



**CITY OF FLORENCE DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
CITY CENTER – COUNCIL CHAMBERS
324 WEST EVANS STREET, FLORENCE, SC
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2026 – 2:00 P.M.**

I. Call to Order

II. Approval of Minutes Regular meeting held on January 14, 2026

III. Old Business

DRB-2026-02 Request for a Certificate of Appropriateness to install internally illuminated wall signs at 135 North Dargan Street, identified as Florence County Tax Map Number 90167-02-013, in the H-1 Historic Overlay District.

IV. Public Hearing and Matter in Position for Action

DRB-2026-05 Request for a Certificate of Appropriateness to install window signs at 604 South Irby Street, identified as Florence County Tax Map Number 90088-08-010, in the D-1 Redevelopment Overlay District and ISCOD Irby Street Corridor Overlay District.

VIII. Adjournment Next meeting is scheduled for March 11, 2026.

CITY OF FLORENCE, SOUTH CAROLINA
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
JANUARY 14, 2026 MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jamie Carsten, Kyle Gunter, Ahmad Jackson, David Lowe, Mike Padgett, Steve Powers, and David Tedder

MEMBERS ABSENT: Scott Collins, Dr. John Keith, and Tonya Morman Jackson

STAFF PRESENT: Jerry Dudley, Derek Johnston, and Alane Zlotnicki

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Carsten called the January 14, 2026 meeting to order at 2:01 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Chairman Carsten introduced the September 10, 2025 minutes and asked if there were any corrections or comments. There being none, he asked for a motion. Mr. Padgett moved to approve the minutes as submitted; Mr. Tedder seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously (6-0).

Ahmad Jackson arrived

PUBLIC HEARINGS AND MATTERS IN POSITION FOR ACTION:

DRB-2026-01 Request for a Certificate of Appropriateness to install an internally illuminated monument sign and internally illuminated wall signs at the FSD1 building located at 301 South Dargan Street, identified as Florence County Tax Map Number 90087-07-004, in the D-3 Arts & Culture Overlay District.

Chairman Carsten read the introduction to DRB-2026-01 and asked staff for their report. Mrs. Zlotnicki presented the staff report as submitted. She clarified that the wall signs are not illuminated, only the monument sign is to be illuminated.

There being no questions for staff, Chairman Carsten opened the public hearing. Kyle Jones, the deputy superintendent of Florence One Schools and Debbie Jenkins with Tyson Sign Company spoke on behalf of the request.

There being no one else to speak regarding the request, Chairman Carsten closed the public hearing and called for discussion and a motion. Mr. Powers said that he was very impressed with the existing monument sign and that on a smaller building this might be too much signage, but it's suitable for this building due to its scale.

There being no other comments or questions, Mr. Powers moved that the request be approved as submitted. Mr. Padgett seconded, and the motion passed unanimously (7-0).

DRB-2026-02 Request for a Certificate of Appropriateness to install internally illuminated wall signs at 135 North Dargan Street, identified as Florence County Tax Map Number 90167-02-013, in the H-1 Historic Overlay District.

Chairman Carsten read the introduction to DRB-2026-02 and asked staff for their report. Mrs. Zlotnicki presented the staff report as submitted. Mr. Padgett recused himself because he has a professional interest in the request.

Mr. Tedder clarified the request. Mrs. Zlotnicki said it was basically for 3 wall signs, two of which are internally lit, and 3 directional signs. There was discussion about externally illuminated versus internally illuminated signs within

the Historic Overlay District. Mrs. Zlotnicki said that The Board has approved internally illuminated signs on a case by case basis.

There being no other questions for staff, Chairman Carsten opened the public hearing.

Mr. Terrance Thomas, the applicant, and Mr. Dennis Faulk with ASL Signs spoke on behalf of the request. Chairman Carsten asked why all the directional signs. Mr. Thomas explained that the entrance to the rooftop bar was located in the rear and the entrance to the upper level apartments was also in the rear, as well as handicapped entrances to either location.

Mr. Faulk said they'd worked hard on the designs to be appropriate for downtown.

Mr. Powers asked about reducing the size of the SOHO sign. Mr. Faulk said it's a halo lit sign with channel letters and reducing it would reduce the effect. He said it was originally larger, but they've decreased it. There was more discussion about the proportion of the SOHO sign to the back wall. Mr. Powers asked Mr. Dudley if staff could work with the applicant on the size. Mr. Dudley said that staff was concerned about the location of the Urban Flats blade sign on the second floor of the front of the building. Mr. Faulk asked where staff would prefer to have it located. He said it is a second business, thus they need a second distinct sign.

Mr. Tedder asked if the Urban Flats was nightly rentals; they said yes, they will be short term rentals. He said he sees the need for the sign but wants staff to work with the applicant to reduce the size.

Mr. Powers said he'd like staff to work with the applicant to find something that really fits in. Mr. Dudley said staff could work with the applicant on the size and placement, but that the Board needs to approve the general styles and numbers of the signs. Mr. Powers asked if staff had any concerns about the directional signs; Mrs. Zlotnicki said no.

