

**Planning, Land Use and Mobility Committee
Case Report
Ruth's Chris Steak House Relocation and Renovation**



*Proposed exterior design up-grade for the former TGI Friday's restaurant site
which will become the new home to Ruth's Chris.*

**Case Report: Ruth's Chris Steak House
DIR-2021-7703-DI (Director's Interpretation)
5919 Canoga Avenue, Woodland Hills, CA. 91367**

PLUM Meeting(s): January 6, 2022 (Initial presentation)

Site Location: 5919 Canoga Avenue. (Allison Plaza)
Downtown District, Warner Center
Woodland Hills, CA 91367

Project Description: The Applicant is requesting a Planning Director's Interpretation for a renovation and expansion of an existing vacant restaurant space (formerly TGI Friday's) located in the Allison Plaza complex in the Downtown District of the Warner Center 2035 Specific Plan. The Applicant is

operating the restaurant in the Promenade Shopping Center and has been in operation there for 15+ years. Their application for a new CUB for the new location is filed under a separate Planning number and is being heard separately(ZA-2021-7538-CUB). A separate Case Report and Motion have been prepared.

Applicant: Ruth's Hospitality Group Inc.
Tim Hanrahan; tel: (407) 829-3478; email: thanrahan@rhgi.com

Representative: Andrea Cardo, Interplan, LLC; tel: (407) 645-5008;
email: ACardo@interplanllc.com

LA City Planner: Tim Fargo; tel: (818) 374-9911

Property Owner: David Allison, Allison Plaza LLC; email: david.allisonassetmgt.com

PLUM Case Leader: Martin Lipkin, martinlipkin@yahoo.com; tel: (818) 999-4340

Overview of Site and Project:

The proposed relocation and renovation site is in the Downtown District of the 2035 WC Specific Plan in a restaurant building in Allison Plaza (Canoga and Oxnard) that previously housed a TGI Friday's restaurant and bar. Ruth's Chris Steak House is a well-known, high-end restaurant that has been located in the old Promenade Shopping Mall for over 15+ years and has achieved a sterling reputation throughout the West Valley. Because the Promenade will be undergoing a massive renovation and reconstruction sometime in the future, the Applicant has made the decision to move their Warner Center operations to another Downtown District within the 2035 Warner Center Specific Plan, and renovate and slightly expand the former TGI Friday's restaurant in Allison Plaza to turn it into a free-standing Ruth's Chris Steak House facility. The Applicant has stated that they plan to expand the interior footprint of the building outward so that the interior spaces match the dimensions of the covered roof overhang of the building. They also plan to upgrade the exterior facades of the structure and add new signage.

Specifically, the Applicant is requesting a Director's Interpretation from the WC 2035 Specific Plan guideline SP Section 5.3.2.7.2 which addresses horizontal additions, and asks for relief from the 35-foot high street wall provision, stating that Section 6.1.2.3.5(a) was not intended for such buildings. Additionally, they are asking for an Administrative Clearance per Section 5.3.2.7.2 of the 2035 WC Specific Plan for a horizontal addition to a new restaurant in an existing building. The old TGI Friday's restaurant site is an integral part of a cluster of commercial building that make up Allison Plaza on the corner of Canoga Ave. and Oxnard Street, which has been a long-time section of Warner Center's main commercial area since 1976. The existing, free-standing, single story restaurant structure is 8,785 SF, and has a height of 22 feet. The Applicant is proposing pushing out the outer walls to meet the dimensions of the existing roof overhang, creating an interior of 10,139 SF and elevating the height to 28 feet. Overall expansion will add 1,354 feet of space to the existing restaurant—a 15.4% addition. With the expansion, there will be 278 indoor seats and 41 patio seats for a total of 319 seats. The 2035 WC Specific Plan allows

