



DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES – PLANNING DIVISION
REPORT: Special Permit for Downtown Signage
 for consideration January 12, 2021

STAFF REPORT

TO: Planning & Zoning Commission
PREPARED BY: Paul Ashworth, Senior Planner
 Paul.Ashworth@Hartford.gov

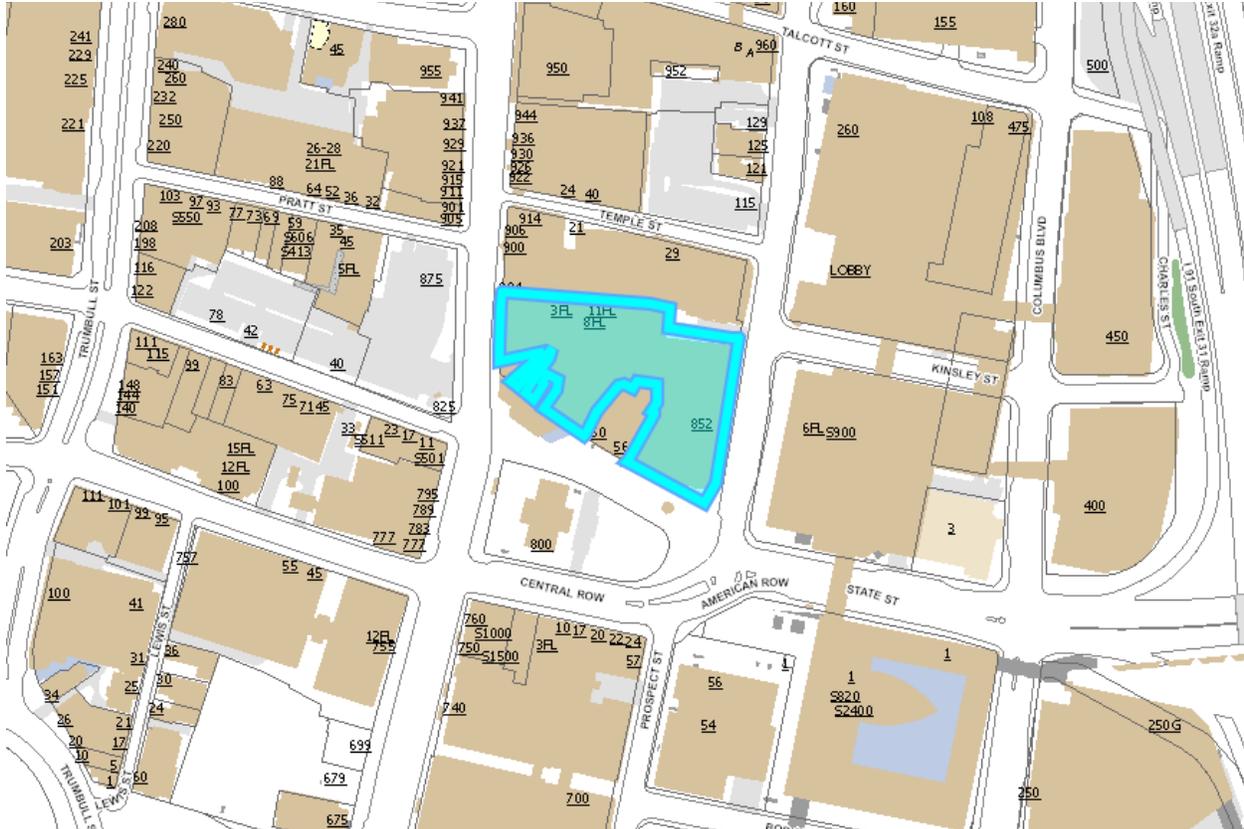
PROJECT: 10 State St
 268-351-016
 P&Z-COMM-2020-0303

ZONE: DT-1, Downtown District

TYPE: Special Permit per Zoning Reg. 8.1.3.E

APPLICANT: Laurentano Sign Group – Alyson Ibbotson

OWNER: MAC-STATE SQUARE LLC



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The applicant is requesting approval of a Special Permit to allow the construction of an illuminated wall sign on a downtown building to signify the presence of a new tenant. The project address has two previous sign related actions approved by City of Hartford boards or commissions. On October 1, 2019 the Hartford Board of Zoning Appeals approved a request for a projecting sign on the Market Street façade of the subject building (P&Z-COMM-2019-0061). The proposed projecting sign displayed 16 square feet of sign area per sign face where the code only allows 6 square feet per face. On May 4, 2020 the Planning & Zoning Commission approved a Special Permit for a wall sign within the top 30 feet of the building and a lower level wall sign. The approval on May 4, 2020 was conditional on the applicant working with staff to determine the best placement of the wall signs.

LEGAL STANDARD

Standard for Application Type:

The Commission reviews special permits in accordance with Zoning Regulations section 1.3.4. Special permits may be approved, approved with conditions, or denied.

