

ZONING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

May 11, 2022



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

Project Address: 4546 Verona Road
Project Name: Atomic Antiques
Application Type: Approval for an Amendment to an Approved Comprehensive Design Review
Legistar File ID # [70888](#)
Prepared By: Chrissy Thiele, Zoning Inspector

The applicant is requesting an amendment to a previously approved Comprehensive Design Review of signage in order to have a wall sign higher than 4' above the roofline, as well as 18.4% larger than what the code permits. The CDR was originally approved in 1998 for two multi-tenant ground signs larger than allowed by code, and Planet Fitness obtained approval in 2019 for a wall sign higher than 4' above the roof line. This zoning lot is located in Commercial Center (CC) District, directly south of the Beltline (6 lanes, 55 mph) and west of Verona Road (6 lanes, 30 mph).

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, there shall be one signable area for each façade facing a street or parking lot 33 feet in width or greater. For a single occupancy, stand-alone, non-residential building with twenty-five thousand (25,000) square feet or more in floor area, or a non-residential occupancy or tenant space with twenty-five thousand (25,000) square feet or more in floor area in a multi-tenant building, the maximum net area of all wall signs shall be thirty percent (30%) of the signable area. In no case shall a wall sign exceed one hundred twenty (120) square feet in net area. The signable area for a wall signs is determined by the area of the facade of the building that is free of doors, windows, or other major architectural detail, and no more than four (4) vertical feet of the parapet wall may be included in the measurement of the signable area.

Proposed Signage: The applicant is proposing a primary wall sign with a net area of 142.12 sq. ft., placed more than four feet above the roofline. The sign consists of internally illuminated individual channel letters and logo, attached to a background metal panel.

Staff Comments: This zoning lot was redeveloped in 1999, and consists of three large format retail storefronts with large parapet walls, and a smaller retail store which was previously an auto repair building. Home Depot, which occupies one of the large tenant spaces, currently has a wall sign high on the parapet, as well as larger than what the code permits (417.5 sq. ft.); this sign, however, was approved before the ordinance was amended to limit the height of signs on the wall and limit the size. Planet Fitness occupies the other large tenant space and obtained CDR approval from UDC to have a sign higher than 4' above the roofline, but is of a compliant size at 97.4 sq. ft. The sign has the illusion of appearing larger, as the signable area for the sign is a different color from the rest of the parapet wall.

The applicant does not indicate how much higher the proposed sign is beyond the roofline, but does propose the sign be in line with the top of the Planet Fitness signable area. The applicant also provides comparisons between the compliant size sign and the proposed sign, and how it relates to Planet Fitness. The applicant also shows how a code complaint sign and the proposed sign would be viewed about 350' away from the right-of-way, which has an overall width of 260'. These examples show how the proposed sign fits better on the large parapet wall, and appears more in scale with neighboring tenant signage. **Recommendation: Staff has no objection to the CDR request and recommends the UDC find the standards for CDR review have been met. This recommendation is subject to further testimony and new information provided during the hearing.**

Notes:

- The applicant shall identify how high above the roofline the sign will be installed on the final submittal.