

FILE NO.: Z-9150-A

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NAME: East Village Revised Short-form PCD

LOCATION: Located at 1200 – 1400 East 6<sup>th</sup> Street

DEVELOPER:

Sixth and Shall LLC  
101 South Spring Street  
Little Rock, AR 72201

ENGINEER:

Cromwell Architects and Engineers  
101 South Spring Street  
Little Rock, AR 72201

AREA: 3.29 acres      NUMBER OF LOTS: 1 zoning lot      FT. NEW STREET: 0 LF

WARD: 1      PLANNING DISTRICT: 7 – I-30      CENSUS TRACT: 2

CURRENT ZONING: PCD

ALLOWED USES: UU, Urban Use District uses

PROPOSED ZONING: Revised PCD

PROPOSED USE: Allow a modification to the approved signage plan

VARIANCE/WAIVERS: None requested.

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BACKGROUND:

Ordinance No. 21,291 adopted by the Little Rock Board of Directors on September 6, 2016, rezoned the property from UU, Urban Use District and I-3, Heavy Industrial District to PCD, Planned Commercial Development to allow the site to redevelop as a mixed use development and to allow a variation from the Presidential Park Design Overlay District. The applicant proposed the placement of parking adjacent to East 6<sup>th</sup> Street. Section 36-419 states no surface parking is allowed along 3rd Street from I-30 east one thousand, one hundred fifty (1,150) feet, 6th Street, Bond Street and College/College Street Extension. Parking structures along these streets must either have non-vehicular uses on

the first (ground) level or a false facade along the street so as to appear to be a non-vehicular use area.

The applicant proposed to utilize the existing building on the northwest corner of East 6<sup>th</sup> Street and Shall Avenue as lease space. The approval allowed the space to be subdivided into multiple lease tenants as the future dictated to support the tenants, additional on street parking on both East 6<sup>th</sup> Street and Shall Avenue were proposed.

Cromwell Architects and Engineers proposed to relocate their corporate offices to the first floor of the building located on the northeast corner of East 6<sup>th</sup> Street and Shall Avenue. In addition, the firm intended to lease approximately 4,000 square feet of the first floor facing Shall Avenue to a retail user likely a restaurant establishment. The plan also included the development of 15 apartments on the second floor for lease. The small parking area located at the southeast corner of the lot was to remain as parking for guests. In addition, the applicant proposed to provide on street parking on Shall Avenue which has historically been used as parking and along East 6<sup>th</sup> Street.

The intent of the development was to create a walkable community with sidewalks along the street edge, curb and gutter, tree wells at regular intervals and on street parking all the way along the north side of East 6<sup>th</sup> Street.

A. PROPOSAL/REQUEST/APPLICANT'S STATEMENT:

The applicant is now proposing to amend the previously approved PCD, Planned Commercial Development, to allow a revision to the approved signage plan. The site is located within the Presidential Park Design Overlay District which has specific guidelines for signage.

The plan includes the placement of *The Paint Factory* which is proposed as a wall sign with 20-inch aluminum channel letters with clear acrylic faces and neon lighting. The sign area is proposed 46-inches in height and 17-feet in length. The plan also includes the placement of a projecting sign. The sign is proposed of welded aluminum construction with painted or vinyl graphics and red neon illuminated. The sign is proposed with a maximum height of 96-inches. The sign projection is 33.25-inches from the wall. All other wall signage will comply with the development standards for signage as allowed within the UU, Urban Use Zoning District and the Presidential Park Design Overlay District.

The plan also includes the placement of shipping containers to create an identification sign for the East Village. The plan includes the placement of seven (7) shipping containers stacked (20-feet by 8-feet by 8-feet) to a height of 56-feet with lettering on the top container identifying the area as the East Village.

The plan also includes the placement of an eight (8) foot tall by 16-foot wide lighted billboard sign on the top of the west elevation facing Shall Avenue of the building located on the southeast corner of Shall Avenue and East 6<sup>th</sup> Street.

B. EXISTING CONDITIONS:

The property is located in the former manufacturing/warehouse district of the City. This area is changing significantly with the reuse of the former manufacturing buildings with new uses such as microbreweries and Rock Town Distillery. E-stem school has purchased a building to the north of this site and intends to move a portion of their grades to this location. Further north of the site is the President Clinton Presidential Park and Heifer International office building. East 6<sup>th</sup> Street is a two (2) lane street. There is a sidewalk located on the north side of the street in disrepair. There is curb located along the street, much of which is broken and/or missing.

C. NEIGHBORHOOD COMMENTS:

All property owners located within 200-feet of the site along with the Hanger Hill Neighborhood Association were notified of the public hearing.

D. ENGINEERING COMMENTS:

PUBLIC WORKS CONDITIONS:

No comment.

