



DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES – PLANNING DIVISION
REPORT: Special Permit for Downtown Signage
 for consideration September 13, 2022

STAFF REPORT

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

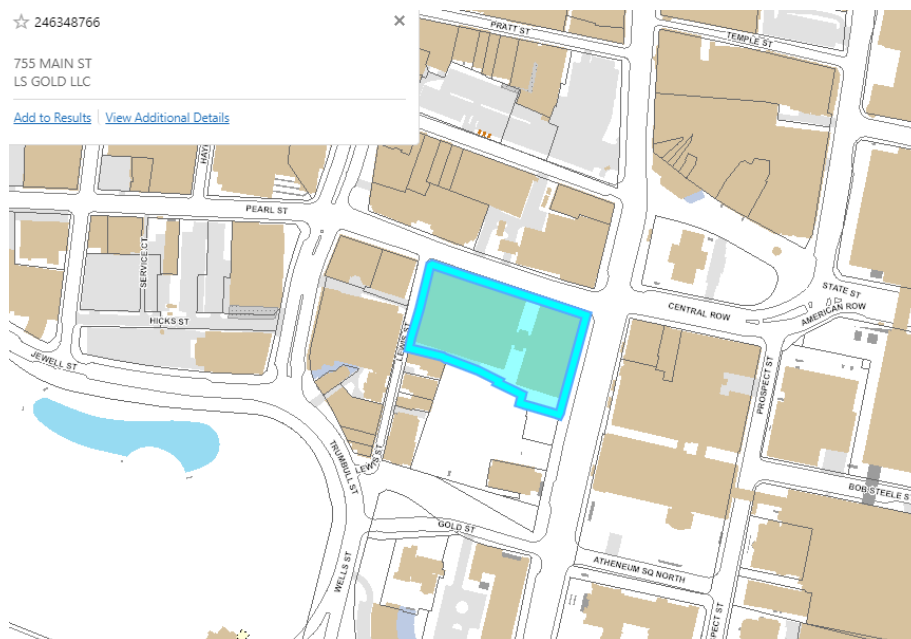
PROJECT: Sun Life Sign Panels
 755 Main Street
 PARCEL ID: 246-348-766
 P&Z-COMM-2022-0679

ZONE: DT-1, Downtown

TYPE: Special Permit for downtown signage including the addition of two 5' by 35' internally illuminated wall signs per Section 8.1.3.E and Section 1.3.4

APPLICANT: Lauretano Sign Group c/o Alyson Ibbotson

OWNER: LS Gold LLC



Overhead View – Hartford GIS 2022

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The applicant is requesting a special permit for downtown signage to allow additional sign panels beyond what is permitted by right in the Hartford Zoning Regulations (the Regulations). The proposed sign package includes six (6) total wall signs where three (3) are permitted by right. The proposed sign package includes the reinstallation of two (2) 5' by 35' panels. The wall signs were removed in 2021 and are now proposed to be reinstalled in the same location.

Also included in the current request was the refacing of a first-floor tenant wall sign on the east façade of the building. This sign was determined permitted by right and approved administratively under P&Z-ADMIN-2022-3355 in August of 2022.

The subject property is not designated historic or within a local, state or national historic district.

KEY APPLICATION TIMELINES

- Application Submission Date: August 3, 2022
- Date Application Accepted as Complete: August 3, 2022
- Application Date of Receipt: August 9, 2022 (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, September 13, 2022; Open Hearing Deadline: October 13, 2022.
- Close Hearing Deadline (if opens September 13, 2022): (35 days after opening) Tuesday, October 18, 2022
- 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

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: 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 12 stories may not install a wall sign higher than the window sill of the second story.

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

Proposed Signage

- Two (2) 5' by 35' wall sign panels
- Each panel will use 4' by 16.5' or ~66 sf of sign area
- Each sign panel will be made of opaque aluminum with cut-through internally illuminated faces

Sign Location

- The wall sign panels will be reinstalled on the north and west facades of the existing downtown general building
- The north facing sign will abut Pearl Street
- The west facing sign will abut a pedestrian courtyard leading to a building entrance



