



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

**County Board Agenda Item
Meeting of September 26, 2009**

DATE: September 16, 2009

SUBJECT: U-3144-05-1 USE PERMIT AMENDMENT for comprehensive sign plan under the Columbia Pike Form Based Code, 2301 Columbia Pike (RPC #25-017-098).

Applicant:

Woodfield Columbia Pike, LLC

By:

M. Catharine Puskar
Walsh, Colucci, Lubeley, Emrich & Walsh, P.C.
2200 Clarendon Boulevard, 13th Floor
Arlington, Virginia 22201

C. M. RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the comprehensive sign plan, subject all previous conditions, and revised condition #26.

ISSUES: This is a request for a comprehensive sign plan and no issues have been identified.

SUMMARY: The applicant for the Form Based Code (FBC) project Siena Park is requesting an amendment for a comprehensive sign plan. On June 16, 2009, the County Board approved some signs for the project, including retail tenant wall signs, directional parking signs, and building identification signs. Per approved condition #26, a comprehensive sign plan is to be submitted to the Zoning Administrator for approval, and all exterior signs are to be consistent with the regulations of the FBC. The Zoning Administrator has determined that some of the signs proposed are not consistent with the FBC regulations nor the Zoning Ordinance, and require modifications approved by the County Board. Therefore, the applicant is requesting County Board approval for a comprehensive sign plan, which contains all signs for Siena Park. The sign plan includes retail signs, such as awning, blade, and window signs; residential signs, such as address signs and identification plaques; parking garage and loading dock signs; and temporary leasing signs. Many of the signs are consistent with the FBC sign standards. The signs, as proposed, provide a unified design scheme compatible with the architecture of the building, and

County Manager: _____

County Attorney: _____

Staff: Melanie Jesick, DCPHD, Planning Division

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are in keeping with the overall intent of the FBC to revitalize the Columbia Pike corridor. Therefore, staff recommends approval of the comprehensive sign plan, subject to all previous conditions and one (1) revised condition #26.

BACKGROUND: The Siena Park project was approved as a Columbia Pike Form Based Code (FBC) project in October 2006 in the Town Center portion of the Columbia Pike Special Revitalization District. This approved development, located on Columbia Pike between South Wayne Street and South Adams Street, is comprised of a 6-story building with ground floor retail and upper story office and multi-family residential uses.

The following provides additional information about the site:

Site: The 67,065 square foot site is located on Columbia Pike, and is bounded by South Wayne Street, South Adams Street, and (proposed) 9th Road alley. The site formerly contained a Safeway grocery store building and a parking lot.

Zoning: The site is zoned "C-1" Local Commercial Districts and "C-2" Service Commercial - Community Business Districts, and is eligible, by reference, to be developed using the "CP-FBC" Columbia Pike Form Based Code District. A 9-story office building is located to the north of the site on a property zoned "C-O" Commercial Office Building, Hotel and Multiple family Dwelling Districts. A strip shopping center, zoned "C-2" Service Commercial - Community Business Districts is located to the west of the subject site.

Land Use: The site is designated on the General Land Use Plan (GLUP) as "Service Commercial", which permits personal and business services of generally one to four stories and a maximum 1.5 F.A.R. with special provisions within the Columbia Pike Special Revitalization District. This project is located within the Town Center node of the Columbia Pike Special Revitalization District. The adjacent sites to the north and west are also designated on the General Land Use Plan (GLUP) as "Service Commercial".

Neighborhood: The site is located within the Penrose Civic Association.

Plans: The site is located within the Columbia Pike Special Revitalization District and is subject to the Columbia Pike Initiative – A Revitalization Plan (Update 2005).

DISCUSSION: The applicant is requesting the approval of a Comprehensive Sign Plan for the Siena Park project. By way of background, on June 13, 2009, the County Board approved a use permit amendment to modify sign requirements for retail tenant wall signs, directional parking blade signs, and building identification signs. At that time it was recommended that the applicant submit a comprehensive sign plan for Zoning Administrator approval. The applicant has submitted a comprehensive sign plan to the Zoning Administrator for approval, but it was determined that some of the signs proposed, including garage parking signs and retail/office and residential identification plaques, were unable to be approved administratively, as they did meet neither FBC sign regulations, nor the regulations of the Zoning Ordinance due to the size and/or number proposed. Therefore, although many of the signs proposed are consistent with the sign

standards of the FBC, the applicant is submitting this request to permit modifications of requirements for some of the signs.

The proposed comprehensive sign plan includes a variety of retail signs, including awning signs, blade signs, and wall signs; residential signs; parking and loading signs; and temporary leasing signs. The attached comprehensive sign plan provides detail on color, size, and location of the proposed signs. The retail tenant wall signs, blade identification sign, and parking, loading and directional blade signs approved by the County Board on June 13, 2009 are included to ensure the sign plan is comprehensive, and to provide a sense of how they complement the proposed signs.

