# A RESOLUTION SETTING A PUBLIC HEARING ON AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE CARRBORO LAND USE ORDINANCE RELATING TO THE ALLOCATION OF SIGNAGE Draft Resolution No. 156/2011-12

WHEREAS, the Board of Aldermen seeks to provide ample opportunities for the public to comment on proposed amendments to the Land Use Ordinance;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Aldermen direct staff to prepare text amendments in accordance with one of the proposals described in the staff memo, set a public hearing for June 26<sup>th</sup>.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the draft ordinances are referred to Orange County and the Town of Carrboro Planning Board for review and recommendations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the draft ordinances are also referred to the following advisory boards and commissions for consideration and recommendation prior to the specified public hearing date:

$\boxtimes$	Appearance Commission	Recreation and Parks Commission
$\boxtimes$	Transportation Advisory Board	Northern Transition Area Advisory Committee
	Environmental Advisory Board	
$\boxtimes$	Economic Sustainability Commission	

This is the 15<sup>th</sup> day of May in the year 2012.

Attachment B - 1



# TOWN OF CARRBORO

NORTH CAROLINA

# TRANSMITTAL PLANNING DEPARTMENT

DELIVERED VIA: HAND MAIL FAX EMAIL

То:	David Andrews, Town Manager							
	Mayor & Board of Aldermen							
From:	Tina Moon, Planning Administrator							
Date:	May 11, 2012							
Subject:	Potential Text Amendments Relating to Signage							

# **SUMMARY**

During construction plan review for the 300 E. Main Street project in mid-2011, developers expressed an interest in additional sign area for the project. This interest aligned with the staff perception that there may be a need for the Town to consider potential amendments to Article XVII of the Land Use Ordinance (LUO), Signs, to address the issues associated with the new medium-rise commercial buildings coming online in downtown. Two specific issues have been identified to date in relation to 300 E. Main. Staff has identified three different options for crafting text amendments, the first two in response to the 300 E. Main issues, the third in respond to broader questions that are anticipated in relation to other projects. There are potential opportunities and challenges associated with each one. Increasing sign allocation will depart from the long-standing approach used for this aspect of land use regulation in Town and has significant visual implications. In light of the policy aspects of such changes in relation to the long term vision for downtown, staff is seeking direction from the Board for moving forward.

# BACKGROUND

The square foot allocation for signage in commercial and manufacturing zoning districts in the Town of Carrboro is currently based on linear street frontage. Section 15-276 (c) of the LUO provides for up to 0.5 square feet of sign surface area per linear foot of street frontage, up to 200 feet of frontage, and up to 0.75 square feet of additional sign surface area per linear foot of lot frontage in excess of 200 feet. For existing buildings within the historic downtown section of the Town of Carrboro this allocation system has, as far as we know, provided sufficient signage for these properties. Most downtown properties are one or two stories in height. The current allocation

system provides for a sign for each tenant that is easily visible to a pedestrian, bicyclist or motor vehicle traveling at posted speed limits.

In consideration of the larger development projects already approved in downtown, it became apparent that some adjustments to sign allocation might be needed to accommodate the larger number of commercial enterprises that may be generated in these spaces, per property street frontage. The town has experience with property owners allocating sign area to upper story tenants in a couple of locations (eg. Carr Mill, 100 block of E. Main Street). In these instances, the principal allocation of sign area has been to the ground floor users, with some grouped or shared signage available to those on the upper floor (both examples are two-stories in height). The current allocation doesn't specifically anticipate mixed use situations, like that presented in the 300 E. Main Street project.

The 300 E. Main developers have provide the Town with its desired sign area allocation for the hotel/shops and parking deck portion of the project. This information is not yet available for other projects. The amount of sign area currently scoped out for the hotel/shops/parking deck totals that allocated for the entire site, some of which is currently in use by other existing users.