Figure 1. Wall sign panel – Lauretano Sign Group 2022



Figure 2. Sign location drawing – Lauretano Sign Group 2022

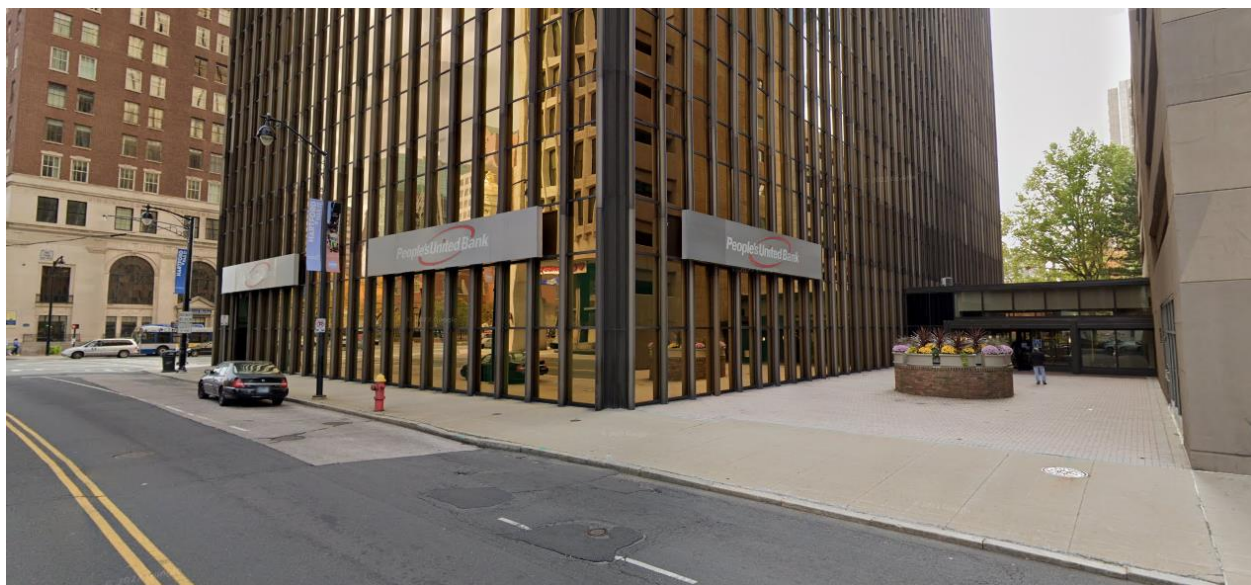


Figure 3. Image of previous sign installation – Google Maps 2020

COMMENTS RECEIVED (DEPARTMENTS, AGENCIES, NRZs, PUBLIC)

No comments have been received from the public at the time of this writing. Downtown Hartford does not have a Neighborhood Revitalization Zone organization.

ANALYSIS

The proposed wall signs will bring the total number of wall signs on the building from four (4) to six (6), where only three (3) wall signs would be permitted by right. This fact alone would require a deviation from the Regulations and a special permit. However, the signs are also of a size not typically associated with first-floor tenant wall signs. The size of the panels (175 sf each) is mitigated by the design of the sign copy or sign area. The area of the panel to be used for signage is only 66

sf. A 66 square foot sign, when considered in the downtown design context is not as unusual. Further, the scale of the subject building at 26-stories tall with a first-floor height of ~19' is supportive of a commensurate sign area deviation. The intention of Section 8.1.3.E is to allow for deviations to the sign regulations to accommodate the larger and more varied scale of development typical of the downtown neighborhood. Staff find that the proposed signs are appropriate based on the scale of the building.

The Regulations permit by right one general building wall sign, and one first-floor tenant wall sign per entrance on the public street and two signs at the 12th story or above. This Regulation regarding first-floor tenant wall signs builds upon the current requirement that new buildings provide a certain number of entrances on each public street. In this case, the subject building was constructed in 1974 prior to the adoption of these requirements, has no entrances on Pearl Street and would not be permitted any first-floor tenant wall signs on this façade. Thus, while the Regulations assume the presence of building entrances and therefore more wall signs, the subject building is restricted from access to this sign type. The two signs on the Pearl Street facade, one existing and one proposed are therefore an appropriate use of the sign deviation power of Section 8.1.3.E. The proposed sign on the western façade is not subject to the same evaluation. The current regulations would not require an entrance on this façade, and therefore a first floor tenant wall sign here is not necessarily contemplated. Staff find that there is not a justifiable basis to justify an additional sign on this façade per Section 8.1.3.E.

Staff find that because the building is of a size and scale that merits additional consideration for signage, and because the current Regulations do not account for nonconforming buildings, that the proposed signage on the Pearl Street facade is consistent with the intent of Section 8.1.3.E and should be approved as a deviation to Chapter 8. Staff find that the size and location of the sign facing the internal courtyard, which is intended to be a pedestrian friendly space, is worth additional evaluation and consideration from the Commission.

The proposed signage otherwise meets the Regulations' regarding illumination, materials, height and projection. The propose placement on the building also appears not to obscure any architectural feature or appurtenance on the building and the height of the signage off the sidewalk is sufficient to eliminate any potential impacts on the pedestrian realm.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of this application with the following condition:

1. The plan shall be revised to eliminate the sign proposed on the western façade. Approval shall only be for the Pearl Street sign.