Retail Signs: A variety of retail signs are proposed. First, each retail tenant would have an option for an awning sign, with optional gooseneck down lighting. Lettering on each awning would be limited to five (5) inches tall on vertically hanging fabric, consistent with the FBC. In addition, the applicant is requesting approval of retail blade signs, not to exceed six (6) square feet each, consistent with the FBC. Wall mounted retail tenant signs are also proposed, as permitted by the FBC. A tenant may choose to have canopy-mounted channel letters instead of a wall sign, as approved by the County Board on June 13, 2009, but may not have both a canopy-mounted and a wall sign. Also proposed for retail tenants are window signs, street address signs, and window graphics (containing, for example, credit card information, hours of operation, or restaurant menus), consistent with the FBC. Finally, one (1) retail/office identification metal plaque is also proposed, which would direct people to the main retail/office lobby entrance of the project.

The only type of retail sign requiring a modification of regulations is the retail/office identification metal plaque (A.3 in the attached plan), as neither the FBC nor Zoning Ordinance has regulations for this type of sign. The proposed plaque will state “retail/office entrance” and the project address, and will be placed along side the retail/office entrance door along Columbia Pike. The applicant states that, as there are a number of different residential and retail entrances, this plaque will help direct patrons to the main retail/office lobby area in the large-scale, mixed use project. In addition, the plaque will help differentiate the retail/office entrance from the numerous residential entrances of the project. Staff finds that the proposed plaque is appropriate given the scale of the building, and will help direct visitors to the retail/office lobby portion of the project.

Residential Signs: There are three (3) types of residential signs proposed. One (1) address sign containing the building address is to be placed above the entry door, which is consistent with the FBC. Another residential sign proposed is the identification blade sign stating, “Siena Park,” approved by the County Board on June 13, 2009. Third are five (5) direction metal plaques (B.3. on the attached plan), for the residential entrances, similar to the metal plaque proposed for the office/retail entrance, which would be placed next to the residential entry doors on Columbia Pike, South Wayne Street, and South Adams Street. County Board approval is needed to allow these plaques, as neither the FBC nor the Zoning Ordinance allows this type of sign. The applicant states that, as there are a number of different residential and retail entrances, these plaques will help direct patrons to the different residential entrances in the large-scale, mixed use project. In addition, the plaques will help differentiate the retail/office entrance on Columbia

Pike from the various residential entrances of the project. Staff finds that the proposed plaques are appropriate given the scale of the building, and will help direct visitors to the appropriate entrances.

Parking/Garage Signs: Five (5) parking directional blade signs were approved by the County Board on June 16, 2009 . Additional parking and loading signs for above the garage and loading entrances are also proposed, which are unable to be approved administratively, as the FBC does not speak to parking signs, and the Zoning Ordinance limits parking signs to be three (3) square feet each, and no more than two (2) per entrance and exit. The applicant is proposing a sign stating “parking” above the garage entrance door, which will be approximately 8.5 square feet, a sign stating “loading dock” which is proposed at approximately fifteen (15) square feet, and two (2) yellow “bar” signs suspended from the parking garage which state, “Do Not Enter” and “Clearance.” All signs face the alley behind the building. As the number and size of the parking garage and loading dock signs are larger than what is permitted by the Zoning Ordinance, County Board approval is needed. Staff supports the proposed signs, as they will appropriately direct motorists to the garage and loading dock from the alley. In addition, the suspended yellow bar signs provide necessary warnings for motorists who are entering the parking garage.

Temporary Signs: The applicant is proposing two (2) types of temporary leasing signs. The first type, an apartment leasing banner, would be a maximum of 120 square feet (the maximum amount permitted in the Zoning Ordinance for this type of leasing sign), and would state the leasing phone number for the Siena Park apartments. The banner would remain below 35’ above grade, and would be placed at the east elevation. The banner is permitted for a period of one (1) year after placement on the building. In addition, temporary retail window signs are proposed for the seven (7) retail bays on site. Each retail leasing window sign would be limited to a maximum of 20% of the total window area, per Zoning Ordinance Section 34.G.7, which regulates lettered window signs. Staff supports the temporary residential and retail leasing signs, as this is a new mixed-use project where this amount of residential and retail previously did not exist. In addition, the retail leasing window signs would provide some additional visibility for the vacant retail along South Adams Street and South Wayne Street, in addition to retail along Columbia Pike. These leasing window signs would be temporary in that they would only be placed in the window of the retail bay if the retail bay is vacant. Once a retail tenant is in the space, the other, permanent retail signs, as outlined in this comprehensive sign plan, will be located in the retail bay.

