

ZONING STAFF REPORT

May 23, 2018



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

Project Address: 7902 Watts Road
Project Name: The Reserve at High Point
Application Type: Approval for Comprehensive Design Review of Signage
Legistar File ID # [51383](#)
Prepared By: Chrissy Thiele, Zoning Inspector
Reviewed By: Matt Tucker, Zoning Administrator

The applicant is requesting Comprehensive Design Review for signage at a residential building complex, located at the corner of Watts Road and South High Point Road. This property is located in a TR-U1 district, neighboring The Princeton Club. Watts Road is four lanes with a posted speed of 30 mph, and South High Point is four lanes with a posted speed of 40 mph.

Pursuant to Section 31.043(4)(b), 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.*

Signage Permitted per Sign Ordinance

One wall and **one ground signs per street frontage** may be displayed; identifying the entity, with a maximum of **two ground signs and two wall signs per zoning lot**. Signs, whether displayed on a wall or the ground, shall not exceed 12 sq. ft. in net area, nor be closer than ten feet to any lot line, except such signs may be increased in net area by one square foot for each additional foot that the sign is set back more than 12 feet from the street lot line. No sign under this section shall exceed 32 square feet in net area. No sign shall project higher than one story, or 12 feet above the curb level, whichever is lower.

Proposed Signage requiring CDR exception

The applicant is looking to install four single-sided ground signs on this zoning lot, with the net area of each sign equaling 10.8 sq. ft., and each sign will be at least 12' away from the property line, complying with the net size requirement. Two of the ground signs will face Watts Road by the side entrances of each apartment building, and two more ground signs are proposed to be installed inside of the lot, near the entrances by the parking stalls.

Staff Comments

Being a residential building complex on a corner lot, typical sign placement for similar development is one monument-style sign oriented to the corner or possibly two monument-style signs, one facing each street. Signage for residential development should be as minimal and intrusive as possible, to meet the identification needs of the development and blend delicately into the site. These signs appear to be of high quality design and the materials used are similar to what is used on the buildings. However, Zoning staff do not believe an argument has been made relative to the standards of approval for CDR and in turn a CDR exception to allow two signs facing towards Watts Road. The applicant states that there is no location facing High Point Road that makes sense, but from the site plan, there appears to be plenty of space between the apartment building and the detention area to place a sign, which would be readable and blend into the site as is typical for similar residential building complex places. The applicant should provide more information as to why a sign could not be placed in this area, and otherwise comply with the sign ordinance.

Also, there does not seem to be a purpose or need for the interior ground signs. The applicant states the signs will provide screening of the patio at the West building and screening for the units adjacent to the East building. Signs are not screening. However, the existing/approved walls could provide screening without being used for additional signage, or other screening methods could be employed if screening is the goal. Also, the residential building complex does not appear large enough to need additional signage for wayfinding purposes. **Staff does not support CDR exception for having four ground signs and believes further information should be provided by the applicant relative to the criteria of approval for a CDR to support the approval of having four ground signs. Otherwise they should comply with the sign ordinance.**

Notes:

- There are an additional two monument walls being installed in the interior of the lot, but will just have the address of the building mounted to the top. The Zoning office does not require sign permits for typical addressing.