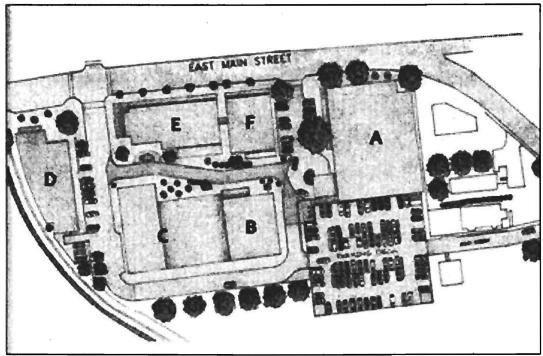
Proposed Building(s)	Frontage	by 0.5	multiply by 0.75	(rounded) Sq. Pt
A (hotel) & Parking Deck	218.35	100	13.76	114
B, C, E, F	364.73	100	123.55	224
D	111.65	55.83	0	56
Site total as the sum of each tract				394
Combined total for the site—as one complex*t	694.73	100	371.05	471

### **Current Sign Allocation for 300 East Main Street**

Project street frontage along East Main Street (per Orange County GIS)

\*Due to the nature of the calculation, combining the linear street frontage for all of the parcels allows a larger percentage of the frontage to receive the 0.75 allocation.

The figures in the chart are designed to illustrate the total amount of signage for the entire 300 East Main Street. It does not take into account the amount of existing signage for businesses that currently occupy the site, such as Fleet Feet, the Arts Center, etc. The square footage of existing signage currently allocated by those businesses would need to be deducted from the total to determine the remaining amount available for the hotel and parking deck.



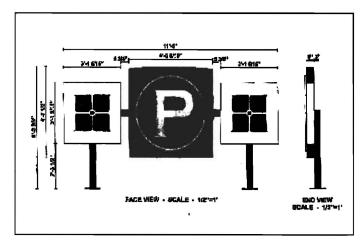
Proposed plan for 300 East Main Street complex: five buildings and a multi-story parking deck The Hotel is identified as building A.

Applicant	Request for	Building A	<u> – Hotel</u>	and Pa	rking Deck
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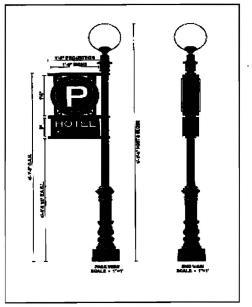
The second se	perUnit	of Units	Footage	Galculation
1. Retail/Restaurant Signs				
a. Facing Exterior-toward Main Street	24.00	8	192.00	192.00
b. Facing Interior-toward courtyard**	24.00	4	96.00	96.00
2. Upper-Floor Hotel Sign				
a. Facing Interior-toward West, Carrboro**	81.20	1	81.20	81.20
b. Facing Exterior-toward East, Chapel Hill	144.38	1	144.38	144.38
3. Parking Deck Hotel Sign				
Facing Exterior-toward East, Chapel Hill	36.09	1	36.09	38.00
4. Parking Garage Signs				
a. Boyd Street - excluding logo**	21.40	1	21.40	40.37
Logo only-directional portion excluded				
b. Interior Parking Deck Entrance -	21.40	1	21.40	40.37
excluding project logo**				
Logo only-directional portion excluded				
c. Padgett Lane Entrance**	53.70	1	53.70	56.81
5. Custom Directional Signs				
a. Boyd Street Entrance**				4.13
b. Lloyd Street Entrance**				4.13
Total square footage of all signs			646.17	697.39
Total - minus potentially excluded signage			372.47	636.32

\*Important for way finding

\*\*Signs identified by applicant as potentially excluded from allocation calculation



Sample #4 - Parking Garage Sign



Examples of signs with directional informational. Directional information may be excluded from the sign allocation count; company names and logos, however, count toward the total allocation.

Sample #5 - Custom Directional

At 300 E. Main , the difference between the amount of signage currently allowed by the LUO for the entire complex (394 to 471 square feet) and the applicant's request for the hotel/shops/parking area (646 square feet) is significant. The applicant has requested the total complex allocation for the hotel/parking deck portion of the site. While some signs may be considered directional and thereby excluded from the calculation, by ordinance, the current proposal for this project clearly exceeds the allowance.

The requested sign area may be separated into three categories:

- 1) Signage for ground floor shops facing E. Main Street and along the entrance road.
- 2) Wall signage for the hotel
- 3) Directional signage that includes logos.

# Potential Approaches to amend the LUO

Staff has identified three main approaches in responding to the issues presented by the 300 E. Main Street project. All offer the potential to provide the applicant with some additional signage; the extent to which the total sign area exceeds that allocated to downtown properties may make it difficult to provide the entire amount proposed.

