

STAFF REPORT

Derby Review Board

Meeting Date: January 17, 2017

Case Planner: Caitlin Long

Case #: DRB-059-17

Location: 7350 Highway 2, Commerce City, CO 80022

**Applicant/
Owner:** A Good Shop Inc.
7350 Highway 2, Commerce City, CO 80022

Request:

1. The applicant is requesting Derby Review Board approval of new wall sign faces and LED retrofit sign illumination.
2. The applicant is requesting Derby Review Board approval of \$2,000 in catalyst funds for the LED retrofit.

Staff Recommendation: Staff is recommending approval of the proposed sign improvements and catalyst fund request as the enhancements meets the design principles of the Derby Design Guidelines and the requirements of the Land Development Code.

Current Zone District: PUD (Planned Unit Development District)

Comp Plan Designation: Commercial/Mixed Use

Surroundings

<u>Existing Land Use</u>		<u>Occupant</u>	<u>Zoning</u>
North	Commercial	Glass and repair	PUD
South	Commercial	Vacant parking lot	PUD
East	Commercial	Key Bank	PUD
West	ROW	Highway 2	ROW

Background Information

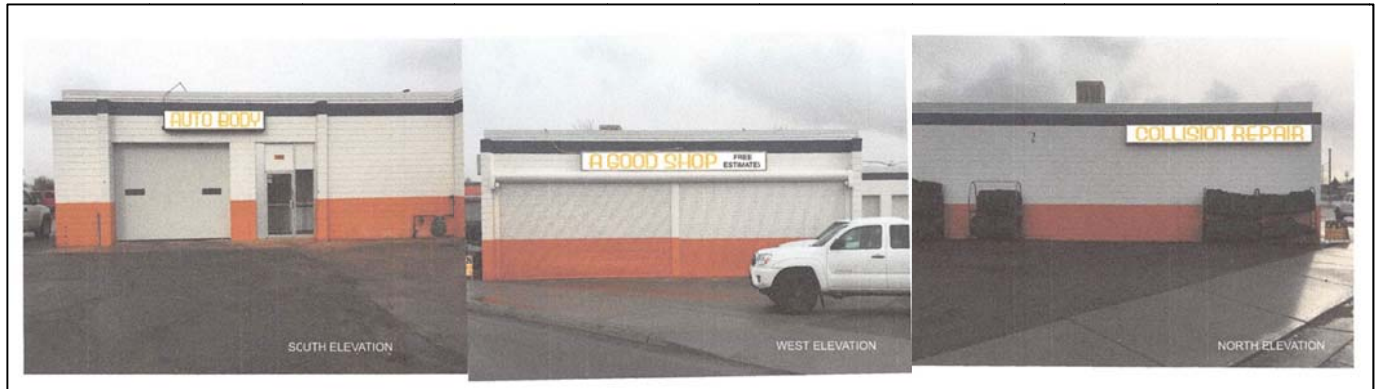
City Council approved PUD zoning for the Derby area in September 2007. The zoning supports the Derby Master Plan by designating the district as a mixed-use commercial district. The PUD boundaries are E. 72nd Avenue to the south, Hwy 2 to the west, and Magnolia Street to the east. Building improvements, demolition and construction within this geographic area are subject to review by the Derby Review Board.

The subject property is located on the East side of Highway 2 along Monaco Street. The applicant is the tenant of the subject property. The entire lot area is 19,602 square-feet and contains a single story service garage building. The building is approximately 7,220 square-feet with building frontage on both Monaco Street and Highway 2. The subject property is designated as commercial/mixed-use and is legally conforming. The applicant was granted a Conditional Use Permit by City Council in case #CU-112-15 for the use of the property as an auto body shop, and completed façade renovations which were approved by the Derby Review Board in case #DRB-051-15. A Good Shop opened for business in December 2016, and is now ready to install permanent signage.

Summary of Applicant's Request

The applicant is requesting signage enhancements to the building for his new business within the Derby District. The applicant proposes to change the sign faces of three existing cabinets, on the south, west, and north sides of the building, along with retrofitting the illumination with new LEDs inside the signs. The existing cabinets are approximately 2 feet by 10 feet on the south side and 2 feet by 18 feet on the west and north sides. The new faces will have a white background with bright yellow text in a retro font. Images of the proposed signs are shown below.

