



## Board of Adjustment

### *Staff Report*

**CASE NUMBER:** BA15-007 (PLN2015-00066)  
**STAFF PLANNER:** Wahid Alam, AICP  
**LOCATION/ADDRESS:** 825 W University Drive  
**COUNCIL DISTRICT:** Council District 4  
**OWNER:** JEG-FIT University & Extension Partners, LLC  
**APPLICANTS:** Withey Morris PLC.

**REQUEST:** *Requesting a Substantial Conformance Improvement permit to allow the redevelopment of an existing shopping center in the LC zoning district.*

### SUMMARY OF APPLICANT'S REQUEST

The applicant is requesting a Substantial Conformance Improvement Permit (SCIP) to allow the redevelopment of a former grocery store in an existing commercial center. The site is approximately 10.66± acres and is located at the southwest corner of University Drive and Extension Road originally developed in 1985 called Continental Mesa North Commerce Center.

The applicant is requesting a Substantial Conformance Improvement Permit (SCIP) to facilitate the redevelopment of the site for three tenants using the existing site plan layout which maintains the existing circulation pattern of the shopping center with reduced parking lot landscape and reduced quality of parking spaces. The SCIP would allow the redevelopment of the site without having to bring the entire site into conformance with current code.

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of case BA15-007, *conditioned upon the following:*

- 1. Compliance with the project narrative, site plan, landscape plan and elevations submitted except as modified by the following conditions.*
- 2. Compliance with the Administrative Design Review approval for this redevelopment project.*
- 3. Compliance with all City development codes and regulations.*
- 4. Compliance with all requirements of Development Services in the issuance of building permits.*
- 5. Provide two trees and six shrubs in each landscape islands at the end of each rows of parking spaces (in the parking area facing the former fry's grocery store building.*
- 6. Install one raised landscape island between the two existing islands at the end of each row to break the parking field (16 parking spaces compared to 8 space per current code) to achieve at least one every eight spaces only in front of the proposed redevelopment.*
- 7. Install trees along the south property line within the existing perimeter landscape yard only for parcel 1.*
- 8. Install 1 tree and 6 shrubs per 25 linear feet of Extension Road frontage per Section 11-33-3.*
- 9. Remove all temporary structures, outdoor storage units, vents, and similar items that are located at the rear of the building along south elevation.*
- 10. Remove all non-operating roof top mechanical equipment.*
- 11. All new roof-mounted equipment shall be screened by an encompassing monolithic unit, rather than several individual screens or "hats". The height of the screening element shall equal or exceed the height of the structure's tallest piece of installed equipment per Section 11-30-9A1.*
- 12. Install gates to the existing trash enclosure at the rear of the building per current city standards.*
- 13. Install a pedestrian connection between Extension Road and the proposed redevelopment.*

14. *Repair the existing driveway access off of Extension Road per City of Mesa Standards.*
15. *Install brick veneer or tiles at the wainscot level compatible with the existing urgent care pad building.*
16. *Submit a revised site plan, landscape and building elevations including color ones and materials board for staff approval prior to Building Permit submittal.*
17. *All conditions shall be met prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy.*
18. *Signage (detached and attached) need separate approval and permit issued by Development Services.*

#### **SITE CONTEXT**

<b>CASE SITE:</b>	Existing vacant building – zoned LC
<b>NORTH:</b>	Existing urgent care/medical pad building – Zoned LC
<b>EAST:</b>	(across Extension Rd) Existing residential development – Zoned RS-6
<b>SOUTH:</b>	Existing residential development- Zoned RM-2 PAD
<b>WEST:</b>	Existing residential development- Zoned RM-2 PAD

#### **STAFF ANALYSIS**

The applicant is requesting a SCIP to facilitate the redevelopment of an existing site previously occupied by Fry's grocery in the existing Continental Mesa North Commerce Center originally developed in 1985. The applicant's proposal includes occupying a portion of the existing building (former grocery store) for a fitness center and divide the rest of the area into two future tenant spaces. The Planet Fitness will occupy 21,462 square feet and future tenant #1 will be 16, 512 square feet and future tenant #2 will occupy the balance of the area for 12,343 square feet. The proposal is to convert the former grocery store into three tenant spaces. The proposed redevelopment will create 50,317 square-foot multi-tenant commercial spaces by converting the existing vacant building. The proposed commercial building will use the existing shared driveway access off of University Drive and Extension Road. The shopping center includes the following:

- Lot 1) the proposed 50,317 sq.ft. multi-tenant building occupying the former grocery store at 825 W University Drive.
- Lot 2) the existing shops in an L shaped building for 37,734 sq. ft. at 855 W University Drive including a restaurant for 1,200 sq.ft. and a dental office for 1,200 sq.ft.
- Lot 3) a pad building for 2,715 sq.ft. used by medical facility at 835 W University Drive.
- Lot 4) another pad building for 6,690 sq.ft., currently vacant and located at the SWC University and Extension.

