



**City of Coral Gables
CITY COMMISSION MEETING
February 5, 2013**

AGENDA ITEM NO. _____

ITEM TITLE:

Board of Architects Appeal – Application No. AB 12-11-0424

Mr. Jorge Alvarez, representing Dade Medical College, the applicant, has filed an appeal to the Coral Gables City Commission, from a decision of the Board of Architects at its regular meeting of November 29, 2012, wherein the Board denied Application No. AB 12-11-0424, in connection with a building sign (Dade Medical College) located above the sixth floor of the building located at 95 Merrick Way.

SUMMARY OF APPEAL:

The Dade Medical College sign (illustrated below, on the left) was presented to the Board of Architects at three separate meetings. During the meetings, there was extensive discussion about the aesthetic features of the proposed sign and the impact the sign would have on the appearance of the building.

After considering all the facts presented to them, the Board made several suggestions, including the alternative layout illustrated below (on the right), and an alternative location along Galiano Street. The applicant did not accept the Board's suggestions and instead chose to resubmit the original design during the third and final meeting. The design was unanimously rejected.

Therefore, the applicant has appealed the decision of the Board of Architects to the City Commission, as provided by the City of Coral Gables Zoning Code (Article 3, Division 6, Section 3-605). The appeal was first heard by the Commission on January 22, 2013. As a result of the Commission discussion, the applicant revised the sign to comply with zoning requirements and presented the revised sign to the Board of Architects. The Board of Architects did not approve the sign, and the applicant is proceeding with the appeal.

DMC requested signage location



Signage location suggested by Board of Architects



BACKGROUND:

The Board of Architects considered the application for the proposed sign for Dade Medical College during three separate meetings.

On November 15, 2012, the sign was presented to the Board for the first time by a representative of King Signs and Mr. Jorge Alvarez, representing the College. The design submitted at that time was the same design under review in this appeal. It is located on the Merrick Way façade of the building.

Several members of the Board of Architects expressed concerns about the following issues:

- The sign location was not appropriate, because the center bay of the façade projects forward. Thus, the sign would not be placed on a flat wall, a feature that detracts from its design integrity.
- The design of the sign did not complement the architecture of the building in terms of the overall length, spacing of the letters, and color.
- There are alternative locations where a sign would be more compatible with the architecture of the building.

The Board made several suggestions, in an effort to enhance the aesthetic quality of the sign. The following alternative options were recommended:

- Locate the sign on the Galiano Street façade (instead of Merrick Way).
- Group the three words and logo and locate the entire sign on the central tower element of the building.

Prior to the second Board of Architects meeting, City staff met with the applicant in an effort to facilitate the incorporation of the comments and recommendations expressed by the members of the Board.

