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## Departure from Sign Design Standards

## DSDS 621

Application	General Data
<b>Project Name:</b> Capital Nissan  <b>Location:</b> North side of Annapolis Road approximately 371 feet east of 76 <sup>th</sup> Avenue, known as 7598 Annapolis Road.  <b>Applicant/Address:</b> Kyle Bach 3699 West Lathrop Street South Bend, Indiana 46628	Date Accepted: 4/30/04
	Planning Board Action Limit: NA
	Plan Acreage: 0.64
	Zone: C-M
	Dwelling Units: NA
	Square Footage: 146.25
	Planning Area: 69
	Tier: Developed
	Council District: 03
	Municipality: N/A
200-Scale Base Map: 206NE06	

Purpose of Application	Notice Dates
Departure from area requirements for a freestanding sign.	Adjoining Property Owners Previous Parties of Record Registered Associations: (CB-12-2003) 2/18/04
	Sign(s) Posted on Site: 09/28/04

Staff Recommendation		Staff Reviewer: Laxmi Srinivas	
APPROVAL	APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS	DISAPPROVAL	DISCUSSION
	X		

October 20, 2004

**TECHNICAL STAFF REPORT:**

TO: The Prince George's County Planning Board

VIA: Jimi Jones, Acting Zoning Supervisor

FROM: Laxmi Srinivas, Senior Planner

SUBJECT: **Departure from Sign Design Standards Application No. 612.**

REQUEST: **Departure to exceed the allowable area for the proposed freestanding sign.**

RECOMMENDATION: **Approval with conditions**

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NOTE: The Planning Board has scheduled this application for a public hearing on the agenda date indicated above. The Planning Board also encourages all interested persons to request to become a person of record in this application. Requests to become a person of record should be made in writing and addressed to the Development Review Division at the address indicated above. Please call 301-952-3530 for additional information.

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A. **Location and Field Inspection:** The subject property is located on the north side of Annapolis Road (MD 450), approximately 400 feet east of its intersection with 76<sup>th</sup> Avenue, known as 7598 Annapolis Road. The subject property comprises approximately 0.64 acres of land. Access to the property is from an entrance along Annapolis Road. The property is zoned C-M, and it has 168 feet of street frontage on Annapolis Road.

B. **Development Data Summary:**

	<b>EXISTING</b>	<b>PROPOSED</b>
Zone(s)	C-M	C-M
Use(s)	Auto dealership	Auto dealership
Acreage	0.64	0.64
Signs	1 freestanding (approved)	1 freestanding
Sign Area	60	146.25
Sign Height	25'	20'

C. **History:** On December 4, 1986, the Planning Board denied a departure from sign design standards application DSDS 327 for a 100-square-foot, 25-foot high, freestanding sign (PGCPB No. 86-493). On May 11, 1987, the District Council approved DSDS 327 with a condition of approval stating that the area of the sign shall not exceed 60 square feet in area.

D. **Master Plan Recommendation:** The 1994 Bladensburg-New Carrollton and Vicinity Master Plan retains the subject property in the C-M Zone. There are no master plan conformance issues and no specific sign guidelines that are pertinent to this property.

E. **Request:** The applicant is requesting relief from the sign ordinance to allow an area of 146.25 square feet for the proposed sign. The maximum permitted sign area is 42 square feet.

F. **Surrounding Uses:** The property is surrounded by the following uses:

North: Single-family residential uses in the R-55 Zone.

West: Gas Station in the C-2 Zone, single-family residential uses in the R-O-S Zone, and industrial office uses in the I-3 Zone.

South: Annapolis Road—commercial uses in the C-S-C Zone.

East: Auto dealership in the C-2 Zone.