Mr. Powers moved that all but the two lit signs be approved as submitted and asked the applicants to work with staff to determine appropriate sizes and locations for the SOHO and Urban Flats signs. Mr. Tedder seconded, and the motion passed unanimously (6-0) with Mr. Padgett recused.

DRB-2026-03 Request for a Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish the house located at 608 South McQueen Street, identified as Florence County Tax Map Number 90075-10-014, in the D-4 Timrod Park Overlay District.

Chairman Carsten read the introduction to DRB-2026-03 and asked staff for their report. Mrs. Zlotnicki presented the staff report as submitted.

There being no questions for staff, Chairman Carsten opened the public hearing.

Mr. Fields Norwood, the owner of the lot, offered to answer any questions, but the Board didn't have any.

Mrs. Sharon Jack, a resident of Timrod Park, spoke next. She said their wish is to preserve the integrity of the neighborhood. She pointed out that a tract style home was built at the corner of South McQueen and West Pine Streets recently that doesn't match the character of the neighborhood. She asked them to honor the sixty foot lot width.

Mr. Tedder clarified that the Board of Zoning Appeals would determine the appropriateness of the lot division.

There being no one else to speak regarding the request, Chairman Carsten closed the public hearing and called for discussion and a motion. Mr. Padgett said that the current house is very far gone, and he has no issues with demolishing it. Mrs. Zlotnicki explained that the new Design Standards do provide specific standards for all new construction.

Mr. Norwood said the new houses would not be tract homes, and they would not be rentals. He clarified that he would use two of the designs that were submitted.

Mr. Dudley explained that this is what staff is looking for to provide redevelopment in Timrod Park.

There being no other comments or questions, Mr. Padgett moved that the demolition be approved, and that the general designs be approved, with staff to approve the final details.

Mr. Lowe seconded, and the motion passed unanimously (7-0).

DRB-2026-04 Request for a Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish the building located at 291 West Palmetto Street, identified as Florence County Tax Map Number 90087-01-001, in the D-1 Redevelopment Overlay District.

Chairman Carsten read the introduction to DRB-2026-04 and asked staff for their report. Mrs. Zlotnicki presented the staff report as submitted. Mike Padgett recused himself because he has a professional interest in the request.

There being no questions for staff, Chairman Carsten opened the public hearing.

Dr. Mark Lawhon, the property owner, spoke in favor of the request. Mr. Powers asked if there were any gas tanks underneath. Dr. Lawhon said the previous owners had been drawing off the tanks for a long time and they are almost finished. He said there isn't much historical material left to the building itself, and he thinks it's time to remove it and put something else there. He is looking at residential or mixed uses to be placed there.

There being no one else to speak regarding the request, Chairman Carsten closed the public hearing and called for discussion and a motion. There being no comments or questions, Mr. Gunter moved that the demolition be approved. Mr. Lowe seconded, and the motion passed unanimously (6-0) with Mr. Padgett recused.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no other business, Chairman Carsten adjourned the meeting at 2:40 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for February 11, 2026 at 2:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by

Alane Zlotnicki, AICP
Senior Planner

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT
STAFF REPORT TO THE
CITY OF FLORENCE DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
FEBRUARY 11, 2026

CASE NUMBER: DRB-2026-02
LOCATION: 135 North Dargan Street
TAX MAP NUMBER: 900167-02-013
OWNER OF RECORD: ASK Investments & Holdings LLC
APPLICANT: Kristin Leggio with ASL Sign Services
PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Installation of Internally Illuminated Signs
OVERLAY DISTRICT: Historic Overlay District (H-1)

Background Information

135 North Dargan Street is a 3,892 square foot commercial building constructed in 1920. The property is zoned Central Business District within the Historic Overlay District. It has a restaurant on the ground floor, and a new bar and apartments on the second floor.

On January 14, 2026, the applicant requested approval of five different wall signs. Three small, non-illuminated directional signs were approved, but the Board asked the applicant to work with staff on two internally illuminated signs after concerns about their sizes and locations were cited.

The applicant proposed a wall sign for the back of the building that was 10 square feet smaller, which staff determined better met the intent, and the Certificate of Appropriateness was issued for the SOHO sign.

Due to the location of the Urban Flats sign and its potential to set an undesirable precedent, staff is not comfortable with issuing the COA for the Urban Flats sign without final review and approval by the Board.

Project Description

The applicant is still seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) to install one new illuminated sign on the building:

The Urban Flats – The applicant has proposed 4 different options to the 22 square foot blade sign originally requested: three different routed illuminated wall signs with areas of 32, 21, or 16 square feet located directly above the awning on the second floor, or a smaller illuminated blade sign also placed above the awning (see Attachment D).

