



DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES – PLANNING DIVISION
REPORT: Special Permit request for Signage at 100 Constitution plaza
for consideration May 25th, 2021

STAFF REPORT

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

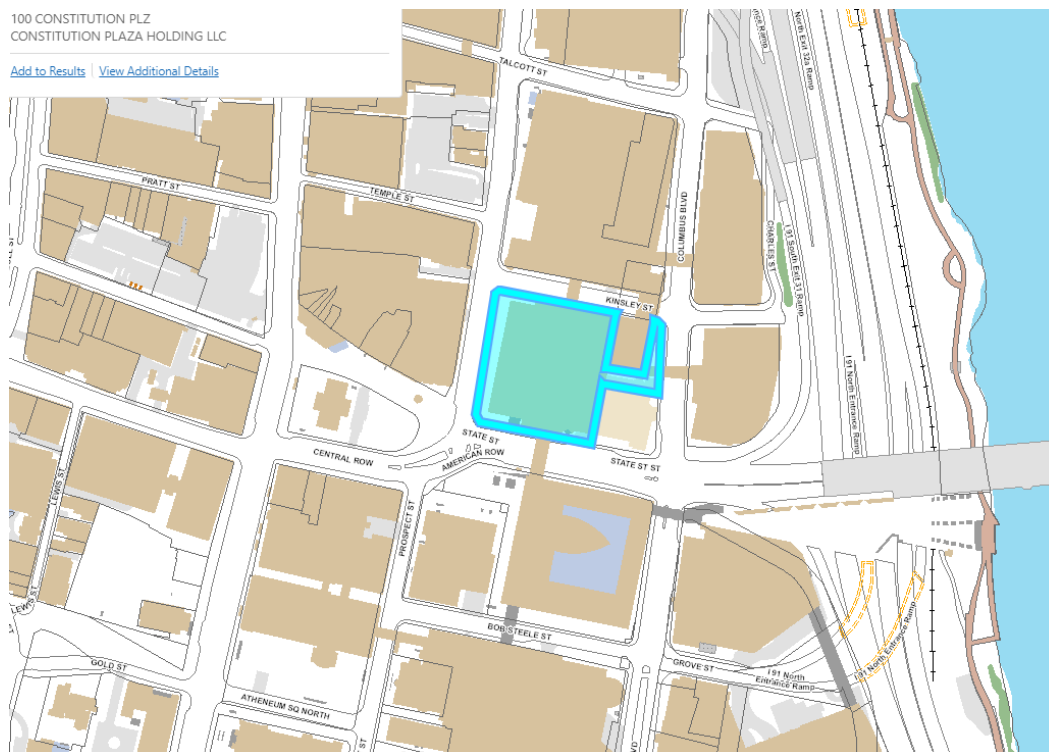
PROJECT: Trinity College Window Signs
100 Constitution Plaza
PARCEL ID: 268-355-025
P&Z-COMM-2021-0396

ZONE: DT-1, Downtown District

TYPE: Special Permit for Downtown Signage per Zoning Reg. 8.1.3.E

APPLICANT: Sign Pro Inc c/o Tracy Becker

OWNER: Constitution Plaza Holding LLC



Overhead View – Hartford GIS 2021

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Applicant is requesting approval of a Special Permit to allow two (2) window signs for a single tenant in a Downtown District. No previous actions have been taken on this matter.

The Applicant is Trinity College and they would like to place two (20 illuminated window signs on their third-floor tenant space windows. One sign is proposed facing Market Street, the other sign is proposed facing Constitution Plaza.

KEY APPLICATION TIMELINES

- Application Submission Date: April 14, 2021
- Date Application Accepted as Complete: April 14, 2021
- Application Date of Receipt: May 11, 2021 (sooner of either: date of next regularly scheduled meeting, or 35 days after acceptance of complete application)
- Public Hearing is scheduled to open on Tuesday, May 25, 2021; Open Hearing Deadline: July 15, 2021.
- Close Hearing Deadline (if opens May 25, 2021): (35 days after opening) Tuesday, April 6, 2021
- CT General Statutes Sec.8-7D allow that the applicant may consent to one or more extensions of time, provided the total extension of all time periods shall not be for longer than 65 days*.