Proposed Sign Faces:



Staff Analysis

The applicant's request for signage enhancements to the building, including new sign faces and retrofitted LED illumination, has been reviewed by staff in conformance with the Derby Sub-area Master Plan, the Derby Design Guidelines, PUD Zone Document and the Land Development Code (LDC). As part of this analysis, staff reviewed the building history, architectural character of the subject building and the architectural context of the surrounding buildings and properties in order to establish sufficient detail for design review of the proposed signage.

Building History

The subject property is located on a unique lot within the Derby Downtown District. The applicant is the tenant of the subject building. According to the Adams County Assessors records, the subject building was constructed in 1971 as a service garage. The building itself is approximately 7,220 square-feet. Prior to the applicant, the subject building had not been used in several years. The applicant recently completed exterior and interior renovations of the building for use as an auto body shop. There are three existing sign cabinets on the south, west, and north sides of the building.

Architectural Character

The subject building's architecture has been influenced by the Mid-Century style. These architectural styles are defined by clean lines and simple design. Often this style of architecture was utilized to construct buildings with a focus on function rather than form. The image in Figure 1 of the subject building clearly shows that the character of the building has only been influenced by the Mid-Century architectural style. This architectural style was prominent across the United States from the 1950s through the 1970s. To the East and the North are buildings that were constructed within a similar time period with a similar use of materials for some areas.

Subject Building



Existing Sign Cabinets



Signage in Derby

Although the signage styles throughout the Derby District vary and are not all a match with the subject property, the variety of styles tell the story of commercial development within the Derby Downtown District. Signs are generally encouraged to complement the architectural character of the building on which they are placed, as to contribute to the identity of the district. This context has been considered by staff and is important to the review of the proposed signage. Some examples of nearby and recently approved signs are shown on the next page. The use of geometric shapes, unique fonts, and pastel colors are some of the features identified here.

Existing Signs in Surrounding Area:



In Derby, proposed projects are evaluated by their conformance with applicable guidelines and codes. The Derby Design Guidelines contain design-related criteria to govern how well a project aligns with the district's overall goals. The Derby PUD contains the regulations that dictate what land uses are allowed in addition to performance standards for the zoning. Finally, The Commerce City Land Development Code provides the regulating framework for specific development standards that govern physical characteristics of a project before construction or installation. The proposed enhancements have been reviewed against the approval criteria within the Land Development Code and were found to be in compliance with all applicable standards.

Composition of Derby Design Guidelines

The Derby Design Guidelines utilize standards and principles to determine which design criteria must be followed (standards) and which design criteria is desired but not required (principles).

Standards: Objective criteria providing specific direction based on the Guideline Goals, used to define issues considered critical to achieving the Guideline Goals. Standards use the term "shall" to indicate that compliance is mandatory unless it can be demonstrated that an acceptable alternative meets one or more of the following conditions:

1. The alternative better achieves the Guideline Goals
2. The Guideline Goals will not be achieved by application of the Standard in the circumstance
3. The effect of other Standards or Principles will be improved by not applying this Standard
4. Unique site factors make the Standard impractical.

Principles: Statements of non-binding policy, explanation or direction to assist the City Planning office and applicant with application of standards. Principles use the term “should” to express desired outcomes.

Conformance with the Derby Design Guidelines

The term “Googie architecture” is a form of modern architecture, a subdivision of futurist architecture influenced by car culture, the Space Age, and the Atomic Age. Originating in Southern California during the late 1940’s and continuing approximately into the mid-1960s, Googie-themed architecture was popular among motels, coffee houses and gas stations.

The applicant is requesting signage enhancements that are in alignment with the Derby Design Guidelines, which include the sign face changes and LED lighting retrofit. The proposed sign face changes include a simple white background with yellow text in the retro-style Beauty School Dropout font, which mimics the appearance of neon signs. In addition, the proposed LED retrofit will update the sign lighting to modern electrical codes while using significantly less energy. The proposed enhancements bring the existing building into further alignment with the vision and goals of the Derby Sub-Area Master Plan and the Derby Design Guidelines. These documents envision the buildings within the Derby Downtown District to have attractive facades that are well maintained and inviting to visitors; display signage that reflects the architectural era of the buildings on which they are placed; and promote sustainability through the use of long-lasting and energy efficient materials. The upgrades to the existing sign cabinets will increase use of the area through a new business with customers and employees.