E. SUBDIVISION COMMITTEE COMMENT: (June 28, 2017)

Mr. Dan Fowler was present representing the request. Staff presented an overview of the item stating the request was to amend the approved signage plan for the East Village development. Staff stated there were no technical issues associated with the request.

The Commission questioned the proposed use of the shipping containers. Mr. Fowler stated the intent was to stack the containers and place the sign on the top level to be visible from I-30. The Commissioners questioned the finish of the containers. Mr. Fowler stated it would depend on the finishes that could be purchased. The Commissioners questioned access. He stated a ladder would be required to allow access to the top level for service of the signage and lighting.

There were no more issues for discussion. The Committee then forwarded the item to the full Commission for final action.

F. ANALYSIS:

The applicant provided staff with a visual representation of the containers proposed and the containers with relation to the adjacent railroad overpass as requested at the June 28, 2017, Subdivision Committee meeting. The request is to amend the previously approved PCD, Planned Commercial Development, for the East Village development to allow a revision to the approved signage plan. The site is located within the Presidential Park Design Overlay District which has specific guidelines for signage. Section 36-420, General sign regulations are to be as per the base zoning classification except for the first two (2) floors where the following are required: (1) Awning valances are appropriate locations for signage, sign area not to exceed six (6) square feet of valance, (2) Neon illumination is permitted if channelized, (3) Letters shall not exceed thirty (30) inches in height, (4) Window signs shall not cover more than twenty-five (25) percent of each glass panel.

The plan includes the placement of *The Paint Factory* wall sign which is proposed 20-inch aluminum channel letters with clear acrylic faces and exposed neon lighting. The sign area is proposed 46-inches in height and 17-feet in length. The variation is to allow the exposed neon lighting for the sign.

The plan also includes the placement of a projecting sign. The sign is proposed of welded aluminum construction with painted or vinyl graphics and red exposed neon illumination. The variation is to allow the exposed neon lighting of the sign. The sign is proposed with a maximum height of 96-inches. The sign projection is 33.25-inches from the wall. Any projections over the public right of way will require a franchise agreement with the City. All projections must meet a minimum clearance over the sidewalk of eight (8) feet.

The plan also includes the placement of shipping containers to create an identification sign for the East Village. The plan includes the placement of seven (7) shipping containers stacked (20-feet by 8-feet by 8-feet) to a height of 56-feet with lettering on the top container identifying the area as the East Village.

The plan also includes the placement of an eight (8) foot tall by 16-foot wide lighted billboard sign on the top of the west elevation of the eastern most building facing Shall Avenue. The sign is proposed to identify businesses within the proposed development. The sign is not proposed as an off-premise billboard advertising sign.

All other signage will comply with the development standards for signage as allowed within the UU, Urban Use Zoning District and the Presidential Park Design Overlay District.

Staff is supportive of the allowance of the exposed neon. Staff is not supportive of the proposed signage plan as indicated. Staff is not supportive of the applicant's request for the billboard or the stacked container sign. The site is located within the UU, Urban Use Zoning District and the Presidential Park Design Overlay District. Staff does not feel the billboard advertisement is suitable for this area. Also within the UU, Urban Use Zoning District, the maximum height allow for signage is six (6) feet with a maximum sign area of 64 square feet. The sign is proposed well in excess of the height typically allowed with a sign area which far exceeds the typical ordinance standard.

G. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends denial of the request as filed.

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PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:

(JULY 20, 2017)

Mr. Dan Fowler was present representing the request. Staff presented the item with a recommendation of denial for the placement of the billboard and the shipping container sign. Staff presented a recommendation of approval for the request to allow the placement of signage with exposed neon.

Mr. Fowler yielded his time to the opposition.

Ms. Ruth Bell addressed the Commission in opposition to the request. She stated signs were usually used to communicate. She stated the placement of the shipping container sign and the billboard sign did not appear to communicate anything to anyone. She stated the height exceeded the height allowed within most zones. She stated the sign also gave the appearance of being ugly.

Mr. Fowler stated the intent was to provide an architectural feature that would provide a sense of place. He stated the goal was to revitalize this area of downtown and he felt the proposed signage designated the sense of place and added life to the area. He stated the billboard was to be a static feature. He stated it would be a through back to a period of time maybe the 50's or 60's when the area was in full use. He stated the billboard would not be used to advertise any business just the area of the East Village.

There was a general discussion by the Commission concerning the height and the intent of the sign. Mr. Fowler stated the sign was proposed to be visual from the Interstate. He stated the height was needed to be visual from areas outside the development area. The Commissioner indicated they felt the container sign and the billboard could be designed in a way that could be supported but felt additional information was needed. Mr. Fowler stated he would amend his application to remove those two (2) elements and only move forward with the exposed neon request.

The Chair entertained a motion for approval of the item as amended. The motion carried by a vote of 9 ayes, 0 noes and 2 absent.