



DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES – PLANNING DIVISION
REPORT: Special Permit for Downtown Signage at 1212 Main Street for consideration on Tuesday December 13, 2022

STAFF REPORT

TO: Planning & Zoning Commission
PREPARED BY: Evelyne St-Louis, Senior Planner (evelyne.st-louis@hartford.gov)

PROJECT: 1212 Main Street
PARCEL ID: 267-293-001
PZ-SPUSE-22-00007

ZONE: DT-3, Downtown District

TYPE: Special Permit for Downtown Signage per Section 8.1.3.E of Hartford's Zoning Regulations

APPLICANT: John Malagisi, Sign Design Inc.

OWNER: City of Hartford

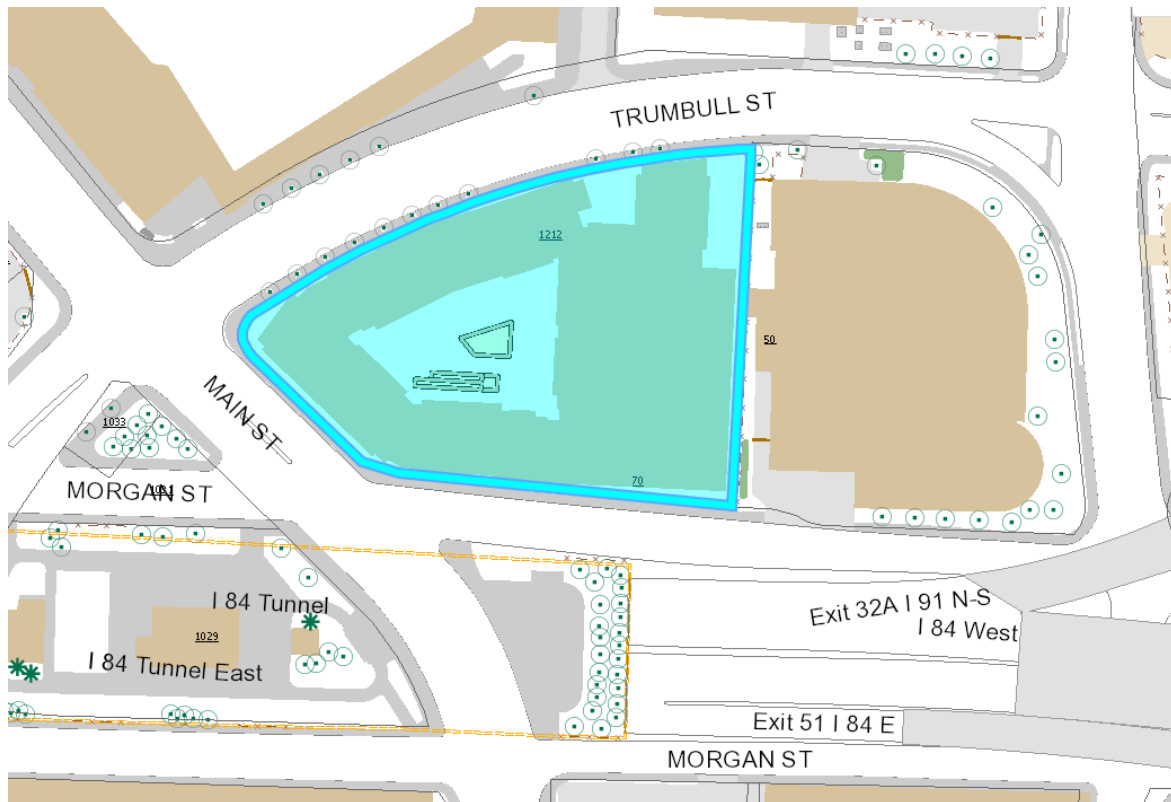


Figure 1. Location of 1212 Main Street (City of Hartford GIS, 2022)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This application is a request for a special permit for Downtown signage at 1212 Main Street. This site is commonly known as The Pennant at North Crossing, or DoNo Parcel C, and is located in the Downtown North Transformative Project Area as identified in Hartford's Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD).

