



Note: Staff reports can be accessed at www.mncppc.org/pgco/planning/plan.htm.

DEPARTURE FROM SIGN DESIGN STANDARDS APPLICATION NO. 593

Application	General Data
Project Name: Brandywine Citgo Location: West side of US 301 approximately 0.7 mile south of MD 5, known as 14807 South Crain Highway. Applicant/Address: Roy M. Morauer, et al 6801 East Clinton Street Clinton, Maryland 20735	Date Accepted: 11/1/02
	Planning Board Action Limit: N/A
	Plan Acreage: 0.69
	Zone: C-M
	Dwelling Units: N/A
	Square Footage: N/A
	Planning Area: 85A
	Council District: 09
	Municipality: None
	200-Scale Base Map: 219SE07

Purpose of Application	Notice Dates
Departure of 4 feet from the 10-foot setback requirement for a canopy sign	Adjoining Property Owners: (CB-15-1998) 11/05/02
	Previous Parties of Record: (CB-13-1997) N/A
	Sign(s) Posted on Site: 01/08/03
	Variance(s): Adjoining Property Owners: N/A

Staff Recommendation		Staff Reviewer: Tom Lockard	
APPROVAL	APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS	DISAPPROVAL	DISCUSSION
X			

January 15, 2003

TECHNICAL STAFF REPORT:

TO: The Prince George's County Planning Board

VIA: Arie Stouten, Zoning Supervisor

FROM: Tom Lockard, Senior Planner

SUBJECT: **Departure from Sign Design Standards Application No. 593**

REQUEST: **Departure of 4 feet from the 10-foot canopy sign setback**

RECOMMENDATION: **APPROVAL**

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.

FINDINGS:

- A. **Location and Field Inspection:** The site is located on the west side of US 301, 0.7± mile south of the intersection of US 301 and Branch Avenue. The site comprises approximately 30,000 square feet and is improved with a gas station constructed in the 1950s. A one-story building houses a gas station, fast-food restaurant and convenience-commercial center. The site has 150 feet of frontage on US 301, which it accesses via a pair of 35-foot-wide driveways.

- B. **Development Data Summary:**

	EXISTING	PROPOSED
Use(s)	Gas Station Fast-Food Restaurant Convenience Commercial	Gas Station Fast-Food Restaurant Convenience Commercial
Acreage	0.69± acre	0.69± acre
Square Footage/GFA	1,625 square feet	1,625 square feet
Canopy Signs	None	25.82 square feet

- C. **History:** The District Council approved a special exception for a commercial-convenience center on this site in 1985 pursuant to SE-3530. Numerous variances were also approved over the years covering pump island and canopy setbacks, landscaping, side yard setback and screening/fencing requirements along the north and west lot lines (Appeals Nos. 5529 and 7470). A departure application filed in 1985 for the freestanding sign setback (DSDS-308) was found to be unnecessary and was withdrawn.
- D. **Master Plan Recommendation:** The 1993 *Subregion V Master Plan* recommends retail-commercial use for the property.
- E. **Request:** Citgo proposes to renovate this gas station by adding signs to the existing pump island canopy.
- F. **Surrounding Uses:** The site is surrounded on all sides by undeveloped land in the R-R Zone, with the exception of a gas station and undeveloped land to the east, across US 301, in the C-M, I-3 and E-I-A Zones.
- G. **Parking and Loading Regulations:** The use requires 16 parking spaces; 18 are shown.
- H. **Other Issues:** The Permit Review Section (M-NCPPC), in its referral dated December 1, 2002, found no additional deficiencies to the site plan.
- I. **Sign Regulations:** The applicant is requesting a departure to allow three signs to be placed on the existing pump island canopy. The canopy is set back 42 feet from the actual paving of US 301, but only six feet from the ultimate right-of-way; a setback of 10 feet is required by Section 27-613(a)(1). The applicant is permitted 50 square feet of canopy sign area; 25.82 square feet is proposed.

(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.**

Finding: In general, the purposes of Part 12 (Signs) of the Zoning 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 existing pump island canopy is set back 42 feet from the existing edge of pavement for US 301. It is the existence of a wide, unused ultimate right-of-way for US 301 that makes this departure necessary. The applicant proposes 25.82 square feet of signage; 50 square feet is permitted. Given the circumstances, the purposes for sign regulation will be equally well served by the applicant's proposal.

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

Finding: The placement of three 8.6-square-foot signs on the long-existing pump island canopy, given the reality of the true setback from the existing edge of pavement, can be considered the minimum necessary.

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

Finding: There is no distinction between the existing situation and what the applicant is now proposing. The placement of the signs on the pump island canopy will not change the use to any noticeable degree; the signs will simply function to make the site more attractive and recognizable. The fact that this site has been developed with this use for more than 40 years results in unique circumstances that this departure can address.

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

Finding: The departure will allow for a continuation of the long-existing use on the site. In over 40 years it has not impaired the quality or integrity of the site or the surrounding area.

(B) **Not applicable to this application**

CONCLUSION:

Based on the preceding analysis and findings, staff recommends **APPROVAL** of Departure from Sign Design Standards Application No. 593.