

## ZONING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

August 22, 2018



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

**Project Address:** 361/321 Integrity Dr  
**Project Name:** West Place  
**Application Type:** Comprehensive Design Review Initial/Final Approval  
**Legistar File ID #** [52159](#)  
**Prepared By:** Chrissy Thiele, Zoning Inspector

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The applicant is requesting Comprehensive Design Review INITIAL/FINAL Approval for signage at this new development. This development is part of a large zoning lot, mainly consisting of UW's clinic and medical offices, a bank, restaurants, and retail to the west and a multi-tenant building to the north that currently consists of a daycare, dentist office, and veterinary clinic. This zoning lot is located in a Suburban Employment (SE) district, at the corner of Mineral Point Road (4 lanes, 40 mph) and South Gammon Road (4 lanes, 35 mph).

The new development consists of a new five-story and two story office buildings, and another two new buildings totaling to 11,300 sq. ft. for restaurant/retail use. The project also suggests three additional office buildings to be built in the future. The CDR request consists of the zoning lot having a total of 20 ground signs, eight of them already existing and 15 under the control of this development (five are considered parking lot directional signs). This CDR requests also consists of an above-roof sign on the five-story office building.

Pursuant to Section 31.043(4)(b), MGO, the UDC shall apply the following criteria upon review of an application for a Comprehensive Sign Plan:

1. *The Sign Plan shall create visual harmony between the signs, building(s), and building site through unique and exceptional use of materials, design, color, any lighting, and other design elements; and shall result in signs of appropriate scale and character to the uses and building(s) on the zoning lot as well as adjacent buildings, structures and uses.*
2. *Each element of the Sign Plan shall be found to be necessary due to unique or unusual design aspects in the architecture or limitations in the building site or surrounding environment; except that when a request for an Additional Sign Code Approval under Sec. 31.043(3) is included in the Comprehensive Design Review, the sign(s) eligible for approval under Sec. 31.043(3) shall meet the applicable criteria of Sec. 31.043(3), except that sign approvals that come to Comprehensive Design Review from MXC and EC districts pursuant to 31.13(3) and (7) need not meet the criteria of this paragraph.*
3. *The Sign Plan shall not violate any of the stated purposes described in Sec. 31.02(1) and 33.24(2).*
4. *All signs must meet minimum construction requirements under Sec. 31.04(5).*
5. *The Sign Plan shall not approve Advertising beyond the restrictions in Sec. 31.11 or Off-Premise Directional Signs beyond the restrictions in Sec. 31.115.*
6. *The Sign Plan shall not be approved if any element of the plan:*
  - a. *presents a hazard to vehicular or pedestrian traffic on public or private property,*
  - b. *obstructs views at points of ingress and egress of adjoining properties,*
  - c. *obstructs or impedes the visibility of existing lawful signs on adjacent property, or*
  - d. *negatively impacts the visual quality of public or private open space.*
7. *The Sign Plan may only encompass signs on private property of the zoning lot or building site in question, and shall not approve any signs in the right of way or on public property.*

**Wall Signs Permitted per Sign Ordinance:** Summarizing Section 31.07, Wall signs may be attached flat to or affixed parallel with a distance of not more than 15 inches from the wall. No sign affixed flat against a building wall shall extend beyond any edge of such wall. There shall be one signable area for each façade facing a street or parking lot 33 feet in width or greater. Standard net area allows for 30% of the signable area. In no case shall the sign exceed 120 sq. ft. in net area.

Furthermore, Section 31.07(3) states, “An above-roof sign is a sign, any portion of which is displayed above the roofline. Above-roof signs may be displayed in the IL and IG employment districts and as allowed in Sec. 31.04(2)(b)2.b.iii. and iv., if no wall or roof sign is displayed on the corresponding facade. The signable area for an above-roof sign is calculated on the corresponding wall facade and can be transferred above the roofline. An above-roof sign may extend to a maximum height of ten (10) feet above the roofline.”

**Proposed Signage:** The applicant is requesting approval for a 119.21 sq. ft. sign above the roofline on the South elevation. The North elevation will have a 31.67 sq. ft. on the first floor, near the entrance. The sign on the North elevation appears to be no larger than 30% of the signable area and should meet code, but cannot verify this, as dimensions of the signable area were not provided. The above roof sign is not permitted in SE districts, but can be approved by the UDC per Section 31.043(c), additional sign code approvals. However, as the applicant is applying for a CDR for the number of ground signs, this above-roof sign is also being requested through CDR approval.

**Staff Comments:** The applicant requests a sign that cannot be approve at any similarly zoned property without a UDC exception. Section 31.043(c) states the UDC can permit the use of an above-roof sign on a given zoning lot where not otherwise allowed in Group 3 districts provided that if the signs on adjacent properties reduce the effectiveness of other types of conforming signs or *where topographic relationships between structures and right-of-ways would deem their use appropriate*. CDR, through its standards, is designed to allow for unique and high-design signage, with consideration to integration to the site and necessity. The mechanical screen is basically a screen wall, not an architectural element at the top of the building that is integrated into the architecture of the building.

