



Agenda Item #5

Application 2025-13-CA

DETAILS

Location:

1550 Government Street

Summary of Request:

Install 64 square foot double-faced monument signage.

Applicant (as applicable):

Wrico Signs on behalf of Aldi, Inc.

Property Owner:

AXGNL 1 MOBILE AL LP

Historic District:

Old Dauphin Way

Classification:

Non-contributing

Summary of Analysis:

- In addition to existing signage at the property, the proposed new monument signage would exceed the permitted tenant signage area.
- The property owner has received a zoning variance for wall signage to exceed the 64sf maximum outlined in the Unified Development Code (UDC).

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PROPERTY AND APPLICATION HISTORY

Old Dauphin Way Historic District was initially listed in the National Register in 1984 under Criterion C for significant architecture and community planning. The district includes most nineteenth-century architectural styles and shows adaptations of middle-class domestic designs of the nineteenth century to the regional, Gulf Coast climate. It includes “fine examples of commercial, institutional, and religious structures as well as 20th-century apartments.”

The property at 1550 Government is a contemporary masonry grocery store constructed in the 1986. The property has been occupied by commercial pursuits since at least 1904, when the Sanborn Fire Insurance Map shows a one-story frame saloon and grocery store at the northwest corner of Government and Catherine streets and a two-story frame store building to the immediate west. By the time of a 1952 aerial photograph, the saloon/grocery store building appears to have expanded to the north along Catherine Street, and another larger building had been constructed to the northwest. The 1956 overlay of the 1925 Sanborn map notes the larger building was concrete block and brick and housed a warehouse and store. The large parcel accommodated vehicle parking. The parcel was expanded in the 1980s with the demolition of residential properties to the west along Macy Place, and the existing grocery store building appeared in aerial photographs between 1985 and 1997, thus confirming the Mobile County tax assessor’s construction date of 1986.

According to Historic Development Department files, this property has previously appeared four times before the Architectural Review Board (ARB). An application for alterations to the east and south elevations of the existing building was approved in January 2009. In May 2010, the ARB approved an application to install three signs with a total square footage of 195.665 on the east elevation of the building, in addition to the existing pole-mounted sign then in existence along Government Street; this decision was based partially on a 1995 Board of Zoning Adjustment variance allowing up to 200 square feet of signage on the property. An application to install additional signage on the pole-mounted sign was denied by the ARB in September 2012. The property last appeared before the ARB in February 2020, when the ARB approved the installation two wall signs with a total area of 184 square feet, bringing the total square footage of signage on the property to 280 square feet including the previously approved 96 square foot monument sign along Government Street. In October 2024, an application was approved for Aldi, Inc. which allowed for a new 74.97 square foot wall sign on the east façade.

SCOPE OF WORK

1. Install signage on an existing monument sign located on the south boundary of the lot along Government Street.
 - a. The proposed sign would be double-faced, with each face consisting of the company’s logo and name.
 - b. Each face would measure 8’-0” wide by 4’-2” high, for a total of approximately 64 square feet of monument signage.
 - c. The signs would be fastened to the monument panel with counter sunk screws.
 - d. The sign would consist of individually lit aluminum channel letters fixed to an aluminum face.

APPLICABLE STANDARDS (*Design Review Guidelines for Mobile’s Historic Districts*)

1. **11.3** Design a new sign to be compatible with the character of a building and the district.
2. **11.5** New signs are restricted to a maximum of 64 square feet.
3. **11.6** Place a sign to be compatible with those in the district.
 - When placing a new sign on a historic building, locate a sign to emphasize design elements of the historic building façade.
 - Mount a sign to fit within existing architectural features.
4. **11.7** Use a sign material that is compatible with the materials of the building on which it is placed and the district. New materials that achieve the effect of traditional materials and lighting solutions will be considered on a case by case basis.

- Do not use highly reflective materials for a sign. All plastic faced box signs are not allowed.
 - Design a sign to be subordinate to the building façade.
5. **11.8** Where necessary, use a compatible, shielded light source to illuminate a sign.
- Consider direct lighting toward a sign from an external, shielded lamp when possible.
 - Use a warm colored light to illuminate a sign when possible.
 - If halo lighting is used to accentuate a sign or building, locate the light source so that it is not visible.
 - If a back-lit sign is used, illuminate each individual letter or element separately.
6. **11.9** When possible design a monument sign to be compatible with the building it serves and the historic district.
- Limit the area of a monument sign to 50 square feet (maximum of 25 square feet on each side).
 - Limit the height of a monument sign to 8 feet. A monument sign should be visible, but clearly subordinate to the building.
 - Where possible, design a monument sign to be compatible with the architecture of the associated building.
 - Use lighting that is shielded and directed toward the sign. This lighting can be installed in the ground adjacent to a monument sign.
 - Do not use an internally illuminated monument sign.