Staff Analysis

According to the *City of Florence Downtown Design Standards*, “internally illuminated letters, neon, roof, and moveable signs must be reviewed by the DRB”, necessitating review by the Board for the Soho wall sign. Regardless of size, the Urban Flats sign constitutes a second primary sign on the front of the building since there is already a blade sign in place for the restaurant on the first floor.

Besides the Synergi wall sign at 101 West Evans Street, which was approved under the former Design Guidelines, there are no signs in the second floor sign band of downtown buildings. The proposed sign would be for the second floor apartments/short term rentals, which are accessed through the breezeway on the south side of the building.

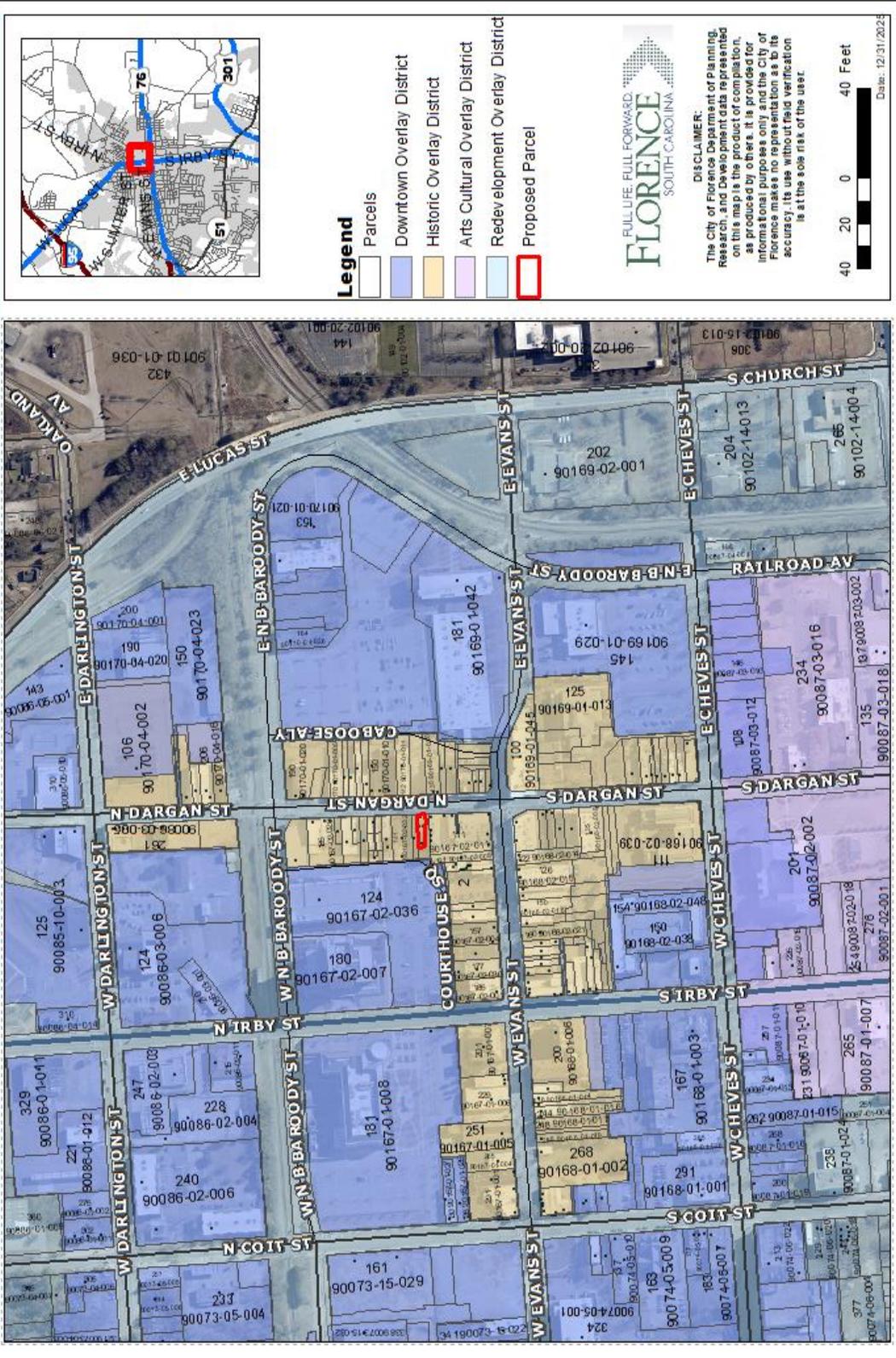
Board Action

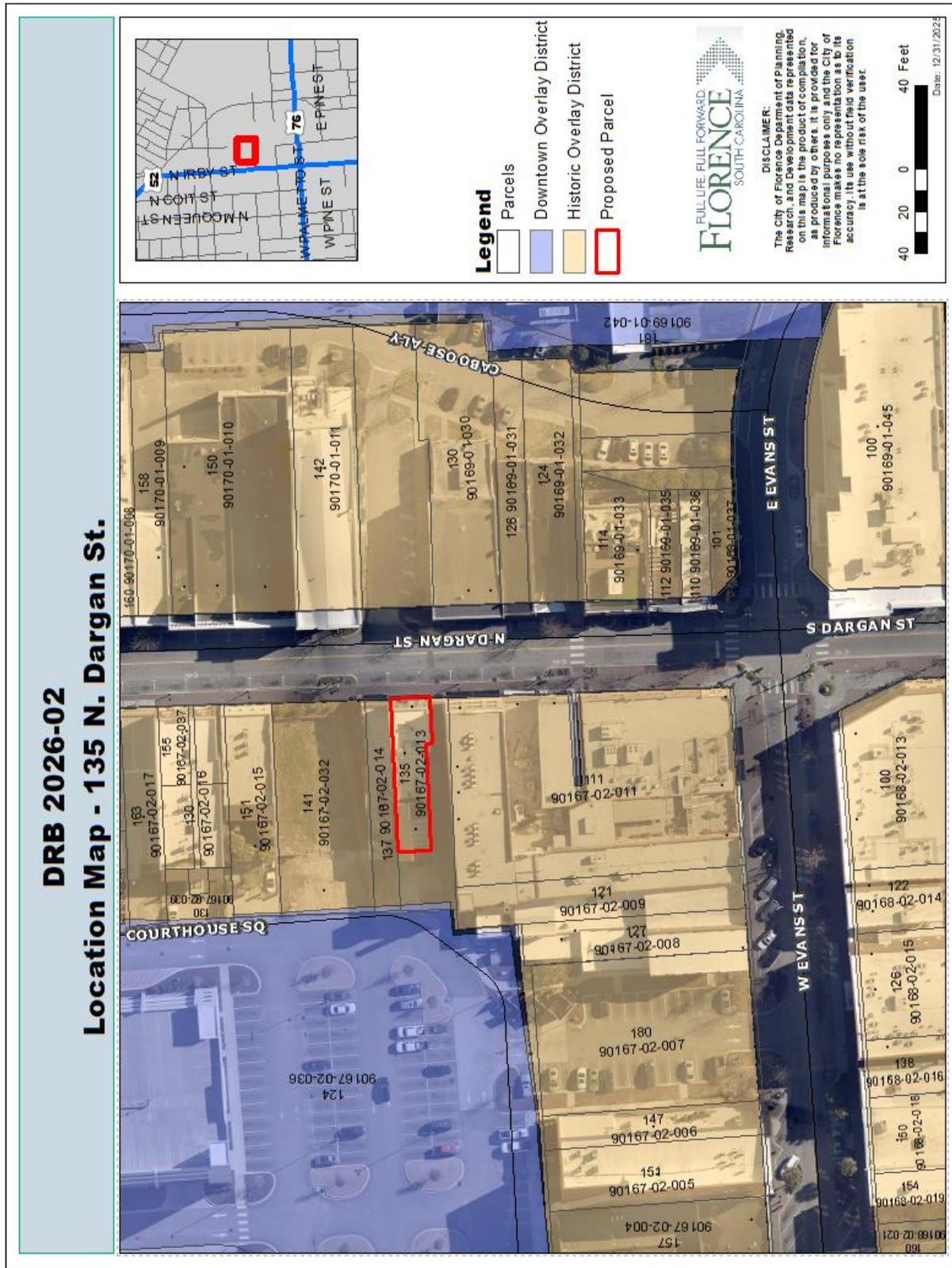
1. Consider only the evidence presented before the Board during the public hearing.
2. Apply the intent of the Design Standards to the application, considering the character of the applicable zoning and overlay districts.
3. Based on the determination of appropriateness, make a motion regarding the request to issue or deny the Certificate of Appropriateness.

