

# ZONING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

December 1, 2021



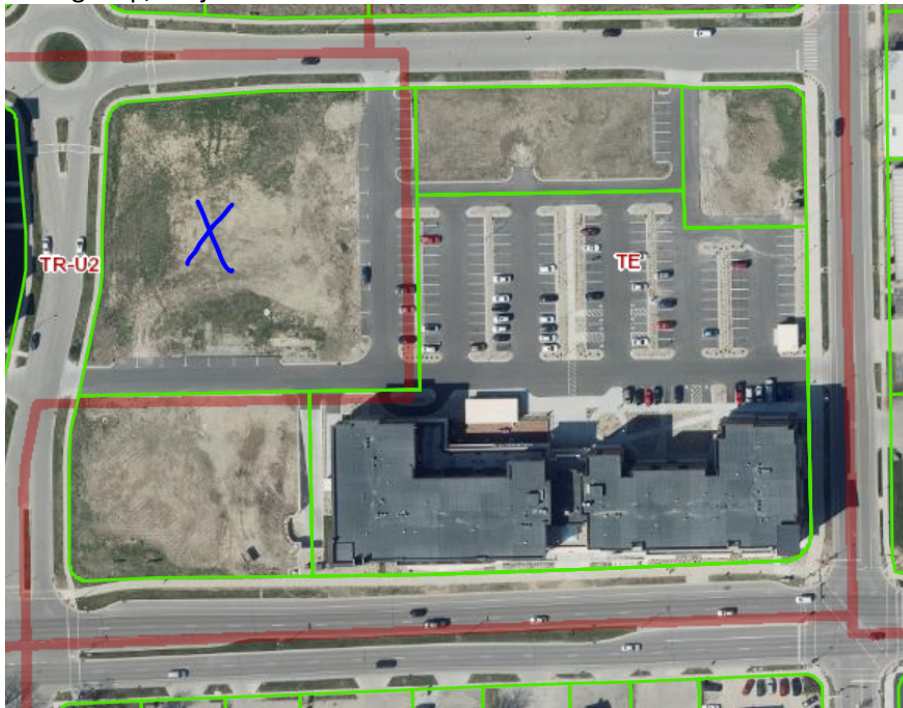
PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

**Project Address:** 515 Pinney Street  
**Project Name:** 515 @ Royster  
**Application Type:** Approval for Comprehensive Design Review of Signage  
**Legistar File ID #** [67175](#)  
**Prepared By:** Chrissy Thiele, Zoning Inspector  
**Reviewed By:** Matt Tucker, Zoning Administrator

This is a resubmittal from the September 22, 2021 UDC meeting. The applicant has withdrawn the request for a lit projecting sign at the northwest corner of the building, and instead are requesting a wall sign on the south elevation, located at the third story. The applicant has kept the request for the three above canopy signs, to either be illuminated or non-illuminated. The UDC report for this meeting can be accessed through the Legistar file link above.

The applicant is requesting Comprehensive Design Review of signage for a new 88 unit apartment building, which parcel is part of a larger zoning lot zoned TE (Traditional Employment), containing an additional 86 residential units and 37,000 sq. ft. of commercial space, including Pinney Library. The apartment building is located in the Traditional Residential – Urban 2 (TR-U2) district and abuts Pinney Street (2 lanes, 25 mph) and Royster Oaks Drive (2 lanes, 25 mph). Single family residences are located to the north of Pinney Street, and to the west of Royster Oaks is a residential building complex.

Zoning map, subject site blue "X":



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.*
  - e. *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.*

Signage Permitted per Sign Ordinance: Section 31.14(4)(a), MGO, allows for identification sign twelve square feet in size, indicating only the name and address of the building and the name of the management thereof. The sign shall be a wall sign only. The wall sign could be placed at a maximum height of 12'. The sign shall not be illuminated.

Proposed Signage requiring CDR exception: The applicant is proposing for three above canopy signs, two of which would be located above the primary entrances found in the interior courtyard adjacent to the parking lot. The third above canopy sign would be located above a private entrance/exit door facing Pinney Street. The applicant provides two options for the Commission to choose from. One style is non-illuminated and is 2' tall, which is the maximum height permitted in Group 2 and 3 districts. The other style is for internally illuminated signs comprised of channel letters and routed face cabinet, with an overall height of 2' 9".

The applicant has removed the projecting sign from the application, and instead is requesting for an illuminated wall sign that would face the driveway entrance on Royster Oaks Drive, installed at the third story, and have a total net area of 9.78 sq. ft. They also have an option for a non-illuminated sign, with the same proposed size and location.