This mechanical screen, at its furthest point is set back about 4.5 feet from the south-facing wall of the building. There are two approved examples of this type of signage in the city: the TDS/Johnson Bank building on Junction Road, which clearly has an architecturally integrated building topper with integrated architecture, and associated appropriate signage. The UDC approved this signage years ago, as a Planned Development. The other is the recently approved above-roof sign at 2921 Landmark Place, which consists of signage on the mechanical screening located on the north and west elevations, through CDR.

The applicant provides illustrations of the Navitus sign on different locations of the south façade of the building. The first example shows the sign half way up the building, the second shows the sign on the mechanical screening, and the third location shows the sign toward the top right of the wall. The third example would require the façade of the building to be altered to accommodate the sign, which staff does not support. Between the first two options, the applicant provides further examples of how the surrounding buildings on nearby properties would obstruct the view of the sign if it were installed half way up the building, and the prime location to view the sign would be higher up on the building. The sign itself is a compliant size if it were to be located on the mechanical screening or on the brick façade; however, the sign would be over 30% of the signable area if it is placed on the altered façade toward the top of the building (option three). **Staff has no objection to the CDR request and recommends the UDC find the standards for CDR review have been met, with the condition that all other wall signage shall comply with code.**

**Ground Signs Permitted by Sign Ordinance:** This zoning lot is allowed up to two ground signs with a combined net area of 128 sq. ft., and a maximum height of 10' for monument style signs, based off of the prevailing speeds and number of traffic lanes. The ordinance also allows for lots with frontage 500' or more, as well as a vehicle entrance on that frontage, to have an additional monument-style ground sign, no larger than eight feet in height, with 32 sq. ft. per side, located at each vehicle entrance.

**Proposed Ground Signage:** The applicant is proposing 12 additional ground signs. Two of the proposed ground signs are for the commercial properties located at Southeast corner of the lot (A1 and A2), each totaling 89.4 sq. ft. Two other similarly sized ground signs are multi-tenant signs that would be placed at the vehicle entrance on Mineral Point and S. Gammon Road (B1 and B2). Three additional ground signs will be placed further in the zoning lot, one totaling to almost 26 sq. ft., and the other two each totaling roughly 21 sq. ft. (dimensions of the net were not provided, so these numbers cannot be confirmed). The remaining five proposed ground signs are considered parking lot directional signs, as long as they are no more than 3 sq. ft. per side, and do not require permits.

**Staff Comments:** This zoning lot already has nine ground signs, three of which are under the control of this development (TQ Diamonds, Noodles, and then multi-tenant ground sign to the north). The remaining five ground signs, while located in this zoning lot, are outside the control of the developer, and this CDR. In this zoning lot, the development contains roughly 600 feet of frontage on Mineral Point Road and about 1,400 feet of frontage on South Gammon Road.

The two proposed commercial buildings for the restaurant/retail uses are located at the Southeast corner of the zoning lot, very close to Mineral Point Road and South Gammon Road. Any wall signs installed on these buildings can be easily viewed from the streets, examples of which can be seen on the elevation renderings. Providing additional ground signage, solely for these buildings, would clutter the street frontage on Mineral Point Road, as there are already two existing ground signs not much further down the street. The applicant is also proposing a multi-tenant ground sign at the vehicle entrances on Mineral Point Road and South Gammon Road that would include these commercial tenants, providing identification for these tenants as well as marks the parking lot entrance for this zoning lot.

The two ground signs that would be placed at the vehicle entrances on Gammon and Mineral Point are 30 sq. ft. larger than what is allowed by code (these signs would each total to 94 sq. ft. while the code allows each sign to be no more than 64 sq. ft. if there are two of them). However, the height of the signs are compliant (less than 10 feet) and the size appears to be of appropriate size and will allow future tenants to be added, as this property develops in the future. As stated above these signs provide identification for the numerous tenants on this zoning lot, as well as marks the entrance to the parking lot for this zoning lot.

Another three ground signs are smaller in size and height (one is 26 sq. feet, 5.42 feet tall and the other two are 21 sq. ft., 4.58' tall) and will be placed further in the zoning lot for wayfinding purposes. The sizes of the signs appear to be appropriate in size, considering the number of tenant names listed while also trying to keep some uniformity to the design and size of the signs.

It is understood that the remaining five ground signs are to be parking lot directional signs and the net is not to exceed 3 sq. ft. per size, should otherwise comply with Chapter 31, and not need special exceptions in this CDR.

**Staff recommends UDC find the CDR standards are not met and deny the two proposed ground signs for the retail/restaurant buildings (A1 and A2). For the remaining ground signs, staff has no objection to the CDR**

**request and recommends the UDC find the standards for CDR review have been met, with the following conditions:**

- **when the three existing ground signs are removed from the property, they cannot be replaced without a major alteration to the CDR, and**
- **any future proposed ground signs will also require a major alteration to the CDR.**

Staff Comments regarding other signage

- The wall sign for the 312 Integrity Dr does not need any special exceptions and should comply with Chapter 31, as well as the wall signs for the new retail development.
- It should be noted in the final CDR "Future signage submittals not specifically addressed by this document shall comply with the standards of Chapter 31."
- Dimensions of the net for ground signs B1, B2, C1, C2, and C3 will need to be provided in the final CDR.
- Dimensions of the net for the parking lot directional signs will need to be provided to confirm they it is no more than 3 sq. ft.
- Dimensions of the signable areas for the walls signs will need to be provided in the final CDR.