

MEGAN BARRY  
MAYOR



## METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY

Metropolitan Historic Zoning Commission  
Sunnyside in Sevier Park  
3000 Granny White Pike  
Nashville, Tennessee 37204  
Telephone: (615) 862-7970  
Fax: (615) 862-7974

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION 170 Fourth Avenue North October 19, 2016

**Application:** Signage

**District:** Downtown Historic Preservation Zoning Overlay

**Council District:** 19

**Map and Parcel Number:** 09306109900

**Applicant:** Clay Curtis, Premier Sign

**Project Lead:** Melissa Sajid, [melissa.sajid@nashville.gov](mailto:melissa.sajid@nashville.gov)

**Description of Project:** The applicant seeks approval to replace three skyline signs and two wall signs. A modification is requested to allow one skyline sign exceed fifty percent (50%) of the façade to which it is attached.

**Recommendation Summary:** Staff recommends approval of the proposed skyline signs and wall signs, with the conditions that:

1. All skyline signs not exceed fifty percent (50%) of the wall to which they are attached;
2. Wall signs project no more than two inches (2") from the wall;
3. Staff review and approve the materials for the wall signs prior to purchase and installation; and
4. The new signs are inspected prior to the installation.

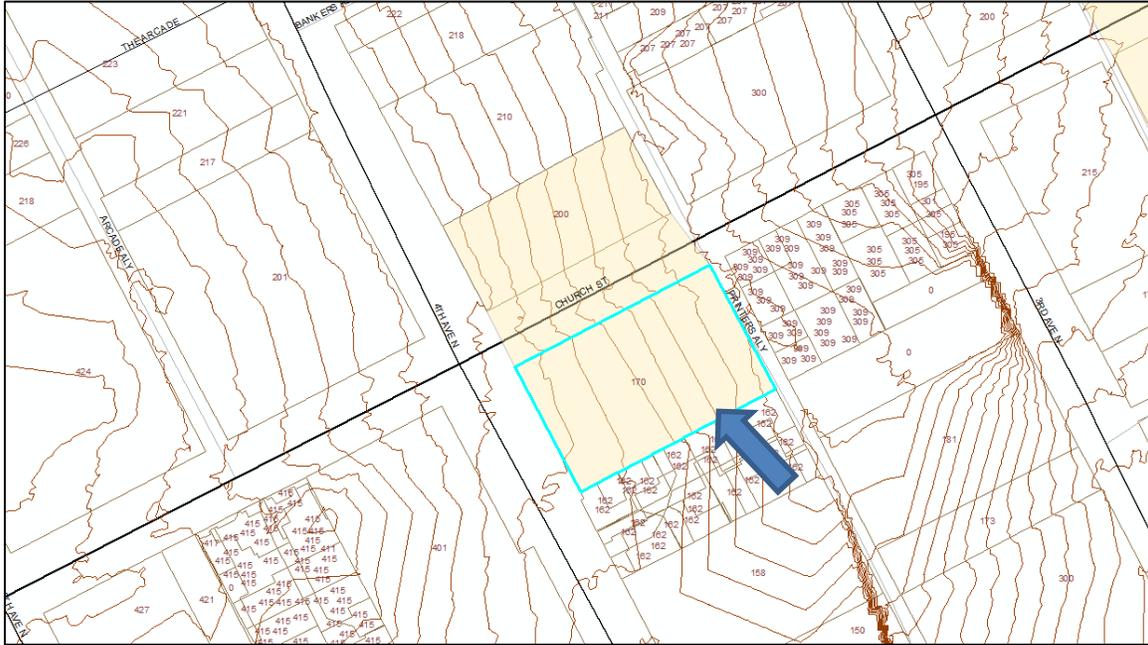
With these conditions, staff finds that the project meets Section IV of the design guidelines for signage in the Downtown Historic Preservation Zoning Overlay.