# Option 1: Add new subsections to Article XVII to address the various components of these new projects.

- Section 15-272, Signs Excluded From Regulation includes 11 subsections describing signs that may be excluded from counting toward a sign allotment. Add a new subsection as number (6) (b) or (11) to read something to the effect of, "Signs directing and guiding traffic onto and within commercial property for that do not exceed \_\_\_\_\_\_ square feet each and that bear no advertising matter. Signs may provide information regarding the type of facility-shopping, lodging, public parking and the like, but shall not include the names of specific vendors, hotels, etc."
- The allocation formula described in Section 15-276 could be expanded to provide a similar square footage allocation for businesses facing an interior courtyard, pedestrian street or internal circulation drive. This provision could be added as a subset of 15-276 (d).
- Allow all downtown tenants to have one sign with no more than 24 square feet of sign area. Add a new section as 15-271 (c) (2) (c) or 15-271 (c) (3) for buildings with multiple tenants in the downtown districts to allow one sign for each tenant with an exterior facing door. Tenants with interior facing doors could request signage on a shared monument sign.
- Add a new subsection under 15-280, Location and Height Requirements, to clarify height limits for wall sides. Subsection 15-280 (c) provides the only guidance for the height of wall signs, and only speaks to projecting signs. Signs projecting more than twelve inches from the wall must be located so that the bottom of the sign is not lower than eight feet off the ground and the top of the sign is no higher than fifteen feet off the ground. Wall signs that project twelve inches or less may currently be located at any height. The Town of Chapel Hill limits the height of wall signs in the downtown area (Town Center 1, 2, and 3) to the second story. "No wall sign shall extend above the parapet or eave line, as appropriate, of the building to which it is attached. If the building consists of more than two (2) stories, wall signs shall not extend above the second story." (Town of Chapel Hill Land Use Management Ordinance, Article 5 – Design and Development Standards, 5.14.8(4)D.) The Town of Carrboro may wish to adopt similar language to limit the height of signs on taller buildings so that the downtown retains a pedestrian scale.

Analysis for Option 1: Adding minor amendments to these few sections of the sign ordinance would provide some additional sign allocation for downtown properties, address the issue of signage for business facing interior courtyards and interior pedestrian streets, and provide height limits for wall signs on tall buildings.

#### Option 2: Establish a new sign allocation system for hotels.

- Draft a new subsection 15-276 (h) specific to hotels in the downtown area--zoning districts Town Center Business B-1 (C) and General Business B-1 (G). Develop a new way to determine the maximum square footage for signage based on the number of guest rooms or the total square footage of the building or some other systematic approach.
- Should more criteria be needed, an entirely new Section 15-284 could be created from the reserved sections. This section could speak to the number of signs, the height limit for wall and freestanding signs, as well as signs directing guests to hotel parking.

Analysis for Option 2: The Town could draft an ordinance tailored to the hotel portion of the project. Signage for the reminder of the project, buildings B-F, would be subject to the current allocation system, unless a subsequent amendment was prepared. The establishment of a new hotel section allowing considerably more signage than previously permitted would have the potential to set a precedent for similar medium-rise developments coming online, and would likely necessitate a review of the entire sign ordinance at some future time.

Option 3: Establish a new Section 15-184 to address new development or redevelopment in the downtown districts: Town Center Business B-1 (C), General Business B-1 (G), Residential High Density and Commercial Overlay District (RHDC), and Downtown Neighborhood Protection Overlay (DNP). Provide a reference to the new section in subsection 15-176 (h). Develop specific performance standards based on some or all of the following criteria:

- new allocation system based on total building floor area, or other method
- with consideration of the site plan and the incorporation of interior courtyard areas, pedestrian streets, and interior circulation area that might produce tenant doorways facing the interior block rather than the exterior street,
- consideration of sign size based on speed limits for fronting rights of way,
- consideration for the appropriate size and height of exterior signs based on the existing streetscape and the viewshed for typical travelers—pedestrian or motorist, and
- the need for directional or informational signage for parking, lodging and the like.

Analysis for Option 3: While this option requires the most staff time to research and prepare, it provides the most comprehensive response to the changing face of downtown Carrboro and takes a proactive approach toward about signage needs within the context of Carrboro's existing fabric. As infill occurs in the downtown and buildings increase in from one to three stories in height to four and five stories, the Town will want to think carefully about the size of signs and the height of signs on these new buildings.