KEY APPLICATION TIMELINES

- Application Submission Date: Friday November 18, 2022.
- Date Application Accepted as Complete: Friday November 18, 2022.
- Application Date of Receipt: Tuesday November 22, 2022 (sooner of either: date of next regularly scheduled meeting, or 35 days after acceptance of complete application)
- Public Hearing scheduled to open: Tuesday December 13, 2022; Open Hearing Deadline: Thursday January 26, 2023.
- Close Hearing Deadline (if opens Tuesday December 13, 2022) (35 days after opening): Tuesday January 17, 2023.
- CT General Statutes Sec.8-7D allow the applicant to consent to one or more extensions of time, provided the total extension of all time periods shall not be 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

City of Hartford Zoning Regulations

Section 8.1.3.E. DT Districts. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in this chapter, deviations from this chapter's requirements for sign quantity, sign size, sign area, height, location on the building or site, or placement on the building or site may be allowed for signage in the DT districts pursuant to special permit review.

Section 8.3. Wall Signs

Sign area: Each building may have a sign with a maximum area in accordance with Section 8.2. In addition, for each first-floor tenant with public entryways on public street facing facades, the total permitted sign area shall not exceed 1 square foot for each linear front foot of exterior building wall for the tenant's unit.

Location: Permitted on all façades, [...] further provided that per this table, buildings less than 12 stories may not install a wall sign higher than the window sill of the second story.

Quantity: Below the 12th floor: 1 wall sign per building, plus 1 per first-floor tenant per public entryway on the public street, side, or rear of the building.

Internal illumination: Permitted for individual alphanumeric characters and logos.

Section 8.7. Canopy-Mounted Sign

Sign area: Maximum area for each canopy-mounted sign is 30 sf.

Height: 2 ft max alphanumeric character/graphic element height; cannot project more than 2.5 ft above 2nd story floor or window sill or roof line, whichever is closer to ground plane.

Location: Permitted on all facades; prohibited on the principal roof of the building.

Quantity: 1 per tenant per street frontage; 1 per tenant per side/rear façade for parking lots.

Internal illumination: Permitted for individual alphanumeric characters and logos.

Section 8.13.2.A Temporary Signs, Real Estate Signs

Section 8.13.2.G. Banner Signs

- (a) **Multi-Unit Dwelling Uses.** Temporary banners are allowed on lots with Multi-Unit Dwelling buildings, provided that no more than one temporary banner is allowed for each 50 dwelling units in the building, up to a maximum of 3 banners. Temporary banners may not exceed 32 square feet in area and no more than one may be attached to each building wall. The mounted height of the temporary banner may not exceed 24 feet. Temporary banners on multi-unit buildings may be in place for no more than 180 days in any calendar year.
- (b) **Temporary banners in all DT, MS, and CX districts** are subject to the standards applicable to permanent signs and are counted in the total square footage of signage allowed on the site.

City of Hartford Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD)

Downtown North Transformative Project Area: “Let’s position the Downtown North project as the gateway from downtown to North Main and Albany Avenues, and ensure that Clay Arsenal benefits from amenities and opportunities that follow.”

FINDING OF FACTS

Subject property:

- Zoned DT-3, Downtown district. No historic designation.
- Parcel dimensions: ~2.5-acre lot with street frontage on Main Street (Primary Street, ~225 ft including corners); Morgan Street (Secondary Street, ~305 ft) and Trumbull Street (Secondary Street, ~486 ft).
- Property is known as The Pennant at North Crossing, or DoNo Parcel C, and is located in the POCD’s Downtown North Transformative Project Area. The site plan for this project was approved in 2020 (P&Z-ADMIN-2020-0752). Construction was completed in 2022.

- Site is occupied by a 5-story, 270-unit Downtown Storefront Building Type with an accessory parking structure. Primary use is Multi-Unit Dwelling, with ground floor commercial spaces.
- Abutting properties:
 - North: Dunkin Donuts baseball stadium and DoNo Parcel D, a former data center building that is now vacant and planned for redevelopment.
 - Northwest: DoNo Parcel B, a vacant parking lot planned for future mixed-use redevelopment.
 - Southwest: Heaven Skate Park.
 - South: Highway I-84.
 - East: Multi-unit dwelling residential building (The Millennium).
- There are currently four unpermitted temporary banner signs installed on the top of the fifth-floor building. Three of the four temporary banner signs measure 200 sf (4 ft by 50 ft), with one installed on Main Street façade, one on Trumbull St, and one on Morgan St. There is fourth smaller banner sign on the Main Street façade.