**Attachments**

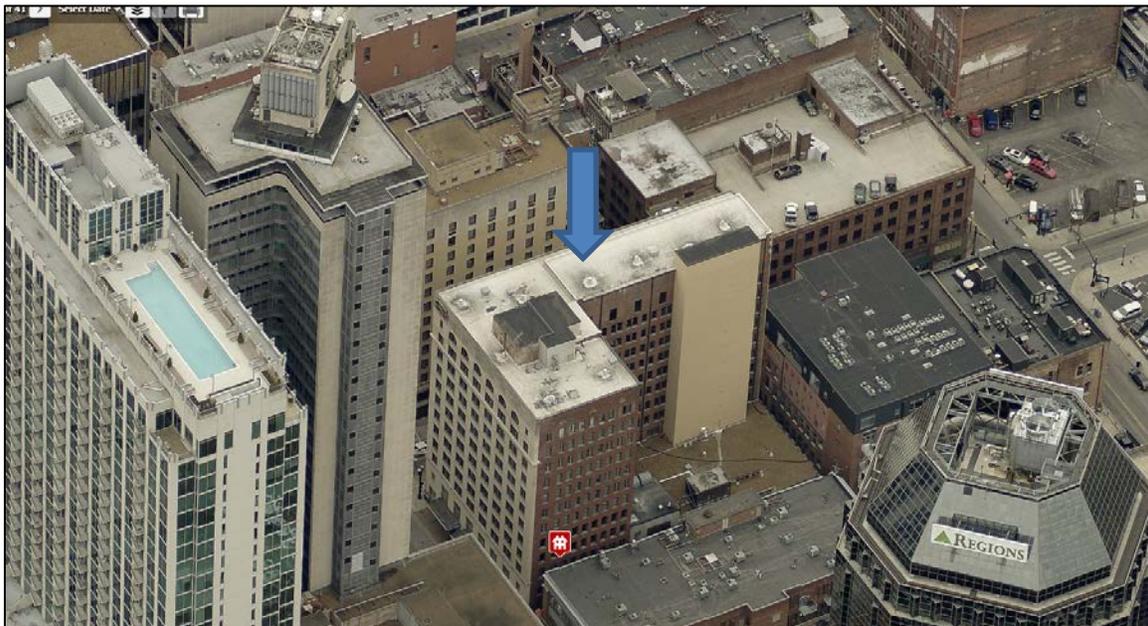
**A:** Images

**B:** Plans

**Vicinity Map:**



**Aerial Map:**



## **Applicable Design Guidelines:**

### **IV. SIGNAGE**

#### **INTRODUCTORY PROVISIONS**

##### **Intent**

The purpose of these regulations is to preserve the historic character of the overall district and individual historic buildings follow the basic principles and guidance of the “Downtown Codes Sign Standards” as adopted 1/30/2013. The “Downtown Codes Sign Standards” breaks signage guidance up by “street types.” The Downtown Historic Preservation Zoning Overlay closely follows the guidance for “Pedestrian Street” type.

#### **MODIFICATIONS**

##### **Sign Permit Modifications**

Requests for modifications to sign standards are reviewed by the Metro Historic Zoning Commission. If the property is also within a MDHA redevelopment district, approval from the MHZC is all that is needed. Two additional types of Modifications for signage related permits may be requested and are outlined below.

##### **Allocation of Sign Area**

The maximum sign area for each type of sign is established in the following tables. Specific requirements for each sign type are shown on the subsequent pages.

For each cell in the table, there is a maximum allowed sign area that may be utilized with any combination and any number of signs associated with that cell, unless otherwise noted.

The measurements for “linear feet” shall be at grade.

##### Building Signs

Wall, Awning, Canopy and Projecting Signs—1.5 square feet of sign area per 1 linear foot of building façade or 36 square feet, whichever is greater. When a projecting sign is used on a building, an additional .50 square feet of sign area per 1 linear foot of building façade shall be permitted, for a total 2 square feet per 1 linear feet of building façade.

##### Skyline Signs

75’-110’—480 square feet

101’-200’—600 square feet

201’ and taller-720 square feet

#### **GENERAL STANDARDS**

##### **Materials**

All permanent, on-premises signs shall be constructed of a rigid, weatherable material such as hard plastic, wood, MDO plywood, aluminum, steel, PVC, glass, fiberglass and or Plexiglass. On-premises permanent signs shall not be constructed of nonrigid materials including, but not limited to, vinyl, fabric, canvas, or corrugated plastic. The provisions of this subsection shall not apply to approved, permitted canopies, awnings and porticoes.