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

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 8.2, Figure 8.2-A: Window Signs are permitted in the DT-1 District.

Section 8.9, Figure 8.9-A: Window signs on upper stories are limited to one per tenant per floor.

WINDOW SIGN REQUIREMENTS

Permitted Districts	Refer to 8.2.1 Permitted Sign Types by District.
Sign Area	Up to 30% of a set of continuous windows may be covered with signs; no more than 50% of any one window panel may be covered with signs; no more than 10% of the square footage of windows on any facade may be covered with signs.
Height	No maximum.
Location on the Building or Site	Permitted on all facades.
Placement on the Building or Site	Ground or upper story windows; may be affixed to window or hung/mounted behind glass.
Quantity	Ground story: no maximum quantity, limit is based on window sign area. Upper Story: 1 per tenant per floor.
Internal Illumination	Not permitted, except on neon or similarly illuminated window signs.
Materials	Drawn, painted, or affixed on the glass; wood, metal, neon glass, plastic, or other similar materials also permitted. LED ropes or similar lights are prohibited.

Figure 8.9-A Window Sign Requirements

FINDING OF FACTS

Sign Specifications

- Both proposed signs measure 10.375" by 94" or 6.77 SF.
- Illumination: Halo illumination of the proposed text reflected off a grey backing.

Sign location

- Near the top of their respective windows.
- One located on the 3rd floor window of the plaza facing façade (see Figure 1 below).
- One located on the 3rd floor window of the Market Street facing façade (see Figure 2 below).

COURTYARD Photo rendering is only conceptual. Actual size ratio and color may differ slightly from finished sign.



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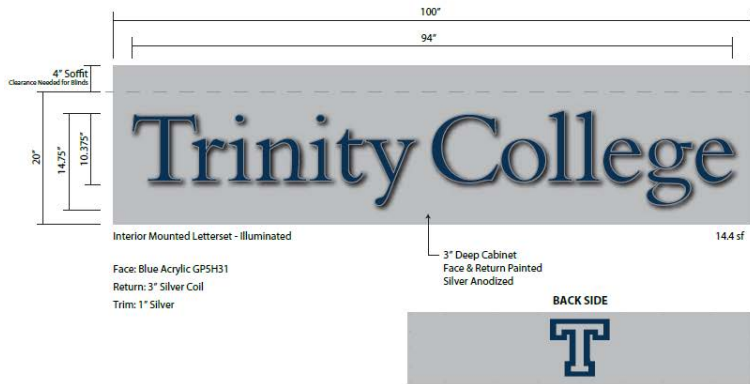
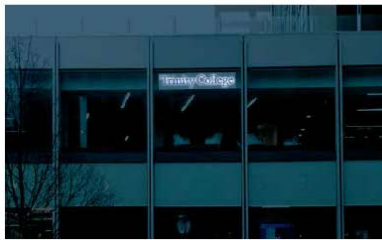


Figure 1. Plaza Facing Window Sign – SignPro 2021

MARKET ST Photo rendering is only conceptual. Actual size ratio and color may differ slightly from finished sign.



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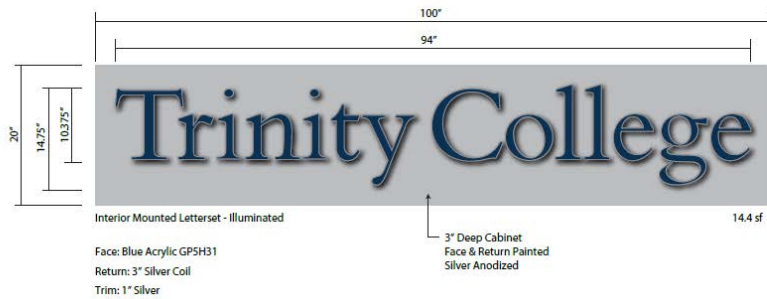