Considerations the Commission may weigh in special permit review include: harmony with the plan of conservation & development; compliance with the purposes of the district; effect on existing development; creation of safety hazards in vehicular and pedestrian circulation; effects on traffic; compatibility with adjacent properties; suitability of arrangement of buildings, open space, and provision of light and air; impact on essential services; impact on stormwater runoff; impact on city services and infrastructure; tree and landscape provision; and pedestrian amenities. The Commission may deviate from the minimum requirements for building siting, height, street facades, accessory structures dimensions, tree installation, landscape installation, buffers, fencing, lighting, parking, signage, and street design by up to 15% upon certain findings.

STANDARD SPECIFIC TO THE USE

Figure 8.2-A: Wall signs are permitted in the DT-1 district.

Figure 8.2-B: Maximum signage in the Downtown Districts: 3 Square feet per 1 linear foot of front lot length.

Section 8.1.3.E: Deviations to Chapter 8's sign requirements may be allowed for signage in the DT districts pursuant to special permit review.

Section 8.1.8 Illumination: Channel cut internally illuminated letters are permitted; signs in the DT districts are exempt from the brightness standards of this section.

Figure 8.3-A: Wall Sign Location on the Building or Site: Permitted on all facades, provided that buildings less than 12 stories in height may not install a wall sign higher than the window sill of the second story. Signage on non-street facing facades may only be placed on facades with side or rear on-site parking lots.

Figure 8.3-A: Wall Sign Quantity: One per building plus first floor tenant signs and two mounted at the 12th story or above.

FINDING OF FACTS

Location Details

- Sign located on the south face of the downtown building located at 10 State St, adjacent to State House Square.
- Subject building spans the block between Main Street and Market Street occupying approximately 2.5 acres with almost 100% building coverage.

- Subject Building has a varying roofline, as high as approximately 15 stories and connected to lower portions of the building including a 3-story retail court and a 5-story portion of the building adjacent to State House Square.
- The proposed sign is directly above a 2-story section of the retail court on a portion of the connected 5-story structure as seen below. Please see Attachment 1 for applicant provided drawings and photo.



Applicant provided representation of the proposed wall sign – 2020.

Proposed Wall Sign Details

- Sign dimensions are 2 feet by 14 feet or 28 square feet.
- Sign will project 5 inches from the face of the building.
- Sign will consist of three internally illuminated channel cut letters.
- No light or brightness data was provided.

Existing Signs

- A sign inventory for the entire site was not provided.
- The location currently has several signs for multiple tenants including Bank of America, the YMCA, Wells Fargo, Panera Bread, the US Post Office, and a banner identifying a food court inside the building.



Google Street View – June, 2019

COMMENTS RECEIVED

No comments have been received from the public at the time of this writing. There is no NRZ associated with Downtown Hartford.

ANALYSIS

The proposed wall sign does not meet all the requirements of the Zoning Regulations (Regulations). More specifically, the proposed sign placement is just below the window sill of the third story, where the Regulations' state that no wall sign shall be mounted above the second story window sill of a building less than 12 stories tall. This building, like many in the downtown area, does not make for a simple application of the Regulations. Portions of the building's roofline stretch above the 12 story mark, while other sections are as low as two stories. Further, when compared to the average size of a building in Hartford, it is rational to think that buildings in the downtown district may be more formidable in size and have a larger number of tenants that would like to signify their presence on the outside of the building. It is then plausible that this intensity of use is not strictly accounted for within wall sign regulations written to generally suit the entire City. The downtown districts are different in character both in size and in scope than the rest of the City and it is consistent with the Plan of Conservation and Development that they be so. It is in the spirit of that context that Sec.8.1.3.E becomes relevant. The section specifically allows for Special Permit review for signs that exceed the requirements of the Regulations located in the downtown districts.

The proposed sign meets the Regulations' requirements regarding illumination, materials, height and projection. The proposed placement on the building also appears not to obscure any architectural feature or appurtenance on the building. When evaluating the proposed sign for compliance with sign quantity or total sign area, staff was unable to determine compliance because a comprehensive sign inventory of the building was not provided. This gap in information does not deem the sign automatically unacceptable however because, consistent with the intent of Section 8.1.3.E, the Planning & Zoning Commission may make an independent judgement concerning whether this sign is acceptable as it is designed.

Staff does not have any objections to the proposed wall sign and has found it compliant with the regulations less the stated exceptions. Further, Staff recommends approval of the Special Permit based on the downtown neighborhood context and the spirit of Section 8.1.3.E.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of this application.