##### **Building Façade and Street Frontage Measurement**

In determination of number of stories of a building, rooftop additions shall not be considered within the number of stories.

## **Building Sign: Wall Sign**

### **Description**

- A wall sign is a building sign that is attached flat to, or mounted away from but parallel to, the building façade.
- A wall sign may be painted on the building façade, in some instances, as a modification.

### **General Provisions**

- A wall sign shall be located lower than the window sills of the top floor for multi-story buildings.
- No portion of a wall sign may extend above the roof line or above a parapet wall of a building with a flat roof.
- No portion of a wall sign may extend above the lower eave line of a building with a pitched roof.
- A wall sign cannot cover windows or architectural details.
- An exposed raceway shall be finished to match the background wall or be integrated into the overall design of the sign.
- A wall sign can be externally or internally illuminated in accordance with the section on Illumination.

### **Design Standards**

- A** Overall area allocation (max)--see allocation of sign area
- B** Projection (max)--2 inch OR 13 inches for internally lighted or neon signage
- C** Exposed Raceway height--50% of the letter height, OR if the Raceway is used as the sign background, the Raceway may extend 3 inches beyond the largest part of the sign. Refer to Illumination section for additional raceway standards and permitted locations.

## **Skyline Sign**

### **Description**

A building sign is attached flat to or mounted away from the building façade. Sign may be parallel to the building façade or vertical. Located on the upper band of a building.

### **General Provisions**

- A skyline sign is only allowed on buildings greater than 75 feet in height.
- A skyline sign must be located within the top third of the building.
- No portion of a skyline sign may extend above the roof line or above a parapet wall of a building with a flat roof.
- No more than one skyline sign per façade is allowed. However, additional skyline signs may be allowed as a Modification for Exceptional Design.
- Raceways are not permitted on skyline signs.
- A skyline sign can be internally (but not externally) illuminated in accordance with the Illumination section of the design guidelines.

### **Design Standards**

- A** Area (max)—see allocation of sign area
- B** Height (max)—14 feet
- C** Width (max % of façade length)—50%

### **Illumination**

Illumination of signs shall be in accordance with the following requirements:

#### **External Illumination**

- External light sources shall be placed close to, and directed onto the sign and shielded to minimize glare into the street, sidewalks or onto adjacent properties.
- Projecting light fixtures used for externally illuminated signs shall be simple and unobtrusive in appearance. They should not obscure the sign.

### **Internal Illumination**

- Channel letters may be internally lit or back-lit.
- For cabinet signs, the background must be opaque. Only graphics, text and logos may be illuminated, and a halo of one inch around graphics, text, and logos may be non-opaque.
- Exposed neon may be used for lettering or as an accent.

### **Prohibited Light Sources**

The following light sources are prohibited:

- Blinking, flashing, chasing, and sequential lighting. This type of lighting may be allowed for Broadway (not the district but the street) only through a modification. In these cases, the chase or flash should not last less than every three seconds.
- Bare bulb illumination.

### **Raceways and Transformers**

- Visible transformers are prohibited.

**Background:** The twelve-story steel frame structure located at 170 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue North was constructed in 1905 and contributes to the character of the Downtown Historic Preservation Zoning Overlay.

**Analysis and Findings:** The applicant requests approval to replace three skyline signs and two wall signs. A modification is requested to allow one skyline sign exceed fifty percent (50%) of the façade to which it is attached.

### **Skyline Signs**

Allotment, Size: The overall height of the building is one hundred and fifty-two feet (152'), which allows for a total

skyline sign allocation of six hundred square feet (600 sq. ft.) for the building. The request is to replace existing skyline signs on the Church Street, Fourth Avenue North, and Printer's Alley façades. All existing skyline signs are to be removed, and only one skyline sign is proposed for each façade.