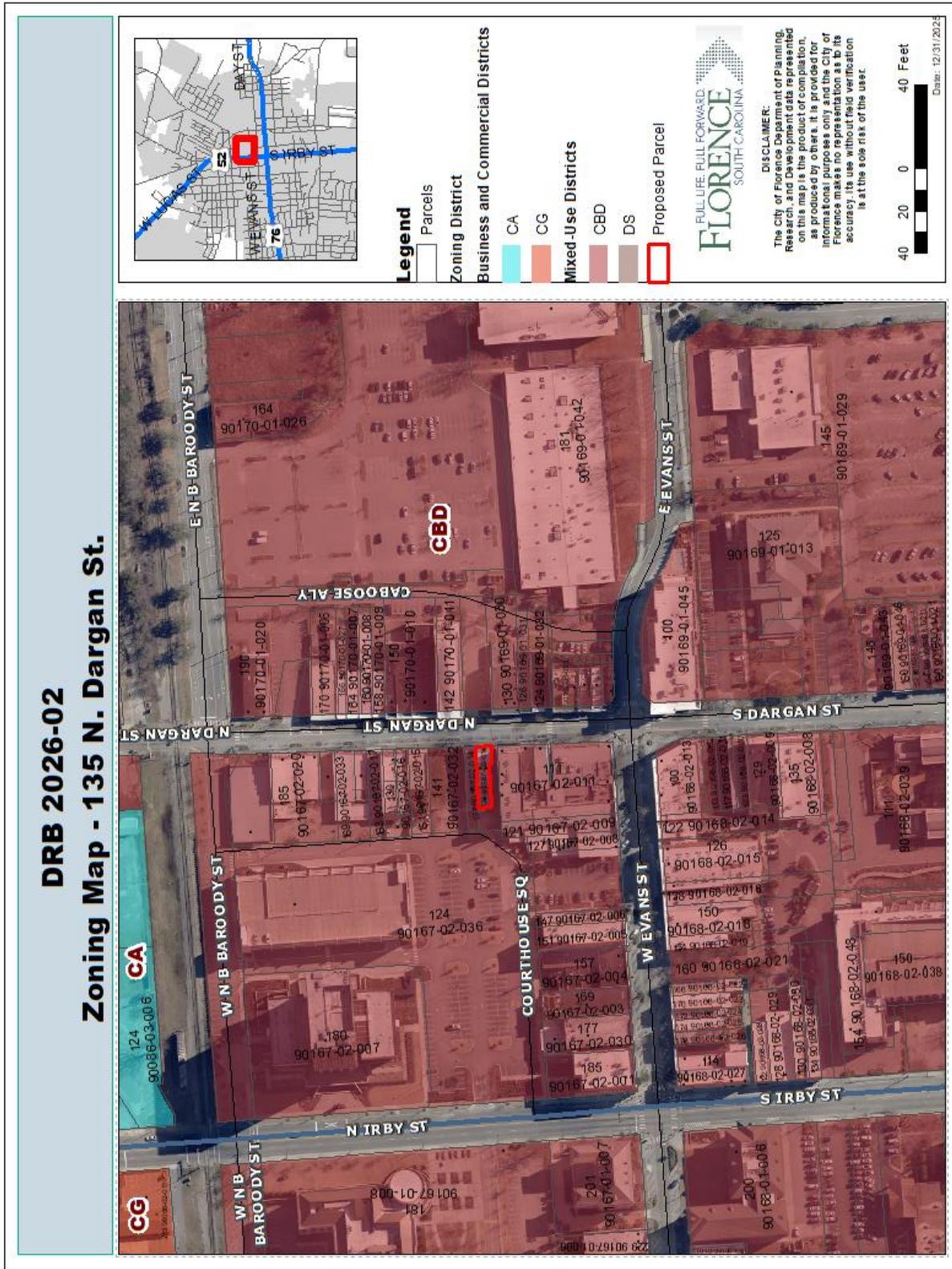
Attachments

- A. Vicinity Map
- B. Location Map
- C. Zoning Map
- D. Sign Renderings
- E. Synergi and Town Hall Signs

DRB 2026-02
Vicinity Map - 135 N. Dargan St.

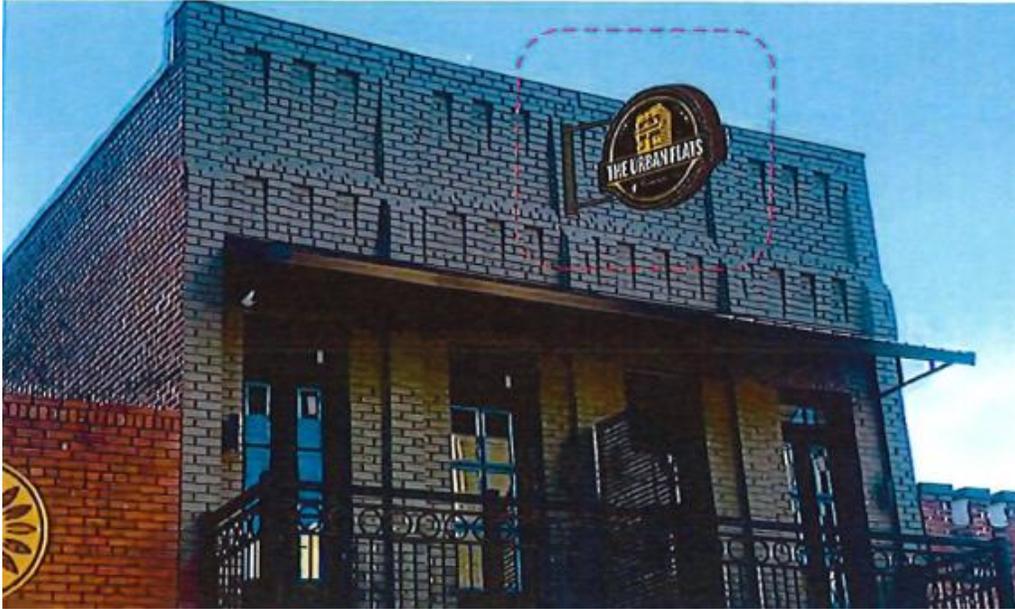






Attachment D: Sign Renderings

Original Proposal: The Urban Flats – Front of Building Illuminated Blade Sign – 22 SF