Staff Comments: The property owner would like the signs on the apartment building to be styled similar to the previously approved signs for the Royster Corners building (which was granted CDR approval from UDC in November 2018) in order to create a uniform look across the zoning lot. However, lands outside of the subject parcel are zoned for mixed-use (in this case, the TE Traditional Employment District) and while the apartment building is part of this zoning lot, it is a residentially zoning parcel with different regulations for signage. The subject site is also surround by other residentially zoned lots to the north and west, where *group one* sign regulations apply, and which are the considered to be the most sensitive to impacts of signage. Most signage permitted in *group one* districts are non-illuminated wall signs, with a maximum net area of either three or 12 sq. ft., depending on the residential district.

The apartment building was designed to have two primary entrances (see attached floor plan). One is located on the north interior courtyard and the other is on the south interior courtyard. The applicant is requesting for both of these entrances to have the above canopy signs, which will note the designated north and south entrances, in order to guide tenants and visitors to the appropriate entrance, as well as assist with mail/package delivery, as each entrance has its own mailbox and intercom system. The third above canopy sign the applicant is requesting is located above a private entrance/exit door that leads to a stairwell for the apartment building. This is not a public entrance, and visitors will not be able to freely enter the building from this location. The applicant states the sign is needed so visitors can identify the building is 515 Pinney Street and not 515 Grand Oak Trail. Between the two style options provided (one being non-illuminated and 2' tall and the other internally illuminated and 2' 9" tall), the applicant does not provide a preference of one over the other. Note: At the Sept. 22<sup>nd</sup> UDC meeting,

It is reasonable to desire signage over the primary entrance to a building, especially when the primary entrance are not located where visitors would expect them to be, or where there are multiple primary entrances. However, Staff has concerns about the internally illuminated signs, since the signage will face the interior courtyard for the apartment, and how it could affect the residential units with windows facing the courtyard at night. Staff has reviewed the site plans submitted for zoning approval, and it is shown that lighting will be provided in the interior courtyard. Therefore, staff feels that the non-illuminated option to be sufficient, illumination not necessary. **Note: It is noted Sept. 22<sup>nd</sup> UDC staff meeting that Commissioners recommended non-illuminated signs in the courtyard.**

As for the above canopy sign that will face Pinney Street, which is located above a private entrance/exit door, Staff does not believe an adequate case has been made to allow this sign via CDR. The applicant states this sign is to help visitors with wayfinding at night, yet it is a locked entry so guests are unable to enter the building at this door. Also, as stated in the initial report and discussed at the Sept. 22<sup>nd</sup> UDC meeting, most traffic is expected to come from the parking lot entrance off of Dempsey Road or Royster Oaks Drive. Therefore, it does not appear that having a sign facing Pinney Street will assist with wayfinding or be visible to visitors coming to the building. Staff also has concern about an internally illumined sign facing a low density residential district across the street from Pinney Street. Note: At the Sept. 22<sup>nd</sup> UDC meeting, Commissioners encouraged directional signage for vehicles to the building main entrances. **Recommendation: Staff has no objection to the CDR request for the two non-illuminated above canopy signs located above the primary entrances, and recommends the UDC find the standards for CDR review have been met. However, staff recommends the UDC find the standards for CDR review have not been met for the request for the above canopy sign facing Pinney Street. This recommendation is subject to further testimony and new information provided during the hearing.**