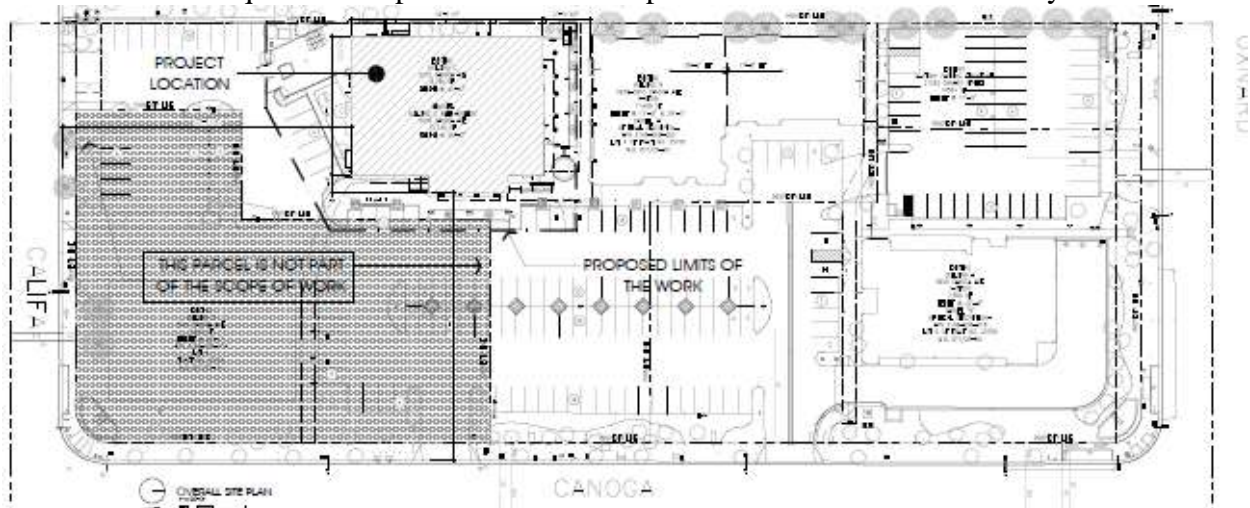
for an addition if it does not exceed the Cumulative Square Footage Limit and does not have any horizontal addition exceeding 25%.



Exterior shots of the former TGI Friday's building showing front entry and greenhouse dining section of the building. Patio is on right.



Restaurant parking is provided through a master plan for Allison Plaza (3 individual parcels with a single set of CC&Rs) and there is a total of 248 spaces (including the required Disabled spaces) and exceeds the required 114 spaces of the 2035 Specific Plan. There is a service yard area on



Site plan for Allison Plaza showing restaurant at the top left.

the southwest corner for deliveries and trash pick-up. Allison Plaza meets/exceeds all the 2035 Specific Plan requirements for Publically Accessible Open Space and for connectivity. The minimal expansion will not have a significant impact on the PAOS. Because the structure is 150 feet from Califa and 161 feet from Canoga, it does not appear to fall under the intent of the Specific Plan’s street wall guidance requiring building height to be 35 feet, and thereby only needs the Director’s interpretation for relief.

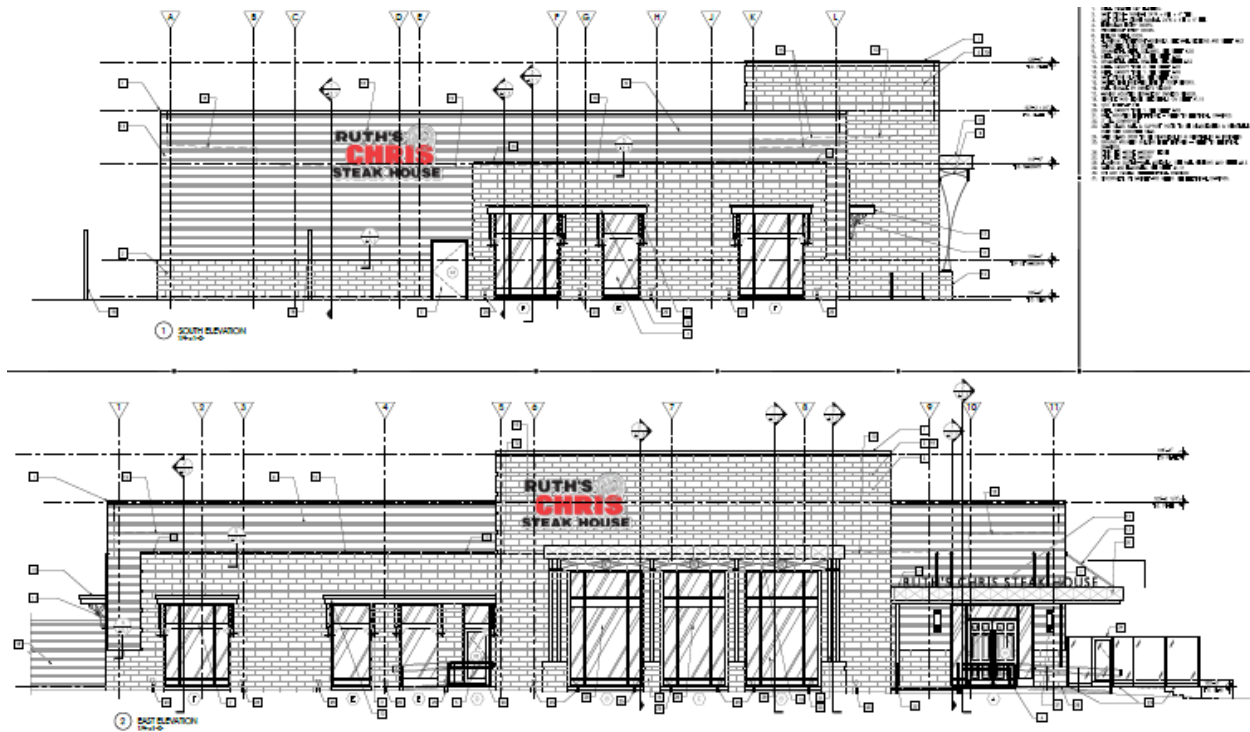
Architectural Design and Materials:

The building, constructed in 1978-79, will undergo a complete renovation and upgrade. All exterior walls and roofing will be replaced with new materials and finishes, and all new electrical, mechanical and plumbing will be installed. The proposed building materials for the exterior renovation are cast stone (alabaster—ground face), Newtech wood accents (teak), metal panels and canopies with a black powder coating, and red front doors. Exterior hardscaping and landscaping are already in place, although some areas and plantings may be up-graded.



View of proposed renovation of building showing materials, canopies and front door.

Compared to the existing structure’s current architectural style, the proposed renovation will add more windows and textured architectural materials, and the roofline will be taken from its 1970’s styling to exhibit a more contemporary look. The “greenhouse” addition to the original structure will be replaced with a large set of windows to allow more light into the dining area. It should be noted that the proposed architectural upgrade will still maintain the overall look and esthetic of Allison Plaza and will fit in with the styles and finishes of the other buildings there. In fact, the proposed renovation will be an esthetic upgrade over the former red-striped, circus style typography of the old TGI Friday’s establishment.



South (top) and East elevations. (Signage required to conform to 2035WCSP signage regs.)

Case Report Analysis and Recommendation(s):

Ever since their franchise closed down in Allison Plaza, the old TGI Friday's building has been in dire need of a complete makeover and refurbishment from its' 1970's styling and can serve as an ideal location for one of Warner Center's long-established top-end restaurants that is being forced to relocate out of the Promenade mall site which is planned to be torn down and eventually rebuilt. The proposed upgrades and changes by Ruth's Chris corporate offices adheres to the requirements of the 2035 Warner Center Specific Plan and also maintains the architectural integrity of the surrounding Allison Plaza structures.

After studying the submitted plans and conducting a site visit, we believe the requests for a Director's Interpretation from WC 2035 SP Section 5.3.2.7.7 for horizontal additions and for relief from Section 6.1.2.3.5 (a) should be granted by City Planning. The horizontal additions are crucial to upgrading the structure's overall look and operating capabilities, and it is obvious that the 35-foot street wall height requirement was not intended to be instituted on an existing structure that is 100+ feet away from the two closest streets.

While the overall footprint of the building will be expanded by approximately 15%, few if any individuals will ever be aware of the enlargement since it will all be existing under the existing roof's umbrella. The submitted plans will remove the "greenhouse" area which was a later addition to the TGI Friday's building and unify the entire structure architecturally.

The proposed exterior materials of cast “alabaster” stone should complement the other existing structures in Allison Plaza, and the wood-like embellishments to the exterior will be a welcome relief from all of the stucco of the previous iteration. Changing the roof and roofline will lift much of the “heaviness” of the existing structure and make it more visually inviting. The exterior hardscape is already in place, and most of the existing landscaping will probably be maintained. The “glass wall” and railing for the patio are being retained, thus satisfying the State liquor license requirements, and all of the mandates for the 2035 WCSP parking, Publically Accessible Open Space, and connectivity requirements are already in force for Allison Plaza and will not change with the proposed Ruth’s Chris plans.

