



SIGN VARIANCE REQUEST REVIEW

Date: November 9, 2022

Project: Mercer Steet Warehouse District
330 & 304 Mercer Street
Dripping Springs, TX 78620

Applicant: Dean Erickson, Carter Core Fund

Submittals: Variance Application
 Sign Permit Application
 Master Signage Plan (if applicable)
 Planned Develop District/Development Agreement Signage Regulations (if applicable)

Variance Requests: Allow an off-premises pole sign.

The following review has been conducted for the City of Dripping Springs to determine compliance and consistency with the City of Dripping Springs CODE OF ORDINANCES, Title 2 BUILDING AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS, Chapter 26 SIGNS, Article 26.03.003 VARIANCES

The Mercer Street Warehouse District is comprised of several parcels located at 330 Mercer Street. The development has an existing nonconforming pole sign that identifies the businesses in the Mercer Street Warehouse District development (see photo below). The pole sign was granted a variance.

The applicant installed a pedestrian walkway through the parcel located at 304 Mercer Street in cooperation with the owner of the parcel after a small storage building was removed from the property. On this parcel next to the walkway is a nonconforming pole sign structure that has not been used for many years. The applicant wishes to use this structure to identify businesses located on the adjacent lots that make up the Mercer Street Warehouse District, as well as the short term rental on the parcel. Pole signs are prohibited types of business signs for such use and a variance is required to allow one (Section 26.01.004 Prohibited Signs, B. 17). A variance is also required to allow an off-premises sign (Section 26.01.004 Prohibited Signs, B. 4).

A monument sign could be installed at 304 Mercer Street where the pole sign is proposed. A monument sign for a single business can be up to 32 square feet and 6 feet in height, and a monument sign for a multi-unit complex can be up to 48 square feet and 6 feet in height.

4 directional signs could also be installed on the Mercer Street Warehouse District property or at 304 Mercer Street:

Directional signs, up to four signs on a property where the sign is for providing direction to commercial use and may include the logo or name of business but shall not be taller than four feet in height and the sign area shall not be more than four square feet. These signs may be pole, wall, or monument signs. (Section 26.01.005 Authorized Signs Without a Separate Permit. (13))

The proposed pole sign is approximately 20 square feet and 14 feet and 2 inches tall. The applicant would like the ability to add one tenant sign panel for the short term rental, if needed.

Currently, several businesses use daily display signs and place them near the proposed pole sign (see photo below). The applicant has agreed verbally to restricting businesses identified on the proposed pole sign from using a daily display sign near the proposed pole sign (they could continue to be used directly in front of the businesses).

The variance requests relate to the consideration for granting variances as follows:

Considerations in granting variances (Sec. 26.03.003 (e))

(1) Special or unique hardship because of the size or shape of the property on which the sign is to be located, or the visibility of the property from public roads.

Applicable Not Applicable

The Mercer Street Warehouse District is comprised of two parcels, one not being adjacent to the street. The most direct access to some of the businesses is through the walkway on 304 Mercer. Most of the businesses' wall signs are not visible from Mercer Street. Visibility of a monument sign in the proposed pole sign location would usually be blocked by parked vehicles during business hours.

(2) Hardship claim based on the exceptional topographic conditions or physical features uniquely affecting the property on which a sign is to be located.

Applicable Not Applicable

Large trees block visibility of most of the businesses' wall signs.

(3) Proposed sign location, configuration, design, materials and colors are harmonious with the hill country setting.

Applicable Not Applicable

Proposed signage and pole are primarily black and white.

(4) Natural colors (earth tones) and muted colors are favored. Color schemes must be compatible with the surrounding structures. Predominate use of bold and/or bright colors is discouraged under this section.

Applicable Not Applicable

(5) The sign and its supporting structure should be in architectural harmony with the surrounding structures.

Applicable Not Applicable

(6) Mitigation measures related to the sign in question or other sign on the same premises.

Applicable Not Applicable

Proposed sign is smaller in sign area than what could be allowed. Applicant is willing to prohibit daily display signs from area near the pole sign.

(7) Demonstrated and documented correlation between the variance and protecting the public health and safety.

Applicable Not Applicable

(8) The stage at which the variance is requested. The city will be more inclined to consider a variance request when it is sought during an earlier stage of the construction approval process, for instance, when the responsible party is submitting/obtaining a plat, planned development district, development agreement, or site plan.

Applicable Not Applicable

(9) Whether the sign could have been included in a master signage plan. Master signage plans are highly encouraged. The city will be more inclined to favorably consider a variance request when the variance is part of a master signage plan. There will be a presumption against granting variances piecemeal, ad hoc, on a case-by-case basis when the sign for which a variance is sought could have been included in a master sign plan and considered in the course of a comprehensive review of the entire project's signage.

Applicable Not Applicable

(10) The sign administrator may authorize the remodeling, renovation, or alternation of a sign when some nonconforming aspect of the sign is thereby reduced.

Applicable Not Applicable

Approval and Conditions

In my opinion, the proposed pole sign meets many of the considerations for granting a variance and further mitigation measures should be required. I recommend approval of the variance requests with the following conditions:

Daily display signs for the businesses identified on the pole sign shall not be displayed adjacent to Mercer Street and near the pole sign;

The building located at 304 Mercer Street may have a small tenant panel on the pole sign;

The pole sign shall not be illuminated; and

No other permanent free standing signs shall be allowed at 304 Mercer Street and 330 Mercer Street in addition to the existing pole sign and the proposed pole sign; and

No directional signs shall be allowed at 304 Mercer Street and 330 Mercer Street for the businesses identified on the pole sign.

Please let me know if you have any questions about this report.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michelle Fischer
Sign Administrator



