

**STAFF DESIGN COMMISSION REPORT**

**PROJECT INFORMATION:**

**Project Name:** Arlington Heights Promenade  
**Project Address:** 305-349 E. Rand Rd.  
**Prepared By:** Steve Hautzinger

**PETITIONER INFORMATION:**

**DC Number:** 15-133  
**Petitioner Name:** Robert Whitehead  
**Petitioner Address:** Olympic Signs  
 1130 N. Garfield  
 Lombard, IL 60148  
**Meeting Date:** December 8, 2015

**Date Prepared:** November 9, 2015

**Requested Action:**

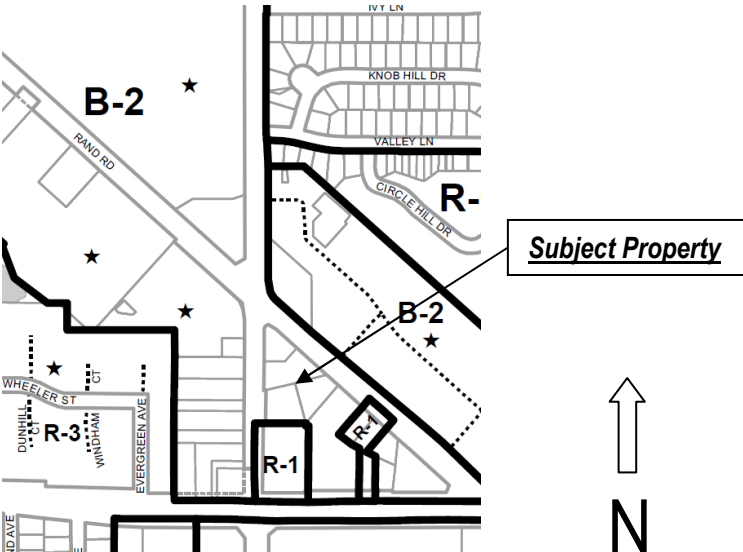
1. A variation from Chapter 30, section 30-302a, to allow two (2) ground signs with a separation distance of approximately 225 feet, where 600 feet of separation is required between ground signs on a through lot.
2. A variation from Chapter 30, section 30-303a, to allow a 12 foot tall ground sign, where 0 feet is allowed.
3. A variation from Chapter 30, section 30-303c, to allow a 48.3 sf ground sign, where 0 sf is allowed.

**SUMMARY**

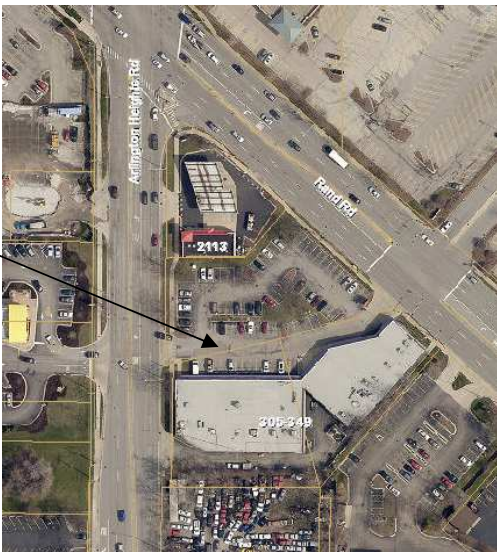
The subject design is being forwarded to the Design Commission for review pursuant to Chapter 6 of the Municipal Code, specifically Section 6-501 (e)(1), which states that the Design Commission "shall review all Plan Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, Building Permit and Sign Permit applications for new construction...to determine whether it meets with the standards, requirements and purposes of the Design Guidelines and Chapter 30, Sign Code."

The petitioner is proposing to install a new, multi-tenant ground sign facing Arlington Heights Road to serve the existing "Arlington Heights Promenade" multi-tenant retail center. The retail center is located near the intersection of Arlington Heights and Rand Road in the B-2, General Business zoning district. It has approximately 24,000 sf of retail space on a 1.67 acre (72,695 sf) site. The center currently has multiple retail tenants such as The UPS Store, Tropical Smoothie Café, Domino's Pizza, a shoe store, hair salon, and Family Christian book store.

In addition to the proposed new ground sign, there is an existing, ground sign on the site facing Rand Road. The petitioner has indicated that the existing ground sign facing Rand Road will be replaced with a new ground sign to match the size and design of the current sign proposal, for a total of two ground signs on the property. The property is a through lot, which allows one ground sign facing each street frontage if a minimum separation distance of 600 feet is provided. The proposed new sign will be approximately 225 feet from the existing sign, thereby requiring a variation to allow the proposed second sign.