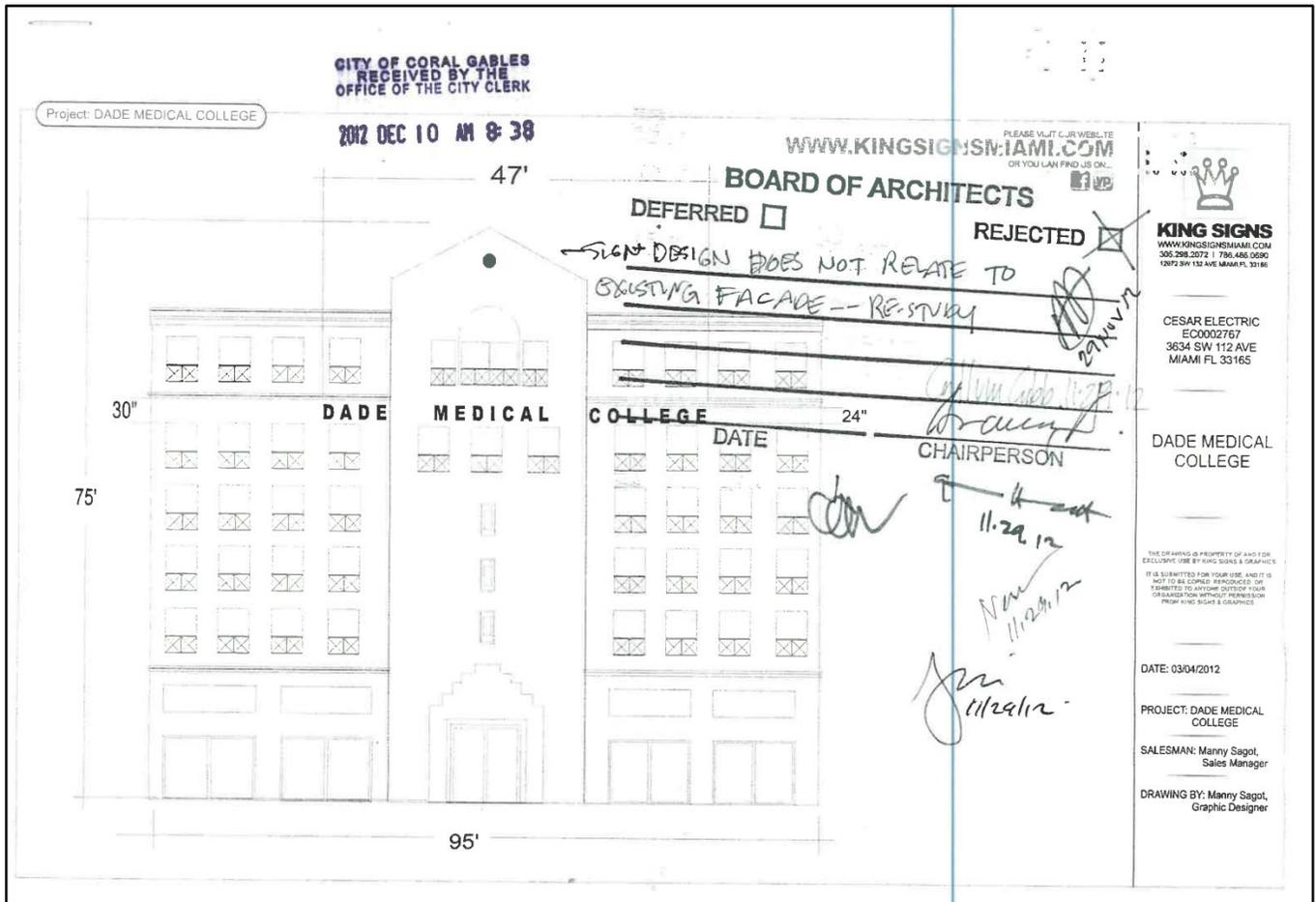
On November 21, 2012, during the second meeting, the applicant presented the first of these alternate solutions to the Board of Architects. The Board approved this design. However, after further consideration, the applicant decided not to pursue this option, and resubmitted the original design.

On November 29, 2012, during the third meeting, the original design was reviewed again by the Board of Architects. The applicant explained that although the suggestions from the members of the Board had been considered, the proposed design best satisfied their desire for visibility from a distance.

During the meeting, the members of the Board of Architects and the applicant discussed the Board members' concerns about the aesthetics of the sign, in an effort to find a solution that would be more compatible with the architecture of the building. The applicant expressed a preference to keep the original design and that if the application was denied by the Board of Architect, the decision would be appealed.

The Board of Architects voted unanimously to deny the application.

Board of Architects Rejection Stamp:



On December 10, 2012, the applicant filed an Application for Appeal from the Board of Architects at the Office of the City Clerk.