Therefore, the grand total for the entire shopping center for lots 1 thru 4 is 97,456 sq.ft.

The proposed site plan includes a reduction to the required landscape setback along north property line and reduced foundation base along north elevation of the building. The Zoning Ordinance requires a 15' setback along the north property line for commercially zoned properties adjacent to arterial streets like University; the applicant is requesting to keep the existing 4 feet setback along the north property line. The foundation base along the north elevation is required to be 15'; the proposed site plan wants to keep the existing 10' wide foundation base. Also, the proposed site plan does not meet the landscaping requirements for interior parking lot landscape islands.

Staff identified the following items based on a recent site visit:

- a) There are significant damages/cracks on the driveway access off of Extension Road.

- b) There is no pedestrian connection from Extension Road. Residents were seen walking through the retention basin to get to their neighborhood to the south.
- c) There are various outdoor storage units, vents and similar objects installed at the rear of the building along south elevation probably left over by the former grocery store.
- d) The parking spaces in the front and rear of the building needs new restriping.
- e) Most of the landscape islands in the parking field do not have trees and in some cases are missing shrubs also.
- f) The exterior finishes including paint are in poor condition.
- g) Existing roof-mounted mechanical equipment at the rear of the building is totally visible from the existing residential development to the south.

Table 1:

Standard	Code Requirement	Applicant Proposed	Staff Recommendation
University Drive (north property line)	15 feet from future 65-foot right-of-way	4 feet from current 55' right-of-way	As proposed/existing
Extension Road (east property line)	15 feet from 45 feet right-of-way	20 feet from current right-of-way	Meets Code
South property line	25 feet setback	10 feet setback	As proposed/existing
West property line	0 feet setback (group commercial)	0 feet setback	Meets Code
Parking	Planet Fitness 21,462 s.f. @ 1/100 s.f. = 215 required Tenant #1 16, 512 s.f. @ 1/375= 44 req. Tenant #2 12,343 s.f. @1/375 s.f.= 33 req. <b>Total for proposed redevelopment= 292 required</b> Balance of the shopping center: Retail 44,424 s.f.@1/375 s.f.= 112 required Medical/dental 5,115 @1/200 s.f.= 26 required <b>Grand Total (entire center) 430 spaces required</b>	<b>Existing:</b> Lot 1=241 spaces, L2= 142spaces, Lot 3=5 spaces Lot 4=24 spaces Total= 412 spaces <b>Proposed:</b> Proposal 233 in front & 19 in rear and existing 171 in rest of the center for a grand total of 252+171= 423 spaces provided.	As proposed
Foundation Base	Exterior walls w/Public Entrance: 15 feet center vertically and horizontally	10 feet existing	As proposed with plant materials on ground and on pots
Parking Lot Landscape Islands	(1) 8'x15' island every 8 parking spaces and at the end of each row of parking	No island in between and at the end of each row with 16 parking spaces	As proposed with staff recommended condition #6
Parking area screening	Parking areas and drive aisles shall be screened from street(s) with masonry wall, berm or combination of wall/berms and densely planted landscaping	Screen walls exist along University Drive and Extension Road	Meets Code

The existing site provides 412 parking spaces for the entire shopping center (Lot 1 thru 4). The applicant has revised the site plan to provide 233 parking spaces in front of the Planet Fitness and future tenant spaces and created 19 additional spaces in the rear of the building for employees. The current code requires 430 spaces for the entire center and the proposed redevelopment will provide a total of 423 spaces for the entire center. There is only a shortage of 7 spaces. The applicant proposes to improve the foundation base with plant

materials both in ground and in pots which will enhance the front of the redeveloped project. Staff does not have concerns with the small number of reduced parking provided on the entire shopping center, since the various uses ranging from retail to medical including health clubs will have the opportunity to distribute the parking load throughout the business hours and not create heavy peak hour or demand at any certain time of the day. The proposed Planet Fitness and future tenant spaces will definitely energize the existing center and bring back shoppers like old days.

The proposed exterior changes in color, material and texture shall require approval by Administrative Design Review process. The applicant has indicated that they are in the process of preparing a submittal for Administrative Design Review.

#### **FINDINGS**

- 1.1 The proposed redevelopment of the site invokes conformance with current development standards.
- 1.2 At the time of initial development in 1985, the setbacks, foundation base, and landscape requirements of the Zoning Code varied or were non-existent when compared to the development standards of the current Code.
- 1.3 The proposed project provides 423 parking spaces on-site where 430 spaces are required. The reduced parking for only 7 spaces compared to current code should not affect the center. The center has various types of uses ranging from retail to medical including fitness center which will help to distribute the parking demand throughout the business hour and not create heavy peak hour or demand at any certain time of the day
- 1.4 Requiring compliance with the current code would not allow the redevelopment of the site to occur.
- 1.5 The deviations requested are consistent with the degree of change requested and improve the site significantly making it an asset to the neighborhood.
- 1.6 The proposed improvements with the recommended conditions of approval help bring the site into a closer degree of conformance with current standards.
- 1.7 The proposed use will not be detrimental to surrounding properties.