A draft resolution follows.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Sign Plan dated 4/26/22

REVIEWED AND EDITED BY,

Aimee Chambers, Director



**CITY OF HARTFORD
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION RESOLUTION
755 MAIN STREET
SPECIAL PERMIT FOR DOWNTOWN SIGNAGE**

Whereas, The City of Hartford Planning & Zoning Commission reviewed the application and attached documents regarding a Special Permit for downtown signage at 755 Main 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 signage meets the criteria of the Zoning Regulations regarding wall signs with the exception of Figure 8.3-A regarding the total number of signs and total sign area; and

Whereas, The proposed signage includes two wall sign panels measuring 5' by 35', each using 4' by 16.5' of the surface area for sign area as defined by the Regulations; and

Whereas, The Planning & Zoning Commission has found the proposed signage facing Pearl Street 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 downtown signage as shown on the 2-page plan titled Sun Life by Lauretano Sign Group and dated April 26, 2022 at 755 Main Street with the following conditions:

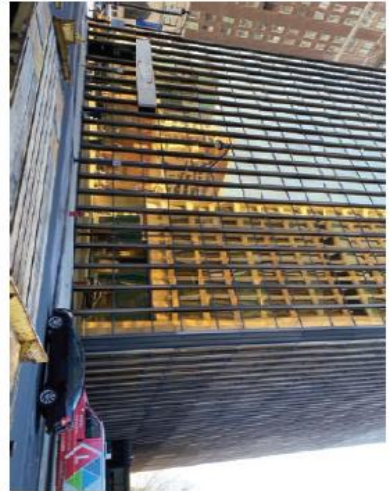
1. The plan shall be revised to eliminate the sign proposed on the western façade. Approval shall only be for the Pearl Street sign.

Be It Further,

Resolved, This 13th day of September 2022.