The tables on the following pages provide additional detail on all signs proposed in the comprehensive sign plan, highlighting those where a modification of sign regulations is requested.

RETAIL SIGNS				
Type of Sign (quantity)	Sign Area (per sign)	Text	Material	Modification required?
A.1. Retail awnings (TBD)	TBD. Height of letters not to exceed 5", per FBC	TBD (retail tenant name)	Welded extruded aluminum tubing covered with fabric.	No. FBC allows awnings with 5" lettering.
A.2. Retail Blade (1/retail tenant per street frontage)	Max. 6 sq. ft.	TBD (retail tenant information)	Metal, acrylic, metal, foam.	No. FBC encourages blade signs, limited to 6 sq. ft. each.
A.3. Identification plaque (1)	Max. 4 sq. ft.	2301 Columbia Pike Retail/Office Entrance	Metal plaque with engraved copy filled back.	Yes. Neither FBC nor Zoning Ordinance (ZO) regulates these types of identification plaques.
A.4. Canopy-mounted letters (1/retail tenant)	Max. 30 sq. ft.	TBD (retail tenant)	3" deep fabricated aluminum w/ face-lit channel letters.	Yes - Approved by County Board 6/16/2009.
A.4. Wall-mounted letters (an alternative to A.4. above)	Max. 30 sq. ft.	TBD (retail tenant)	Halo-lit aluminum channel letters.	No. FBC allows these wall signs.
A.5. Window signs	Max. 8 sq. ft.	TBD (retail tenant information)	TBD.	No. FBC allows window signs up to 8 sq. ft.
A.6. Window graphics (1/retail tenant)	Max. 3 sq. ft.	TBD (retail tenant window information)	TBD.	No. FBC allows one (1) graphics sign per retail tenant.
A.7. Street Address (1/retail tenant)	Approx. 1.5 sq. ft. Max 8" tall lettering, per FBC.	2301	TBD.	No. FBC allows address signs using 6-8" tall lettering.
RESIDENTIAL SIGNS				
B.1. Street Address (1)	Approx. 1.5 sq. ft. Max. 8" tall lettering, per FBC.	2301	TBD.	No. FBC allows address signs using 6-8" tall, non-cursive lettering.
B.2. Blade (1)	Max 54 sq. ft.	Siena Park	Fabricated aluminum sign box, painted.	Yes - Approved by County Board on 6/16/2009
B.3. Residential plaque (5)	Max. 4 sq. ft.	2301 Columbia Pike Siena Park Residential Entrance	Metal plaque with engraved copy filled black.	Yes. Neither FBC nor ZO regulates these types of identification plaques.
PARKING/GARAGE				
C. Parking blade (5)	Max. 6 sq. ft.	"P" with arrows.	Internally illuminated signs with cut-in "P."	Yes - Approved by County Board on 6/16/2009
D.1. Garage entrance (1)	Approx. 8.5 sq. ft.	"Parking"	Black titanium letters on brick fascia.	Yes. Larger than permitted by ZO.
D.2. Loading dock (1)	Approx. 15.25 sq. ft.	"Loading"	Same as "parking" sign.	Yes. Larger than permitted by ZO.
D.3. Suspended garage (2)	4 sq. ft each	"Do Not Enter" and "Clearance"	Yellow PVC pipe with applied black vinyl graphics.	Yes. Larger than permitted by ZO.

TEMPORARY SIGNS				
<u>Type of Sign (Quantity)</u>	<u>Sign Area (per sign)</u>	<u>Text</u>	<u>Material</u>	<u>Sign Modification requested?</u>
E. Leasing banner (1)	Max 120 sq. ft.	Siena Park and leasing phone #	Vinyl banner mechanically fastened to building.	No. Permitted by Zoning Ordinance for leasing banner up to 120 sq. ft.
F. Leasing window signs (7)	TBD. Not to exceed 20% of window.	TBD. (will state that retail space is available).	Vinyl	No. Per Zoning Ordinance must be 20% of the window area.

CONCLUSION: The comprehensive sign plan provides a unified design scheme compatible with the architecture of the building, and is in keeping with the overall intent of the FBC to revitalize the Columbia Pike corridor. In addition, staff supports the sign modifications as proposed. Therefore, staff recommends approval of the comprehensive sign plan, subject to all previous conditions and one (1) revised condition #26.