Zoning Map of Property



Aerial of Property

**Table 1: Surrounding Land Uses:**

Direction	Existing Zoning	Existing Use
North	B-2, General Business District	Shell Gas Station Northpoint Shopping Center
South	R-1, One Family Dwelling District	Hillside Towing
East	B-2, General Business District	Pep Boys Automobile Service and Parts
West	B-2, General Business District	Annex of Arlington Shopping Center McDonald's Restaurant

**Table 2: Ground Sign Summary:**

Ground Sign	Frontage	Size Allowed	Existing/ Proposed Size	Height Allowed	Existing/ Proposed Height	Separation Distance Required	Proposed Separation Distance	Remarks
Existing Multi-Tenant Ground Sign	Rand Road	66 sf	72 sf / 48.3 sf	16'-6"	12'-0"	NA	NA	
Proposed Multi-Tenant Ground Sign	Arlington Heights Road	0 sf (80 sf if allowed)	<b>48.3 sf</b>	0' (16'-6" if allowed)	<b>12'-0"</b>	600'	<b>225'</b>	Variations required for separation, size, and height.
Total Proposed:			96.6 sf					

**Sign Variation Criteria:**

The Village Sign Code, Chapter 30, Section 30-901 sets out the criteria for granting a sign variation as follows:

- a. That the particular difficulty or peculiar hardship is not self-created by the Petitioner.
- b. That the granting of said variation shall not create a traffic hazard, a depreciation of nearby property values or otherwise be detrimental to the public health, safety, morals and welfare;
- c. That the variation will serve to relieve the Petitioner from a difficulty attributable to the location, topography, circumstances on nearby properties or other peculiar hardship, and will not merely serve to provide the Petitioner with a competitive advantage over similar businesses;
- d. That the variation will not alter the essential character of the locality;
- e. That the Petitioner's business cannot reasonably function under the standards of this Chapter.

The petitioner has submitted a letter addressing the hardship criteria, with highlights as follows:

- a. The sign is necessary to bring attention to the shopping since there is currently no signage facing Arlington Heights Road. The new sign will provide business identity to drivers heading north or south.
- b. The sign will not impact the vision of drivers since it conforms to the code setback requirements.
- c. The sign is designed with quality materials and will complement the surrounding properties.
- d. The sign complies with the maximum allowed size (based on Arlington Heights Road size & speed limit).
- e. The existing sign will be replaced with a new sign to match the proposed design.

## **ANALYSIS**

**Unique Circumstances:** The following is a summary of unique circumstances relative to this request.

- Through Lot (not a Corner Lot):
  - This property is close to the corner, but there is a gas station located in front of it creating a through lot.
  - The gas station blocks visibility from the street intersection.
  - The gas station prevents the opportunity to have a single ground sign at the corner of the site to capture both streets.
- Building Orientation:
  - Typical retail centers are set back from the road and oriented parallel to the street frontage to allow clear visibility of the retail storefronts and wall signs.
  - The Arlington Heights Promenade building is oriented perpendicular to the street frontage, so drivers heading north on Arlington Heights Road, and west on Rand Road, approach the back of the building with no visibility of the retail storefronts or wall signs.
  - The petitioner has reported that this lack of visibility is causing a hardship.
- Unique Street Angle & Site Layout:
  - Rand Road intersects Arlington Heights Road at an acute angle creating an unusual shaped property.
  - This is the only retail center in Arlington Heights with this unique layout.
  - The closest comparable property would be 2020 E. Northwest Highway which is on an angled street. However, the buildings are oriented towards Northwest Highway with greater visibility.
- Located on Major Roads, away from Residential:
  - Arlington Heights Road and Rand Road are both major arterial roads, where commercial signage is appropriate.
  - This retail center and the proposed signage is not adjacent to, or across from any residential neighborhoods which could be negatively impacted by the sign.
- Sign Size:
  - In this location, Arlington Heights Road has a 40 mph speed limit and a width greater than 66 feet, which would allow for an 80 sf ground sign.
  - The petitioner is proposing a more modestly sized 48.3 sf sign that is sized proportionate to the smaller size of their retail center, as compared to the adjacent larger shopping centers (as summarized in Table 4 below).
- Sign Quality:
  - The proposed sign is very nicely designed.
  - The quality sign design will enhance the overall appearance of this retail center, and it will contribute to the character of the locality.
- Existing Sign Replacement:
  - The existing sign facing Rand Road has a poor and dated appearance, and currently exceeds the allowable sign size.
  - The petitioner has agreed to replace the existing sign with a new code-compliant ground sign to match the size and design of the current sign proposal.

Staff feels that this sign variation request meets the criteria for granting a sign variation based on the above unique circumstances. As a condition of approval of the sign variation, it is recommended that the existing sign on Rand Road be replaced within approximately one year with a compliant sign not to exceed 49 sf and new landscaping.