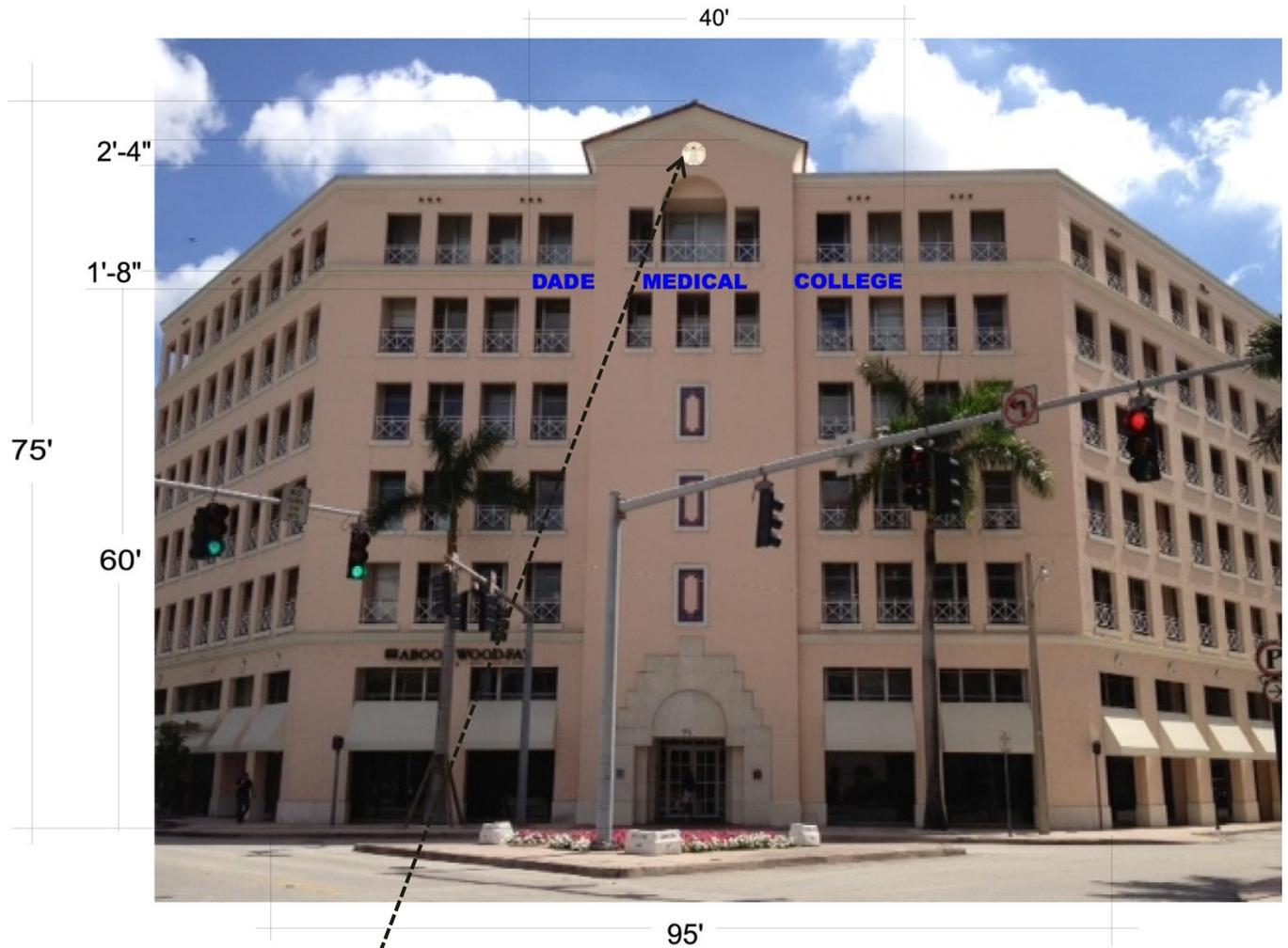
On January 22, 2013, the City Commission heard the appeal. During the discussion, the City Commission was informed that the proposed sign did not meet certain zoning requirements, and the Commission requested that this issue be resolved before the appeal was heard.

The applicant revised the sign, by reducing the size of the letters to 20” in height and reducing the overall length of the sign. The revised sign was submitted to staff and reviewed for compliance with zoning. Attached is the Zoning Analysis. The revised sign meets zoning requirements.

On January 31, 2013, the applicant presented the revised sign to the Board of Architects. After discussion, two separate motions for approval failed, including a motion to reduce the height of the letters to 18” to allow for enhanced spacing between the existing windows. The Board did not take further action.

The applicant has decided to pursue the appeal of the Board of Architects’ decision at the Commission meeting scheduled for February 5, 2013.

Revised sign, submitted by the applicant:



Proposed logo design:



BOARD OF ARCHITECTS ACTION(S):

Date	Comments (if any)
11.15.2012	Applicant appeared at the BOA and received suggestions from the Board to install the sign on the façade of the building that was continuous (Galiano Street elevation). A second suggestion was to lower the location of the sign to an area below the “balcony openings” of the central tower element. The project was then rescheduled to appear the following week.
11.21.2012	The project was presented with drawings showing the sign located on the Galiano Street façade. This was then reviewed by a full Board and APPROVED.
11.29.2012	The applicant requested the full Board to review again the original proposal (Merrick Way elevation) as the applicant had indicated this was the only acceptable solution for visibility of the sign. The project was reviewed by a full Board and REJECTED.
12.10.2012	Applicant placed an application with the Office of the City Clerk to appeal the Board of Architects rejection.
01.31.2013	Revised sign was considered. Two motions failed. Board took no further action.

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION(S):

Date	Form of Notification
01.11.2013	Miami Daily Business Review

APPROVED BY:

Department Director	City Attorney	City Manager

EXHIBIT(S):

- A. Notice of Public Hearing.
- B. Application for Appeal from Board of Architects filed at Office of the City Clerk.
- C. 01.22.2013 City Commission Meeting Minutes.
- D. 01.28.2013 Preliminary Zoning Analysis.