch tall, illuminated monument signs and one seven-square-foot illuminated attached sign.

Per Section 11-43-3.A of the MZO, T4N properties are permitted one non-illuminated sign per lot or parcel, attached or detached, with a max of four sq. ft. of sign area, and a max height of four feet (detached) and ten feet (attached). Non-residential land uses are allowed to increase the maximum area of each permitted sign to 32 square feet with a maximum height of eight feet if detached, or below the top of the parapet or eave if wall-mounted. Similar apartment developments zoned T4NF or RM would be permitted two signs per street front, attached or detached, with a maximum of 32 square feet of sign area and a maximum height of eight feet. Those signs in the T4NF or RM districts could be illuminated if located adjacent to an arterial or collector street. The proposed illuminated signage totals 61 square feet, and each monument sign is similar in size to what is permitted by-right for non-residential uses, or for other apartment developments in the T4NF or RM districts.

Table 1 below shows the sign allowances provided in the MZO, and the proposed signage requested with this Comprehensive Sign Plan. The requested deviations are in **bold** font.

Table 1: Proposed Attached and Detached Sign Criteria

Proposed Attached Signage	MZO Requirements	Proposed
Design Guidelines	<u>MZO Section 11-43-2.C.2.a:</u> The sign copy should not exceed a horizontal-to-vertical ratio of two to one (2:1)	As proposed: 4.33 to 1 (4.33:1)
Maximum Number of Signs	<u>MZO Section 11-43-3.A:</u> 1 per lot or parcel	3 total signs
Maximum Area per sign	<u>MZO Section 11-43-3.A:</u> 4 square feet	61 square feet total sign area: (2) 27-square-foot monument signs (1) 7-square-foot attached sign

Maximum Sign Height	<u>MZO Section 11-43-3.A:</u> 10-feet attached; 4-feet detached	11-feet attached; 4-foot, 5-inch tall detached
Illumination	<u>MZO Section 11-43-3.A:</u> Non-illuminated	Illuminated (see condition #2)

Comprehensive Sign Plan MZO Section 11-46-3(D):

Per Section 11-46-3(D) of the MZO, the Board of Adjustment shall find the following criteria are met for approval of a CSP:

1. 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

The development spans the distance along 2nd Avenue between Robson and Macdonald (650+ feet), and the CSP includes a request for two monument signs, one at each intersection, to identify the development.

The proposal meets this criterion.

2. 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

The development is the first courtyard building type to be constructed in Mesa under the Form-Based Code and occupies a two-and-a-half acre property that has been vacant since 2013.

The proposal meets this criterion.

3. The proposed signage incorporates special design features such as lighting, materials, and craftsmanship, murals, or statuary that reinforce or are integrated with the building architecture.

Per the project narrative, the proposed signage incorporates special design features which integrate with the building architecture. The monument signs will be constructed of a masonry base with sand stucco finish, face lit RPC letters for 'COMMONS' and the two accent circles will also be illuminated. A special design feature will be the returns of the RPC letters will be painted various muted tones to add some contrast and interest to the signs.

The proposal meets this criterion.

Special Use Permit MZO Section 11-70-5

Per Section 11-70-5(E) of the MZO, the Board of Adjustment shall also find the following criteria are met for approval of a SUP:

1. Approval of the proposed project will advance the goals and objectives of and is consistent with the policies of the General Plan and any other applicable City plan and/or policies;

The site is located within the Downtown character area of the General Plan, and the Downtown Neighborhood Evolution area of the Central Main Street Area Plan. The intent of this area is to be pedestrian friendly, and improve the streetscape along 2nd Avenue. The proposed CSP includes three signs designed to be complementary to the building architecture as well as to the murals located in downtown Mesa.

The proposal meets this criterion.

2. The location, size, design, and operating characteristics of the proposed project are consistent with the purposes of the district where it is located and conform with the General Plan and any other applicable City plan or policies;

The proposed project is located in the T4N district. Per Section 11-58-5 of the MZO, the courtyard building type apartments are permitted in the T4N district and conform to the goals of the 2040 Mesa General Plan. The proposed CSP is consistent with the location, size and design of the site.

The proposal meets this criterion.

3. The proposed project will not be injurious or detrimental to the adjacent or surrounding properties in the area, nor will the proposed project or improvements be injurious or detrimental to the neighborhood or to the general welfare of the City; and

There will be no injurious or detrimental impact to surrounding properties, neighborhood or general welfare of the City with the proposed modifications in signage.

The proposal meets this criterion.

4. Adequate public services, public facilities and public infrastructure are available to serve the proposed project.

City of Mesa utilities and public infrastructure is existing to serve the existing residential buildings and signage.

The proposal meets this criterion.

Findings:

- A. The proposed CSP provides modifications to the standard sign code allowances and design criteria to provide a sense of place along 2nd Avenue.
- B. The CSP specifies the lighting, materials and craftsmanship for the proposed signs.
- C. The subject property is located in the T4N district, within the Downtown character area of the 2040 General Plan and within the Downtown Neighborhood Evolution area of the Central Main Street Area Plan.
- D. The proposed CSP advances the goals and objectives of the General Plan and character area by authorizing illuminated signage and an increase to signage area and height, that will provide well-designed identification for a new residential development, and improve the streetscape along 2nd Avenue.
- E. The proposed CSP will not be injurious or detrimental to the surrounding properties.

Neighborhood Participation Plan and Public Comments:

The applicant mailed the required notification letters to all property owners within 500 feet of the subject property. As of the date of this report, staff has not been contacted by any resident or property owner to express support or opposition to the request.

Staff Recommendation:

Based on the application received and preceding analysis, staff finds the proposed CSP conforms to the review criteria for Comprehensive Sign Plans outlined in Section 11-46-3 of the MZO and the required findings for a Special Use Permit outlined in Section 11-70-5 of the MZO; therefore, staff recommends approval with the following conditions.

Conditions of Approval:

- 1. Compliance with the sign plan documents submitted.
- 2. The monument sign at the southwest corner of the site shall not be illuminated between the hours of 11:00pm and sunrise.
- 3. Compliance with all requirements of the Development Services Department regarding the issuance of building permits.
- 4. All signage to be reviewed and approved through a separate permit application.

Exhibits:

Exhibit 1 – Vicinity Map
Exhibit 2 – Staff Report
Exhibit 3 – Site Plan
Exhibit 4 – Narrative and Justification Statement
Exhibit 5 – Comprehensive Sign Plan