

HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

December 18, 2024

HDRC CASE NO: 2024-398
ADDRESS: 1331 SE MILITARY DR
LEGAL DESCRIPTION: NCB 7676 BLK LOT 31
ZONING: C-3, H
CITY COUNCIL DIST.: 3
DISTRICT: Mission Historic District
APPLICANT: George Rodriguez
OWNER: SAN ANTONIO DIAMOND DEVELOPMENT LLC
TYPE OF WORK: Signage
APPLICATION RECEIVED: November 14, 2024
60-DAY REVIEW: January 13, 2025
CASE MANAGER: Bryan Morales
REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for approval to install signage at 1331 SE Military Dr. Within this request, the applicant has proposed the following:

1. Install one (1), internally illuminated cabinet sign to read “BEER N’ ALL” to be located on the front façade. The proposed signage will feature an overall width of 6’11” and height of 6’. The total size of the sign will be approximately 42 square feet.
2. Install one (1), internally illuminated cabinet sign to read “DRIVE-THRU MARGARITAS – MARGARITAS – DAIQURIS – MICHELADAS – SHOTS – CHAMOY SNACKS” to be located on the front façade. The proposed signage will feature an overall width of 41’6” and an overall height of 5’5”. The total size of the sign will be approximately 210 square feet.
3. Install one (1), internally illuminated cabinet sign to read “MARGARITA DRIVE-THRU” to be located under the previously approved refaced pole sign. The proposed signage will feature an overall width of 7’2” and an overall height of 3’8”. The total size of the sign will be approximately 56 square feet.

APPLICABLE CITATIONS:

Historic Design Guidelines, Chapter 6, Guidelines for Signage

1. General

A. GENERAL

- i. Number and size*—Each building will be allowed one major and two minor signs. Total requested signage should not exceed 50 square feet.
- ii. New signs*—Select the type of sign to be used based on evidence of historic signs or sign attachment parts along the building storefront where possible. Design signs to respect and respond to the character and/or period of the area in which they are being placed. Signs should identify the tenant without creating visual clutter or distracting from building features and historic districts.
- iii. Scale*—Design signage to be in proportion to the facade, respecting the building’s size, scale and mass, height, and rhythms and sizes of window and door openings. Scale signage (in terms of its height and width) to be subordinate to the overall building composition.

B. HISTORIC SIGNS

- i. Preservation*—Preserve historic signs, such as ghost signs or other signs characteristic of the building’s or district’s period of significance, whenever possible.
- ii. Maintenance*—Repair historic signs and replace historic parts in-kind when deteriorated beyond repair.

C. PLACEMENT AND INSTALLATION

- i. Location*—Place signs where historically located and reuse sign attachment parts where they exist. Do not erect signs above the cornice line or uppermost portion of a facade wall, or where they will disfigure or conceal architectural details, window openings, doors, or other significant details.
- ii. Obstruction of historic features*—Avoid obscuring historic building features such as cornices, gables, porches, balconies, or other decorative elements with new signs.

iii. *Damage*—Avoid irreversible damage caused by installing a sign. For example, mount a sign to the mortar rather than the historic masonry. iv. *Pedestrian orientation*—Orient signs toward the sidewalk to maintain the pedestrian oriented nature of the historic districts.

D. DESIGN

i. *Inappropriate materials*—Do not use plastic, fiberglass, highly reflective materials that will be difficult to read, or other synthetic materials not historically used in the district.

ii. *Appropriate materials*—Construct signs of durable materials used for signs during the period of the building's construction, such as wood, wrought iron, steel, aluminum, and metal grill work.

iii. *Color*—Limit the number of colors used on a sign to three. Select a dark background with light lettering to make signs more legible.

iv. *Typefaces*—Select letter styles and sizes that complement the overall character of the building façade. Avoid hard-to-read or overly intricate styles.

E. LIGHTING

i. *Lighting sources*—Use only indirect or bare-bulb sources that do not produce glare to illuminate signs. All illumination shall be steady and stationary. Internal illumination should not be used.

ii. *Neon lighting*—Incorporate neon lighting as an integral architectural element or artwork appropriate to the site, if used.

F. PROHIBITED SIGNS

i. An abbreviated list of the types of signs prohibited within San Antonio's historic districts and on historic landmarks is provided below. Refer to UDC Section 35- 612(j) and Chapter 28 of the Municipal Code for more detailed information on prohibited signs.