G. **Sign Requirements:**

**Section 27-614(C)(3)(b), Freestanding Signs, allows a sign area of one square foot for each four (4) lineal feet of street frontage, to a maximum of two hundred (200) square feet for each sign, if the business is not located in an integrated shopping center. The street frontage will be measured on the property by the use associated with the sign.**

The proposed sign has a sign area of 50 square feet. The sign will be 8 feet in length and 6 foot 3 inches in width. The base of the sign consists of two 13-foot 9-inch by 3-foot 6-inch cladded columns. The area of the base of the sign is 96.25 square feet. The total area of the sign including the base is 146.25 square feet. The maximum allowable sign area is 42 square feet. The applicant is requesting a departure for the additional 104.25 square feet of sign area.

**Section 27-589 contains the following purposes for regulating signs:**

- (1) To promote the health, safety, and welfare of the present and future inhabitants of the Regional District.**
- (2) To encourage and protect the appropriate use of land, buildings, and structures.**
- (3) To regulate unsightly and detrimental signs which could depreciate the value of property and discourage quality development in the Regional District.**
- (4) To regulate signs which are a hazard to safe motor-vehicle operation.**
- (5) To eliminate structurally unsafe signs which endanger a building, structure, or the public.**
- (6) To prevent the proliferation of signs that could detract from the scenic qualities of the landscape or the attractiveness of development.**
- (7) To control the location and size of signs, so as to provide for adequate identification and advertisement in a manner that is compatible with land uses in the Regional District.**

The proposed is a freestanding sign with the corporate logo for Nissan. The sign will have light gray metal cladding. The base of the sign will consist of cladded metal posts with gray and red colors. The cladding for the base gives the appearance of a monument sign instead of a freestanding sign mounted on a pole. However, the large amount of metal cladding for the base columns is unnecessary. The proposed sign is only 50 square feet. The area of the base of the sign is 96.25 square feet. The sign can be supported by a maximum of four posts that are not cladded. Supporting the sign with four posts will substantially reduce the overall sign area and the monolithic appearance of the sign. The four posts can be red and gray to match the colors of the sign. The posts can either be circular (with a maximum diameter of two feet) or square (two feet by two feet). Conditions of approval have been added to require the above modifications to the sign. With the proposed conditions, the overall design of the sign will be subdued and compatible with the commercial use of the property. The sign will not attract undue attention, will provide for adequate identification and advertisement, and will be compatible with the overall streetscape along Annapolis Road. A condition of approval has also been added to require adequate landscaping along the base of the sign to enhance the appearance of the sign along the street.

**H. Required Findings:**

**(A) Section 27-239.01(b)(9) of the Zoning Ordinance provides that in order for the Planning Board to grant the departure, it shall make the following findings:**

- 1. The purposes of this Subtitle will be equally well or better served by the applicant's proposal.**

The applicant is requesting relief from the maximum allowable area requirements of Section 27-614, Freestanding Signs, of the Zoning Ordinance, which allows a maximum sign area of 42 square feet. The proposed sign area for the corporate logo and lettering is only 50 square feet, which exceeds the allowable sign area by only eight square feet. The additional

eight square feet for the sign is requested to accommodate the corporate logo for the sign and have a sign of adequate size that allows easy identification along Annapolis Road. An additional 96.25 square feet are requested for the cladded base of the sign. The large amount of additional sign area for the cladded base of the sign is not necessary. The sign can be supported by four posts instead of a monolithic cladded base.

In general, the purposes of the sign ordinance are to regulate unsightly and hazardous signs, to provide adequate identification and advertisement, to promote the general welfare of the residents of the county, and to foster the appropriate use of land, buildings and structures. The location, size and design of the proposed 50-square-foot sign area will provide adequate identification and advertisement for the car dealership along Annapolis Road. The monolithic base for the sign is not necessary and will attract undue attention to itself. Conditions of approval have been added to provide a maximum of four posts for the sign instead of a cladded base. The area of the recommended posts for the sign will not be included in the sign area.

With the proposed conditions, the purposes of this Subtitle will be equally well or better served by the applicant's proposal.