The recommendation from the WHWCNC PLUM Committee is to accept the submitted plans for the Ruth’s Chris Steak House relocation and renovation, as specified in the following motion.

PLUM MOTION

As pertaining to Case DIR-2021-7703-DI for relocation and renovations for Ruth’s Chris Steak House at 5919 Canoga Avenue, Woodland Hills, CA 91367, after having held one (1) live or virtual electronic public meeting for the application filed by Ruth’s Hospitality Group, Inc. to enlarge, upgrade and refurbish an existing restaurant structure in Allison Plaza in the Downtown District of the Warner Center 2035 Plan, and to gain Administrative Clearance and a Director’s Interpretation for WC 2035 SP Section 5.3.2.7.2 for horizontal additions, and for relief from Section 6.1.2.3.5(a), the WHWCNC Planning, Land Use and Mobility Committee hereby finds that:

WHEREAS, the proposed renovation to the former TGI Friday’s restaurant structure will enlarge the existing 8,785 SF structure by 1,354 SF to 10,354 SF which is a 15.4% addition and which meets the requirements/restrictions of the 2035 WC Specific Plan; and,

WHEREAS, the existing structure has occupied this site since 1978, and is located over 100+ feet away from each of the three WC streets (Califa, Oxnard and Canoga) fronting the Allison Plaza property and should be exempt from the 35-foot “street wall” requirement contained in Section 6.1.2.3.5(a) of the WC 2035 Specific Plan; and,

WHEREAS, a Director’s Interpretation for WC 2035 SP Section 5.3.2.7.2 for horizontal additions will be needed to successfully complete the renovation plans and still remain within the Specific Plan guidelines; and,

WHEREAS, the exterior remodeling submitted will substantially upgrade the structure architecturally by changing the existing roofline and re-cladding the structure in more contemporary exterior materials; and,

WHEREAS, the requested changes will retain a long-time, high-end Warner Center dining establishment in the Downtown District and help to attract additional commercial activity and enterprises to the commercial center of Warner Center; and,

WHEREAS, all of the required 2035 Warner Center Specific Plan requirements for parking, Publicly Accessible Open Space (PAOS) and connectivity will be maintained and or enhanced; and,

WHEREAS, the application for the alcohol CUB is being made under a separate case filing, and signage must meet the 2035 WCSP sign ordinance requirements and will be subject to approval by the Los Angeles City Planning Department before installation;

Therefore, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED that the Planning Land Use and Mobility Committee and the full Board of the Woodland Hills - Warner Center Neighborhood Council, for the findings and conditions stated herein, finds that application and plans submitted by Ruth's Hospitality Group Inc. and its affiliated architects and representatives receive the support of the Board of the Woodland Hills - Warner Center Neighborhood Council (WHWCNC) for their requested actions contingent upon the following conditions:

Conditions

1. All plans presented either in person or electronically January 6, 2022 to the WHWCNC PLUM Committee and Board of the WHWCNC on 1/12/22 shall be dated as such and, shall be re-submitted to Planning as a final project plan application submittal.
2. The applicant will not submit any significant, further updated plans or changes without first presenting them to the WHWCNC for support. Any modifications to the elevation(s)/ architecture that are no longer in substantial conformance with the initial presented plans will be presented first to the WHWCNC for support before submitting them to City Planning. Additionally, all conditions herein shall be printed on one of the Project Summary pages as a commitment to--and acceptance of--these conditions.
3. The Applicant will place a project sign near the structure during the remodel of the project at the beginning of construction of sufficient size that is clearly visible to the parking lot area showing a rendering of the proposed/approved project, plus specifics as to the ownership and contact information. Upon receipt of a Certificate of Occupancy, the signs for that building shall be removed.

The Planning, Land Use and Mobility Committee recommends that the Board of the Woodland Hills – Warner Center Neighborhood Council advise the City of Los Angeles Planning Department and Council District 3 Councilmember Bob Blumenfield of its findings and subsequent recommendations to SUPPORT this motion presented on January 12, 2022.

Motion: Marty Lipkin

Second: Peter Fletcher

Vote: Aye: 8 Nay: 0 Abstain: 0