- Billboards, junior billboards, portable signs, and advertising benches.
- Pole signs.
- Revolving signs or signs with a kinetic component.
- Roof mounted signs, except in the case of a contributing sign.
- Digital and/or LED lighted signs, not to include LED light sources that do not meet the definition of a sign.
- Moored balloons or other floating signs that are tethered to the ground or to a structure.
- Any sign which does not identify a business or service within the historic district or historic landmark.
- Any non-contributing sign which is abandoned or damaged beyond 50 percent of its replacement value, including parts of old or unused signs.
- Notwithstanding the above, signs designated as a contributing sign or structure by the historic preservation officer shall not be prohibited unless or until such designation is revoked.

G. MULTI-TENANT PROPERTIES

i. *Signage Plan*—Develop a master signage plan or signage guidelines for the total building or property.

ii. *Directory signs*—Group required signage in a single directory sign to minimize visual color and promote a unified appearance.

3. Projecting and Wall-Mounted Signs

A. GENERAL

i. *Mounting devices*—Construct sign frames and panels that will be used to be attach signs to the wall of a building of wood, metal, or other durable materials appropriate to the building's period of construction.

ii. *Structural supports*—Utilize sign hooks, expansion bolts, or through bolts with washers on the inside of the wall depending upon the weight and area of the sign, and the condition of the wall to which it is to be attached.

iii. *Appropriate usage*—Limit the use of projecting and wall-mounted signs to building forms that historically used these types of signs, most typically commercial storefronts. To a lesser degree, these signage types may also be appropriate in areas where residential building forms have been adapted for office or retail uses, if sized accordingly.

B. PROJECTING SIGNS

i. *Placement*—Mount projecting signs perpendicularly to a building or column while allowing eight feet of overhead clearance above public walkways.

ii. *Public right-of-way*—Limit the extension of projecting signs from the building facade into the public right-of-way for a maximum distance of eight feet or a distance equal to two-thirds the width of the abutting sidewalk, whichever distance is greater.

iii. *Area*—Projecting signs should be scaled appropriately in response to the building façade and number of tenants.

C. WALL-MOUNTED SIGNS

i. *Area*—Limit the aggregate area of all wall-mounted signs to twenty-five percent of a building facade.

ii. *Projection*—Limit the projection of wall-mounted signs to less than twelve inches from the building wall.

- iii. *Placement*—Locate wall signs on existing signboards—the area above the storefront windows and below the second story windows—when available. Mount wall signs to align with others on the block if an existing signboard is not available.
- iv. *Channel letters*—Avoid using internally-illuminated, wall-mounted channel letters for new signs unless historic precedent exists. Reverse channel letters may be permitted.

Mission Historic District Design Manual, Section 5: Guidelines for Signage

A. GENERAL

- i. *Provision* — Signage in the Mission Historic District should adhere to the Historic Design Guidelines unless amended by the following provisions for signage in this section of the Mission Manual.
- ii. *Sign types* — Use sign types that are appropriate to the character and context of the area principally along the Mission Historic District Primary Road Corridors. Sign types that are not listed as a preferred type in the table below will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

B. PAINTED SIGNS

- i. *Paint Colors* — Brightly painted buildings are acceptable within the historic district in accordance with common cultural traditions but must be approved on a case-by-case basis. Provide the HDRC with a description of the design concept, drawings of the proposed painting, and color samples. Painting should express the historic district's regional cultural theme. Brightly painted buildings must have surfaces such as masonry or stucco capable of accommodating heavy layering of paint over time. In general, buildings with wood exteriors are not considered appropriate for heavy and repeated commercial painting.
- ii. *Masonry Buildings* — Historic masonry buildings of brick or stone that are currently unpainted should not be painted. Signage can be painted onto masonry buildings that have been previously painted.
- iii. *Lettering* — Painted content including lettering and graphics may be included in the overall painting scheme. The area of lettering and graphics should comply with the allowable size standards for wall mounted signs.
- iv. *Murals* — Painted murals on the blank side walls of existing buildings are generally acceptable as a form of public art. Murals are similar to painted masonry signs and are a means of enlivening the streetscape. Painted buildings, signage, and murals should be painted by professional artists experienced in mural design and execution. Masonry paint specifically made for the building surfaces and exterior conditions should be used. Signage and branding within murals will contribute to the overall signage square footage.
- v. *Painted Window Signs* — Painted window signs are acceptable within the historic district in accordance with common cultural and community traditions. Painted window signs should relate to the primary historic structure and/or existing branding in their color and art style. Painted window signs may include the business name, artful depictions of products and services, slogan branding, and/or seasonal decor. Painted window signs should be well maintained and reapplied as necessary. Signage and branding within windows will contribute to the overall signage square footage.