#### **ORDINANCE REQUIREMENTS:**

##### **Zoning Ordinance, Sec. 11-73-3 – Substantial Conformance Improvement Permits – Required Findings:**

A SCIP shall not be granted unless the Zoning Administrator, acting as a Hearing Officer, or Board of Adjustment shall find upon sufficient evidence that:

- A. The entire development site will be brought into substantial conformance. Substantial conformance shall mean physical improvements to the existing development site which constitute the greatest degree of compliance with this Ordinance that can be attained without causing or creating any of the following conditions:
  1. The demolition or reconstruction of existing buildings or other significant structures (except signs); or
  2. The cessation of the existing conforming use, or the preclusion of any other lawful, permitted use.
  3. The creation of new non-conforming conditions.
- B. The improvements authorized by the SCIP will result in a development that is compatible with, and not detrimental to, adjacent properties or neighborhoods.



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2525 E. Arizona Biltmore Circle, Suite A-212, Phoenix, AZ 85016

March 10, 2015

City of Mesa, Planning Division  
55 N. Center St.  
Mesa, AZ 85201

RE: Substantial Conformance Improvement Permit (SCIP) / Proposed Planet Fitness & Retail building / 825 W. University Dr.

To Whom It May Concern:

Our firm represents Planet Fitness who is to acquire the property at 825 W. University Dr. in Mesa, Arizona (the "Property"). The Property is improved with a building formerly used as a Fry's grocery store. The grocery store is currently vacant and has been for some time. Planet Fitness proposes to redevelop and make improvements to the building to be used as a gym (approximately 21,833 s.f.) and retail store (approximately 28,856 s.f.). The proposed gym will include machines and equipment but there is no sport court or pool. The retail store does not have an identified user at this time, so the area is simply being designated for its proposed use. Given the new use and the existing building, the applicant requests Substantial Conformance Improvement Permit (SCIP) approval for the Property.

As with any redevelopment project, older infill sites such as this face many challenges. One of the greatest challenges when redeveloping a project is trying to apply current standards to a property that was developed years ago. Even more challenging is dealing with the constraints of an urban infill parcel that does not easily comply with ordinance requirements that were drafted with newer, undeveloped areas in mind. In fact, full conformance with the current code requirements would most likely cause a demolition of part of the existing buildings, cessation of an existing conforming use, or the creation of new non-conformities. As such, the applicant has worked diligently to meet as many of the requirements as possible. However, in order for the redevelopment to be feasible, this application requests some relief through the SCIP process.

The relief requested is related to the number of parking spaces required and the landscaping provided. Currently, there are 408 parking and ADA spaces on site. However, the parking required for the Planet Fitness, retail store and mix of other uses in the shopping center would normally require 443 spaces; a deficiency of 35 spaces. In addition, the site was developed with minimal parking lot landscaping, and no building foundation landscaping.

Because of its existing built environment, the Property is limited in its ability to provide new spaces and new landscaping. The applicant also recognizes that any new parking lot landscape areas will effectively cause a loss in parking. However, the applicant is able to do some site improvements that will enhance the site and bring it closer in to conformance with the current development standards.

Specifically, the applicant will re-vegetate the parking islands (within the property) which are currently barren today. The landscape islands will be replanted with Live Oak Trees along with Valentine Shrubs and New Gold Lantana Groundcover Plants to provide color and texture. The landscape areas adjacent to the parking lot side of the perimeter walls will have Bush Morning Glorying and Red Yucca Plants that are more conducive to the narrow planting areas. The Hopseed Bush has been incorporated within the property to help screen the trash enclosure that is located outside of the property.

The front of the existing building will have a combination of strategically located linear planting areas and planter pots (with corporate colors purple and pellow) so that the pedestrian traffic will not be obstructed but will soften the building elevation by providing variety, color, and texture. The proposed landscape areas consist of low water using plants and will be connected to an automatic irrigation system.

As for the parking requirements, the applicant looked into whether the current parking configuration, striping, aisle widths, and space dimensions could be re-adjusted to bring the site into better conformance. They explored many options in determining how it could best accommodate the parking situation. Upon further research the applicant learned:

- Existing parking widths and aisles are currently at the minimum standards. No additional stalls could be added based on reducing the stall widths or drive aisles.
- Perpendicular parking (rather than angled) is not an option. The site would lose the entire east row and would require removal and/or relocation of the existing light standards. This would also trigger significant underground conduit relocation and replacement.
- We are unable to shift the northern parking lane due to drive aisle width requirements which are at minimum at both ends. Additionally, if the north curb is shifted to create a larger landscape frontage along University Dr, it would impact the drive aisle alignment in an east-west travel path and it wouldn't line up with the curb for the Urgent Care site.

