

ZONING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

September 11, 2024



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

Project Address: 901 East Washington Avenue

Project Name: Indigo Hotel/Palette Bar and Grille

Application Type: Approval for Comprehensive Design Review of Signage

Legistar File ID # [84959](#)

Prepared By: Chrissy Thiele, Zoning Inspector; Jessica Vaughn, Urban Design Commission Secretary

The applicant is requesting a Comprehensive Design Review for signage for an existing hotel with a restaurant. This parcel is located in a Traditional Employment (TE) zoning district, as well as Urban Design District #8, and abuts East Washington Avenue (6 lanes, of 25 mph), South Patterson Street (2 lanes, 25 mph), and East Main Street (2 lanes, 25 mph).

Comprehensive Design Review and Approval Criteria

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.*

Urban Design District 8 Signage Guidelines

Pursuant to Section 33.24(15)(e)10., UDD 8 guidelines for signage, the Urban Design Commission shall consider in each case those of the following guidelines as may be appropriate:

a. Guidelines.

- i. Preferred sign types include building mounted signs, window signs, projecting signs, and awning signs.
- ii. Signs should be simple and easy to read.
- iii. Sign colors should relate to and complement the primary colors of the building facade.
- iv. Sign design and placement should fit the character of the building and not obscure architectural details.
- v. Signage should generally be centered within the prescribed signable area of the building.
- vi. Plastic box signs are highly discouraged.
- vii. Signs displaying illuminated copy should be designed so that when illuminated, the sign appears to have light-colored copy on a dark or non-illuminated background.
- viii. Individually mounted backlit letters are an encouraged form of signage.
- ix. The use of small, well-designed building-mounted light fixtures is a preferred method of illuminating signage.
- x. Freestanding signs should be attractively designed. Signs should be coordinated with adjoining properties and public street signage to avoid visual clutter.

Projecting Signs Permitted per Sign Ordinance: This zoning lot is allowed one projecting sign on every elevation facing a street with a maximum net area of 32 sq. ft. per side, based on the number of traffic lanes. Also, if a ground and projecting signs are displayed on the same a zoning lot, only one (1) of such signs may exceed twelve (12) square feet in net area.

Proposed Signage: The applicant is proposing to remove the existing ground sign and install a blade sign for the restaurant. This would make it the second projecting sign on the E Washington Avenue elevation, whereas the code would only permit one projecting sign per street facing elevation. The sign would have a total net area of 28.13 sq. ft. per side and consists of a combination of routed copy and individual channel modules.

Staff Comments: The hotel obtained approval for the projecting sign, as well as a ground sign for the restaurant in 2018. The restaurant is looking to update their sign as the existing sign on the gabion wall is awkward and doesn't fit with the rest of the signage on the building. The sign also has limited visibility at the existing location being next to the outdoor seating area and limited in height. A projecting sign would seemingly provide more effective business identification to visitors and passersby than what the ground sign currently provides.

Overall, the building has the appearance of being different buildings and the distance between signs on the E Washington Avenue is far enough to not appear cluttered (over 180 feet of separation). The restaurant sign is designed in a similar style to Hotel Indigo sign with the individual channel modules, creating depth and interest to the sign. The sign also has a unique night illumination design, with the letters illuminating the same color as the color as its circle (which is opaque except for the outer edge) instead of just white letters. In addition, given

the sign type (projecting sign which is a preferred sign type), location (below the third floor, aligning with the other projecting sign on the elevation, and not crossing architectural details), and proposed design (night view compliance and individual channel letter modules), staff believes that the proposed sign is generally consistent with the UDD 8 guidelines for 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.**