



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

Project Address: 4725 Tradewinds Parkway

Application Type: Signage Exception to allow for a Sign to be Mounted Higher than the Urban Design District Allows
UDC is an Approving Body

Legistar File ID #: [90605](#)

Prepared By: Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

Background Information

Applicant | Contact: Lindsey Mickelson, Sign Art Studio

Project Description: The applicant is proposing to install a wall sign at 26'-5" above grade, which is in excess of the mounting height allowed in Urban Design District 1 (18 feet).

Approval Standards: The UDC is an **approving body** on this request. The Sign Control Ordinance, [MGO Sec. 31.043\(2\)](#) states that: "After a public hearing as provided in Sec. 33.24(4)(e)3, the UDC may approve a sign with up to fifty percent (50%) greater net area or **fifty percent (50%) higher than the maximum height otherwise allowed**, or reduce the required yard or setback if such approval:

- (a) *Is necessary for a sign located on the site of an establishment to be identifiable and legible from the nearest roadway at prevailing speeds; and*
- (b) *Will result in a sign more in scale with the building and site and in a superior overall design."*

Summary of Design Considerations

Project Site Location. The project site is located at the southwest corner of the intersection of Tradewinds Parkway and Galleon Run in the Industrial Limited zoning district and in Urban Design District 1 (UDD 1). The building's main visitor entrance and parking area are located along Tradewinds Parkway. The building itself has a significant setback of more than 75 feet from Tradewinds Parkway, limiting the visibility of potential wall signage and entrance identification.

In 2023, the UDC approved exterior alterations to the building, including generally and in summary as it related to windows, entry canopy depth and paint scheme (Legistar File ID [77006](#)). Staff note that since that time, the applicant has completed a Site Plan Review to document changes in the exterior color scheme of the building (blue/grey to yellow/grey) and update onsite landscaping to meet Zoning Code screening requirements.

Existing Signage. There is no existing signage on the building.

Summary of Sign Code Requirements and Proposed Signage. Pursuant to MGO 31, Sign Code, wall signage is permitted on both street-facing sides of the building. Given that the building is more than 120,000 square feet in size and occupied by a single tenant, each wall sign could be up to 120 square feet in size.

As noted above, the project site is located in UDD 1, which requires that the height of a ground or wall sign shall not exceed ten (10) feet along John Nolen Drive or **eighteen (18) feet elsewhere in the district unless a higher sign is specifically approved by the Urban Design Commission based on the approval criteria noted above.**

The proposed sign is mounted at 26'-5", while this is in excess of the maximum mounting height allowed in UDD 1 (18 feet), it is less than what the maximum variance would allow (27 feet (50% higher)).

The proposed wall sign is 88 square feet in size and is designed as individual channel letters and logo. The sign is placed such that it is centered in the signable area, above the main entrance to the building.

Summary of Staff Analysis. A signage exception is required because the proposed sign is mounted higher on the building than what is permitted in UDD 1.

Staff believe that the approval criteria have been met and are supportive of the proposed signage given that:

- The proposed wall sign is smaller in size than what the code would allow,
- The proposed sign is of a higher quality design aesthetic with individual channel lettering, and
- If the sign was mounted to comply with the height limitations in UDD 1, the sign would cross architectural detailing and not be centered on the wall or in the signable area. Complying with code requirements would necessitate other exceptions to the Sign Code and would not be as well-integrated with the architectural design of the building, and
- Given the building's setback from the street, the increased mounting height was found to be necessary for business identification purposes.