STAFF ANALYSIS

The property under review is a non-contributing structure in the Old Dauphin Way Historic District. This application involves the installation of double-faced monument signage which would be fixed to an existing monument along Government Street.

The proposed sign would be composed of aluminum channel letters fixed to an aluminum facing. The *Design Review Guidelines for Mobile's Historic Districts (Guidelines)* direct that new signage in historic districts be "compatible with the character of a building and the district." (11.3, 11.6, 11.7, 11.8) The proposed sign materials would be consistent with the non-historic and non-contributing nature of the existing building.

The proposed monument sign area would be approximately 64 sf. Existing wall signage at the property totals 74.97sf. The combined total of 138.97sf exceeds the maximum permitted sign area for tenants of commercial properties in historic districts by 74.97 square feet. This maximum square footage is a stipulation listed in both the *Design Review Guidelines for Mobile's Historic Districts*, and in the Unified Development Code (UDC). (11.5) In February 2025, the Board of Zoning Adjustment granted a variance to allow wall signage exceeding 64 square feet at the subject property.

Guideline 11.9 instructs that monument signs should not be internally illuminated. According to the applicant, the top panel on the monument was previously illuminated. There is existing power at the sign location, and the proposed internal illumination would be a dim light which would be compatible with the signage on the building.

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD VICINITY MAP



APPLICATION NUMBER 5 DATE 4/2/2025

APPLICANT Jennifer Jacksons/Wrico Signs

PROJECT Install new signage on existing monument sign



Site Photos – 1550 Government Street



1. View of property, looking northwest.



2. View of existing signage on grocery store building façade. Looking west.



3. View of existing monument sign, looking west.

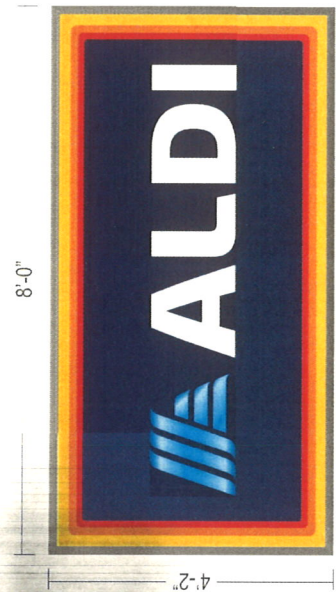
2



EXISTING:
 4'-2" X 8'-0"
 1 1/2" RETAINER



PROPOSED:
 OPTION A



CHANNEL LETTER DETAIL
 SCALE: 3/8" = 1'-0"

2

Picture of building
Before



Current Signage



1550



Firestone
Auto Care Center

Winn-Dixie
Since 1858

Current
Inventory
Bands





THE CITY OF MOBILE, ALABAMA

BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT

LETTER OF DECISION

February 5, 2025

Stormy Rutledge
Wrico Signs, Inc.
3345 Halls Mill Road
Mobile, Alabama 36606

Re: 6650/6255/5796/5774/4459/4458/4453/523
BOA-003191-2025
1550 Government Street
Wrico Signs, Inc.
District 2

Dear Applicant(s) / Property owner(s):

On February 3, 2025, the Board of Zoning Adjustment considered your request for a Sign Variance to amend a previously approved sign variance to allow wall signage exceeding 64 square feet along the Government Street corridor in a B-2, Neighborhood Business Urban District; the Unified Development Code (UDC) does not allow signage exceeding 64 square feet along the Government Street corridor in a B-2, Neighborhood Business Urban District.

After discussion, the Board determined the following findings of fact for approval:

- A) The variance **will not** be contrary to the public interest;
- B) Special conditions **exist** such that a literal enforcement of the provisions of the chapter **will** result in unnecessary hardship; and
- C) The spirit of the chapter **shall be** observed, and substantial justice **done** to the applicant and the surrounding neighborhood by granting the variance.

No permit, license or certification can be issued until the 15-day appeal period has expired and no appeal has been made. If a permit/license has not been obtained on or before August 3, 2025, the variance will expire and become null and void.

Any party aggrieved by this decision may, within fifteen days of the date of the decision, appeal to the Circuit Court of Mobile County by filing a written notice of appeal, specifying the decision from which the appeal is taken. Notice of the appeal, as well as a date stamped copy of the appeal filed in Circuit Court must be filed with this Board within the fifteen-day appeal period.

BOA-003191-2025 1550 Government Street
February 5, 2025

For further assistance, please call 251-208-5895.

Sincerely,

BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT

William Guess, Chairman

By: Stephen Guthrie
Stephen Guthrie
Deputy Director of Planning and Zoning