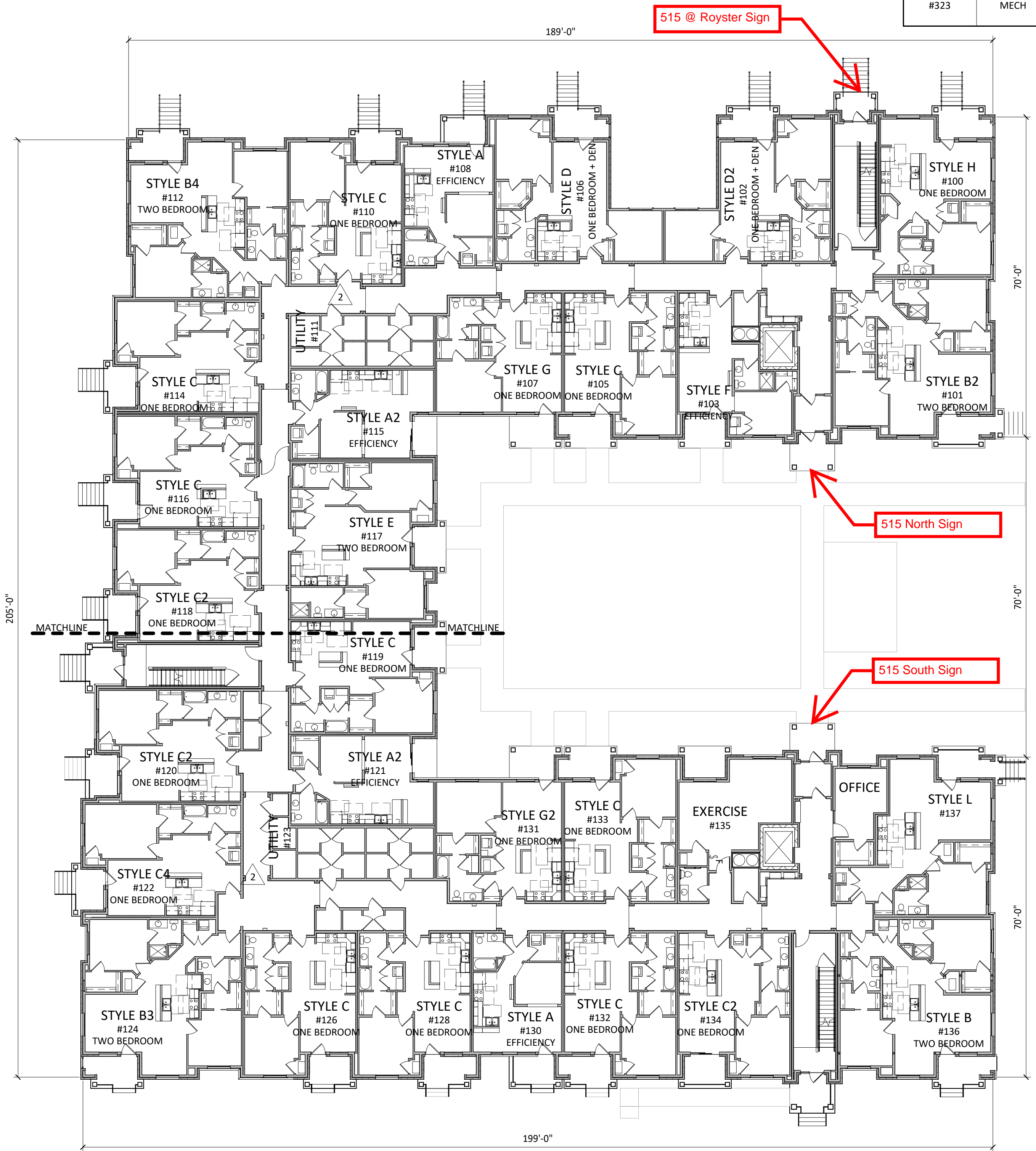
The applicant has removed the request for a projecting sign, and instead is asking for a wall sign that would be more than 12' above grade, and not face the street. The applicant states the proposed location will provide visibility from Cottage Grove Road for identification of the building and wayfinding. That being said, while the

sign would be visible in the for the immediate future, the lot directly south of the apartment building is primed for development (most likely a multi-story apartment building, or mixed use commercial building with apartments above the first story). When that portion of the lot is developed, there will be no visibility of this sign from Cottage Grove Road, and instead the illuminated sign will face the adjacent development. More importantly, having a wall sign high up on a building does not fit with the character of an apartment building in a group 1 district. Signs in group one districts are meant to blend in with the surrounding neighborhood and identify the site without being excessive. Staff believes having the sign no higher than 12' above grade is sufficient for visitors to identify the site, without appearing like a commercial building. Otherwise, staff still supports the idea of having a sign identifying the building at the Royster Oaks driveway entrance, oriented to face vehicular traffic driving northbound, and perhaps a second sign at the driveway entrance on Pinney Street, with the ground sign oriented toward westbound, to assist with directing visitors to the site. This recommendation is constant with the Sept. 22<sup>nd</sup> UDC discussion. **Recommendation: Staff would support a wall sign no higher than 12' above grade, but does not believe the applicant has satisfied the criteria for CDR approval for the wall sign higher than 12', and recommends the UDC find the criteria for CDR review have not been met and refer the request for more information or deny the request as submitted. This recommendation is subject to further testimony and new information provided during the hearing.**

Notes:

- The final CDR documents shall state that all other signage not requiring permits shall comply with MGO 31.
- Artwork for canopy signs shall be revised as to not project beyond the face of the canopy.

|      |      |                    |
|------|------|--------------------|
| #311 | MECH | HVAC UNIT T        |
| #323 | MECH | HVAC UNIT T<br>COM |



2 FIRST FLOOR - OVERALL PLAN  
A-0.1 1/16" = 1'-0"

