

# CIFUENTES STUDIO

## FRUTILANDIA SUBSTANTIAL CONFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PERMIT

May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Dear Mesa Planning/Zoning Staff:

I write this letter to request the approval of substantial conformance improvement permit for the building located at 1231 W. Baseline Road. The subject building was built in the mid-1980s as part of the Mesa Executive Park located on the southwest corner of Alma School and Baseline Roads. In the initial preliminary site plan for the Lot #5 Parcel there was a very large restaurant (10,000SF) slated with a considerable amount of parking to support that use. Later in 1984 due to a re-evaluation of the market and the surrounding development this concept was deemed to not be viable and therefore a minor site plan was submitted to allow the development of "Grandy's" restaurant and retail shops as a more feasible product for this parcel. This minor site plan was approved by the City of Mesa Planning and Zoning Board by a 6-0 vote on March 19<sup>th</sup>, 1984. When the Minor Site plan for the Grandy's parcel was approved it was approved with integration of restaurant Drive-Through use as part of the project. Here is a snippet of the approved minor site plan amendment from 1984 showing said Drive-Thru:

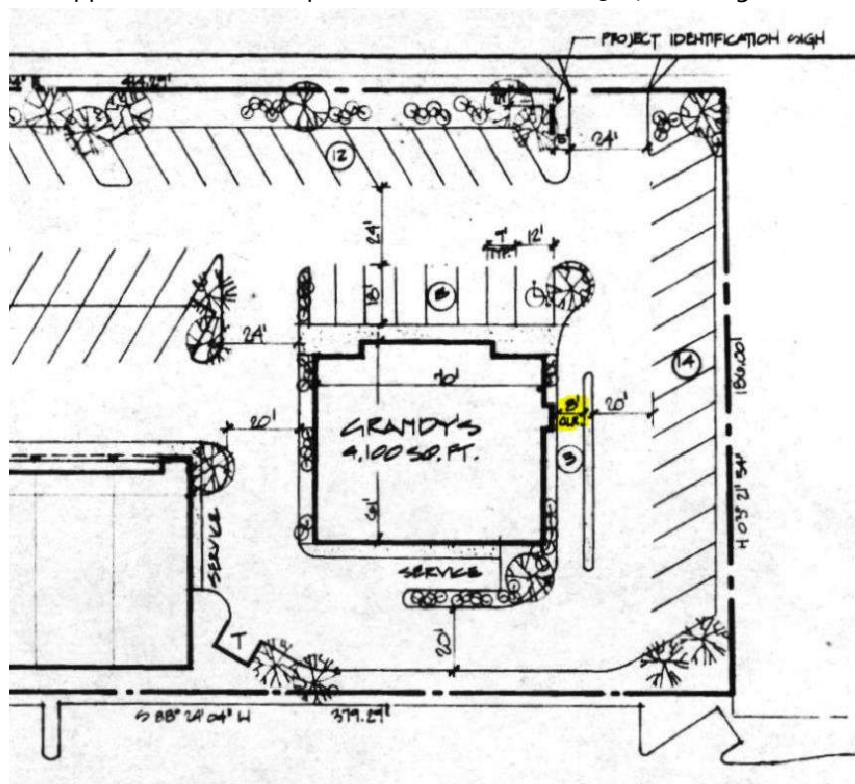


Figure 1 – 1984 Minor Site Plan Amendment

As one can see the building was situated on site with the intention of having a drive-through as it was located for that use of the east part of the building. Upon further research through the Maricopa County Historic Aerials from 1986 (the year the building was completed) it is visible that the service area and the proposed drive-through as designed and approved in the site plan were indeed built as part of the Grandy's project.



Figure 2 - 1986 Maricopa Aerial (Grandy's)

Once we located this historic aerial, we did more research into the Grandy's concept from the 1980's and indeed found that their restaurants usually featured a small drive-through canopy with two column piers as is visible in Fig. 3 and 4.



Figure 3 - Grandys 80's Drive-Thru



Figure 4 - Grandy's 80's Drive-Thru

We believe upon research and reading through historic newspapers that Grandy's was built, operated, and eventually was turned into Denny's as SERVUS! LLC the parent company owned both Denny's and Grandy's concepts throughout the nation. As a part of the building transforming from the Grandy's to Denny's concept (which does not employ drive-through), the drive-through area was enclosed and made into more restaurant seating.

Newspaper record of Grandy's hiring staff in 1986:

<https://www.newspapers.com> > newspaper

### Arizona Republic from Phoenix, Arizona on October 12, 1986 ...

Oct 12, 1986 — Baseline Mesa . ... **GRANDY'S HARD WORKERS WANTED-8**, appreciated lature  
oersnns desired. ure ... Lunch & dinner shifts **open**. ... Italian restaurant has immediate  
positions **open**: Day Food Servers Day Bus People ...

Figure 5 - Grandy's Newspaper Hiring Ad

This bring us to today, the current building has sat in the prime intersection of Alma School and Baseline Road, vacant and dilapidated for over 10 years, as you can see in this Google Street image from 2011 where the building was already showing signs of disrepair and aging.



Figure 6 - 2011 Google Street View

Our proposal for this property seeks to do a few things for this long-forgotten parcel.