Alternate Options Proposed:

Option 1: 32 SF



PROPOSED - OPTION 1

Option 2: 21 SF



PROPOSED - OPTION 2

Option 3: 16 SF

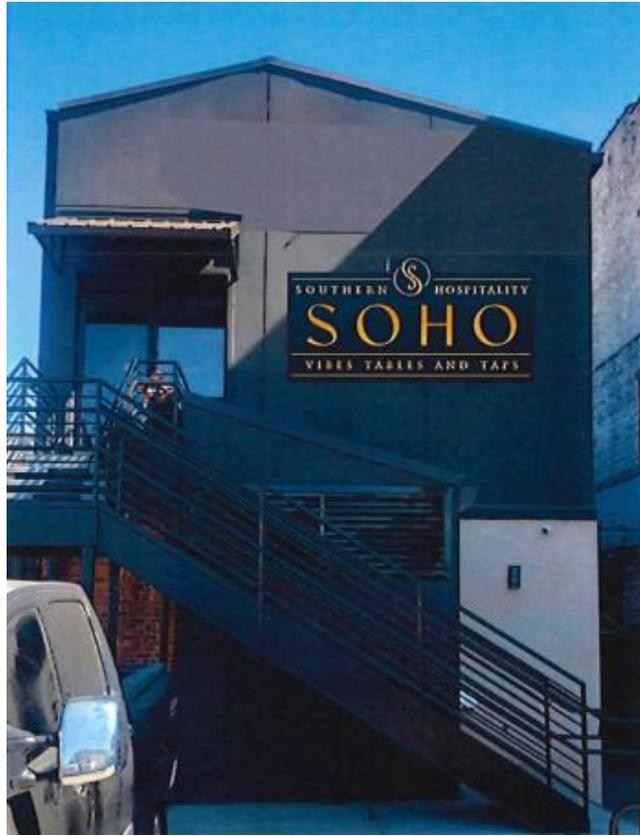


PROPOSED - OPTION 3

Option 4: 9.75 SF blade sign



SOHO Sign – Rear of Building Illuminated Wall Sign – Original Proposal: 52 SF



Administratively Approved Proposal: 41 SF



Attachment E: Synergi and Town Hall Signs



DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT
STAFF REPORT TO THE
CITY OF FLORENCE DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
FEBRUARY 11, 2026

CASE NUMBER: DRB-2026-05

LOCATION: 604 South Irby Street

TAX MAP NUMBER: 90088-08-010

OWNER OF RECORD: Marshall Anderson

APPLICANT: Brantley K. Gainey Jr. with Sign Zone & Banners

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Installation of Window Signs

OVERLAY DISTRICT: Redevelopment Overlay District (D-1)
Irby Street Corridor Overlay District (ISCOD)

Project Description

The applicant is seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) to replace the existing window graphics on a commercial building with a larger amount. Currently there is signage on 9 windows and the door, for a total area of about 291 square feet, or 27% of the front façade. The proposal adds one more window for a total area of signage of 310 square feet, which is about 29% of the area of the façade of the building.

According to Table 5-17.2.1A of the *Unified Development Ordinance*, window signs are allowed outright, but they are subject to the applicable provisions of Table 5-17.2.1B. Wall signs in the Commercial General zoning district may have a maximum wall area of 25% of the front façade. They are also limited to 2 building signs; however, the code is ambiguous as to what constitutes a building sign.

Because the lot is within the Redevelopment and Irby Street Corridor Overlay Districts, the Planning Director has the option to refer the request to the Board for assistance and clarification because there is a question of appropriateness.

Background Information

604 South Irby Street is a 9,424 square foot commercial building constructed in 1946. The property is zoned Commercial General within the Redevelopment and Irby Street Corridor Overlay Districts. It is the location of Anderson Plumbing. Prior to 2017 there was no window signage but there was signage on the awning. In March 2022, the awning was replaced with one without signage on it, and fencing was installed around the parking area as the site transitioned to serve as a storage and staff training location rather than as an office for customers.

Staff Analysis

According to the City of Florence *Downtown Design Standards*, the intent of the Redevelopment Overlay District is to “foster the cultural, economic, and general welfare of the public by providing a mechanism for the identification, recognition, conservation, maintenance, protection, and enhancement of existing architecturally valuable structures, properties, and neighborhoods.”

The intent of the Irby Street Corridor Overlay District is to “foster redevelopment of properties adjacent to the US Highway 52/Irby Street Corridor for the purpose of creating and maintaining a safe, efficient, functional, and attractive corridor that prioritizes pedestrians through the City of Florence downtown.”

Staff feels the best path forward is to consult the Board for confirmation of the sign’s appropriateness, taking the following facts into consideration.