This applicant is requesting three permanent signs and three temporary banner signs:

- Permanent signs:
 - One 43-sf canopy-mounted sign on the building’s front façade (Main Street) that would read “The Pennant at North Crossing”.
 - One 83-sf wall sign installed vertically on the building’s front façade (Main Street). The sign would span from the top of the second floor to the top of the fifth floor and would read “Pennant” with a logo.
 - One 45-sf wall sign installed horizontally on the top of the fifth floor at the building’s front façade at the corner with Morgan Street. The sign would read “The Pennant at North Crossing”.
 - These signs would have internally illuminated white lettering and consist of aluminum with acrylic face. The wall signs would project 8” the from building face.
- Temporary signs:
 - The applicant is requesting to retain the three 200-sf temporary banner signs, one on each street-facing façade, until December 31, 2023.
 - The fourth smaller banner sign would be removed.
 - The applicant stated that they are “a key factor in generating income by attracting tenants to the building”.
 - While the applicant is requesting these banners, they also stated that they “do not want this to affect the permanent sign approval in any way.”



Figure 2. View of the subject property from Main Street and Morgan Street (top) and from Main St and Trumbull Street (bottom). The four unpermitted banner signs are highlighted with the yellow arrows. (Google Streetview, August 2022).



All supports will be 2" square x 1/4" wall metal tubing sprayed black automotive finish, satin, MAIN ENTRANCE ON MAIN ST

White front lit channel letters, black trim cap clear anodized silver sides mounted to black raceway system to be installed on entrance canopy when built

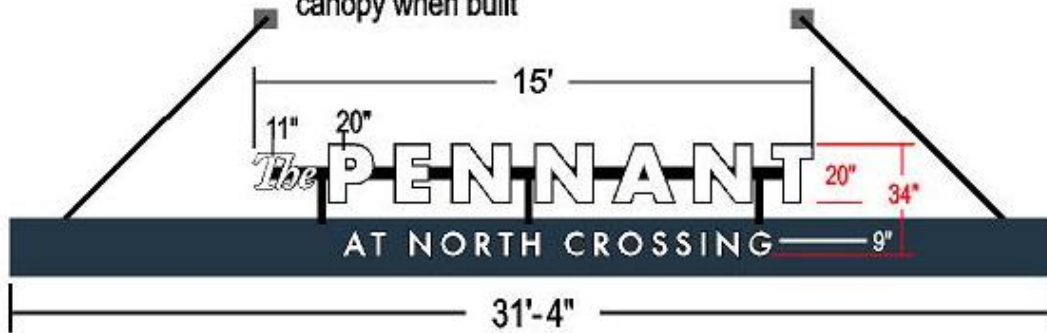


Figure 3. Proposed canopy-mounted sign (submitted by John Malagisi on 12/1/2022)



Figure 4. Proposed wall signs (submitted by John Malagisi on 12/8/2022)

COMMENTS RECEIVED (DEPARTMENTS, AGENCIES, NRZs, PUBLIC)

There is no NRZ associated with the Downtown area. As of the time of writing, no public comments had been received regarding this application.

ANALYSIS

Section 8.1.3.E of the Regulations states that the Commission, through the special permit process, can approve deviations from Section 8 for signs in the Downtown districts. The proposed signs comply with some aspects of the Zoning Regulations, but several deviations from Section 8 would be required, as analyzed below.

- Canopy signs and wall signs are both permitted sign types in DT-3. A mix of wall and canopy-mounted signs is permitted on a single lot if similar materials and colors are used.
- The canopy-mounted sign complies all of the specification of Section 8.7, with the exception of the sign area. The proposed sign would be 43 sf, whereas the maximum permitted is 30 sf.
- Two wall signs are permitted on this lot (one building wall sign and one tenant wall sign associated with the front entrance). The proposed wall sign area, and other characteristics of these wall signs, comply with Section 8.3, with the exception of their location: buildings with

less than 12 stories may not have wall signs above the second story. In this case, both wall signs would be installed above the second story.

- In DT districts, the total area of any temporary banner signs is counted towards the total sign allowance for the lot. The combined sign area for the six proposed signs (~770 sf) comes out to just below the property's maximum sign allowance (~775 sf).
- Temporary real estate banners are regulated by Section 8.13.2.A and Section 8.13.2.G. Specifically, one banner sign is permitted for every 50 units, with up to 3 banners total, and one banner may be installed per building wall. Therefore, the requested three banners would be allowed on this building. However, several other deviations would be required:
 - Each banner measures 200 sf, whereas the permitted maximum area is 32 sf.
 - These banners would be installed at the top of the fifth floor (~50 ft from grade), whereas the Regulations do not allow temporary banner signs higher than 24 ft.
 - The applicant is asking for the signs to remain installed until December 31, 2023 (383 days from date of public hearing), whereas the Regulations impose a maximum time period of 180 days.