Figure 2. Market Street Facing Window Sign – SignPro 2021

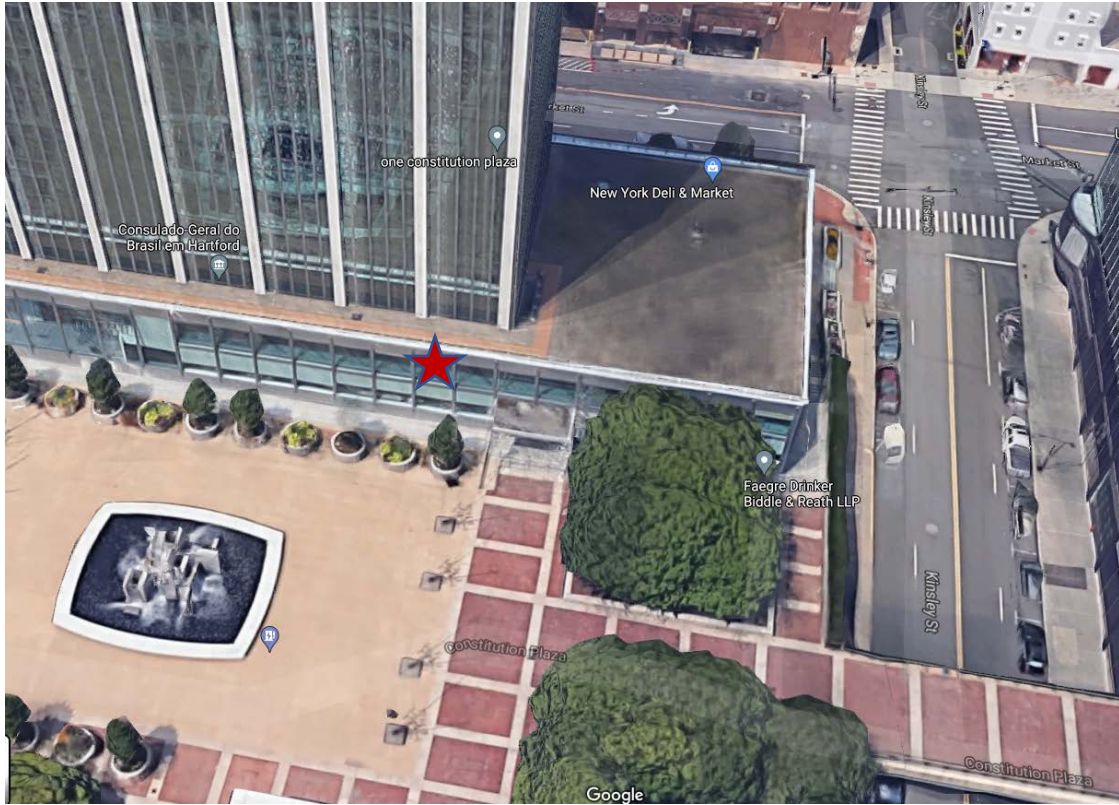


Figure 3. Plaza Façade Sign Location Guide – Google Maps 2021

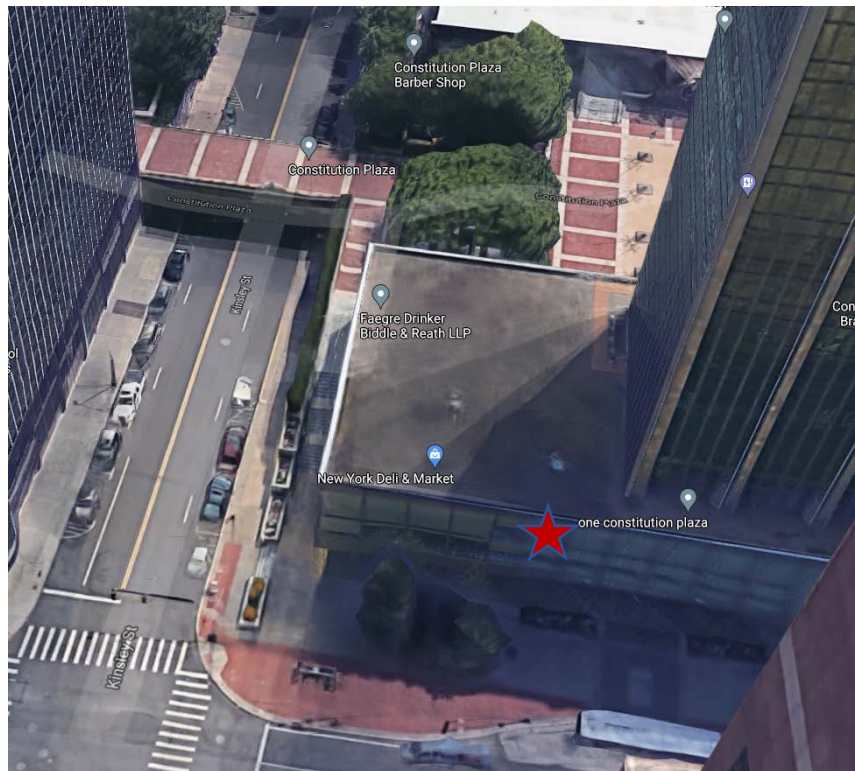


Figure 4. Market Street Façade Location Guide – Google Maps 2021

COMMENTS RECEIVED (DEPARTMENTS, AGENCIES, NRZs, PUBLIC)

No comments have been received as of this writing.

ANALYSIS

The proposed signs are compliant with the regulations regarding window signs in the DT-1 district with the exception of the quantity of signs and the illumination style. The Applicant has proposed a sign design similar to the wall sign typology in that the lettering uses halo illumination reflecting off a solid backing. This design is often mounted to an exterior wall while in this case it will be hung behind glass as a window sign. The effect of this unique design is substantially similar to that of a traditional window sign with the added benefit of unobtrusive illumination. Halo illumination creates less glare generally because it is indirect and no light emitting source directly faces the viewer. The indirect nature of the illumination is important considering that the building stands across the plaza from high intensity residential uses. Staff finds the design permissible and similar in size, scale and effect to that of other more traditional window signs.

The Applicant has proposed two windows signs on the same floor of the subject tenant space. The regulations only permit the placement of one sign per tenant per floor, however, the sign regulations did not and could not account for all reasonable design outcomes. This is the rationality behind Section 8.1.3.E, the section allowing deviations from the standard regulations regarding signs in the downtown districts. In this case the subject tenant space fronts two streets and a public plaza to the rear. The public plaza is level with the second floor of the subject building and interacts with the building much the way a public right-of-way does. It is safe to assume that the regulations contemplated the possibility of a building facing one street, or perhaps two if located on a corner, however it is possible the configuration of the subject property