Location of Proposed Upper Floor Hotel Sign b. circled in blue (144 sq. ft.) facing Chapel Hill Image from The Carrboro Commons, Issue 5.4/Spring 2012

Depending on the topography of their site, some buildings may serve as a sign in and of themselves. The Town of Chapel Hill's sign height limit for the Franklin Street area seems to speak to this situation. Signs located more than two stories off the ground may have limited wayfinding benefits for pedestrians and slow moving traffic, but may have significant wayfinding impact from a distance. Existing landmarks such as the water towers and particularly tall buildings can be viewed from NC 54 Bypass at the crest of the hill at the intersection with Fayetteville Road, near Carrboro Plaza. Construction cranes from a couple of projects offer a sense of the visual impact of future development projects coming online.

Staff has not identified a preferred strategy and is seeking input from the Board of Aldermen on these approaches. Community input may be desired as well. Staff feels that an ordinance making changes as described in options 1 and 2 could be prepared in time for review at a June 26<sup>th</sup> public hearing. Option 3 could not be accomplished in that time frame.



View driving into Carrboro from NC 54 Bypass Construction cranes visible from multiple projects.

#### Summary

When guiding potential amendment language, the underlining question may focus on the purpose of signage within the Town and, particularly within the compact downtown area. Is the purpose of signage wayfinding, to help residents and visitors find their destination? Is it to provide advertising for local businesses with a recognizable emblem or logo? Or is it a combination of both.

The 300 East Main Street project represents the new medium-rise type of development encouraged during the Vision 2020 process. The traditional system for determining sign area allocation based on linear footage of street frontage may not be reasonable or appropriate, for projects that are several stories tall, and or are designed with interior streets or interior block pedestrian streets. Amendments to allow additional signage should take into account the character of the existing fabric of downtown Carrboro and seek aesthetically compatible solutions for new and existing properties.

## MEMORANDUM

 TO:
 TOWN OF CARRBORO

 ZONING DIVISION

 FROM:
 MAIN STREET PROPERTIES OF CHAPEL HILL, L.L.C. &

 TARHEEL LODGING II, LLC

 RE:
 SIGNAGE FOR PHASE \_\_ OF 300 EAST MAIN STREET PROJECT

# SUMMARY OF PROPOSED SIGNS.

Attached are five drawings of the proposed signage for the 300 East Main street Project prepared by Todd Hardy of Acken Signs. The proposed signs are as follows:

1. <u>Retail/Restaurant Signs</u>. Twelve (12) single-faced signs are shown on <u>Drawing #1</u>. Each sign will have a maximum area of twenty four (24) square feet. Eight (8) of the signs will face the exterior of the Project and four (4) signs will face the interior of the Project. Each sign is for a separate business.

# 2. Upper-Floor Hotel Signs.

a. <u>Interior Facing</u>. One (1) channel lettered sign thirty six (36) inches tall and two hundred eighty eight (288) inches tall is shown above the fifth  $(5^{th})$  floor of the Hotel on **Drawing #2**. The sign has a gross area of 81.20 square feet and faces the interior of the Project.

b. <u>Exterior Facing</u>. One (1) channel lettered sign forty eight (48) inches tall and four hundred thirty three (433) inches tall is shown above the fifth  $(5^{th})$  floor of the Hotel on <u>Drawing</u> <u>#3</u>. The sign has a gross area of 144.38 square feet and faces the exterior of the Project.

3. <u>Parking Deck Hotel Sign.</u> One (1) channel lettered sign twenty four (24) inches tall and two hundred twenty eight (228) inches tall is shown above the Boyd Street entrance to the Parking Deck on <u>Drawing #4</u>. The sign has a gross area of 36.09 square feet and faces the exterior of the Project.