The skyline signs proposed for the Church Street and Fourth Avenue North façades are each one hundred sixty-eight square feet (168 sq. ft.), and the skyline sign proposed for the Printer's Alley façade is approximately two hundred sixty square feet (260 sq. ft.). The total area of skyline signage proposed is five hundred ninety-six square feet (596 sq. ft.), which does not exceed the maximum allotment.

The height of the skyline signs for the Church Street and Fourth Avenue North façades is three feet, six inches (3'-6") while the height of the sign on the Printer's Alley façade is approximately seven feet, seven inches (7'-7"). None of the proposed skyline signs exceed the maximum height of fourteen feet (14').



Figure 1: 170 4<sup>th</sup> Ave N

The design guidelines also require that the skyline signs not exceed fifty percent (50%) of the length of the façade. The signs proposed for the Church Street and Fourth Avenue North façades both meet this requirement. However, the width of the sign proposed on the Printer's Alley side encompasses approximately sixty-two percent (62%) of that façade and does not meet this guideline. The applicant has requested a modification to permit the sign as proposed. In order to meet this guideline, the width of the sign must be reduced by approximately six feet, nine inches (6'-9").

The current skyline signs were permitted in 1998 (Permit #199803776) and were each eighteen feet by seven feet (18' x 7') or one hundred twenty-six square feet (126 sq. ft.). The existing sign on the Printer's Alley façade meets the guideline that the sign not exceed fifty percent (50%) of the width of the façade. (Figure 2)

While the Printer's Alley façade is narrower than the Church Street and Fourth Avenue North façades, staff finds that there is not a compelling reason for staff to recommend approval of the requested modification. The applicant has

requested the modification so that the sign will have increased visibility from the interstate and Nissan stadium, yet the existing sign meets this guideline. In addition, the building is located in the Capitol Mall Redevelopment District, and MDHA does not recommend approval of the sign modification. Therefore, staff recommends that the skyline sign not exceed fifty percent (50%) of the façade as required by the design guidelines.

Location: As proposed, the skyline signs are located within the top third of the building, as required by the design guidelines, and no portion of the signs extends above the roof line.

Illumination: The skyline signs will be internally illuminated. This meets section IV of the design guidelines for illumination.

Materials: The sign cabinet will be aluminum with an acrylic face. Staff recommends having final approval of the materials prior to its installation.



Figure 2: Existing skyline sign on Printer's Alley façade

## Wall Signs

**Allotment, Size:** The building is allotted one and one-half square feet (1.5 sq. ft.) of signage per linear foot of frontage or thirty-six square feet (36 sq. ft.), whichever is greater. The proposal includes two wall signs that are each approximately two square feet (2 sq. ft.). One wall sign will be located on the Fourth Avenue North façade, and the other will be on the Church Street façade. The building is oriented to Fourth Avenue North which has a frontage of one hundred fifteen feet (115'). Therefore, the total allotment for wall signs for this building is one hundred seventy-two square feet (172 sq. ft.).

There is currently a four square feet (4 sq. ft.) wall sign on the Fourth Avenue North façade that will remain, but there are no other signs on the Church Street façade. (Figure 3)



Figure 3: Existing wall sign to remain

With the existing sign that is to remain, the new signs will meet the allotment guidelines with one hundred and sixty-four square feet (164 sq. ft.) of allotted signage remaining. As proposed, the wall signs meet the design guidelines for allotment.

The design guidelines also require that wall signs have a maximum projection of two inches (2") if not illuminated. Details on the maximum projection have not been provided, and staff recommends a condition that the signs project no more than two inches (2") from the wall.

**Location:** The signs will be located at the corner of Church Street and Fourth Avenue North with one sign on each façade (Figure 4.) As proposed, the signs are located at the corner on a pedestrian level and do not cover windows or architectural details.