with essentially three frontages, one of which is elevated and not visible from the other two frontages was not accounted for. The proposed sign plan allows for the presence of the tenant to be advertised both to the public right-of-way and in an appropriate way to the elevated plaza. No other signs are permitted for upper story tenants in buildings less than 12 stories tall and thus without the requested deviation from the standards this reasonable design would not be possible.

Staff finds the proposal to place the additional sign facing the public plaza to be a reasonable request not injurious to the public and recommends approval of the special permit as proposed.

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
100 CONSTITUTION PLAZA
SPECIAL PERMIT FOR DOWNTOWN SIGNAGE**

- Whereas,** The City of Hartford Planning & Zoning Commission reviewed the application and attached documents regarding the request for a special permit for downtown signage at 100 Constitution Plaza including two illuminated window signs; and
- Whereas,** The subject property is in the DT-1 Downtown District in an area of the City characterized by larger buildings and more intense uses; and
- Whereas,** The subject tenant space is within a building located on a corner and also abutting an elevated public plaza; and,
- Whereas,** The relationship between the building and the public right-of-way and abutting plaza is a unique and appropriate characteristic of a downtown area; and
- Whereas,** Without the proposed deviation to allow two window signs, the tenant would not be able to alert users of both the public right-of-way and the plaza of their presence; and
- Whereas,** The proposed sign design utilizes the smallest deviation possible to accomplish this goal; and
- Whereas,** The Board has found the proposed signs 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 application for a special permit for downtown signage at 100 Constitution Plaza including two halo-illuminated window signs, each measuring 10.375" by 94" or 6.77 square feet, one located on Market Street at the third floor and one located facing Constitution Plaza also on the third floor:

Be It Further,

- Resolved,** This 25th day of May, 2021.