# 4. Parking Garage Signs.

a. <u>Boyd Street Entrance</u>. One (1) approximately fifty five (55) inch square directional sign is shown on the Boyd Street entrance to the Parking Deck on <u>Drawing #5</u>. The sign has a gross area of 21.4 square feet and faces the exterior of the Project. The sign is flanked by the logo of the Project.

b. <u>Interior Parking Deck Entrance</u>. One (1) approximately fifty five (55) inch square directional sign is shown on the interior entrance to the Parking Deck on <u>Drawing #6</u>. The sign has a gross area of 21.4 square feet and faces the interior of the Project. The sign is flanked by the logo of the Project.

c. <u>Padgett Lane Entrance</u>. One (1) forty six (46) inch wide by one hundred seventy eight (178) tall sign is shown on the Padgett Lane entrance to the Parking Deck on <u>Drawing #7</u>. The sign has a gross area of 53.7 square feet and faces the exterior of the Project.

## 5. <u>Custom Directional Signs</u>. A style of custom directional sign is shown on <u>Drawing #8</u>.

a. <u>Boyd Street Entrance</u>. One (1) of these directional signs is proposed for the Boyd Street entrance to the Parking Deck and Hotel. This sign, when combined with the Parking Deck Hotel Sign described in <u>Paragraph 3</u> above and the Boyd Street Entrance Parking Sign described in <u>Paragraph 4a</u> is considered by us as very important to the safe and orderly flow of traffic into these two facilities. Since this is one of the two permitted left-turn entrances into these two facilities, we believe these signs will help direct visitors into these two facilities and reduce traffic flow further down East Main Street and congestion at the intersection of East Main Street and Lloyd Street.

b. <u>Lloyd Street Entrance</u>. One (1) of these directional sings is also proposed for the Lloyd Street entrance to the Parking Deck and Hotel. This sign will be located at the remaining permitted left-turn entrances to the Parking Deck and Hotel and is considered by us as very important to the safe and orderly flow of traffic into these two facilities.

# **PROPOSED ORDINANCE CONSTRUCTION AND REVISIONS.**

The following is a summary of the Sign Ordinance Constructions and revisions that will permit the proposed signs and that will accommodate the future signage of the 300 East Mains Street Project and similar projects in the Central Business District of Carrboro.

1. <u>Authorized Signage</u>. <u>Section 15-272(2)</u> of the Sign Ordinance excludes signs erected on behalf of or pursuant to the authorization of governmental bodies for identification, information and traffic directional signage. We believe that the signs in <u>Paragraphs 4 and 5</u> above fall into this category and could be approved by the Town of Carrboro. These two facilities will produce a continuous traffic flow which needs to be properly channeled and directed if the public safety of pedestrians and other traffic is to be protected and if the parking deck is to be fully utilized for the benefit of the citizens of Carrboro. New regulations may be developed to regulate the use of such signage for similar needs in the future. We believe it is better to have adequate signage for such uses than to have less signage and more confusion and congestion.

2. <u>Upper Floor Signage</u>. We propose that the Sign Ordinance be amended to enable the use of upper floor signage by five story buildings constructed in the Central Business District. Because of the limited number of such building in the Central Business District and the fact that such signs do not distract pedestrians or local traffic or result in "sign clutter", we believe that a limited number of such signs will greatly benefit businesses locating in Carrboro without causing the problems common to street-level signage. The size of this signage can be regulated by reasonable regulations. The sign in <u>Paragraph 2b</u> would be permitted by this Ordinance change.

3. <u>Interior Project Signage</u>. Because of the number of businesses that will need signage facing the interior of this Project and others to be constructed in the future, we believe that <u>Section 15-270(1)</u> should be construed as not including sign facing the interior of a unified Project that will, upon buildout of the Project, have limited visibility from the exterior of the Project. We believe that the standard should not be whether the signs are visible but whether they are facing the interior or exterior of the Project. Virtually, any sign could be considered as visible from some point on the exterior of a Project and this eliminates the use of signage to draw customers within

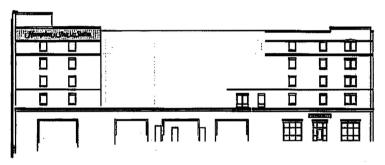
a Project that may have some visibility from the exterior of the Project. Four (4) of the signs in Paragraphs 1 and the signs in <u>Paragraph 2a and Paragraphs 4b and c</u> fit this category.