**Illumination:** The signs will not be illuminated. This section of the design guidelines does not apply.

**Materials:** Details on the material for the wall signs have not been provided, but the wall signs appear to be

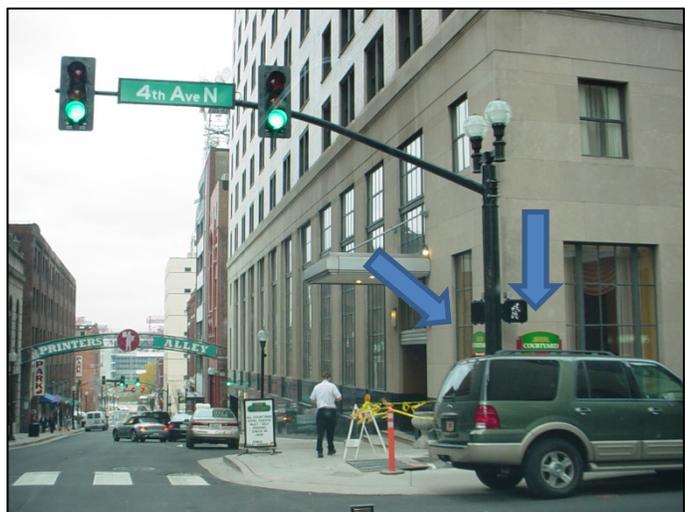


Figure 4: Replace existing wall signs on Church Street and 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue North

individual letters applied to the façade. Staff recommends a condition that staff have final approval of the materials prior to purchase and installation.

**Recommendation:** Staff recommends approval of the proposed skyline signs and wall signs, with the conditions that:

1. All skyline signs not exceed fifty percent (50%) of the wall to which they are attached;
2. Wall signs project no more than two inches (2") from the wall;
3. Staff review and approve the materials for the wall signs prior to purchase and installation; and
4. The new signs are inspected prior to the installation.

With these conditions, staff finds that the project meets Section IV of the design guidelines for signage in the Downtown Historic Preservation Zoning Overlay.

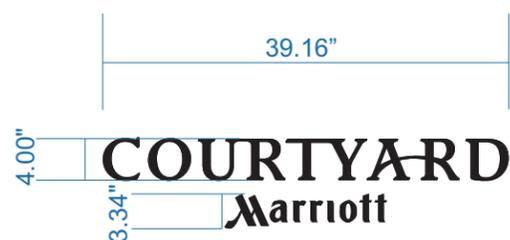


PLATE LETTERS

color specifications -

■ MP-LVS929 CARBON BLACK

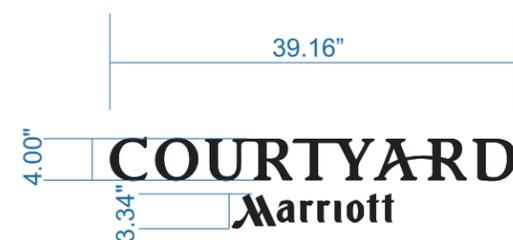


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Rev. #2	09-14-16	AAAJ	Rev. #5	_____	_____
Rev. #3	_____	_____	Rev. #6	_____	_____

