

# HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

December 06, 2023

**HDRC CASE NO:** 2023-457  
**ADDRESS:** 819 S LAREDO ST  
**LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** NCB 311 BLK 1 LOT 6, 10,11, 12, S 61.74 FT OF 5 & SW IRR 5.0 FT OF 9  
**ZONING:** C-3NA, RIO-7D  
**CITY COUNCIL DIST.:** 1  
**APPLICANT:** Jacob Landin/KOTEL INVESTMENTS INC  
**OWNER:** Jacob Landin/KOTEL INVESTMENTS INC  
**TYPE OF WORK:** Signage  
**APPLICATION RECEIVED:** November 08, 2023  
**60-DAY REVIEW:** January 07, 2024  
**CASE MANAGER:** Edward Hall

## REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for approval to:

1. Install a vinyl wall sign to feature an overall width of 18' – 0" and an overall height of 11' – 0" for a total size of 198 square feet. This sign will not be lit.
2. Install vinyl door graphics on the front entrance doors.

## APPLICABLE CITATIONS:

Unified Development Code Section 35-678, Signs and Billboards in the RIO.

### (a) General Provisions.

- (1) This section governs all exterior signs and all interior signs hung within ten (10) feet of an exterior fenestration, or those signs intended to be read by exterior patrons.
  - A. All signage within an RIO district shall conform to all city codes and must have approval of the historic preservation officer prior to installation.
  - B. Permits must be obtained following approval of a certificate of appropriateness.
  - C. No sign shall be painted, constructed, erected, remodeled, refaced, relocated, expanded or otherwise altered until it has been approved and a permit has been obtained from the development services department in accordance with the provisions of this section and applicable city code.
  - D. Signs, visual displays or graphics shall advertise only the business on the premises unless otherwise allowed in this section.
  - E. Temporary displays for permitted events are authorized if in accordance with chapter 28 of the City Code of San Antonio, Texas.
- (2) When reviewing applications for signage the historic preservation officer and the historic and design review commission shall consider the visual impact on nearby historic resources.
  - A. Signs should respect and respond to the environment and landmark or district character in which constructed.
  - B. Signs should respect and respond to the river improvement overlay districts character and the historic Riverwalk.
  - C. The content or advertising message carried by permitted signs shall pertain to the business located on the same premises as the sign or to any otherwise lawful noncommercial message that does not direct attention to a business operated for profit, or to a commodity or service for sale, provided that signs erected on buildings with multiple businesses within shall pertain to any such business within.
- (3) For signs with changeable message panels, the changeable message area of the sign shall not exceed twenty-five (25) percent of the total sign area, except for gasoline price signs which shall not exceed seventy-five (75) percent of the total sign area. Electronic changeable message boards shall be prohibited.
- (4) The name of a business may be changed through the administrative approval process if the sign conforms to the provisions of this section, and if the color, size, and style of lettering, and illumination of the sign remain the same.

- (5) Provisions under this section shall comply with chapter 28 of the City Code of San Antonio, Texas. In cases where provisions under this section are stricter or a sign is designated as a contributing structure, then this section shall control.
  - (6) Special consideration should be given to the character of the sign itself proposed in the application, and whether the proposed sign has inherently historic characteristics which may fall outside of the guidelines presented below but which would contribute to the historic district, landmark or area for which it is being proposed. Additionally, when reviewing applications for signage the historic preservation officer and the historic and design review commission shall consider the visual impact on nearby historic resources.
  - (7) Memorials, markers, naming rights of public property, and recognition of charitable donations given to the City of San Antonio shall be additionally governed by any formal action passed by city council.
- (b) Sign Definitions. For signage definitions, refer to subsection 35-612(b) and chapter 28 of the City Code.
- (c) Standards for Sign Design and Placement. In considering whether to recommend approval or disapproval of an application to construct or alter signage on a building, object, site, or structure in a river improvement overlay district, review shall be guided by the following standards in addition to any specific design guidelines approved by city council.
- (1) Primary sign design considerations shall be identification and legibility. Size, scale, height, color and location of signs shall be harmonious with, and properly related to, the overall character of the district and structure. Sign materials shall be compatible with that of the building facade. Highly reflective materials that will be difficult to read are not permitted.
  - (2) Signs which describe, point, or direct the reader to a specific place or along a specific course, such as "entrance," "exit," and "disabled persons access," as well as government signs, shall be reviewed but shall not be included in total allowable signage area. Emergency signs shall be exempt from historic and design review commission approval.
  - (3) All graphic elements shall reinforce the architectural integrity of any building. Signs shall not disfigure, damage, mar, alter, or conceal architectural features or details and shall be limited to sizes that are in scale with the architecture and the streetscape. Emblems and symbols of identification used as principal structural or architectural design elements on a facade shall not be included in the total allowable signage per facade per structure when approved. Review shall be guided by the building's proportion and scale when such elements are incorporated.
  - (4) Graphics and signage may be illuminated by indirect, internal, or bare-bulb sources, providing that glare is not produced; by indirect light sources concealed by a hood or diffuser; by internal illumination with standard opal glass or other translucent material or with an equal or smaller light transmission factor. All illumination shall be steady and stationary. Neon lighting shall be permitted when used as an integral architectural element or artwork appropriate to the site. For purposes of this subsection, "Glare" shall mean an illumination level of six (6) Lux or greater at the property boundary. If internal illumination is used, it shall be designed to be subordinate to the overall building composition. Light fixtures should reflect the design period of the building on which they are placed. The use of ambient light from storefront or streetlights is encouraged.
  - (5) Signage requests for multi-tenant buildings must complement existing signage with regards to size, number, placement and design, unless such existing signage is not in conformity with regulations in this article. It is recommended that the building owner or their agent develop a master signage plan or signage guidelines for the total building or property. If a property has an approved master signage plan on file with the historic preservation officer, then applications for signage may be approved administratively at the discretion of the historic preservation officer provided that they comply with such master signage plan. Notwithstanding the above, signs may not exceed the maximum size and height limitation of signage contained in chapter 28, article 9.
- (d) Proportion of Signs. For all signage, signage width and height must be in proportion to the facade, respecting the size, scale and mass of the facade, building height, and rhythms and sizes of window and door openings. The building facade shall be considered as part of an overall sign program but the sign shall be subordinate to the overall building composition. Additionally, signs shall respect and respond to the character and/or period of the area in which they are being placed.
- (e) Number and Size of Signs.
- (1) Number and Size. The historic and design review commission shall be guided in its decisions by the total number of businesses or services per building and the percentage of visible storefront occupied by each business or service. Applicants may apply for up to three (3) signs total. Total signage for all applicants shall not exceed fifty (50) square feet unless additional signs and/or additional total footage is approved. Additional square footage may be approved provided that the additional signage is in conformity with, and

does not interfere with, the pedestrian experience on the Riverwalk. The additional square footage shall be based upon the size and scope of the site. Signs should reflect the type and speed of traffic they are meant to attract. Signs designed for pedestrians and drivers of slow moving cars should not be the same size as signs designed for highway traffic.

- (2) Sign Area. The sign area shall be determined in the following manner:
  - A. Sign Areas. The area of a sign shall be computed on the actual area of the sign. Sign area shall be calculated as the area within a parallelogram, triangle, circle, semicircle or other regular geometric figure including all letters, figures, graphics or other elements of the sign, together with the framework or background of the sign. The supporting framework of the sign shall not be included in determining sign area unless such supporting framework forms an integral part of the sign display, as determined by the historic preservation officer. If the sign is located on a decorative fence or wall, when such fence or wall otherwise meets these or other ordinances or regulations and is clearly incidental to the display itself, the fence or wall shall not be included in the sign area. In the cases of signs with more than one (1) sign face, including but not restricted to double-faced signs, back-to-back signs, overhanging signs, and projecting signs, each side of the sign shall be included in total allowable signage area.
  - B. Channel Letter Signs. For channel letter signs, the sign area shall be the smallest rectangle that will encompass the limits of the writing, including spaces between the letters. Each advertising message shall be considered separately.
- (3) Building Identification Signs. An additional building identification sign may be placed on a building with multiple tenants, if the building name is not the same as the business(s) housed within and such sign is recommended for approval by the historic and design review commission. This type of sign is to identify a building as a destination, shall not exceed thirty-two (32) square feet, shall not be included in the total allowable signage area, and shall not include names of individual businesses.
- (4) Freestanding Signs. Freestanding signs are allowed provided the sign does not interfere with pedestrian or vehicular traffic. Freestanding signs shall be perpendicular to the street, two-sided and no taller than six (6) feet. Freestanding signs shall not be located in the right-of-way.
  - A. Projecting Arm Signs. Signs hung from poles are allowed. Pole height shall not exceed six (6) feet and the pole diameter shall not exceed three (3) inches. Blade signs are not allowed to project over a sidewalk or other right-of-way.

## **FINDINGS:**

- a. The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for approval to install signage at 819 S Laredo. This property is located within the River Improvement Overlay, District 7D.
- b. ALLOWABLE SIGNAGE – The Unified Development Code recommends one major and two minor signs per application, not to exceed fifty (50) square feet total. The Commission may approve additional signage and square footage.
- c. PERMANENT SIGNAGE – Staff finds the proposed signage to be temporary in nature and inconsistent with the goals and objectives UDC's standards for the River Improvement Overlay. Staff finds that signage that features metal, wood or glass construction would be more appropriate.
- d. WALL SIGN – The applicant has proposed to install a vinyl wall sign to feature an overall width of 18' – 0" and an overall width of 11' – 0" for a total size of 198 square feet. This sign will not be lit. Staff finds the proposed wall sign to be inconsistent with the UDC, which recommends signage not exceed more than fifty (50) square feet. Staff recommends the wall sign be reduced in size to be consistent with the UDC.
- e. DOOR GRAPHICS – The applicant has proposed to install vinyl door graphics on the front entrance doors. Generally, staff finds the proposed graphics to be appropriate.

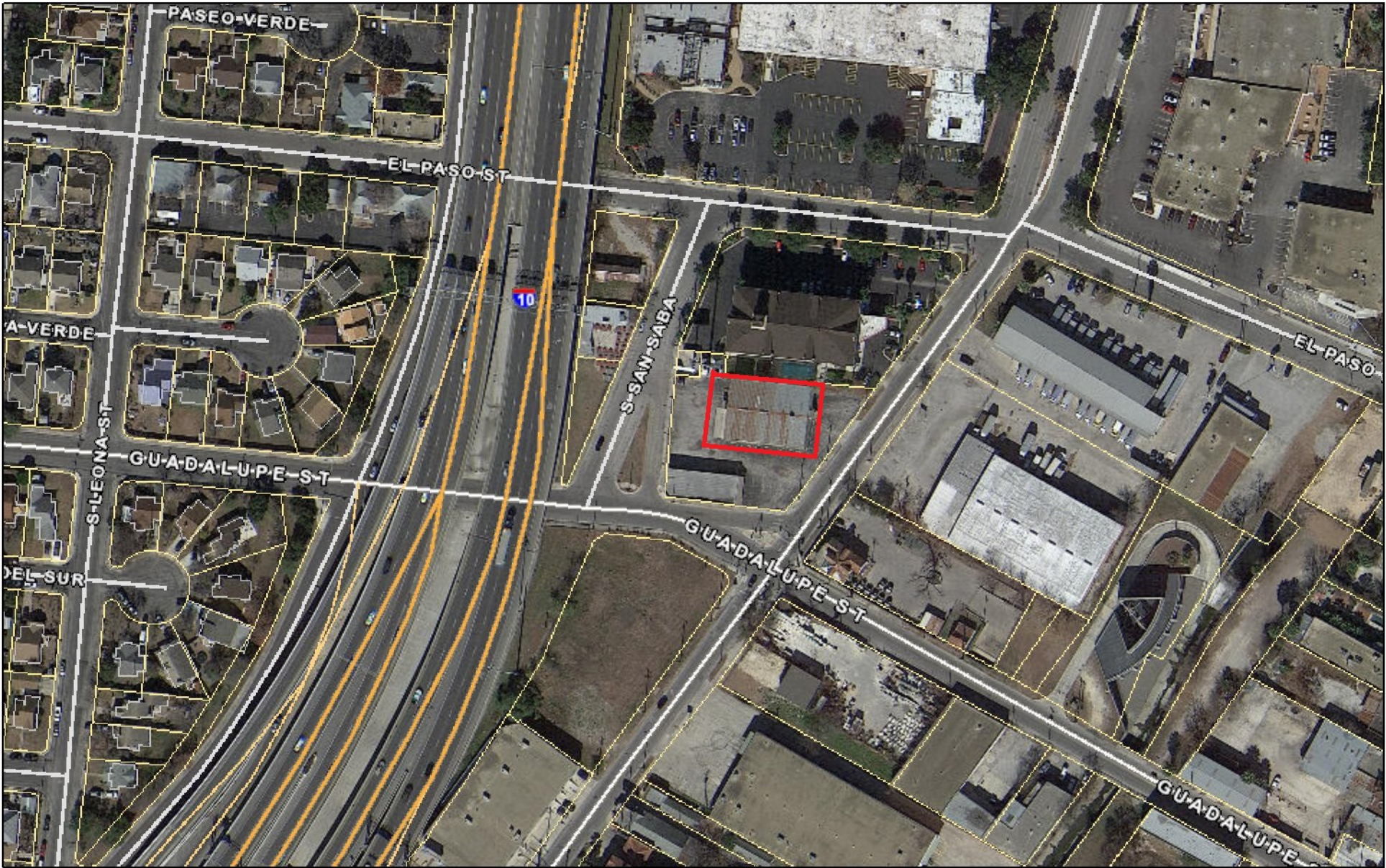
## **RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of items #1 and #2 based on findings a through d with the stipulation that total signage on site, including door graphics not exceed more than fifty (50) square feet. Staff recommends this on a temporary basis, not to exceed six (6) months from the date of HDRC approval. Additionally, staff recommends permanent signage be designed and submitted for review that features metal, wood or glass construction.

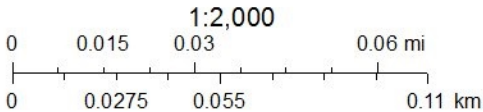
This will require the removal and resizing of the installed vinyl wall sign.



City of San Antonio One Stop



November 29, 2023







823





S Varedo St

HQJ  
HOUSE OF JIU-JITSU

