

ZONING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

May 11, 2022



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

Project Address: 5002 Sheboygan Avenue
Project Name: Chapel Hill Apartments
Application Type: Approval for Comprehensive Design Review of Signage
Legistar File ID # [67895](#)
Prepared By: Chrissy Thiele, Zoning Inspector

The applicant is requesting Comprehensive Design Review of signage for an existing 172 unit apartment building located in a Suburban Residential – Varied 2 (SR-V2) district. The building was built in 1971 and the previous ground sign noted in the application was approved by the Zoning Board of Appeals through a process no longer supported by the Sign Ordinance. The lot abuts Sheboygan Avenue (2 lanes, 30 mph) and North Eau Claire Avenue (2 lanes, 25 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.*

Ground Signs Permitted by Sign Ordinance: Summarizing Sec. 31.13(3), Multiple Family Dwellings are allowed a one identification sign three square feet in size per street frontage, 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.

A church, hospital, school, and residential building complex in an SR-V2 district is allowed one ground sign per street frontage, with a maximum of two per zoning lot. These signs shall not exceed 12 sq. ft. in net area nor be closer than 10 feet to any lot line, except such signs may be increase 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 may exceed 32 sq. ft. in net area. The maximum height is 12 feet above the curb level.

Proposed Ground Signage: The applicant is requesting a single sided, 4' tall, non-illuminated, monument styled ground sign with a total net area of 14.67 sq. ft. The site plan provided with the application shows the proposed location to be 15' away from the edge of the sidewalk. The sign would be constructed of aluminum with vinyl applied face.

Staff Comments: As this site is not technically a church, hospital, school, or residential building complex, it is not permitted ground signage. As stated above, the previous sign shown in the application was approved in 1971 by the Zoning Board of Appeals, through a process that is no longer supported by the Sign Ordinance. This sign was taken down due to age and weathering and the applicant would like to replace it with a ground sign that would otherwise be allowed for a residential building complex. City records show the previous ground signage net area dimensions as 3' 1" tall and 22' long, and the overall length was about 40'. The proposed ground sign is 11" taller (4' in height), however the sign net area would be much smaller (1' 10" tall and 8' long), and would be of a compliant size when installed 15' away from the property line. This proposed size and location would fit in with the character of the neighborhood, which consists primarily of other residential uses.

The applicant has noted that without the ground sign identifying the site, the property has had issues with emergency responders and deliveries finding the correct driveway to the lot. A ground sign at the proposed location would provide better visibility to traffic driving along Sheboygan Avenue and would clearly identify the entrance to the parking lot. The colors chosen for the sign will match the colors used on the building, creating visual harmony between the building and the sign. **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 site plan shall note the distance from the ground sign to the property line.
- Applicant shall add the note that all other signage not addressed in this CDR comply with Chapter 31 in the final submittal.