Attachment 1 – Sign Drawings

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EXISTING

Trinity College

Project Address:
Hartford, CT

SPI WO # 21621
Issue Date: February 18, 2020

Salesperson: Allison Barmyh
Designer: JM

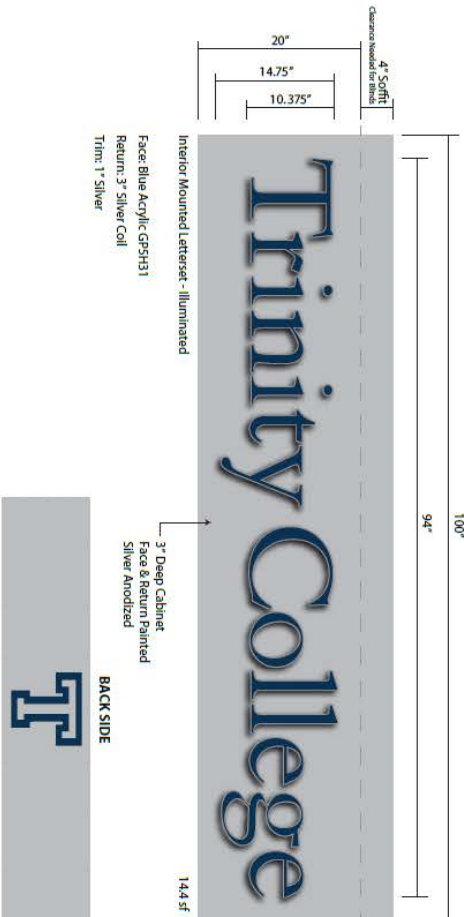
**DRAWINGS ARE NOT TO SCALE
UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED**

SP1 Revisions:
REV1 by JM 3/04/2020
REV2 by JM 3/04/2021
REV3 by JM 3/04/2021
REV4 by JM 3/04/2021
REV5 by JM 3/04/2021

BACK SIDE
Viny Seal to Match Trinity Blue



Existing



Customer Approval: ☐ APPROVED ☐ APPROVED AS NOTED ☐ REVISE & RESUBMIT

PRINT

SIGN

DATE

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SIGN TYPE
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Trinity College

Project Address:
Hartford, CT

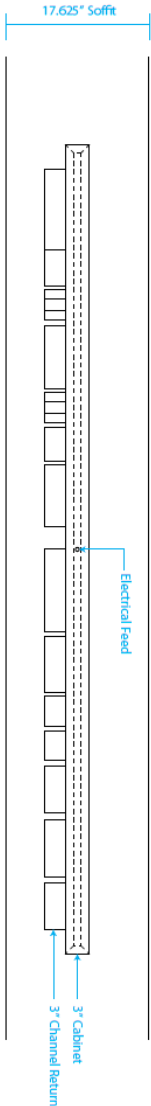
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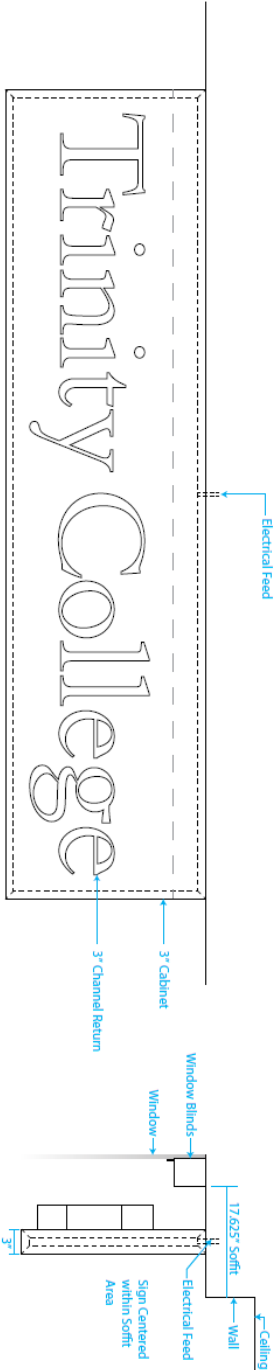
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SP1 Revisions:
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R2/2 By JM 3/06/2020
R3/3 By JM 2/04/2021
R4/4 By JM 2/06/2021
R5/5 By JM 2/06/2021
R6/6 By JM 3/06/2021

