



## Legislation Text

---

**File #:** 21-4212, **Version:** 1

---

HLC#21-010: Public hearing to consider a request for new signage on the J.H. Alexander House at 103 Van Worth Street; Kim and Shawn Pratt, owners

The applicant is requesting approval for new signs on the building. The signs will be placed as follows:

1. A wall sign mounted on the end of the building between the second story windows. The sign dimensions are 4 feet by 4 feet.
2. A hanging sign on the porch facing Van Worth Street. The sign dimensions are 2 feet by 4 feet.
3. A hanging sign on the porch facing the parking lot. The sign dimensions are 2 feet by 4 feet.

According to the quote, the signs will be made from aluminum panels with the business name and logo mounted to the panel in acrylic.

Excel Oil and Gas, the previous business, had larger signs hanging from the front and rear porches. These signs were in place prior to the Mansfield landmark designation and were not subject to the historic guidelines.

The property is zoned C-2, Community Business District. The City's sign regulations for commercial properties allow one sign for each street frontage plus one sign on the wall. As a corner lot at Van Worth and N. Main Streets, this property is entitled to three signs. However, a sign may not be placed on any facade that is parallel or nearly parallel to the front facade of a building.

Although the house is being used for business purposes, it is still a residential structure. The sign guidelines for commercial buildings in the Downtown Guidelines should not be used. The new signage should be reviewed using the guidelines from the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* for signage on a residential landmark:

- *New signs should respect the size, scale and design of the historic building.* The wall sign will be 16 square feet flush mounted on the side wall. The hanging signs will be eight square feet, with one sign located on the north and south porches. Although there is one more sign than the previous business had, the proposed signs are smaller.
- *New signs should not obscure significant features of the historic building.* As presented, the hanging signs on the north (Van Worth side) and south (parking lot side) porches will cover part of a window on each side of the building.

- *Sign materials should be compatible with those of the historic building.* The house is clad in vinyl siding. The aluminum panel signage does not detract from the building based on the sign material.

### **Historic Background**

According to the Mansfield Historical Society, this house was the home of James H. Alexander (1827-1909), the first Justice of the Peace in Mansfield. He brought his family of 9 children to Mansfield after the Civil War ended. He had owned a large plantation in Rome, Georgia when the War broke out, and he served the Confederate States as Assistant Adjutant General. He was at Vicksburg, Mississippi when it fell. He settled on a farm east of Mansfield, but moved to this house in about 1889. The house has been altered from its original condition.

The J.H. Alexander House is the first historic building visible to traffic and pedestrians heading south on the bridge. The most prominent view is the corner of the house at Van Worth and Main Streets. The wall sign on the east façade can be easily viewed. The hanging sign on the north façade is less readable and blocks a view of the porch and the window behind.

This can be mitigated by erecting a freestanding sign in the front yard as shown on the alternate sign exhibit in place of a hanging sign on the porch. Additionally, it will alleviate the restriction on signs being installed on facades parallel to each other.

The view from the parking lot side of the house is less noticeable from the street heading north until a traveler is closer to the house. Installing the sign on the right side of the porch might reduce the visual obstruction.

Staff recommends approval with the condition that the sign on Van Worth Street be a freestanding sign with the details to be worked out at the meeting.

### **Attachments**

Maps and supporting information  
Applicant's Sign Exhibits  
Alternate Sign Exhibit