

ZONING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

June 26, 2024



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

Project Address: 652 Burnt Sienna Drive
Project Name: The Learning Experience
Application Type: Approval for Comprehensive Design Review of Signage
Legistar File ID # [83460](#)
Prepared By: Chrissy Thiele, Zoning Inspector

The applicant is requesting a Comprehensive Design Review for signage for new daycare facility currently being constructed. This property is in a TR-C3 (Traditional Residential – Consistent 3) district, which abuts West Old Sauk Road (2 lanes, 35 mph) and Burnt Sienna Drive (2 lanes, 25 mph). The parcel is primarily surrounded by single family homes and residential building complexes to the north, east, and south, and a church to the west.

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.*

Signs Permitted by Sign Ordinance: Summarizing 31.14(3)(a)3., nonresidential buildings are permitted a maximum of one (1) identification sign or two (2) per unit on a corner lot, with one per street frontage, may be displayed. The identification sign shall not exceed six square feet in net area and shall be limited to the name of the building occupant or management, address of the building, and any legal home occupation or disabled home occupation. Signs under this paragraph shall be wall signs only.

Schools are permitted 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: The applicant is requesting an externally illuminated double-sided monument ground sign, with a total net area of 39.67 sq. ft. and an overall height 4' 11". The site plan notes that the ground sign will be installed 20' from the property line, near the Old Sauk Road and Burnt Sienna Drive intersection.

The applicant is also requesting signage on the south elevation facing the parking lot, which is not considered to be a qualifying elevation in a group one district. One of the signs is a halo lit wall sign, noted to have a total net area of 36 sq. ft., but can be reduced further if the applicant were to calculate the net area using the three-box method, and placed on the building higher than 12' above the curb level.

The other signage on the south elevation is the stacked building blocks on the two columns by the main entrance, which will have letters and numbers. These blocks do not fit any sign type in the sign ordinance, as they are constructed around the canopy columns and do not fit in a signable area.

Staff Comments: The use of this property is a daycare, not a school, so the sign ordinance limits the signage for this building to a six square foot non-illuminated wall sign facing the street. When the building setback is also taken into consideration, a six square foot sign would most likely not be legible from the street. The applicant has designed the wall and ground signs to be more in line with the residential character of the neighborhood and chosen halo lighting and external illumination to minimize the amount of illumination cast off from the building and signage, being sensitive to the surrounding residential neighborhood while still being visible for visitors. The vibrant colors used in the signs are uniform in look and coordinate with the building blocks pillars at the main entrance, while also fitting with the use of the property as a daycare, and the base of the ground sign will match the material 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.**