

AGENDA ITEM

TO: Planning and Zoning Commission

THROUGH: Brandon Opiela, Senior Planner

FROM: Anthony Satarino, Planner

SUBJECT: Conduct a Public Hearing to Consider/Discuss/Act on the Request by Carlos Fernandez Architects, on Behalf of Courtesy Dealership Property, for Approval of a Meritorious Exception for McKinney Buick GMC, Approximately 18.26 Acres, Located on the Southwest Corner of Collin McKinney Parkway and Test Drive, and West of U.S. Highway 75 (Central Expressway).

APPROVAL PROCESS: The Planning and Zoning Commission is the final approval authority for the proposed meritorious exception.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the proposed meritorious exception.

APPLICATION SUBMITTAL DATE: July 25, 2011 (Original Application)
August 8, 2011 (Revised Submittal)
August 15, 2011 (Revised Submittal)
February 27, 2012 (Revised Submittal)

ITEM SUMMARY: The applicant is requesting a meritorious exception to the Architectural and Site Standards section of the Zoning Ordinance for an existing automobile sales facility (McKinney Buick GMC). The applicant has indicated that the proposed elevations for the building complex display a modern style of architecture which is characterized by a composition of four different types of metal paneling. The applicant has indicated that the aluminum composite materials will combine a modern style with a traditional architectural style, and complement the existing neutral colored slate and brick finishing materials. The applicant has submitted a material board and is available for the Commission to review.

The meritorious exception is being requested because the proposed architectural elevations:

- (1) Exceed the maximum percentage of allowed architectural metal finishing material on three of the elevations of the proposed building.

- (2) Do not meet the required minimum of 50 percent masonry covering each exterior wall.

ZONING NOTIFICATION SIGNS: Section 41-233 of the City of McKinney Zoning Ordinance states that all zoning changes or amendments, including zoning, rezoning, amendments to Planned Developments, meritorious exceptions to the architectural standards, specific use permits and the like shall be required to post zoning change signs. The applicant has posted zoning notification signs on the subject property, as specified within Section 41-233 of the City of McKinney Zoning Ordinance.

COMPLIANCE WITH ARCHITECTURAL STANDARDS: The purpose of the architectural standards is to set minimum standards for the appearance of non-residential and multiple family buildings and corresponding site elements which are recognized as enhancing property values and are in the interest of the general welfare of the City of McKinney. Staff is of the opinion that the proposed architectural design of McKinney Buick GMC satisfies the intent of the architectural standards, through the use of building materials, colors, and façade design.

The provisions within the Architectural and Site Standards section of the Zoning Ordinance regarding meritorious exceptions states that “It is not the intent of this ordinance to discourage innovation. An architectural and site design that does not conform with the specific requirements of this ordinance, but which has merit by marking a positive contribution to the visual environment and which is appropriate to the site and use, may be submitted for consideration as a meritorious exception.” Staff is of the opinion that the proposed design satisfies the above provision by providing a positive architectural enhancement to the surrounding area.

The Architectural and Site Standards section of the Zoning Ordinance pertaining to granting a meritorious exception states that the Planning and Zoning Commission shall consider the following factors in determining the extent of any exception to be granted:

1. The extent to which the application meets other specific standards of this ordinance;
2. The extent to which the application meets the spirit and intent of this ordinance through the use of building materials, colors, and façade design to create a building of exceptional quality and appearance;
3. The positive or negative impact of the proposed project on surrounding property use and property values, in comparison to the expected impact of a project which could be built in conformance with the standards of this ordinance; and
4. The extent to which the proposed project accomplishes City goals.

