



*Note: Staff reports can be accessed at [www.mncppc.org/pgco/planning/plan.htm](http://www.mncppc.org/pgco/planning/plan.htm).*

## Departure from Sign Design Standards DSDS-670

Application	General Data	
<b>Project Name:</b> Brandywine Crossing, Phase II  <b>Location:</b> The northbound side of Robert Crain Highway (US 301) at its intersection with Timothy Branch Drive and along the west side of Matapeake Business Drive.  <b>Applicant/Address:</b> Faison-Brandywine, LLC 2176 Wisconsin Avenue NW, Suite 200 Washington, DC 20007  <b>Property Owner:</b> Faison-Brandywine, LLC 2176 Wisconsin Avenue NW, Suite 200 Washington, DC 20007	Planning Board Hearing Date:	06/09/11
	Memorandum Date:	05/26/11
	Date Accepted:	12/27/10
	Planning Board Action Limit:	N/A
	Plan Acreage:	34.1
	Zone:	C-S-C
	Gross Floor Area:	116,100 sq. ft.
	Lots:	4
	Parcels:	1
	Planning Area:	85A
	Tier:	Developing
	Council District:	09
	Election District	11
	Municipality:	N/A
	200-Scale Base Map:	220SE07

Purpose of Application	Notice Dates	
Departure from sign design standards for a freestanding sign along Robert Crain Highway (US 301).  This case was heard by the Planning Board on May 19, 2011 and continued to the agenda date of June 9, 2011.	Informational Mailing	08/27/10
	Acceptance Mailing:	12/22/10
	Sign Posting Deadline:	04/19/11

<b>Staff Recommendation</b>		<b>Staff Reviewer:</b> John Ferrante <b>Phone Number:</b> 301-952-3665 <b>E-mail:</b> John.Ferrante@ppd.mncppc.org	
<b>APPROVAL</b>	<b>APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS</b>	<b>DISAPPROVAL</b>	<b>DISCUSSION</b>
		X	

May 26, 2011

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: The Prince George's County Planning Board

VIA: Jimi Jones, Zoning Supervisor

FROM: John Ferrante, Senior Planner, Zoning Section

SUBJECT: **Departure from Sign Design Standards DSDS-670  
Brandywine Crossing, Phase II**

REQUEST: **Departure from Section 27-614(b) and (c) of the Zoning Ordinance to exceed the  
maximum height and sign area requirements for a freestanding sign.**

RECOMMENDATION: **DENIAL**

The Planning Board heard the above referenced application on May 19, 2011 and approved the application in part for the attached building signs for the movie theater. The Planning Board continued the case to June 9, 2011 in order to allow additional time for the applicant to submit revised sign elevations for the proposed freestanding sign along Robert Crain Highway (US 301). On May 23, 2011, revised sign elevations for the proposed freestanding sign were submitted by the applicant, and the revised materials were referred to the Urban Design Section and the Community Planning South Division for comment.

The Zoning Ordinance limits freestanding signs to 25 feet high and a maximum sign area of 200 square feet. The revised sign elevations demonstrate that a 32-foot-high freestanding sign is proposed with a total sign area consisting of 764.8 square feet, requiring a departure of 7 feet in height and 564.8 square feet in sign area. In comparison to the prior proposed freestanding sign which was 36 feet in height and 936.8 square feet in total sign area, the applicant has now reduced the height of the sign by 4 feet and the total sign area by 172 square feet.

Besides reducing the base of the sign, which results in an overall height reduction of four feet, and substituting the Brandywine Crossing logo for a clock, the sign has essentially remained unchanged. The overall width of the freestanding sign and the size of the tenant sign panels have not been reduced in any manner since the May 19, 2011 Planning Board hearing. Approximately 132 square feet of the 172-square-foot reduction in sign area is primarily due to the fact that the open archway at the base of the

sign has now been removed by the applicant from the overall sign area, when it had been previously counted as part of the sign area at the time of the writing of the staff report. The actual sign itself has only been reduced by 40 square feet.

In a memorandum dated May 25, 2011, the Community Planning South Division stated that, because the revision did not substantially reduce the size of the proposed freestanding sign, their previous determination that the proposed sign does not conform to the recommendations of the 2009 *Approved Subregion 5 Master Plan and Sectional Map Amendment* for pedestrian-scale development remains unchanged.

In a memorandum dated May 26, 2011, the Urban Design Section stated that the proposed sign, with a base of stone veneer columns, a tan main cabinet, the text “Brandywine Crossing” across the top, and a circular inset at the top with a clock face, is very similar in design to the existing shopping center pylon sign that sits at the corner of Timothy Branch and US 301. The proposed sign is, however, substantially bigger and taller than the existing sign. Therefore, it may be said that, while the proposed sign might be compatible with the existing sign in design, it is incompatible in terms of size and height. The difference in size and height appears to have been accomplished by reducing the base column height by approximately four feet.

The submitted revision does not adequately reduce the negative impacts of the proposed freestanding sign. As previously stated in the Urban Design Section memorandum dated March 17, 2011, the Urban Design Section supports a smaller and lower sign because it would, at a smaller size and lower height, accomplish the primary purposes of signage in a more aesthetic fashion and not add to the visual clutter along the right-of-way, which already includes a number of oversized signs that visually impact neighboring properties negatively. As per Section 27-612(d) and Part 3, Division 5 of the Zoning Ordinance, signs that are excessive in height, size, and number can detract from the visual and functional integrity of both the site and surrounding area as stated in Section 27-239.01(b)(7)(A)(iv).

In light of the above comments that were provided by the Urban Design Section and the Community Planning South Division concerning the applicant’s revised sign elevations, staff is unable to find that the purposes of the Zoning Ordinance will be equally well or better served by the applicant’s proposal, that the departure is the minimum necessary, or that the departure is necessary in order to alleviate circumstances which are unique to the site, and will not impair the visual, functional, or environmental quality or integrity of the site or of the surrounding neighborhood.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the above analysis, staff recommends Denial of Departure from Sign Design Standards Application DSDS-670, Brandywine Crossing, Phase II, for the proposed freestanding sign along Robert Crain Highway (US 301).