Nevertheless, other options still exist which can improve the site resulting in 23 new parking spaces. The applicant was able to adjust a couple of existing parking spots in the Planet Fitness parking field where the existing landscape islands can be slightly modified. In addition, there is some miscellaneous striping which can be removed and replaced with actual spaces. New parallel parking at the rear of the building will be added for employee parking. Finally, extra spaces will be added adjacent to the existing trash enclosure to the southwest of the Planet Fitness building. In total, 23 new parking spaces will be added as shown on the site plan included with

this application. As a result, the parking deficiency is only 12 spaces under the new plan compared to 35 spaces with the current site configuration.

The proposed modifications will improve the site aesthetics and will bring it into greater, substantial conformance with the current ordinance standards. The building will be refreshed and updated to create a better visual experience and streetscape. The changes will be a positive impact on the center and surrounding area. Furthermore, the site improvements fit well within the context of both the existing and surrounding development. The proposed changes are in substantial conformance with the previously approved site plan and we respectfully request your approval of the SCIP application.

Sincerely yours,

WITHEY MORRIS, P.L.C.

By 

G. Adam Baugh





UNIVERSITY DRIVE



**PLANET FITNESS MESA, ARIZONA - PLANTING PLAN**

PHOENIX PRECAST - OBLIQUE SERIES  
COLORS: PLUM & DIJON

PLANTERS AT STOREFRONT



PRECAST PLANTERS AT COLUMNS AND BELOW WINDOWS

BIKE RACKS

CUTOUT PLANTERS

CUTOUT PLANTERS

BIKE RACKS

CUTOUT PLANTERS

EXTENSION ROAD

**PLANT MATERIALS LEGEND**

SIZE

**TREES**



Quercus virginiana  
Southern Live Oak

24" BOX



Existing Tree  
within property boundary



Existing Palm Tree  
within property boundary

**SHRUBS**



Dodonaea viscosa 'Purpurea'  
Purple Hop Bush

5 GAL.



Eremophyia maculata  
Valentine Bush

5 GAL.



Euphorbia biglandulosa  
Gopher Plant

5 GAL.



Pedilanthus macrocarpus  
Lady's Slipper

5 GAL.



Ruellia brittoniana 'Kalie'  
Dwarf Ruelia

5 GAL.



Russelia equisetiformis  
Coral Plant

5 GAL.



Tecoma stans  
Orange Jubilee

5 GAL.

**GROUNDCOVERS**



Convolvulus cneorum  
Bush Morning Glory

5 GAL.



Lantana hybrid  
New Gold Lantana

5 GAL.



Lantana montevidensis  
Purple Trailing Lantana

1 GAL.



Wedelia fillobata  
Yellow Dot

5 GAL.

**ACCENTS**



Aloe Hybrid  
Blue Elf Aloe

5 GAL.



Hesperaloe parviflora  
Red Yucca

5 GAL.



Yucca recurvifolia  
Soft Leaf Yucca

5 GAL.

**NOTES:**

1. EXISTING TREE AND SHRUBS WITHIN THE PROPERTY BOUNDARY AT THE PARKING LOT ARE TO BE REMOVED AND REPLACED WITH MATERIALS AS SHOWN.