1. We would request to reactivate the original drive-through as part of renovating the building. This would provide my client's Frutilandia Latin Treats business with the opportunity to provide both a stable business model (due to the ongoing concerns many food establishments have undergone during Covid-19) and also provide residents in the area with much needed fast casual/to-go food options.
2. Would create approximately 15-20 new jobs in the area by providing, a clean, well-established restaurant environment that is safe, family-friendly and provides a welcome space to dine for people of all ages.

3. Would renovate a commercial building that was build 35 years ago with the building technology and retail design expected in today's fast-paced retail landscape.
4. To be allowed to include a small out door patio area to activate the exterior of the North façade and allow for more activity to be visible from Baseline Road.

Upon further research of the current requirements for food drive-through we would be asking for a reduction of the required 5'-0" landscape setback normally requested for the entire length of the drive-through aisles to be only provided on the east portion of the drive-through. This would allow us to screen the drive-through lane in portion of the stacking area that is visible from the right-of-way, but allow us to maintain the 12'-0" minimum required one-way pass-through drive lane.

**Table of Site Development Guidelines and Requirements**

Site Condition	Existing Condition	Code Requirement	Proposed Deviation
Foundation Base	Varies: 2'-0" – 12'-7"	15'-0"	10" East Façade along drive through
Existing Landscape	Dead and Unhealthy Landscaping Throughout	15'-0" wide perimtere landscape yard	Existing Landscape yard is 1'-0", to remain
Pedestrian Connections	No Pedestrian Path	Pedestrian Path Connection Required	New Pedestrian Path Striping added to connect with Existing Pedestrian Path Along Baseline
Parking Lot Landscape Islands	No Parking Islands	Parking Islands Req'd per Sec 11-33-4	One New Parking island provided between existing parking and new proposed angled parking.
Perimeter Screening Standards	Existing Screening Bushes Along South Side, none req'd on West and North, East has trees	Screen Landscape required at property lines with adjacent owners	Existing Screening bushes on South property line to remain, No screening landscape provided on east elevation.
Parking Lot Layout Standards	Existing stalls on the North, Northwest, and South portions of property.	Parking Stalls to Meet Sec 11-3-4	New Angled Parking stalls to meet requirements per 11-3-4, all other existing parking stalls to remain as-is.
Building Separation	Existing To Remain	Building Separation per Article 2	No New Structures proposed
Retention Basin Design	Existing Retention on North End of Property along Baseline Road	Sec 11-33-6	Existing Retention on North End of Property to Remain
Open Space Requirement	Existing to Remain	Per Sec 11-5-5	Open Space of Existing to Remain



Parking Lot Light Standards	Existing to Remain	Sec. 11-33-2.Q	No New Parking Lot Lights Added, existing repositioned
Perimeter Landscape (All Sides)	No Perimeter Lanscaping	Section 11-33-3	Non-Conforming Landscaping to Remain

To enter in conformance with all site conditions required by the City of Mesa would require the demolition of existing buildings to such an extent that there would be little to no building left on the existing site. Providing the required perimeter landscape and building setbacks would create a new non-conformity due to a substantial reduction in parking spaces and a lack of ability to access the site from a vehicular standpoint.

Secondly, we would be asking to modify the building exterior to remove the outdated "Spanish tile roof" and instead replace it with a more modern and durable standing-seam metal roof. We would also be introducing more storefront glazing to bring in more natural light to both suites in the new building and updating the color scheme from a very tired, dated beige into a more modern creamy white that will make the property look more updated.

The General Plan speaks of proposed projects providing rich, high-quality spaces that will be active and inviting cultural resources, this renovation of this building and inclusion of more storefront, new materials, and an outdoor patio would support this goal. I have attached the existing and proposed site plans, the updated building elevations, and the renderings of the proposed work on the project.

### Current Conditions



As outlined in the attachments below, the building has graffiti damage, excessive buildup of trash from transient users, efflorescence caused by the leaching of the coping cap detail above, various broken clay shingles throughout, and excessively damage to the existing stucco finish and the underside of the soffit.



**Figure 8 - Fire damage, Trash, Broken glass, Graffiti on the back side**

In my professional opinion these conditions can not readily be remediated by just a patch job of the stucco and the condition of the building aesthetically has become a deterrent to both local business owner and the adjacent office business park that is struggling to fill it's leasable office square footage.

We are humbly asking for the Board of Adjustments to allow us to change the existing building materials, colors, introduce a small outdoor patio, and rehabilitate a drive through that was once operational on the property. Please refer to the new proposed site plan, building elevations, 3D renderings to allow the future of this building to be a successful property for the surrounding neighborhoods. These modifications will modernize the look and allow the building to be brought up to current retail standards. With the ongoing COVID-19 scenario refreshing and updating the building to not look rundown and not maintained would greatly help my client's business needs.

I've had conversations with both Planning Director Nana Appiah and Planner Tom Ellsworth whom have all met our proposal with friendly, commentary in support of reinvigorating this once bustling part of Mesa's commercial corridor.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Daniel Cifuentes', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

**Daniel Cifuentes, AIA NCARB**

**Cifuentes Studio LLC**