In accordance with Derby Review Board policies, the sign face changes do not qualify to receive catalyst funds. However, the LED lighting retrofit within the signs is eligible. The proposed LED improvements have been quoted at \$4,000 to the applicant. The applicant is requesting the maximum of 50% reimbursement for these improvements, a total of \$2,000.

Additional monument signage may be proposed at a future date.

Derby Design Guidelines -- Goals for this Application:

Goal #3: Enhance Derby’s visibility and identity through:

- **Unique business identification**

Goal #4: Revitalize Derby through:

- **Support and promotion of new businesses and property owners**

Goal #5: Use the 1950s era as a unifying architectural foundation for greater identity while still encouraging building to be an expression of their individual time, use, and function.

Conformance with the Derby PUD Zone Document

The Derby PUD is a custom zoning designation produced specifically for the Derby Downtown District. The zoning establishes a mixed-use zone district comprised of commercial and residential land uses. In addition to establishing the parameters of the Derby Sub Area, the zone document primarily outlines the allowed land uses within the district. Signage standards are deferred to the Derby Design Guidelines.

Final Analysis

The applicant is proposing signage enhancements to the subject building that had been vacant for several years and recently reopened for business as an auto body shop. The building was originally constructed in 1971, and embodies the modernist architectural style that was prevalent from the 1950s through the 1970s. The proposed sign faces utilize a font style that is also reminiscent of the neon lighting of this time period, and the color coordinates with the color of the building and the color palette

in the Design Guidelines. The proposed upgrade to the illumination using new LED lighting will make the signs more modern and energy efficient.

City staff concludes that the proposed enhancements are harmonious with the principles of the Derby Design Guidelines and fulfills the goals of the redevelopment program. Specifically, the enhancements are a sign of reinvestment into a currently vacant building within the Derby District. New businesses will attract additional customers as well as employees to discover all that the District has to offer. Lastly, the application is the first step in the improvements to the site and represents work between Staff and the applicant over the last several months.

As a result, the Planning Division recommends **approval** of the requests. However, the Board has several options to choose from in making a decision:

1. The Board can choose to approve the proposed sign design and catalyst funds as presented;
2. The Board can choose not to approve the proposed sign design and catalyst funds;
3. The Board can recommend approval with changes made to the proposed sign design and catalyst fund request and to work with the Planning staff to finalize the approval; or
4. The Board can recommend changes be made to the proposed sign design and ask that the applicant present a modified design to the Board at a subsequent DRB meeting.

Staff Recommendation

Recommended Motion: “Based upon the finding that the application meets the design principles of the Derby Design Guidelines, I move that the Derby Review Board grant approval in case DRB-059-17, a Derby Redevelopment application for the property located at 7350 Highway 2.”

Recommended Catalyst Fund Motion: “I move that the Derby Review Board approve the use of catalyst funds in an amount not to exceed **\$2,000** to reimburse the applicant for costs the City determines qualify under the program.”

Advisory: The applicant shall obtain an approved sign permit from the Community Development Department prior to installation of any signage or electrical work.

Alternative Motions

Approval with Conditions Motion: “Based upon the findings that the application meets the design standards and principles of the Derby Design Guidelines, I move that the Derby Review Board grant approval in case DRB-059-17 subject to conditions and one advisory, a Derby Redevelopment application for the property located at 7350 Highway 2.”

List conditions

Amended Catalyst Fund Motion: “I move that the Derby Review Board approve an amended amount of catalyst funds in an amount not to exceed \$_____ to reimburse the applicant for costs the City determines qualify under the program.”

Denial Motion: “Based upon the finding that the application does not meet the design standards and principles of the Derby Design Guidelines, I move that the Derby Review Board **deny** case DRB-059-17, a Derby Redevelopment application for the property located at 7350 Highway 2.”