2. FINAL PLANTS SIZES AND QUANTITIES PER THE CITY OF MESA APPROVAL

**planet fitness**

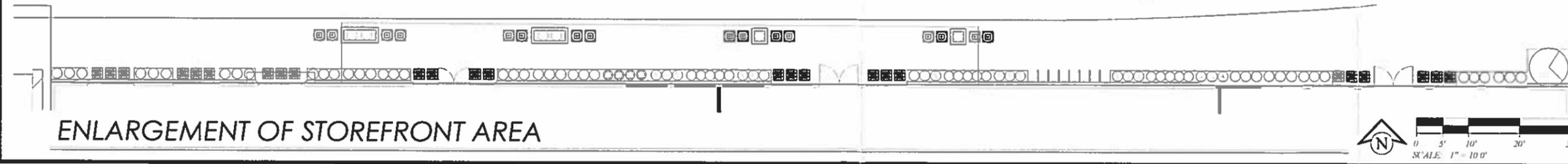
Proposed Planting Plan

Prepared by Neill + Young Associates, LLC  
February 19, 2015





PLANTING PLAN FOR PLANET FITNESS - MESA, ARIZONA



ENLARGEMENT OF STOREFRONT AREA



PLANT MATERIALS LEGEND			
SYM.	PLANT NAME	SIZE	QTY
<b>TREES</b>			
	Quercus virginiana Southern Live Oak	24" BOX	28
	Existing tree within property boundary		
	Existing Palm tree within property boundary		
<b>SHRUBS</b>			
	Dodonaea viscosa 'Purpurea' Purple Hop Bush	5 GAL.	6
	Eremophyia maculata Valentine Bush	5 GAL.	127
	Euphorbia biglandulosa Gopher Plant	5 GAL.	27
	Pedicularis macrocarpa Lady's Slipper	5 GAL.	15
	Ruellia brittaniana 'Katie' Dwarf Ruellia	5 GAL.	18
	Ruellia equisetiformis Coral Plant	5 GAL.	16
	Tecoma stans Orange Jubilee	5 GAL.	1
<b>GROUNDCOVERS</b>			
	Convolvulus crearon Bush Morning Glory	5 GAL.	47
	Lantana hybrid New Gold Lantana	5 GAL.	89
	Lantana montevidensis Purple Trailing Lantana	1 GAL.	101
	Wedelia hibabala Yellow Dot	5 GAL.	16
<b>ACCENTS</b>			
	Aloe Hybrid Blue E8 Aloe	5 GAL.	5
	Hesperaloe parviflora Red Yucca	5 GAL.	54
	Yucca recurvifolia Soft Leaf Yucca	5 GAL.	26
<b>MISC.</b>			
	OBRIQUE SERIES - OS2419 (PLANTER) COLOR: PLUM & DUON PHOENIX PRECAST PRODUCTS		5

**NOTE:**  
 1. EXISTING TREES AND SHRUBS WITHIN THE PROPERTY BOUNDARY AT THE PARKING LOT ARE TO BE REMOVED AND REPLACED WITH MATERIALS AS SHOWN.  
 2. FINAL PLANTS SIZES AND QUANTITIES PER THE CITY OF MESA APPROVAL.

Landscaping Architects  
 Land Planning  
 Urban Design  
 phone 480.949.7127  
 fax 480.949.2655  
 neill@neillyoung.com  
 3795 north dinkwater blvd  
 suite 17  
 scottsdale, arizona 85251

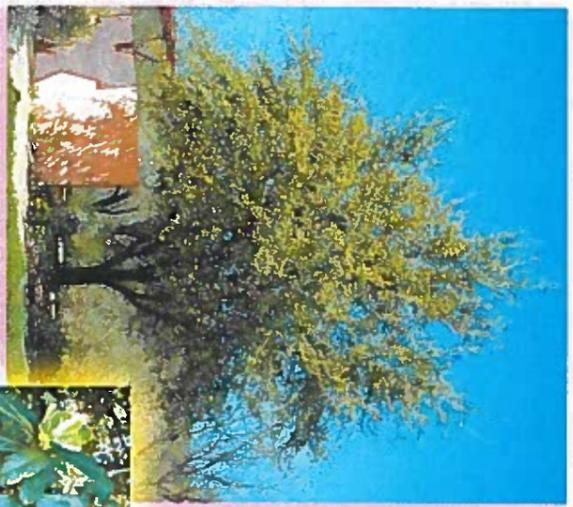


REGISTERED LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT  
 2384  
 JAMES TODD  
 NEILL  
 STATE OF ARIZONA  
 EXPIRES 09/30/2015

**PLANET FITNESS  
 LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENT PLANS**  
 825 West University Drive  
 Mesa, Arizona