4. <u>Exterior Project Signage</u>. Finally, with regards to the exterior signage in <u>Paragraphs 1 and 3</u>, we believe that the Town should amend the Ordinance to provided an alternative measure for signage which allows one sign having no more than twenty four (24) square feet of surface for each business in the Central Business District. This alternative standard will accommodate businesses that have smaller street frontage than average and can be limited to the Central Business District. Similar standards are allowed in towns of similar size to Carrboro and in many cases encourage the use of two-sided signs by requiring that only one sign face of a two-sided sign is counted. An example of signage in a town with this approach is attached as <u>Drawing #9</u>.

Attachment C

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WEST ELEVATION - SCALE - 1/32"=1"



EAST ELEVATION - SCALE - 1/32"-1'



DRAWING SHOWS WEST, EAST AND NORTH ELEVATIONS TO DEPICT WHERE THE TWELVE S/F TENANT SIGNS WILL GO ABOVE DOORWAYS.

EACH SIGN IS TO BE 24 SQUARE FEET MAXIMUM.

TYPE OF SIGN WILL VARY PER TENANT

CUSTOMIER APPROVAL DATE:\_\_\_

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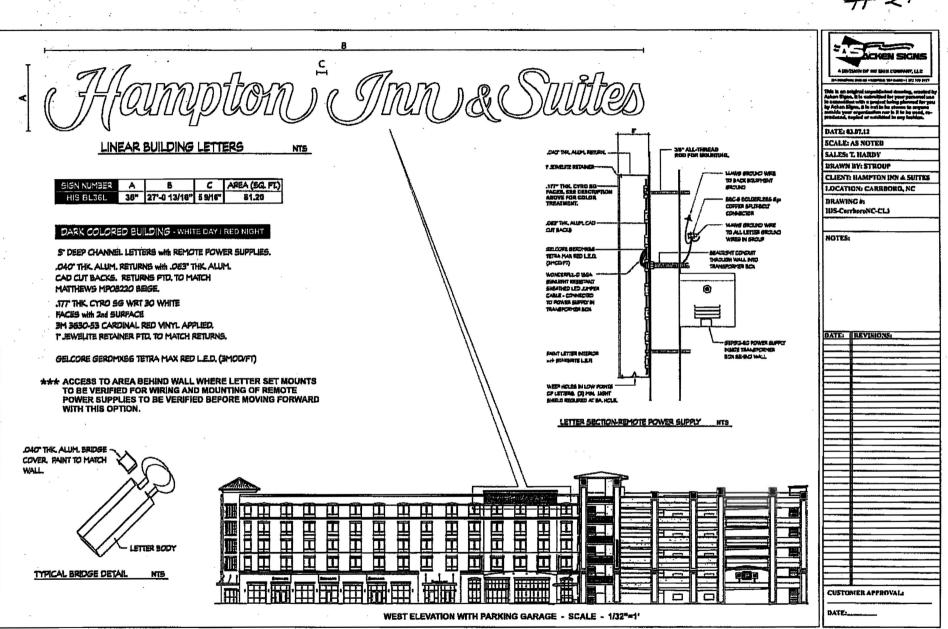
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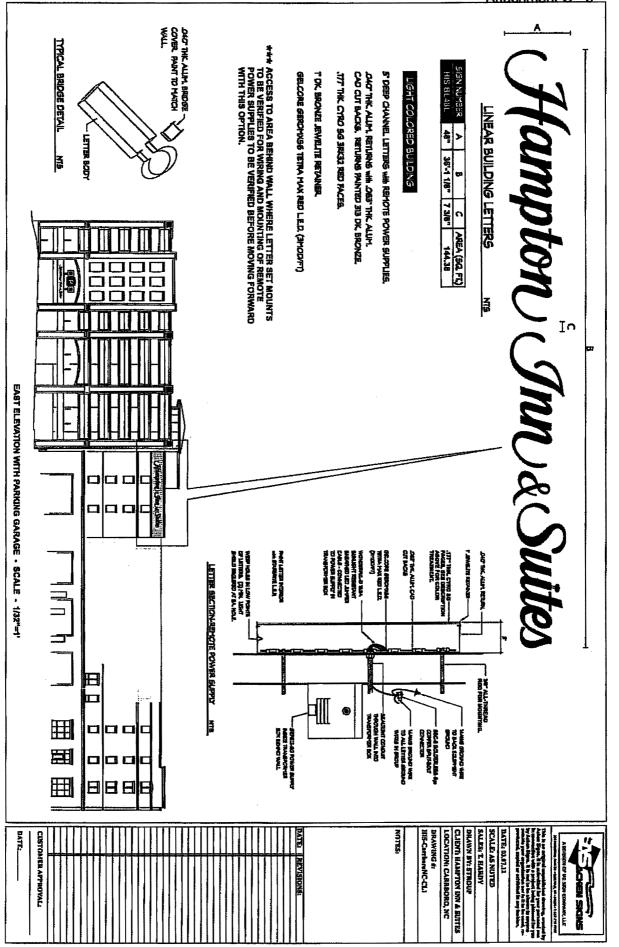