**2. The departure is the minimum necessary, given the specific circumstances of the request.**

The applicant is requesting a departure for an additional eight square feet for the sign to accommodate the corporate logo and lettering for the Nissan car dealership. The additional eight feet of sign area is necessary to provide adequate identification and advertisement for the property along a busy street like Annapolis Road. Therefore, the departure is the minimum necessary, given the specific circumstances of the request.

An additional 96.25 square feet is requested for the cladded base of the sign. The large amount of additional sign area for the cladded base of the sign is not necessary. The sign can be supported by four posts instead of a monolithic cladded base. Therefore, a departure for the cladded base will be excessive and will not be necessary.

**3. The departure is necessary in order to alleviate circumstances that are unique to the site or prevalent in areas of the county developed prior to November 29, 1949.**

Annapolis Road is a busy street. The proposed departure for an additional eight square feet is necessary to provide a sign of adequate size for easy identification. The sign will also help identify the entrance to the car dealership along Annapolis Road and ensure the safety of the motorists on the road. Therefore, the departure is necessary in order to alleviate circumstances that are unique to the site.

An additional 96.25 square feet is requested for the cladded base of the sign. The large amount of additional sign area for the cladded base of the sign is not necessary. The sign can be supported by four posts instead of a monolithic cladded base. Therefore, a departure for the cladded base will be excessive and will not be required to alleviate circumstances which are unique to the site.

**4. The departure will not impair the visual quality or integrity of the site or of the surrounding neighborhood.**

The proposed sign is a freestanding sign with the corporate logo for Nissan. The sign will have light gray metal cladding. The base of the sign will consist of cladded metal posts with gray and red colors. The cladding for the base gives the appearance of a monument sign instead of a freestanding sign mounted on a pole. However, the large amount of metal cladding for the base columns is unnecessary. The proposed sign is only 50 square feet. The area of the base of the sign is 96.25 square feet. The sign can be supported by a maximum of four posts that are not cladded. Supporting the sign with four posts will substantially reduce the overall sign area and the monolithic appearance of the sign. The four posts can be red and gray to match the colors of the sign. The posts can either be circular (with a maximum diameter of two feet) or square (two feet by two feet). Conditions of approval have been added to require the above modifications to the sign. With the proposed conditions, the overall design of the sign will be subdued and compatible with the commercial use of the property. The sign will not attract undue attention, will provide for adequate identification and advertisement, and will be compatible with the overall streetscape along Annapolis Road. A condition of approval has also been added to require adequate landscaping along the base of the sign to enhance the appearance of the sign along the street.

**I. Referral Comments:**

1. In a memorandum dated June 9, 2004, the Urban Design Review Section has stated that the design and color of the proposed sign is better than the design and color of the existing sign.
2. In a memorandum dated June 15, 2004, the State Highway Administration has stated that they have no objections to the departure from sign design standards application.
3. In a memorandum dated June 1, 2004, the Transportation Planning Section has stated that they have no comments regarding the subject application.
4. In a memorandum dated May 21, 2004, the Historic Preservation Section has stated that the proposal will have no effect on historic resources.
5. In a memorandum dated June 15, 2004, the Community Planning Division has stated that the subject proposal has no master plan issues and conforms to the land use policy of the 1994 Bladensburg-New Carrollton and Vicinity Master Plan.
6. In a memorandum dated June 3, 2004, the Environmental Planning Section has stated that there are no environmental issues associated with the proposal.

**CONCLUSION:**

The proposed additional area for the freestanding sign represents a balance between the need to provide adequate identification and the responsibility to control the location and size of signs so as to provide for adequate identification and advertisement in a manner that is compatible with land uses in Prince Georges County.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends APPROVAL of the requested departure from sign design standards for an additional sign DSDS-621, subject to the following conditions:

Prior to certification of the DSDS application, the site plan and sign design drawings shall be revised to show:

1. The cladded base of the sign eliminated and replaced with a maximum of four posts. The four posts shall be red and gray to match the colors of the sign. The posts shall either be circular (with a maximum diameter of two feet) or square (two feet by two feet).
2. Landscaping at the base of the sign to enhance the appearance of the sign.