**COURTYARD**  
**170 4TH AVE N**  
**NASHVILLE, TN**

DRAWING NO:  
 D-ORDER# 081180.00

ARTIST: AAAJ DATE: 9/20/12  
 SHEET: 1 OF 4

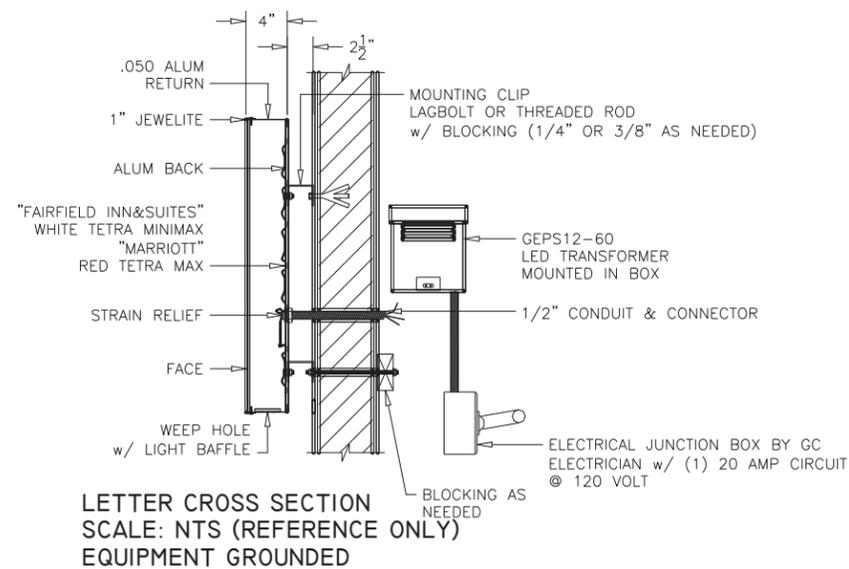
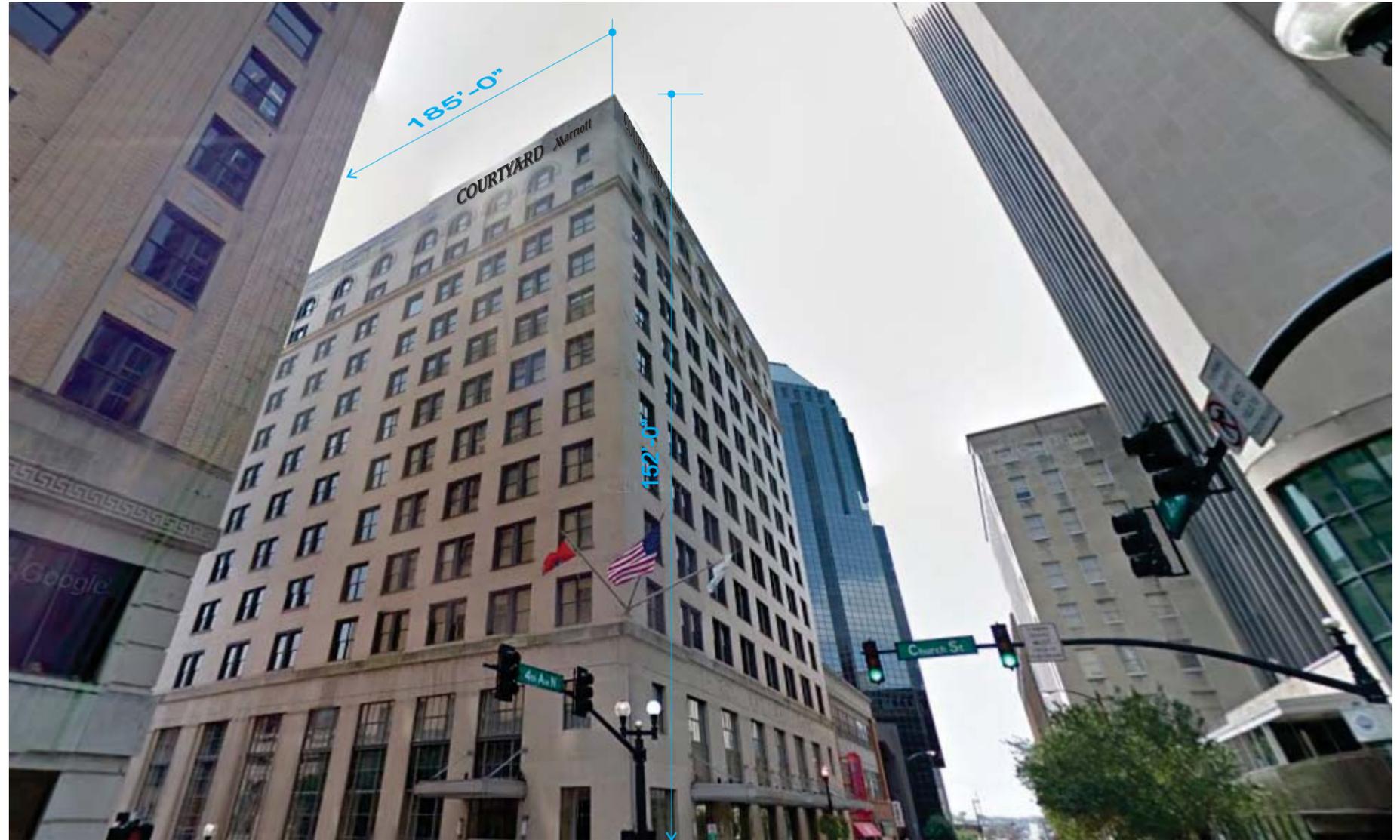
**specifications -**