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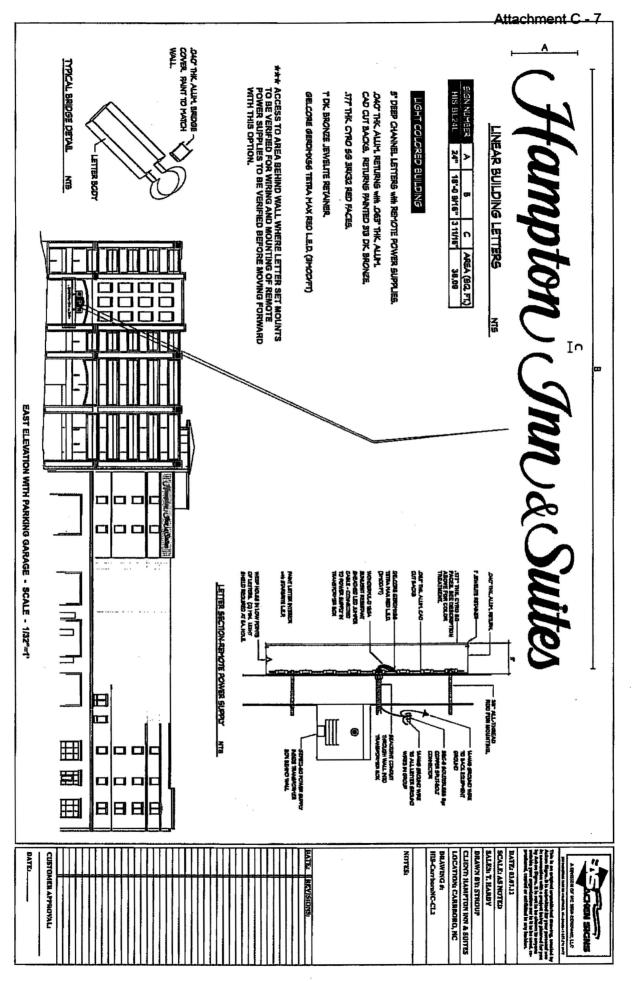
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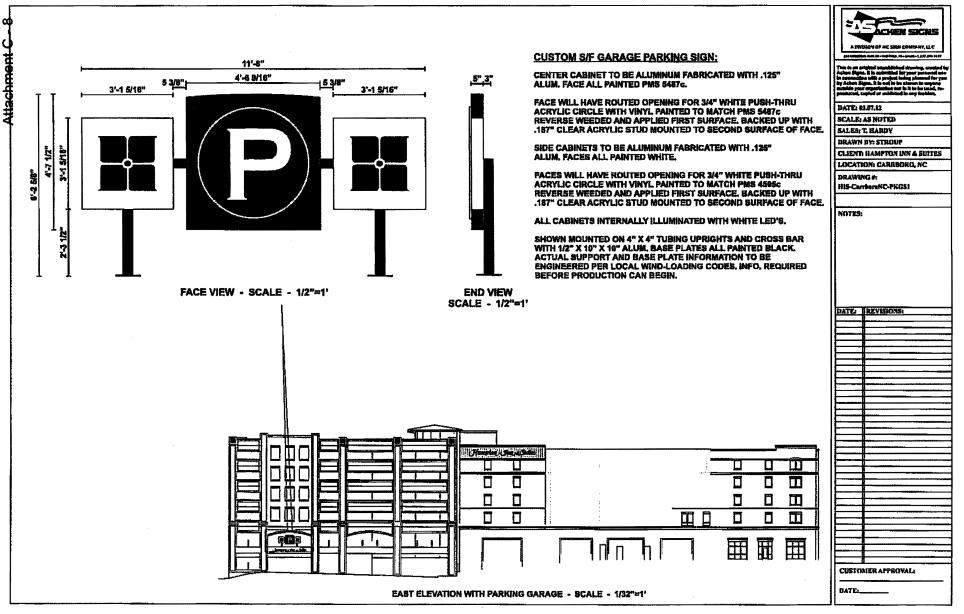
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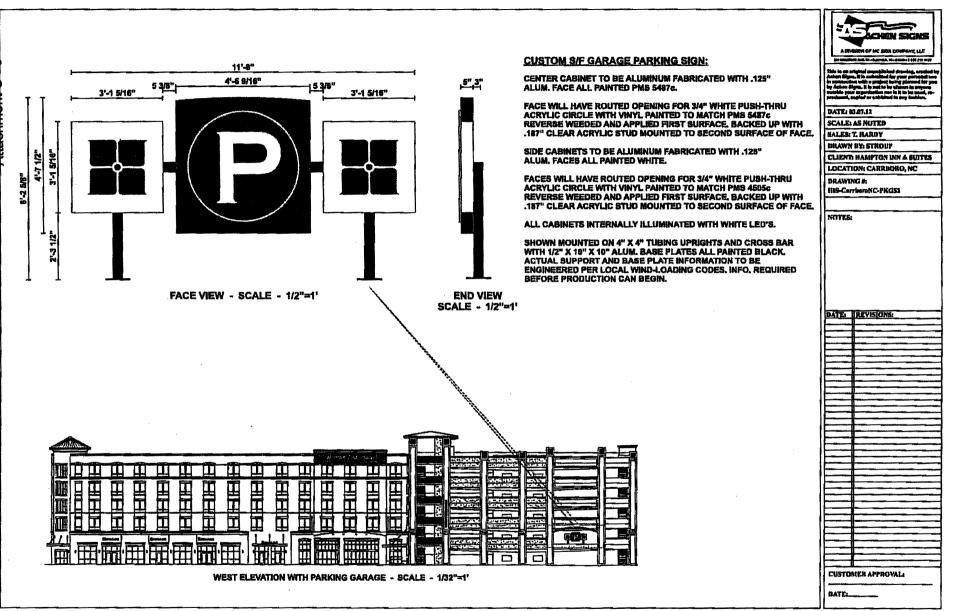