Attachment 1 – Sign Plan dated 4/26/22

Existing Condition

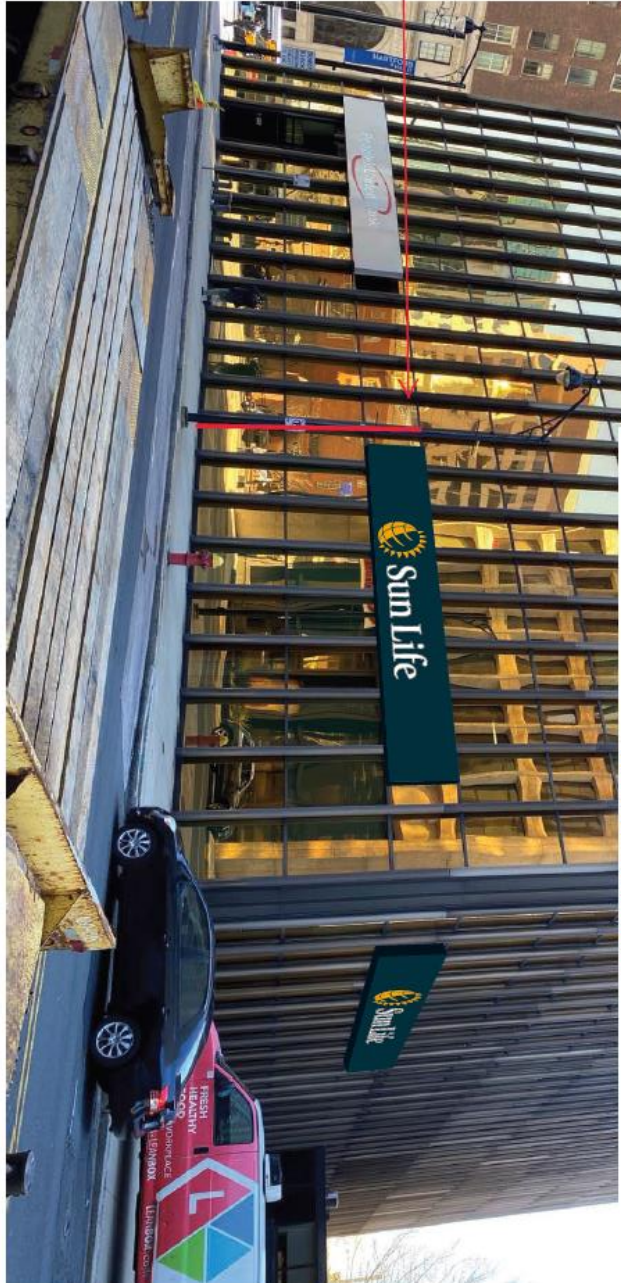


Existing Mounting Brackets



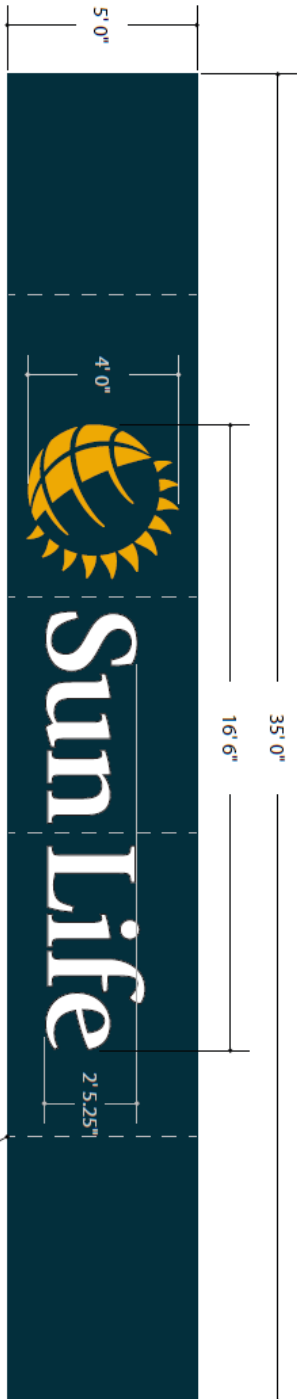
19'-10.75" Sign height
from grade.
14'-10.75" bottom of
sign to grade.
Approx. 25' between
signs.

Proposed Signage



Print 3689JW	Date 4/26/22	ES# 42756	Line 12	SP JR	Sign Type Illuminated Sign Cabinets
CLIENT APPROVAL					
Title Sun Life		Location Two Elevations, As Illustrated		Size 5' 0" ± x 35' 0" ± (175 sqft)	
City/State Hartford, CT		Customer Sun Life		Description (2) Illuminated Sign Cabinets w/Cut-Thru Faces	
AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE		DATE			
1 of 2		This drawing contains original elements created 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.			

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Scale: 1/4" = 1'

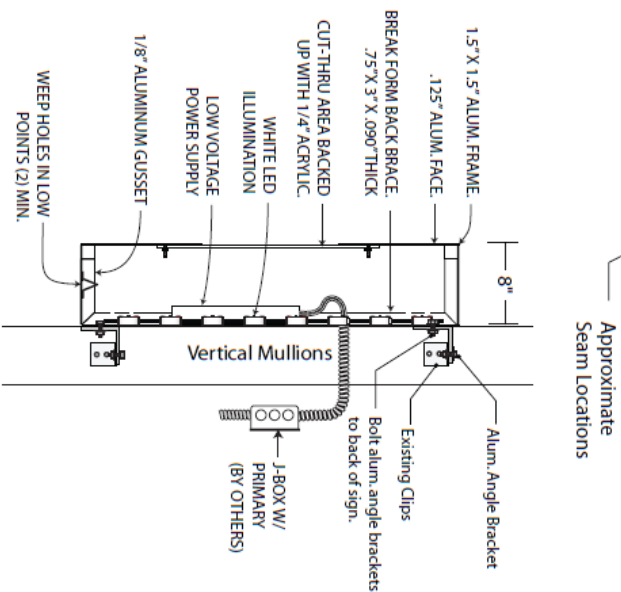
COLORS / MATERIALS

- 8" Deep Cabinet w/Cut-Thru Faces.
- 1" x 1" Alum. Tube Frame w/ .040" Thk. Returns.
- 1" x 2" Alum. Tube Internal Bracing.
- 1/8" Thk. Aluminum Face with Cut-Thru Graphics.
- Face & Returns Painted to match Dark Blue PMS 547c Satin Finish
- Cut-Thru Area Backed up with White Lexan.
- White Lexan Letters & Sun Logo. Sun Logo to receive 1st surface applied trans. PSV digitally printed to match Yellow PMS 124c.
- White LED Internal Illumination, & Class 2 Power Supplies

NOTES

- Fasteners Painted to match face.
- Seams in Face Will be Required.
- Use Existing Primary Power in Place.
- Existing Mounting Brackets Missing for One Sign Location.
- Provide New Mounting Brackets as Required.

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



Typical Illuminated Wall Sign Mounting Detail

(NTS)

PROCEED TO PRODUCTION		Print	3689JW	Date	4/26/22	Installation Method	Use Existing Bracket Style Mounting
AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE		ES#	42756	Line	12	UL FILE NO.	E70436
DATE		5 = Critical Dimension for Internal Quality Control		Amps		Volts	
2 of 2		<p>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>					

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