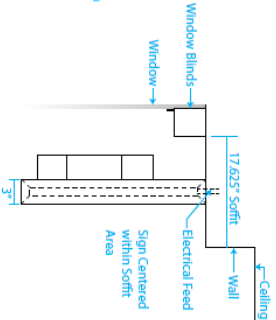
TOP SECTION



FRONT ELEVATION



SIDE SECTION



CUSTOMER TO SUPPLY ELECTRICAL FEED & BLOCKING

Attachment:
Toggle through the gypsum board and studs

Customer Approval: ☐ APPROVED ☐ APPROVED AS NOTED ☐ REVISE & RESUBMIT

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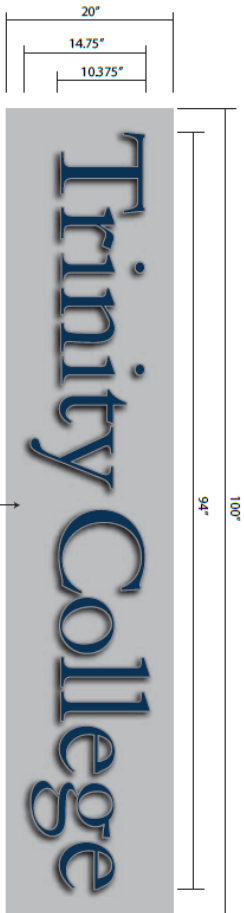
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SP# WO #21621
Issue Date: February 18, 2020

Salesperson: Alison Bamych
Designer: JM

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SP# Revisions:
REV1 by JM 3/24/2020
REV2 by JM 3/26/2020
REV3 by JM 3/26/2020
REV4 by JM 2/18/2021
REV5 by JM 2/24/2021
REV6 by JM 3/26/2021



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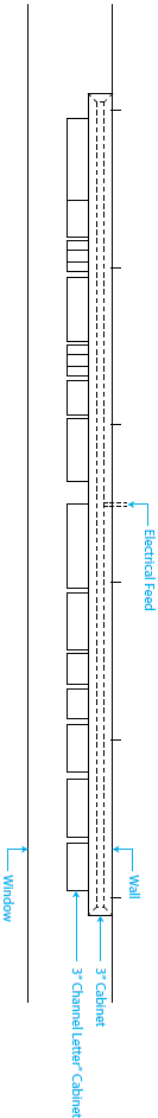
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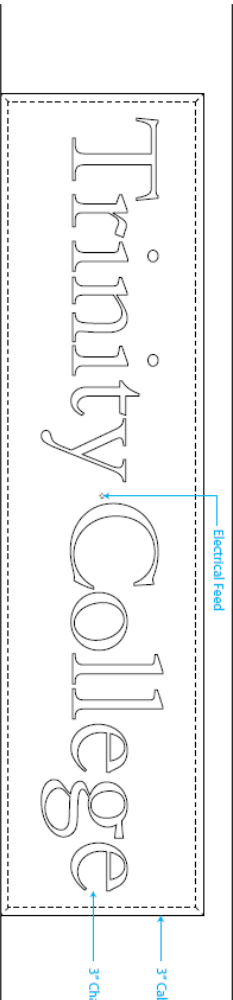
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R02 by JM 3/04/2020
R03 by JM 3/04/2021
R04 by JM 2/08/2021
R05 by JM 2/24/2021
R06 by JM 3/08/2021

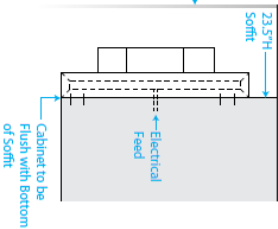
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