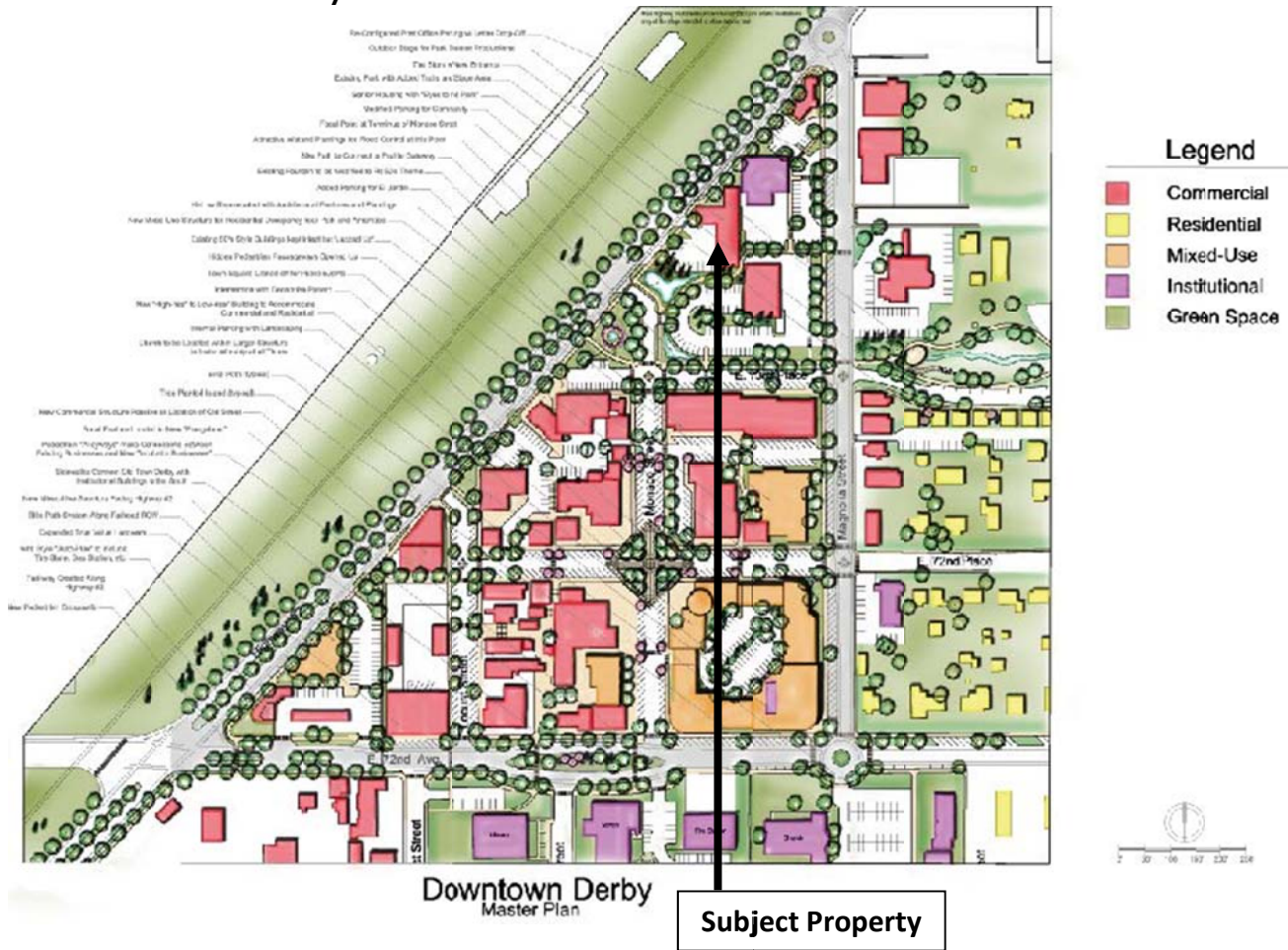
Denial Catalyst Fund Motion: “I move that the Derby Review Board **deny** the use of catalyst funds.”

Attachments

Please see the following pages for illustrations and plans of the proposed project which include:

- Location within the Derby Downtown District
- Aerial view of site

Location within the Derby Downtown District:



Aerial view of site:

