

# HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

October 18, 2023

**HDRC CASE NO:** 2023-388  
**ADDRESS:** 1630 E HOUSTON ST  
**LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** NCB 577 BLK 16 LOT 8 & N 17 FT OF 9  
**ZONING:** C-2, H  
**CITY COUNCIL DIST.:** 2  
**DISTRICT:** Dignowity Hill Historic District  
**APPLICANT:** Terry Martin/A Dreamweaver Florist  
**OWNER:** BALDERRAMA JOHN R & JOHN P  
**TYPE OF WORK:** Signage  
**APPLICATION RECEIVED:** September 22, 2023

## 60-DAY REVIEW:

### REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for approval to install signage at 1630 E Houston Street, located within the Dignowity Hill Historic District. The proposed signage features an internally illuminated cabinet and vinyl door graphics.

### APPLICABLE CITATIONS:

*Historic Design Guidelines, Chapter 6, Guidelines for Signage*

#### 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.

## FINDINGS:

- a. The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for approval to install signage at 1630 E Houston Street, located within the Dignowity Hill Historic District. The proposed signage features an internally illuminated cabinet and vinyl door graphics.
- b. PREVIOUS REVIEW – The installation of an internally illuminated cabinet and channel letters was reviewed by the Historic and Design Review Commission on May 19, 2021. That request was referred to the Design Review Committee.
- c. DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE – The applicant did not attend a Design Review Committee meeting in 2021. A second Design Review Committee meeting was scheduled in September 2023. The applicant did not attend that meeting.
- d. VIOLATION – An unapproved cabinet sign and vinyl door graphics were installed between May 2021 and April 2022. The signage has neither a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Office of Historic Preservation nor a signage permit from Development Services Department.
- e. MASTER SIGNAGE PLAN – OHP staff recommends the development of a master signage plan to provide uniform signage for each tenant space at 1630 E Houston.
- f. ALLOWABLE SIGNAGE – The Historic Design Guidelines, Guidelines for Signage recommend no more than three signs per application (one major and two minor signs) to total no more than fifty (50) square feet.
- g. CABINET SIGN – The applicant has proposed to install an internally illuminated cabinet sign to feature a white, acrylic face. The proposed cabinet will feature an overall width of 8' – 0" and an overall height of 3' – 6", for a total size of approximately twenty-eight (28) square feet. Per the Guidelines for Signage, signage within historic districts should feature wood or metal construction and external illumination. The proposed cabinet is not consistent with the Guidelines.
- h. VINYL DOOR GRAPHICS – The applicant has proposed to install vinyl door graphics on both entry doors facing E Houston. Generally, staff finds these to be appropriate.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff does not recommend approval of the wall sign based on findings a through h. Staff recommends that the applicant propose signage that features metal construction, including metal faces and external illumination.

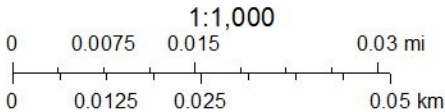
Staff recommends approval of the two vinyl door graphics.

Additionally, staff recommends the development of a master signage plan for the property that would result in uniform signage for each tenant space. The temporary wall sign and window graphic currently located within the storefront system have not been approved and have not been requested as part of this application. Staff recommends that this signage be removed or applied for.

City of San Antonio One Stop



October 11, 2023

















**FLORIST**

**A**

**Dreamweaver**

*"We Make Dreams Come True"*

**210-472-3080**