DATE:	2/19/15
DESIGNER:	JGP
APPROVED BY:	JTN
SCALE:	
REVISIONS:	DATE:
SUBMITTED FOR:	OWNER REVIEW

SHEET NO.  
**L01**  
 8 OF 8



SOUTHERN LIVE OAK



PURPLE HOPSEED



VALENTINE BUSH



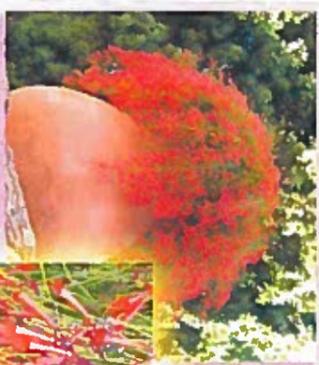
GOPHER PLANT



LADY SLIPPER



RUELLIA KATIE



CORAL PLANT



ORANGE JUBILEE



BUSH MORNING GLORY



NEW GOLD LANTANA



PURPLE TRAILING LANTANA



WEDELIA YELLOW DOT



BLUE ELF ALOE



RED YUCCA



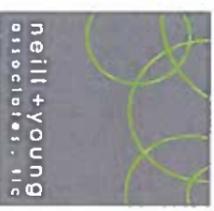
SMOOTH LEAF YUCCA

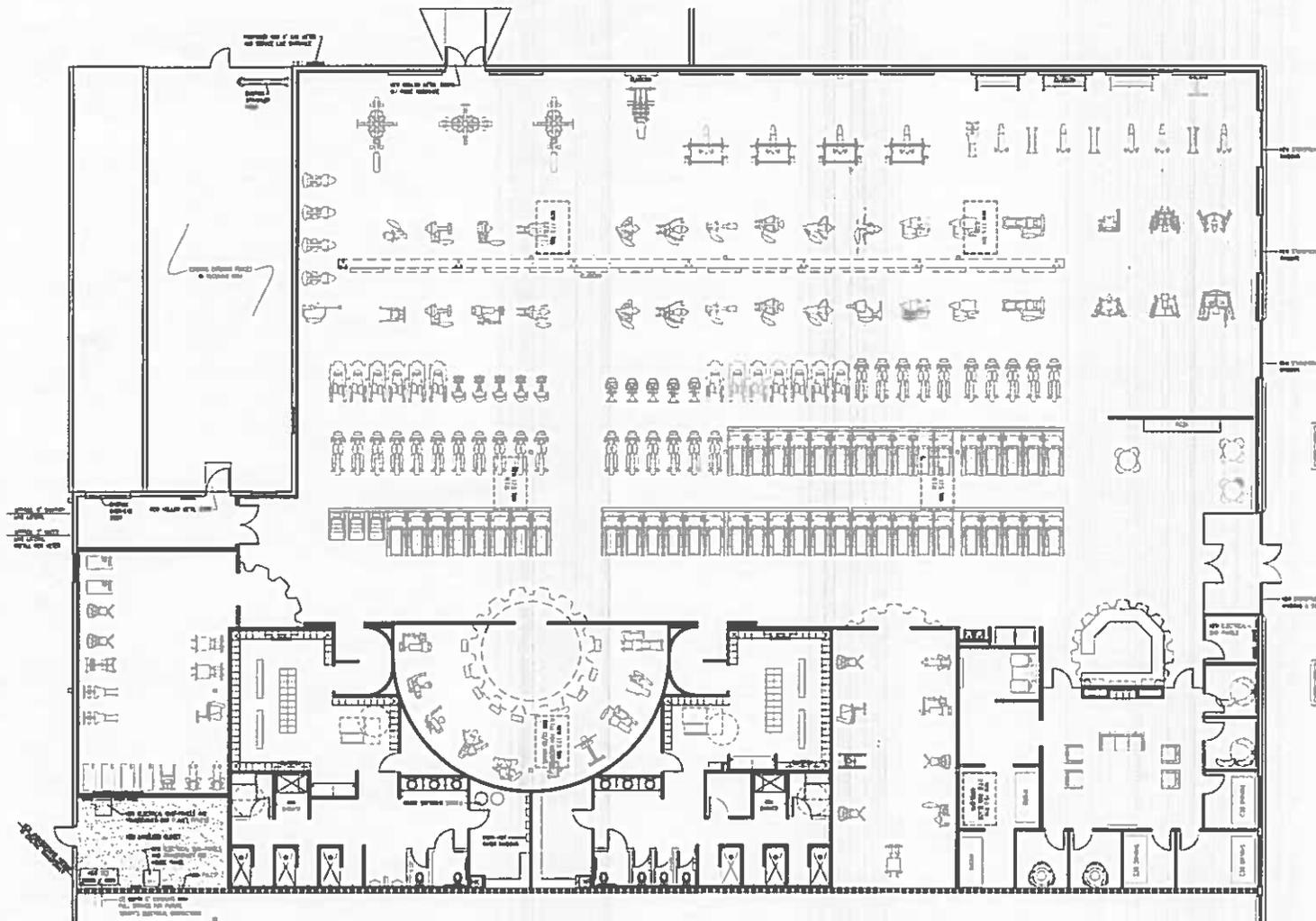


# planet fitness

Prepared by Neill + Young Associates, LLC

February 19, 2015





SKETCH PLAN - 21,462 S.F. ( & 371 LANDLORD CLOSET)  
 SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