**Comparison to Other Retail Centers:**

The separation requirement between ground signs is the only requirement which controls the quantity of ground signs allowed for small versus large retail centers. Tables 3 & 4 (below) summarize the quantity and sizes of ground signs at the adjacent larger retail centers as well as ground signs at many of the small to medium size retail centers throughout Arlington Heights.

**Table 3: Summary of Ground Signs at Similar Size Retail Centers throughout Arlington Heights:**

Retail Centers throughout Arlington Heights	Approximate Building Area	Approximate Site Area	Number / Approximate Size of Ground Signs
Arlington Heights Promenade, 305-349 E. Rand Road (angled street)	24,000 sf	1.7 acres	2 signs (requested), 48.3 sf each
Westgate Park & Shop, 1531-1711 W. Campbell St.	59,000 sf	4.4 acres	2 signs: 66 sf, 60 sf (variation approved in 2015 for 300 separation, with a 3 year time limit)
Arlington Towne Square, 15-89 W. Golf Road	90,300 sf	7.5 acres	1 sign, 80 sf
Clearbrook Plaza, 1801-1865 W. Central Road	44,500 sf	3.9 acres	1 sign, 60 sf
Pal-Win Plaza, 1401-1457 E. Palatine Road	43,500 sf	2.7 acres	1 sign, 37 sf
Terramere Plaza, 4202-4244 N. Arlington Heights Rd	43,500 sf	4.0 acres	1 sign, 46 sf
All American Plaza, 1802-1828 N. Arlington Heights Rd	37,500 sf	2.7 acres	1 sign, 66 sf
Go-Go Center, 606-660 E. Golf Road	35,250 sf	3.1 acres	1 sign, 78 sf
Esplanade, 2920-2964 W. Euclid Avenue	19,000 sf (plus 7,000 sf future)	4.4 acres	2 signs: 45 sf, 45 sf (variation approved in 2008 for 562'-10" separation)
2020 E. Northwest Highway (angled street)	16,500 sf	2.3 acres	3 signs: 79 sf, 24 sf, 80 sf (variation approved in 2012 for 300' & 432' separation)

\* Although most of these similar size retail centers have only one ground sign, all of the above (except Arlington Heights Promenade) have retail buildings oriented towards the street creating storefront visibility, and only Arlington Heights Promenade and 2020 E. Northwest Highway are on angled streets.

**Table 4: Comparison of proposed Ground Signs to Adjacent Retail Centers:**

Adjacent Larger Retail Centers	Approximate Building Area	Approximate Site Area	Number / Size of Ground Signs
<b>Arlington Heights Promenade</b>	24,000 sf	1.7 acres	2 signs requested: 48.3 sf each Total: 96.6 sf requested
Town & Country, 325-615 E. Palatine Rd.	325,603 sf	30.8 acres	3 signs: 66 sf, 66 sf, & 66 sf Total: 198 sf
Arlington Plaza, 134-278 W. Rand Rd.	276,800 sf	27.3 acres	1 sign: 80 sf
Northpoint, 304-470 E. Rand Rd.	264,206 sf	19.7 acres	3 signs: 64 sf, 80 sf, & 58 sf Total: 202 sf
Annex of Arlington, 1-115 W. Rand Rd.	193,175 sf	16.2 acres	2 signs: 80 sf, 80 sf Total: 160 sf

**Retaining Wall:**

As shown in Image 1 below, the condition of the existing retaining wall and landscaping at the location of the proposed new ground sign are in poor condition. It is recommended that these conditions be improved as a requirement of the approval of the sign variation request.



Image 1. Photo of existing conditions at the location of the proposed new ground sign.



**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Design Commission **approve** the requested sign variation for *Arlington Heights Promenade* located at 305-349 E. Rand Road. This recommendation is subject to compliance with the plans dated 7/31/15 and received 10/12/15, Federal, State, and Village Codes, regulations, and policies, the issuance of all required permits, and resolution of the following:

1. The existing ground sign facing Rand Road shall be replaced with a 49 sf, code compliant sign to match the new ground sign design no later than December 31, 2016.
2. The existing retaining wall along the west end of the parking lot shall be repaired, and the landscaping along the sidewalk shall be improved with a 3 foot high densely planted compact hedge designed to provide year round opacity.
3. This review deals with architectural design only and should not be construed to be an approval of, or to have any other impact on, any other zoning and/or land use issues or decisions that stem from zoning, building, signage or any other reviews. In addition to the normal technical review, permit drawings will be reviewed for consistency with the Design Commission and any other Commission or Board approval conditions. It is the architect/homeowner/builder's responsibility to comply with the Design Commission approval and ensure that building permit plans comply with all zoning code, building permit and signage requirements.

---

Steve Hautzinger AIA, Design Planner  
Department of Planning & Community Development

c: Charles Witherington-Perkins, Director of Planning and Community Development, Petitioner, DC File 15-133