



City of Coral Gables Planning and Zoning Staff Report

Applicant: Jorge Navarro, Esq./Devon Vickers, Esq.
Application: Sign Variance – VARI-24-04-0015
Property: 1501 and 1505 Sunset Drive
Legal Description: Lots 21, 22, and 23, less the West 9 feet, Block 205, Coral Gables Riviera Section Part 14
Present Owners: One Sunset, LLC
Present Use: Apartment Buildings/Office Use
Zoning District: Mixed-Use 1 (MX1) District
Public Hearing: Board of Adjustment
Date & Time: Monday, August 5, 2024; 9:00 a.m.
Location: First Floor Conference Room, Development Services
427 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, Florida 33134

1. APPLICATION REQUEST

Request for variances for the property located at 1501 and 1505 Sunset Drive pursuant to the provisions of Ordinance No. 2021-07 as amended and known as the “Zoning Code.”

- 1. Grant a variance to allow a detached monument sign to be located on the corner of Yumuri Street and Sunset Drive (1501 Sunset Drive) vs. detached signs will be permitted only upon premises zoned for commercial or industrial use and facing, abutting and fronting upon U.S. Route 1, (also known as South Dixie Highway) or upon Southwest Eighth Street, pursuant to Section 11-105.A of the Coral Gables Zoning Code.*

2. BOARD OF ARCHITECTS REVIEW

The Board of Architect reviewed and approved this proposal on May 16, 2024.

3. ADVERTISING

This application was advertised in Miami’s Community Newspapers on June 17, 2024, and July 22, 2024. Letters were mailed to properties within one thousand feet of the subject property and the property was posted on June 18, 2024.

4. STAFF OBSERVATION

The subject site, 1501 and 1505 Sunset Drive combined, is approximately 15,500 +/- square feet (0.35 acres). It is located on the northwest corner of Sunset Drive and Yumuri Street. It abuts an existing office building on the west side and a parking garage on the north side fronting San Ignacio Avenue. It is zoned Mixed Use 1 (MXD1) District with a land use designation of Commercial, Low-Rise intensity. Currently, there are two buildings originally built as apartment buildings and were repurpose for office uses.



Site Data and Surrounding Uses

The following tables provide the subject property's designations and surrounding land uses:

Existing Property Designations

Land Use Map designation	Commercial, Low-Rise Intensity
Zoning Map designation	Mixed Use 1 (MX1) District
Overlay District	None
Mediterranean Architectural Design	Yes

Surrounding Land Uses

Location	Existing Land Uses	FLUM Designations	Zoning Designations
North	Parking Garage	Commercial Low-Rise Intensity	Mixed Use 1 (MX1) District
South	Residential Miami-Dade County	N/A Miami-Dade County	N/A Miami-Dade County
East	Office Building	Commercial Low-Rise Intensity	Mixed Use 1 (MX1) District
West	Office Building	Commercial Low-Rise Intensity	Mixed Use 1 (MX1) District



Existing Buildings



Proposed

The owner, One Sunset LLC seeks to redevelop the site, proposing a commercial building with mix of retail on the ground and office use on the upper level, with three parking levels. The proposed building height is 6-stories at 77 feet. The new office building will be the new local headquarters and office space for ONE Sothey's International Realty. The Applicant is currently in the process of pursuing the various approvals necessary to develop the property with the proposed office project. However, in the interim, the two (2) existing apartment buildings have been repurposed as temporary office space for Sotheby's operations at the property until the building permit is approved and construction is ready to commence for development of the office project.

The applicant is requesting a variance to allow a detached monument sign to be located on the corner of Yumuri Street and Sunset Drive, for temporary purposes. Detached sign is only permitted upon premises zoned for commercial or industrial use and facing, abutting and fronting upon U.S. Route 1, (also known as South Dixie Highway) or upon Southwest Eighth Street.

5. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Pursuant to Section 11-118 Standards for Variances of the "Zoning Code," the Zoning Division staff finds as follows in regard to the applicant's proposal as presented in their application for a variance from the provision of Ordinance No. 2021-07, as amended and known as the "Zoning Code," and makes the following findings:

- 1) That special conditions and circumstances exist which are peculiar to the land, structure or building involved and which are not applicable to other lands, structures or buildings in the same zoning district.**

Does meet the standard required for authorization of variance.

Currently, there are two buildings originally built in 1940's as apartment buildings with unique configuration that were repurpose for office uses. The as-built condition of the existing buildings with deeper front setback provides limited visibility for wall signage on the front façade. Staff do find special conditions and circumstances that exist which are peculiar to the existing structure that warrant granting the requested variance.

2) That the special conditions and circumstances do not result from the actions of the applicant.

Does meet the standard required for authorization of variance.

The existing as-built configuration is a special condition that does not result from the action of the applicant.

3) That granting the variances requested will not confer on the applicant a special privilege that is denied by these regulations to other lands, buildings or structures in the same zoning district.

Does meet the standard required for authorization of variance.

The existing as-built configuration of the previously apartment buildings, with limited ability to provide a wall sign, granting the variances requested to allow a temporary monument will not confer on the applicant a special privilege that is denied by these regulations to other lands, buildings or structures in the same zoning district.

4) The literal interpretation of the provisions of these regulations would deprive the applicant of rights commonly enjoyed by other properties in the same zoning district under the terms of these regulations and would work unnecessary and undue hardship on the applicant (see also definition of “necessary hardship”).

Does meet the standard required for authorization of variance.

The Zoning Code does not allow monument sign on Sunset Drive, but since the request is for temporary use on an existing as-built configuration of the previously apartment buildings, with limited ability to provide a wall sign, the literal interpretation of the provisions of these regulations presents hardship in providing proper signage on the property.

5) That the variance granted is the minimum variance that will make possible the reasonable use of land, building or structure.

Does meet the standard required for authorization of variance.

The proposed monument sign is temporary until the building permit is approved and construction is ready to commence for development of the Office project.

6) That granting the variance will not change the use to one that is not permitted in the zoning district or different from other land in the same district.

Does meet the standard required for authorization of variance.

Currently, there are two apartment buildings that were repurpose for office uses. Granting the variance requested will not change the use to one that is not permitted in the zoning district.

- 7) That the granting of the variance will be in harmony with the general intent and purpose of these regulations and that such variance will not be injurious to the area involved or otherwise detrimental to the public welfare.

Does meet the standard required for authorization of variance.

The proposed monument sign is located within the property and setback a minimum of five (5) feet from the abutting rights-of way. The monument sign is also appropriately landscaped in a manner that complements the dense landscaping and context of the neighborhood. Granting the variance requested will not be detrimental to the public welfare.

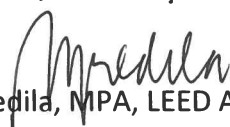
The Planning and Zoning Division staff recommends **APPROVAL** of the request, with condition that the temporary monument sign will be demolished when the building permit is approved and construction is ready to commence for development of the Office project.

6. ATTACHMENTS

- A. Applicant's submittal package.
- B. Property Appraiser Summary Report.
- C. Legal advertisement published and notice mailed to all property owners within 1,000 feet.

Please visit the City website at www.coralgables.com to view all application materials. The complete application also is on file and available for examination during business hours at the Planning and Zoning Division, 427 Biltmore Way, Suite 201, Coral Gables, Florida, 33134.

Respectfully submitted,


Arceli Redila, MPA, LEED AP
Zoning Administrator
City of Coral Gables, Florida