

**AKRON URBAN DESIGN AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

**MEETING OF NOVEMBER 5, 2024 - 9:00 A.M.**

**COUNCIL CHAMBERS, THIRD FLOOR, MUNICIPAL BUILDING**

**166 S. HIGH STREET**

**(1) CORRECTION and APPROVAL of Minutes of July 16, 2024.**

**(2) PUBLIC HEARING:**

A. **UD-2024-10-HD** – Certificate of Appropriateness to add a drive-up window to the Firestone Mini Mart at 1459 Aster Avenue.



**(2) DISCUSSION:**

A. Discussion of Historic Landmark application.

KJ/emd

# UD-2024-05-HD

Certificate of Appropriateness to add  
a drive-up window to the Firestone  
Mini Mart at 1459 Aster Avenue

-  U1 Single Family Residential
-  U3 Retail Business



0 100'  
Created 10/22/2024 jwh  
Revised 10/24/2024 jwh



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** AKRON URBAN DESIGN AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION **ITEM # 2A**  
**UD-2024-05-HD**

**FROM:** DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

**DATE:** NOVEMBER 5, 2024

**SUBJECT:** UD-2024-05-HD – Certificate of Appropriateness to add a drive-up window to the Firestone Mini Mart at 1459 Aster Avenue

### **COMMENTS:**

The owner of the Firestone Mini Mart is proposing to add a drive-up window to the existing retail building and to reconfigure the layout of the existing parking lot. The proposed modifications include adding a 4 foot by 4 foot drive-up window in the north wall of the building, facing Lindenwood Avenue. The window would be located 20 feet east of the Aster Avenue façade. No other changes to the exterior appearance of the building are proposed.

The drive-up window would have a stacking lane that could accommodate 3 vehicles along the north wall of the existing building. To allow for the drive-up window stacking lane, the existing parking spaces along the north wall of the building would be relocated to the north side of the site, facing the Lindenwood Avenue. Five-foot-wide landscaping buffers would be provided along Aster Avenue and Lindenwood Avenue, as required by the zoning code. The number of off-street parking spaces would be reduced from 12 spaces to 5. Eleven parking spaces are required per the zoning code. Existing on-street parking is available for customer use. The proposed site layout would eliminate or narrow the existing curb cuts, reducing the potential for pedestrian/vehicular conflicts. The proposal would eliminate the 30 feet wide curb cut at the corner of Aster Avenue and Lindenwood Avenue. It also reduces the curb cut width on Aster Avenue from 33 feet to 10 feet, and the curb cut on Lindenwood Avenue from 33 feet to 18 feet. If approved, the one-way entrance from Lindenwood Avenue should be reduced to 12 feet wide.

The Firestone Mini Mart is located in Firestone Park, within the Aster Avenue Historic Business District. Firestone Park is an important example of an early twentieth century planned community. The neighborhood was envisioned and built by Harvey Firestone, President of Firestone Tire and Rubber Company. It was designed by landscape architect Alling S. DeForest. The Historic District designation includes all the properties along the east side of Aster Avenue between Lindenwood Avenue and Palm Avenue. All the original historic buildings on Aster Avenue remain except for a gas station that was located at the corner of Aster Avenue and Lindenwood. The site hosted a gas station from 1928 through 1962. The gas station building stood on the

current parking lot for the Firestone Mini Mart, and was attached to the north wall of the existing Mini Mart. The gas station was demolished sometime between 1975 and 1980.

The Aster Avenue Business District was designated as an Akron Historic District in 2018. In 2019, the Aster Avenue Great Streets Plan was developed with community input by the Kent State Urban Design Collaborative. Feedback from the community indicated that stakeholders want to protect the historic character of the business district and maintain the pedestrian-oriented experience of the neighborhood.

Per the Historic District designation, any activity affecting the exterior of included structures requires a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) from the City of Akron Urban Design and Historic Preservation Commission. Before issuing the Certificate of Appropriateness, the Commission shall review the proposed activity for consistency with the Secretary of the Interior's "Standards for Rehabilitation" and "Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings".

According to the Secretary's Standards, "The intent of the Standards is to assist the long-term preservation of a property's significance through the preservation of historic materials and features. The Standards pertain to historic buildings and also encompass the building's site and environment."

In the Standards for Rehabilitation, item 9 states, "Exterior alterations or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment."

According to the "Setting (District and Neighborhood)" guidelines, it is recommended that "new features (such as parking areas, access ramps, or lighting), be designed so that they are as unobtrusive as possible, retain the historic relationships between buildings and the landscape in the setting, and are compatible with the historic character of the setting."

Per the Standards, "A project meets the Standards when the overall effect of all work on the property is one of consistency with the property's historic character." The proposed modifications do not appear to meet the Standards, as the drive-up window and associated car stacking would not have been a common historical use. A drive-up window is a contemporary, suburban, and auto-oriented use. The drive-up window is not consistent with the pedestrian-oriented nature of the Historic District and would negatively impact its overall character.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

The Department of Planning and Urban Development recommends **DISAPPROVAL** of the Certificate of Appropriateness for the rehabilitation of the Firestone Mini Mart at 1459 Aster Avenue.

DD/emd