C. FREESTANDING SIGNS

- i. *Artistic Signs* — Consider using smaller signs, artistic signs, and signs that add to the architectural character of the building they serve. Exceptions to allowed materials, size, lighting, and mounting mechanism noted in this section of the Mission Manual may be considered based on the merit of the design of the artistic sign.
- ii. *Post-and-panel and Flag-Mounted Signs* — Post-and-panel and flag-mounted signs are often appropriate for businesses with front lawns or landscape buffers between streetscapes and pedestrian walkways. These types of freestanding signs should feature wood posts and should be distinguished from generic metal pylon signs. Single-post signs should be displayed in a flag mount configuration and should be distinguished from centered pole signs. Both sides of these types of signs will contribute to the overall square footage of signage allotted per property.
- iii. *Monument Signs* — Monument signage should have a horizontal orientation to reduce streetscape clutter; although vertical orientations are appropriate within scale to the adjacent building or development. Monumental signs are typically constructed with a base and a signage area attached or suspended perpendicular to base shafts or supports. The base should be constructed or faced with regionally sourced sandstone or limestone of different shades and colors. The signage area may be fabricated in wood or metal. Lettering may be painted, carved, or applied. Do not use suburban-style backlit monument signs or electronic messaging signs within historic contexts that are not historically found in San Antonio's historic districts.
- iv. *Monument Sign Area* — For single tenant monument signs, no single sign shall exceed 50 square feet in total area (including structural components of the sign), both sides counted. For example, a single tenant monument sign may be five feet tall and five feet wide. A wider monument sign would require a reduction in overall height. Multi-tenant signs shall not exceed 80 square feet in total area using the same standards above.

v. *Height* — Freestanding signs should accommodate pedestrians in their height. Sign heights are limited by their types in the table below. Sign height is measured from grade to the highest feature on the entire sign structure.

D. LIGHTING

i. *Indirect Lighting* — Use of indirect or concealed lighting of sign surfaces where the source of lighting is not visible to observers is encouraged. Light fixtures providing indirect lighting to a sign surface, awning, or portion of the building may be observable and should be of high quality, for exterior use and exposure, and considered part of the overall design of the sign and the facade.

ii. *Surface Wall-Neon Lighting* — Surface wall mounted, projecting, and window neon signs are appropriate for use particularly when of high quality and artistic design. Neon lighting, when used, should be incorporated as an integral architectural element of the building.

iii. *Lighting of Freestanding Signs* — Externally light freestanding signs using landscape lighting or gooseneck lighting.

E. DIGITAL PROJECTIONS

i. *General* — Digital projections are not found historically and will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Projections are an appropriate alternative to traditional signage when structures have large uninterrupted wall planes featuring historic material like stucco or unpainted masonry.

ii. *Signage Design* — Digital projections should relate to the primary historic structure and/ or existing branding in their color and art style. Displays of signage and branding within the projections will contribute to the overall signage square footage. Projections may include the business name, artful depictions of products and services, and slogan branding. Messaging that is temporary in nature including prices, sales, or specials are prohibited. The design of the projections should not distract from the character of the building it is projected on or interfere with traffic in its vicinity.