PROPOSED RENOVATION FOR:  
**PLANET FITNESS**  
 TOMA BOCK & KEVIN KELLY  
 825 W. UNIVERSITY DRIVE  
 MESA, ARIZONA

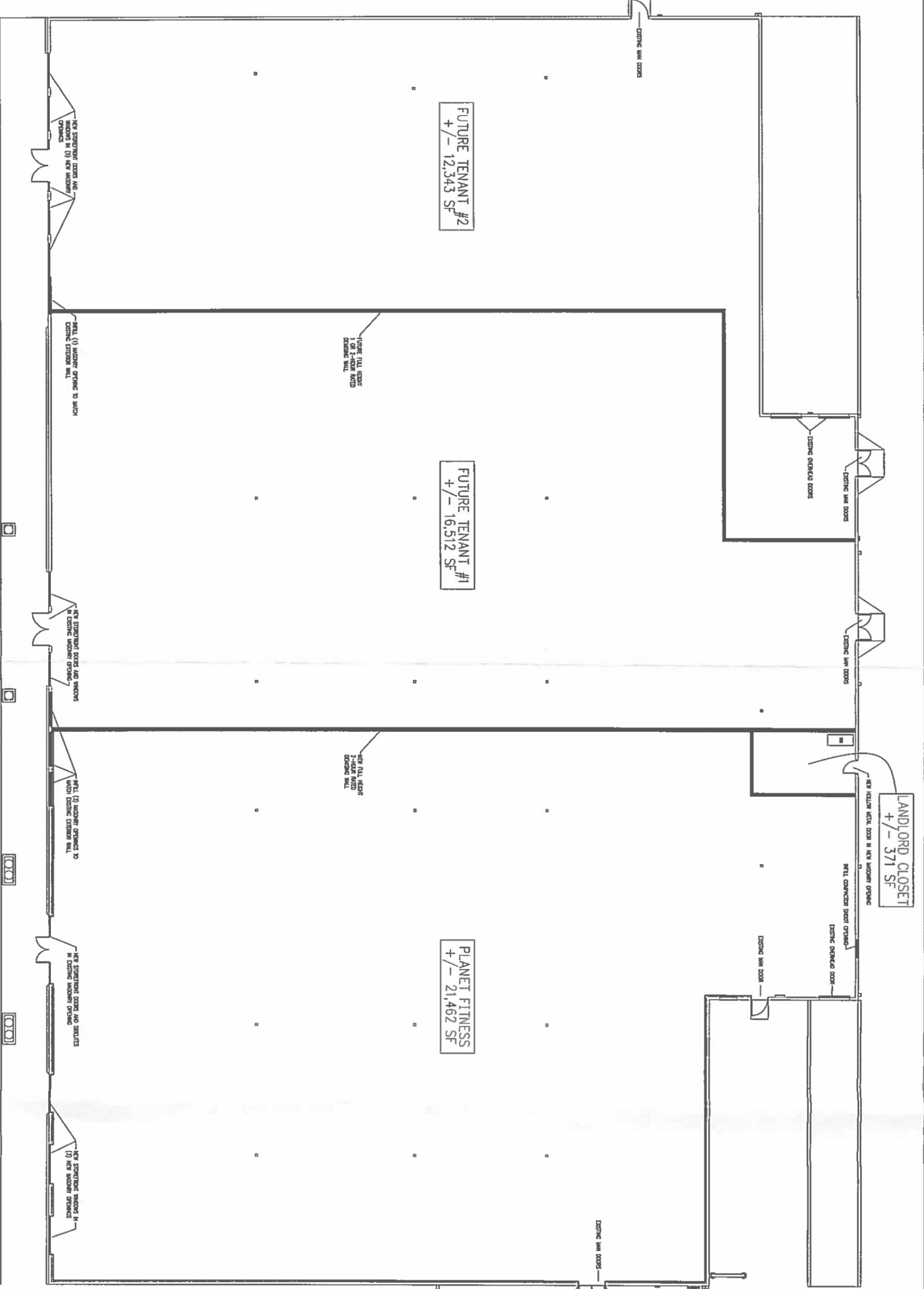
**RHJ ASSOCIATES, PC**  
 ARCHITECTS • PLANNERS • DESIGNERS

850 FIRST AVE, STE 9A  
 KING OF PRUSSIA, PA 19406  
 610.937.0555

3316 S. ROCKFIELD DR  
 WILMINGTON, DE 19810  
 302.482.2160

www.rhjas.com

REVISED	9 18 14
REVISED	2 26 15
REVISED	2 23 15
REVISED	2 20 15
REVISED	2 18 15
REVISED	1 26 15
DATE	1 23 15
PROJECT NO.	2014-0400



FLOOR PLAN  
 SCALE: 3/32" = 1'-0"