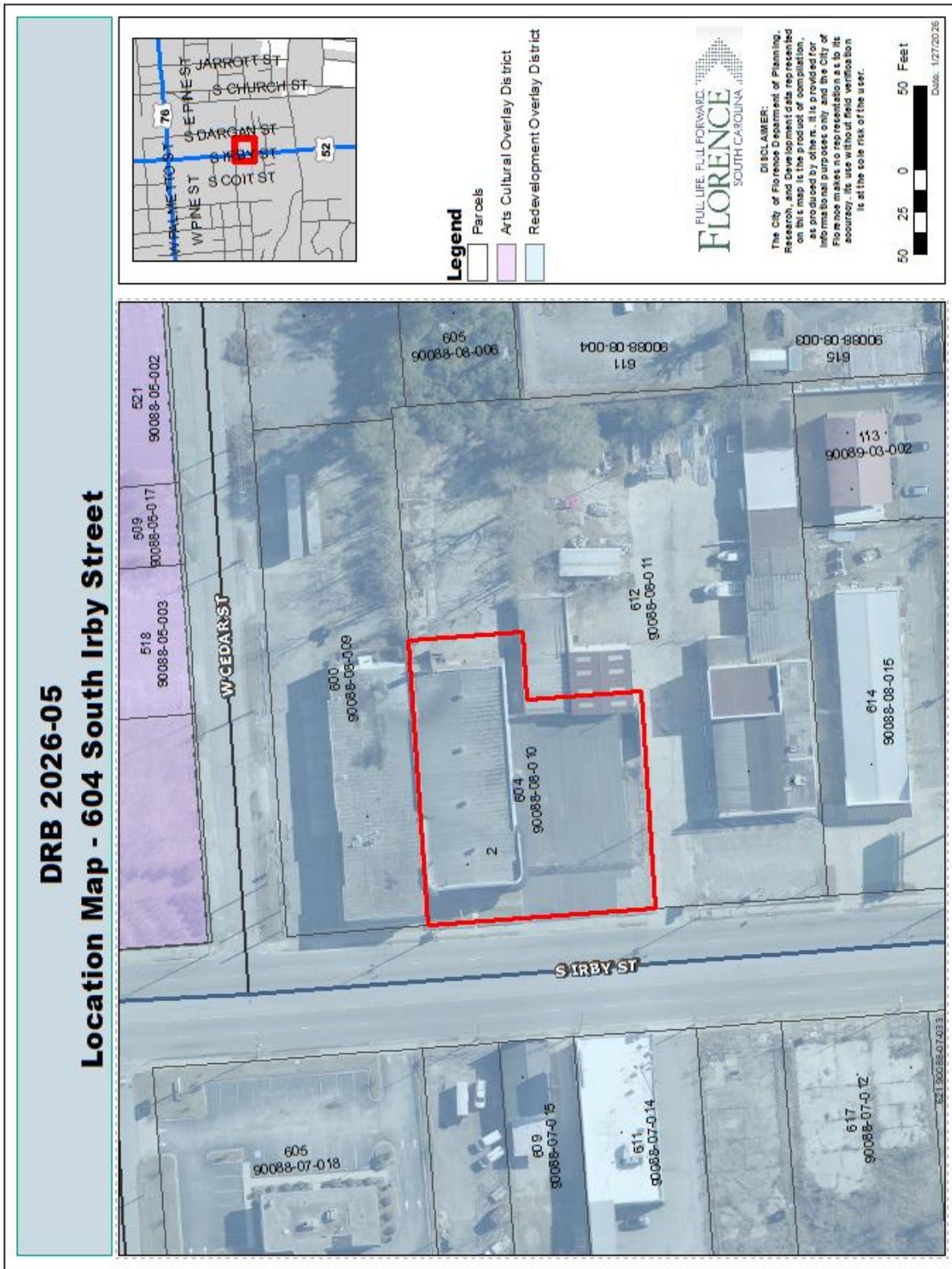
1. The *Downtown Design Standards* prohibit reflective or tinted glass windows in the overlay districts, with openness of glazing and transparency being encouraged.
2. Regulations cannot prohibit constitutionally allowed content of a sign.
3. The *Unified Development Ordinance* is currently being amended to preserve the intent of the Downtown Design Standards and sign code in general by requiring zoning permits for window signs and by allowing coverage of a maximum area of 25% of the window on which it is placed. This is not official code yet, however.
4. This location is permitted as a training and storage location, and is not typically open for customers or utilized for business administration.