FINDINGS:

- a. The property located at 1331 SE Military is a 1-story commercial structure that first appears on the 1983 Historic Aerial Map. It features two rolling garage doors and a flat roof. This property contributes to the Mission Historic District.
- b. VIOLATION – On December 6, 2024, staff confirmed the requested signage had been installed prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness.
- c. ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVAL – The top pole sign reface referenced in the applicant’s signage package is eligible for administrative approval and is not part of this request.
- d. SIGNAGE (SIZE) – The applicant is requesting approval for signage approximately 308 sf in size not including the refaced sign measuring approximately 96 sf. The Historic Design Guidelines for Signage 1.A.i. states total requested signage should not exceed 50 square feet. Staff finds the total size of the proposed signage does not conform to Guidelines.
- e. SIGNAGE (MATERIALS) – The applicant is requesting approval for three internally illuminated acrylic signs. Signage 1.D.i. states to not use synthetic materials not historically used in the historic district. Signage 1.D.ii. states to construct signs of durable materials used for signs during the period of the building’s construction, such as wood, wrought iron, steel, aluminum, and metal grill work. Staff finds the use of acrylic does not conform to Guidelines.
- f. SIGNAGE (LIGHTING) – The applicant is requesting approval for three internally illuminated acrylic signs. Signage 1.E.i. states to use only indirect or bare-bulb sources that do not produce glare to illuminate signs and internal illumination should not be used. Staff finds the use of internal illumination does not conform to Guidelines.

RECOMMENDATION:

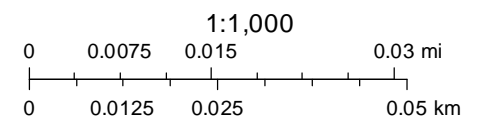
Staff does not recommend approval. The following modifications are necessary to conform with the design guidelines:

- i. That the applicant reduce the total square footage of proposed signage to 50 sf or less.
- ii. That the applicant incorporate durable materials for the requested signage as noted in finding e.
- iii. That the applicant incorporate external lighting as noted in finding f.

City of San Antonio One Stop



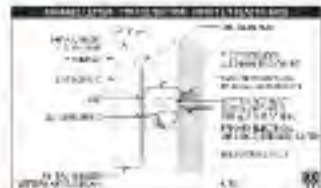
December 11, 2024





FRONT-LIT CLOUD SIGN

FACES: WHITE ACRYLIC 3/16"
 VINYL: DIGITAL PRINT
 TRIMCAP: 1" JEWELITE / BLACK
 RETURN: .040 BLACK (5" DEEP)
 ILLUMINATION: WHITE LED
 RACEWAY: 7" X 7" PAINTED TO
 MATCH WALL COLOR



CLOUD 1 W: 243" H: 52"

CLOUD 2 W: 255" H: 65"



LOGO

W: 83" H: 72"

Drive-Thru Margaritas

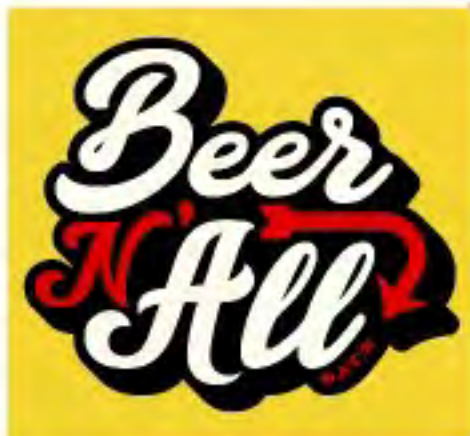
MARGARITAS - DAIQUIRIS - MICHELADAS - SHOTS

CHAMOY SNACKS

CAPSULE W: 332" H: 17"

CAPSULE

W: 127" H: 17"



SIZE
W: 86" H: 80"



SIZE
W: 86" H: 44"

REFACE

FACES: WHITE

VINYL: DIGITAL PRINT



Height 20 Ft

Width 135 Ft

Total Facade

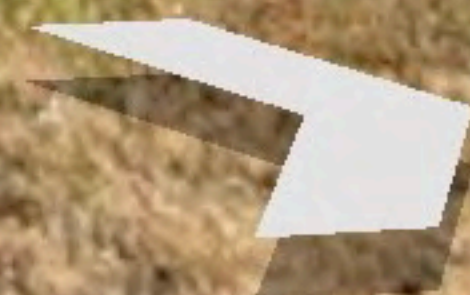
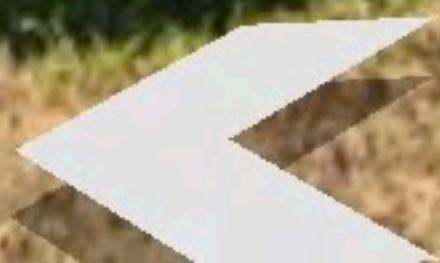
2,700 sq Ft

X-13 Loop



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