A draft resolution follows.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Sign Drawings

REVIEWED AND EDITED BY,

Aimee Chambers, Director



**CITY OF HARTFORD
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION RESOLUTION
10 STATE STREET
WALL SIGN SPECIAL PERMIT**

Whereas, The City of Hartford Planning & Zoning Commission reviewed the application and attached documents regarding a Special Permit for a wall sign at 10 State Street; and

Whereas, The property is located in the DT-1 Downtown District in an area of the City characterized by larger buildings and more intense uses; and

Whereas, Consistent with the Plan of Conservation and Development and the Zoning Regulations, the Board recognizes that the downtown neighborhood was meant to be an area characterized by intense uses and larger, unique buildings with multiple tenants; and

Whereas, The proposed wall sign meets the criteria of the Zoning Regulations regarding wall signs with the exception of Figure 8.3-A regarding the location of signs on the building; and

Whereas, The Board has found the sign to be consistent with the spirit of Section 8.1.3.E regarding a Special Permit for signs in the downtown districts; and

Now therefore Be It

Resolved, The City of Hartford Planning & Zoning Commission hereby approves the Special Permit for a wall sign at 10 State Street;

Be It Further,

Resolved, This 12th day of February 2021.

ATTACHMENT 1 - Sign Drawings



Proposed Condition



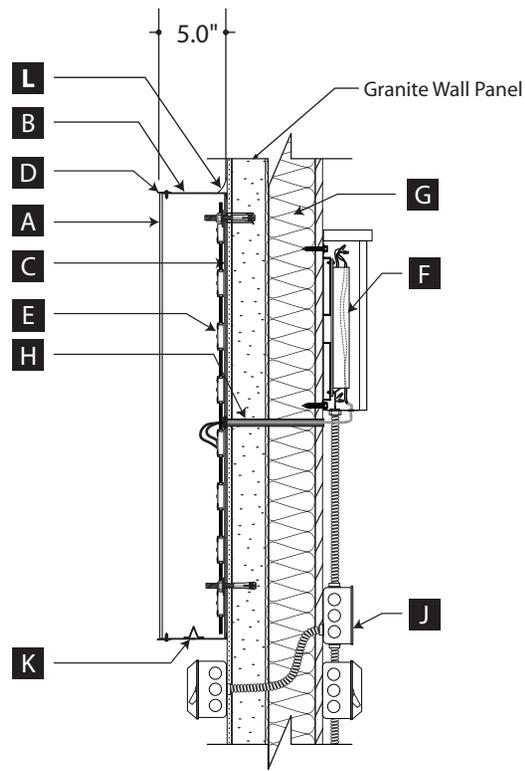
Print 7520TM-4	Date 12/15/20	ES# 39764	Line	Line#	SP	JR	Sign Type	Illuminated Channel Letters
CLIENT APPROVAL		Title	HCL			Location	As Illustrated Above Atrium	
		City/State	Hartford, CT			Size	2' x 14' (28 sq ft)	
AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE		Customer	HCL			Description	Illuminated Channel Letters	
		Int. Note						
DATE								

LAURETANO
SIGN GROUP

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 signs@lauretano.com www.lauretano.com



Scale: 1/2" = 1'



- A** FACES: .177" thk. White Acrylic faces, Blue Day/White Night. 1st surface Perforated PSV Digitally printed to match Blue PMS 2935.
- B** RETURNS: .040 aluminum coil. Painted White
- C** BACKS: .063 aluminum CAD-cut
- D** TRIM: 1" Jewelite, white
- E** L.E.D.'S: Sloan White LED Modules
- F** POWER SUPPLIES: Remote Power Supplies mounted in transformer enclosures.
- G** Hilti Redheads into Granite Wall Panel Surface. Exposed threaded bolt inside the letter for fastening.
- H** WALL BUSTER OR EQUIVALENT. PLTC CABLE, SEAL PASSTHRU w/ SILICONE
- J** J-BOX with PRIMARY ELECTRICAL LOCKABLE PRIMARY DISCONNECT SWITCH & ADJACENT SIGN DISCONNECT SWITCH (BY OTHERS)
- K** WEEP HOLES IN LOW POINTS (2) MIN.
- L** SILICONE BEAD ON UNSEEN TOP EDGES

NOTES

1. LIGHT-ENHANCEMENT PAINT TO BE APPLIED TO CL INTERIORS.
2. UL LABELS REQUIRED - INSTALL IN ACCORDANCE WITH NEC
3. PRIMARY ELECTRICAL BY OTHERS.

Note: For preliminary design purposes only. Accurate field survey and dimension verification required before beginning construction.

Survey and Verification Complete

Typical Channel Letter Mounting (NTS)

PROCEED TO PRODUCTION	Print 7520TM-4	Date 12/15/20	Installation Method		
	ES# 39764	Line Line#			
AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____	= Critical Dimension for Internal Quality Control	UL FILE NO. E70436			
			Amps	Volts	
2 of 2	This drawing contains original elements created by Lauretano Sign Group, Inc., is property of Lauretano Sign Group, Inc. and is subject to all applicable copyright laws. This drawing may not be used in any way until full payment is received by Lauretano Sign Group, Inc. It is intended for review and approval purposes only, and is not to be reproduced, copied, transmitted by electronic media, or exhibited in any fashion to anyone outside your organization without the expressed written consent of Lauretano Sign Group, Inc.			<p>1 Tremco Drive., Terryville, CT 06786 • Phone: 860.582.0233 signs@lauretano.com www.lauretano.com</p>	