Beyond compliance with the Zoning Regulations, special permits should also be reviewed based on the criteria of Section 1.3.4. and consistency with the POCD. Staff do not anticipate any significant negative impacts on abutting properties in terms of lighting, given the nature of abutting properties to the west. Even once DoNo Parcel B is developed, the lot's distance and angle from DoNo Parcel C is such that any light impacts should be limited.

Staff understand the need to publicize this new development project, which is generally in line with the overall desire to advance the POCD's Downtown North Transformative Project Area. Staff also recognize that this is a large structure with wide street frontage and multiple street-facing façades. At the same time, however, Staff find that the total amount of signage proposed for this property is quite significant, especially at the top of the building. Staff recommend approval of the proposed signage, with the exception that the three requested temporary banner signs be removed after 180 days, the standard period set by the Regulations.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of this application, with the following conditions of approval:

1. The three temporary banner signs approved as part of this application shall be removed 180 days from the date of the public hearing (June 11, 2023).
2. The fourth temporary banner signs shall be removed prior to installation of any new signage. Applicant shall send photos of sign removal to Planning Staff as proof.

A draft resolution follows.

ATTACHMENTS

None.

REVIEWED AND EDITED BY,

Aimee Chambers, Director



CITY OF HARTFORD
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION RESOLUTION
1212 MAIN STREET
SPECIAL PERMIT FOR DOWNTOWN SIGNAGE PER SECTION 8.1.3.E

- Whereas,** The City of Hartford Planning & Zoning Commission reviewed the application for a special permit for deviations from the Zoning Regulations’ sign chapter for Downtown signage for a property located at 1212 Main Street (parcel ID: 267-293-001) pursuant to Section 1.3.4; and
- Whereas,** The subject property is zoned DT-3, Downtown district; and
- Whereas,** The subject property is not located any historic district; and
- Whereas,** The subject property is located in the Downtown North (DoNo) Transformative Project Area as identified in Hartford’s Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD); and
- Whereas,** The subject property is commonly known as The Pennant at North Crossing, or DoNo Parcel C; and
- Whereas,** The subject property is occupied by a 5-story, 270-unit Downtown Storefront Building Type, with an accessory parking structure; primary use Multi-Unit Dwelling, with ground-floor commercial spaces; and
- Whereas,** Per Section 8.1.3.E, the Zoning Regulations allow deviations from the Regulations’ sign chapter for signage in DT Downtown districts; this application requires a deviation from the permitted dynamic display sign types and from the maximum window sign coverage; and
- Whereas,** Four unpermitted temporary real estate banner signs are currently installed on the fifth floor of the subject building (one 200-sf banner and one smaller banner on the Main Street façade, one 200-sf banner on the Trumbull Street façade, and one 200-sf banner on the Morgan Street façade); and
- Whereas,** Proposed signage in this application includes the following permanent signs: one 43-sf canopy-mounted sign on the building’s front façade (Main Street) that would read “The

Pennant at North Crossing”; one 83-sf wall sign installed vertically on the building’s front façade (Main Street), spanning from the top of the second floor to the top of the fifth floor and would read “Pennant” with a logo; and one 45-sf wall sign installed horizontally on the top of the fifth floor of the building’s front façade, reading “The Pennant at North Crossing”; all three signs would have internally illuminated white lettering and consist of aluminum with acrylic face, and the wall signs would project 8” the from building face; and

Whereas, The applicant is also requesting to retain three 200-sf temporary real estate banner signs, one on each street-facing façade; the applicant has requested that these signs be permitted to stay on the building until December 31, 2023; the fourth existing banner sign would be removed; and

Whereas, The proposed permanent signs generally comply with the Zoning Regulations; however, they deviate from Section 8 of the Zoning Regulations in the following ways: the canopy-mounted sign exceeds the permitted sign area; and the wall signs would be installed above the second story of the building for a building less than 12 stories; and

Whereas, The proposed temporary signs deviate from Section 8 of the Zoning Regulations in terms of the length of time requested, sign area, and location of the building face; and

Whereas, The Planning & Zoning Commission has found the proposed signage 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 **denies/approves** the request for a special permit for deviations from the Zoning Regulations’ sign chapter for Downtown signage for a property located at 1212 Main Street (parcel ID: 267-293-001) pursuant to Section 1.3.4, with the following conditions of approval:

- 1. The three temporary banner signs approved as part of this application shall be removed 180 days from the date of the public hearing (June 11, 2023).
- 2. The fourth temporary banner signs shall be removed prior to installation of any new signage. Applicant shall send photos of sign removal to Planning Staff as proof.

Be It Further,

Resolved, This 13th day of December, 2022.