MINIMUM POINT SCORE: Section 146-139 (Architectural and Site Standards) in the Zoning Ordinance requires a minimum point score of 85 points for non-residential uses in non-industrial districts in order for the architectural elevations to be approved by Staff. The Architectural and Site Standards state that for all non-residential uses in non-industrial districts, at least 50 percent of each wall shall be covered with a masonry finishing material. Acceptable masonry finishing materials are brick, stone, or synthetic stone materials, including, but not limited to slate, flagstone, granite, limestone and marble. The applicant is proposing more than 75 percent of approved masonry finishing material on three elevations of the building. The applicant is proposing 35 percent of approved masonry material on the east elevation of the building.

The Architectural and Site Standards also require any remainder of exterior finishing materials to be stucco, EIFS, architectural concrete masonry units (CMU), concrete tilt wall construction, architectural metal finishing material (limited to 10 percent), or glass curtain wall systems for multi-story office and retail buildings. The applicant is proposing to utilize architectural metal finishing material on three of the four elevations, all of which exceed the maximum 10 percent. The applicant is proposing to use 14 percent of architectural metal finishing material on the northern elevation, 19 percent on the southern elevation and 62 percent on the eastern elevation. It is important to note that other buildings in McKinney have been approved through the meritorious exception process, which utilize similar metal paneling or metal accents, such as the DrPepper StarCenter, TRAXXAS Corporate Headquarters, McKinney Executive Suites and Brandon Tomes Subaru (currently under construction).

With metal paneling comprising 65 percent of the east elevation, the remaining masonry materials on the wall with the lowest percentage of masonry totals only 35 percent so the applicant cannot receive any points for exterior finishing materials. It should be noted that although the east elevation does not have a minimum of 50 percent masonry, each of the other three elevations have at least 60 percent masonry (81 percent on the north, 75 percent on the south, and 100 percent on the west). The project does earn points for other features, such as exterior color, building massing, minor façade offsets, doors and windows treatment, height slope standards and glass treatment.

In total, the applicant does not meet the minimum 85 point requirement, instead achieving 70 points per the submitted Non-industrial District Calculation Sheet (attached). Staff feels the applicant has met the spirit and intent of the Architectural and Site Standards by creating a building of exceptional quality which can make a positive contribution to the surrounding visual environment

MERITORIOUS DESIGN: The intent of the Architectural and Site Standards section of the Zoning Ordinance is to set standards for the appearance of non-residential and multiple family buildings and corresponding site elements, which are recognized as enhancing property values and are in the interest of the general welfare of the City.

The applicant has described in the letter of intent the following building design characteristics:

“The approval of the Meritorious Exception will result in a modern yet natural looking facility that will blend in harmony with the adjacent auto dealerships along the 75 highway corridor”

The applicant has indicated in the letter of intent that the remodeling of the subject property is an effort to comply with General Motors Corporation national image requirements. It is important to note; however, that Staff does not take this into account when evaluating the merits of a meritorious exception. The request must stand alone based on the merits of the innovative design of the building.

With that said, Staff feels that the applicant has pursued a design that is modern while using traditional finishing materials to create a unique blend of architectural styles. The use of metal paneling should not detract from the overall design and quality of the building, but should instead enhance the visual interest of the building through the use of contrasting materials and textures, making the request meritorious.

IMPACT ON EXISTING DEVELOPMENT: The land surrounding the subject property is mostly developed. The Mansions of McKinney apartment complex is located to the west of the subject property, along with the Bark Hotel. McKinney Volkswagen is northeast of the subject property and has also incorporated metal paneling in the design of their facility. Staff believes the proposed design with metal paneling combined with traditional masonry finishing materials and other architectural elements will blend nicely with the surrounding visual environment, especially with the many nearby automobile sales facilities that utilize similar architectural design elements. Staff is of the opinion that the proposed architectural design of the building is both innovative and of exceptional quality.

MISCELLANEOUS: A meritorious exception shall not be granted to serve as a convenience to the applicant or for reasons related to economic hardship. Staff believes that this is not the case with the proposed meritorious exception request.

OPPOSITION TO OR SUPPORT OF REQUEST: Staff has not received any comments either in opposition to or in support of this request.