FACE: #2447 WHITE IMPACT ACRYLIC WITH  
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 APPLIED IST SURFACE  
 RETURN: .040 X 4.33" PRE-FINISHED BLACK  
 INTERIOR: PAINT W/LEP  
 TRIMCAP: 1" BLACK JEWELITE  
 LED: GEMX71-2 WHITE

PAINT MOUNTING CLIP TO MATCH BUILDING

**color specifications -**

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- BLACK
- 3M 3635-222 MATTE BLACK DUAL COLOR



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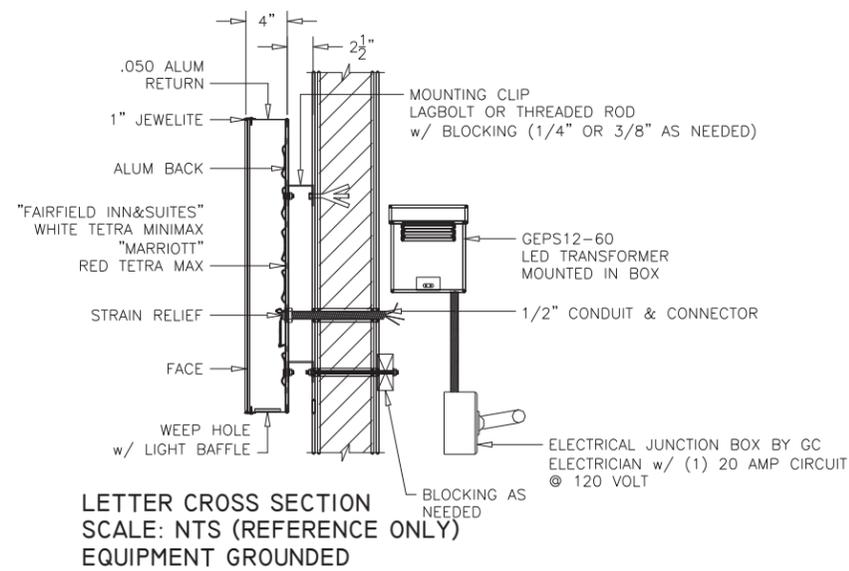
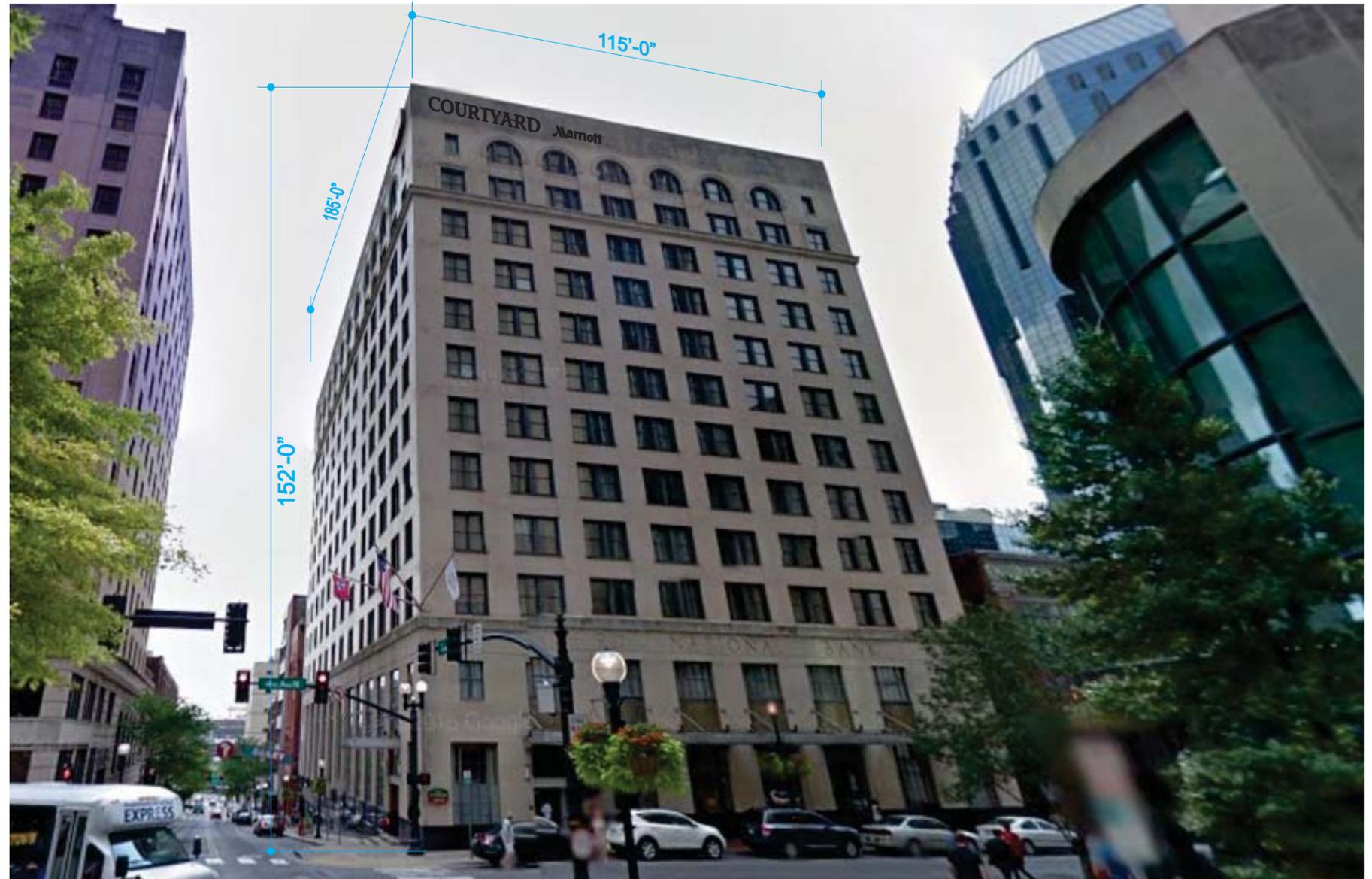
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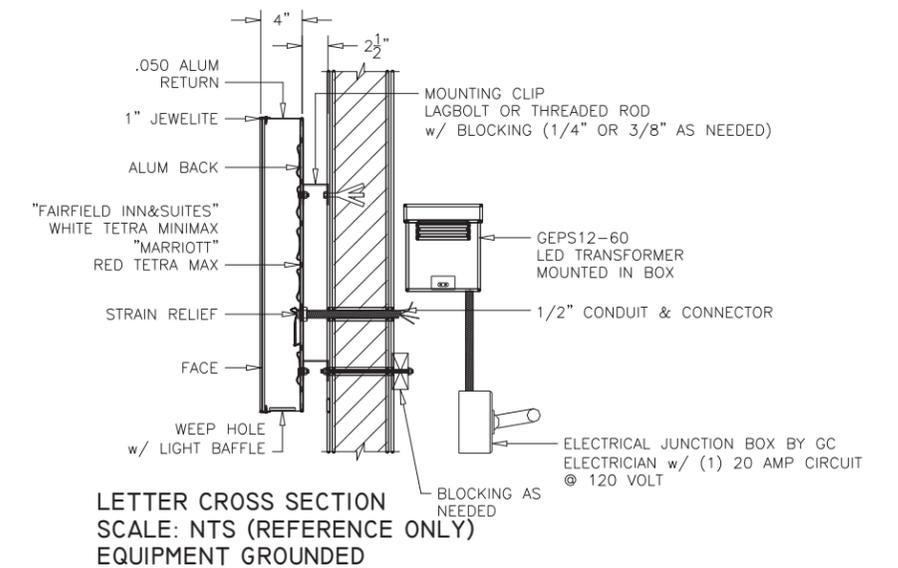
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