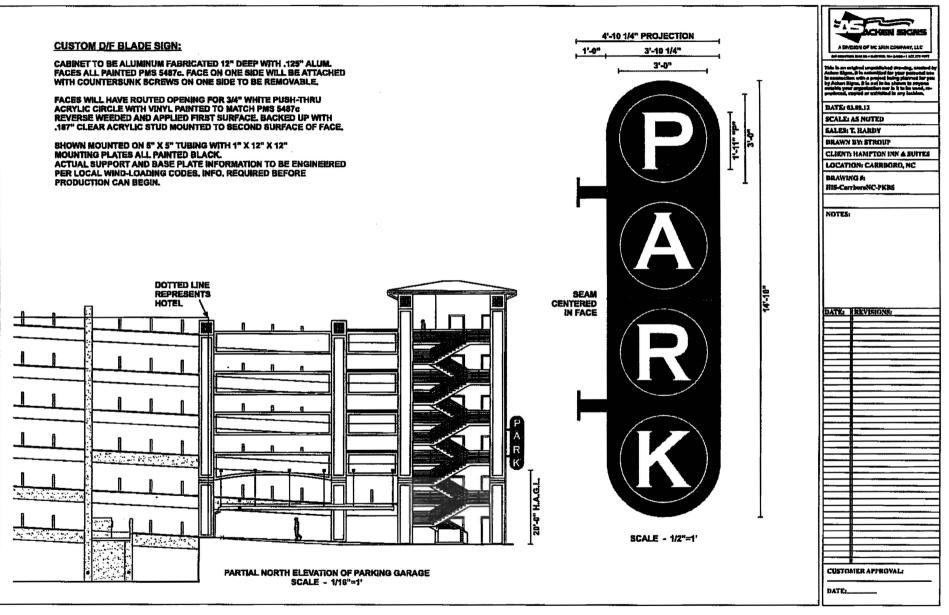
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Attachment C -

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