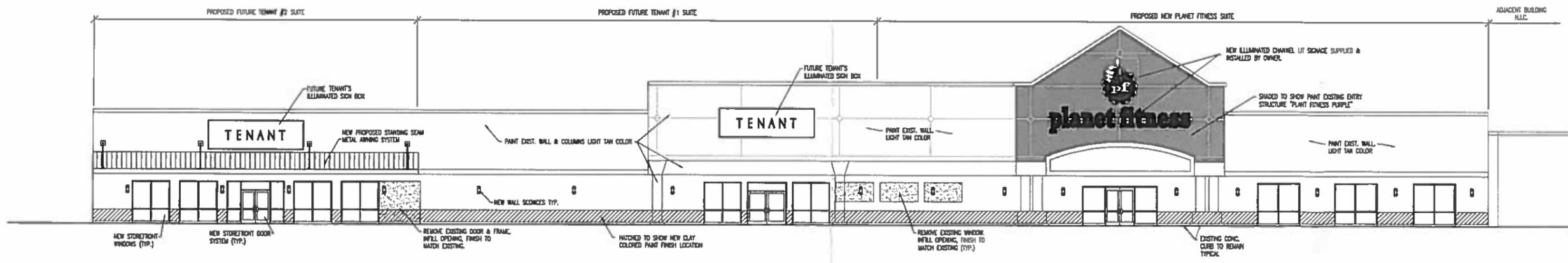
PROPOSED DEMISING STUDY FOR:  
 825 W UNIVERSITY DRIVE  
 MESA, ARIZONA 85201

RHJ ASSOCIATES, PC  
 ARCHITECTS • PLANNERS • DESIGNERS  
 860 FIRST AVE, STE 9A  
 KING OF PRUSSIA, PA 19406  
 610.357.4535  
 www.rhjasoc.com

3315 S. ROCKFIELD DR  
 WILMINGTON, DE 19810  
 302.482.2269

REVISIONS  
 02/18/15  
 02/05/15  
 12/18/14  
 11/18/14  
 2014-0347

**SK-1.1**



EXTERIOR FRONT ELEVATION  
SCALE: 3/32" = 1'-0"

PROPOSED FACADE RENOVATION FOR:  
825 W UNIVERSITY DRIVE  
MESA, ARIZONA 85201

RHJ ASSOCIATES, PC  
ARCHITECTS • PLANNERS • DESIGNERS  
860 FIRST AVE, STE 9A  
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302.482.2269  
www.rhjassoc.com

REVISÉ 02/18/15  
REVISÉ 02/05/15  
REVISÉ 12/18/14  
DATE 11/18/14  
PROJECT NO. 2014-0347

**SK-1.2**

University & Extension



Standing on University looking East



Standing on University looking West



Eastern side of building



Rear of building

University & Extension



Asphalt



Asphalt



Looking at site from University



Standing in front of site looking East

University & Extension



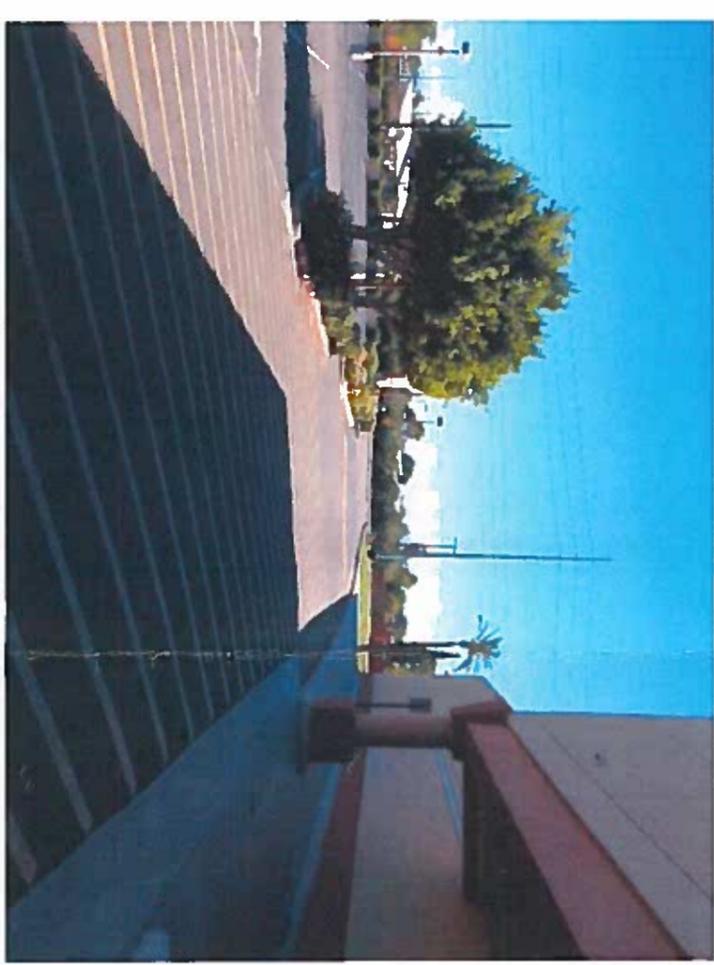
Asphalt



Asphalt



Looking at site from University



Standing in front of site looking East

University & Extension



Standing in front of site looking Northeast



Standing in front of site looking West



Standing in front of site looking Northwest



Standing in front of site looking North