Revised condition #26:

26. ~~The developer agrees to develop and submit a comprehensive sign plan to the Zoning Administrator and that all exterior signs (including identification and directional signage) shall be consistent with the regulations contained within the Columbia Pike Form Based Code (Section 20. Appendix A of the Zoning Ordinance), with the following modifications:~~
- ~~a. Permit the signs shown as tenant signs Type A.4 on page 2 of the plans dated May 21, 2009, which may be used as a replacement for an instead of, but not in addition to, the type of retail signs otherwise permitted.~~
 - ~~b. Permit a blade building identification sign as shown on the plans dated May 21, 2009, in lieu of a building name wall plaque that is otherwise permitted by the FBC.~~
 - ~~c. Permit the five parking, loading, and directional signs to exceed the size limit of 2 square feet per sign provided they are no larger than 6 square feet per sign as shown on the plans dated May 21, 2009; and~~

~~All signs permitted by the modification of the regulations shall be the size, location, and design shown on plans dated May 21, 2009. The Zoning Administrator shall determine whether the signs meet the Form Based Code regulations as modified. No sign permits will be issued until a comprehensive sign plan is approved by the Zoning Administrator as being consistent with the FBC regulations as modified above. The developer agrees to obtain approval from the Zoning Administrator of the comprehensive sign plan before issuance of the Last Partial Certificate of Occupancy. Individual tenants must apply for an obtain sign permits, including the design, colors, and materials of the signs, which shall be reviewed by the Zoning Administrator to ensure consistency with the comprehensive sign plan.~~

The developer agrees that all Siena Park project signs, including the retail, residential, building identification, garage, and temporary signs, shall be consistent with the comprehensive sign plan for Siena Park dated September 2, 2009. This includes the following signs previously approved by the County Board on June 16, 2009 and subsequently included in this comprehensive sign plan: the retail tenant canopy-mounted signs (to be used as a replacement for, but not in addition to, the other type of retail wall-mounted signs permitted), the blade building identification sign for Siena Park (in lieu of a building name wall plaque otherwise permitted by the FBC), and the five (5) blade parking signs (no larger than 6 square feet each).

The developer agrees that the residential apartment leasing banner (sign type E) may be approved for a time period of no more than (1) year after placement on the building. The Zoning Administrator may re-approve the residential apartment leasing banner for a time period of six (6) months if the developer can demonstrate to the Zoning Administrator that the building is less than 2/3 occupied when the approval for the additional six months is sought. In addition, the developer agrees that the retail window leasing signs (sign type F) may be approved only for windows in space in which retail uses are allowed and the developer further agrees that they shall be approved for an initial period of no more than six (6) months. The Zoning Administrator may re-approve the retail window signs (sign type F) for six (6) months at any time the developer demonstrates that the retail space in which the signs are placed is vacant or will become vacant within a period of sixty (60) days.

Minor changes to the approved signs may be approved administratively by the Zoning Administrator. For the purposes of the preceding sentence, minor changes shall include only the following: (i) a minor adjustment in the location of the sign to meet field conditions (less than 1 foot in any direction); or (ii) a minor change in the area of the sign (less than 5%). In addition, the Zoning Administrator may administratively approve changes to the comprehensive sign plan where the proposed signs meet the intent of the FBC or the Zoning Ordinance.

Individual tenants must apply for and obtain sign permits, which shall be reviewed by the Zoning Administrator to ensure consistency with the comprehensive sign plan.

PREVIOUS COUNTY BOARD ACTIONS:

August 1961	Designated as “Undetermined Uses” on the General Land Use Plan
December 1964	Designated “General Commercial” on the General Land Use Plan
November 15, 1986	General Land Use Plan amended to include the Columbia Pike Special Revitalization District. Designated as “Service Commercial”.
December 17, 2002	Columbia Pike Special Revitalization District boundaries amended on the General Land Use Plan
February 25, 2003	Columbia Pike Form Based Code (Section 20 of the Zoning Ordinance) adopted
February 10, 2004	Columbia Pike Street Space Plan adopted and Form Based Code amended to include new Required Building lines.
December 10, 2005	U-3144-05-1 deferred to May 20, 2006
May 20, 2006	U-3144-05-1 deferred to October 14, 2006
October 14, 2006	U-3144-05-1 Use Permit (Form Based Code) approved for 2301 Columbia Pike project (now referred to as “Siena Park”).
June 16, 2009	Defer consideration of use permit amendment for an increase in the number of reserved parking spaces to the July 11, 2009 County Board meeting. Approved use permit to modify sign requirements for retail tenant signs, directional signs, and building identification signs, subject to all previous conditions, and new condition #26 requiring approval of a comprehensive sign plan.
July 14, 2009	Approved the use permit amendment to modify Condition #19 to permit tandem parking spaces to be counted toward the total parking quantity requirement, and adjust the parking allocations for reserved and shared parking spaces; and to modify the height clearance for five (5) awnings along

South Wayne Street and South Adams Street,
subject to all previous conditions, one (1) revised
Condition # 19, and one (1) new Condition #27.