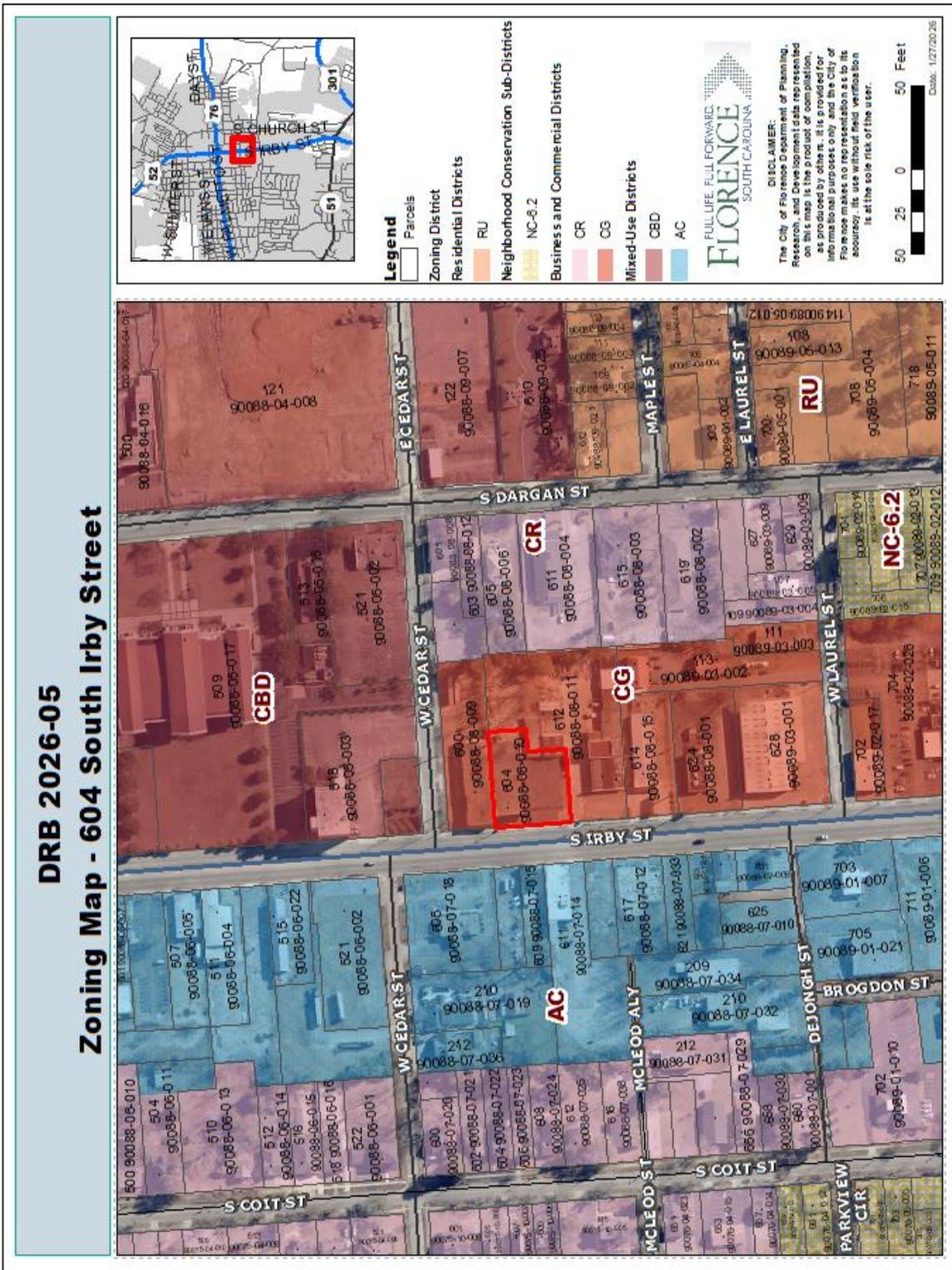
Board Action

1. Consider only the evidence presented before the Board during the public hearing.
2. Apply the intent of the Design Standards to the application, considering the character of the applicable zoning and overlay districts.
3. Based on the determination of appropriateness, make a motion regarding the request to issue or deny the Certificate of Appropriateness.

Attachments

- A. Vicinity Map
- B. Location Map
- C. Zoning Map
- D. Site Photos (Current Signage)
- E. Proposed Sign Renderings
- F. Window Measurements





Attachment D: Site Photos (Current Signage)



Attachment E: Proposed Sign Renderings

LEFT SIDE OF FRONT DOOR



RIGHT SIDE OF FRONT DOOR



Attachment F: Window Measurements



SIZING	
WINDOW 1	56"W BY 72.5"H
WINDOW 2	56.5"W BY 72.5"H
WINDOW 3	61.5"W BY 72.750"H
WINDOW 4	67.250"W BY 72.750"H
WINDOW 5	62.625"W BY 72.750"H
WINDOW 6	64"W BY 72.750"H
WINDOW 7	64"W BY 72.750"H
WINDOW 8	64"W BY 72.5"H
WINDOW 9	56"W BY 72.5"H
WINDOW 10	54.5"W BY 73.750"H
WINDOW 11	58.5"W BY 45.750"H
DOOR	31.5"W BY 61.250"H

Total window sign area for signs 2 through 11 and the door is 310 square feet, which is 31% of the front façade. (Window 1 is not a sign nor is it visible from the street.)