

MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT

Address:	7400 Wisconsin Avenue, Bethesda	Meeting Date:	11/15/2017
Resource:	Master Plan Site #35/014-005A Bethesda Post Office	Report Date:	11/8/2017
Applicant:	7400 Wisconsin LLC (Michael Domeier, Agent)	Public Notice:	11/1/2017
Review:	HAWP	Tax Credit:	N/A
Case Number:	35/14-17A	Staff:	Michael Kyne
PROPOSAL:	Signage		

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the HPC **approve with conditions** the HAWP application.

- 1. The proposed letter signs (TRUEBODY and slogans signs) on the front elevation are not approved.**

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

SIGNIFICANCE: Individually Designated Master Plan Site (35/014-005A)
STYLE: Classical Revival
DATE: Circa 1938

Excerpt from *Places from the Past*:

The Bethesda Post Office is one of three county post offices built under the Works Progress Administration. The program sought to create buildings that fit in with a community's architecture. The Bethesda Post Office is built of native Stoneyhurst stone found on other structures in the Bethesda Commercial District. The Classical Revival building, featuring a hipped roof, distinctive cupola and segmentally-arched windows, was designed by Karl O. Sonnemann (1900-1967). Sonnemann was architect for the Federal Works Agency and its successor, the General Services Administration, from 1925 until his retirement in 1964. The builders were the Sofarelli Brothers of Jamaica, New York. An interior mural by Robert Gates depicts rural Montgomery County. The WPA commissioned Gates to paint murals for several of its projects in this era. Gates became one of Washington's most respected and influential artists.

BACKGROUND

The applicants previously appeared before the Commission for a preliminary consultation at the August 16, 2017 HPC meeting. At that time, the applicants proposed four different options for sign installation, ranging from one to four 9' to 19' tall freestanding figures at the front of the subject property. The Commission did not support any of the proposed options, finding that they all overwhelmed and detracted from the historic building.

The applicants returned to the Commission for a second preliminary consultation at the October 25, 2017 HPC meeting, with a proposal for multiple banner signs attached to the front and left side of the building and two internally illuminated letter signs (TRUEBODY and slogan signs) attached to the front of the building. The Commission expressed the following concerns at the October 25, 2017 meeting:

- The amount of proposed signage at the front of the building created a cumulative effect that detracted from the character-defining features of the historic building.
- The majority of Commissioners were not supportive of the banner signs at the front of the building.
- The majority of Commissioners were supportive of the banner signs on the left side of building.
- There were some concerns about the proximity of the proposed banner signs on the front of the building to the Madonna of the Trail memorial (Master Plan Site #35/14-2).
- There was some concern about the scale and positioning of the proposed letter signs at the front of building, as they obscured character-defining features of the historic building, such as the brick relieving arch above the right window of the main building and the entablature.
- There were some concerns about the use of internally illuminated signage at the front of the building.
- The Commission suggested that the applicants explore alternatives to the proposed letter signs, such as a monument sign like that which was approved as part of a previous HAWP, a blade sign, a vertical sign, or moving the proposed letter signs to the right-side addition/accessible entrance, where they would not obscure the character-defining features of the historic building.

PROPOSAL:

- Sign installation at the front and left side of the subject property.

APPLICABLE GUIDELINES:

In accordance with section 1.5 of the *Historic Preservation Commission Rules, Guidelines, and Procedures (Regulation No. 27-97) (Regulations)*, the Commission in developing its decision when reviewing a Historic Area Work Permit Application for an undertaking at a resource in the Chevy Chase Village Historic District uses section 24A-8 of the Montgomery County Code (“Chapter 24A”), the *Secretary of the Interior’s Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitation (Standards)*, and pertinent guidance in applicable master plans – *Chevy Chase Village Historic District Design Guidelines*. [Note: where guidance in an applicable master plan is inconsistent with the *Standards*, the master plan guidance shall take precedence (§ 1.5(b) of the *Regulations*.)] The pertinent information in these documents, incorporated in their entirety by reference herein, is outlined below.

Sec. 24A-8. Same-Criteria for issuance.

- (a) The commission shall instruct the director to deny a permit if it finds, based on the evidence and information presented to or before the commission that the alteration for which the permit is sought would be inappropriate, inconsistent with or detrimental to the preservation, enhancement or ultimate protection of the historic site or historic resource within an historic district, and to the purposes of this chapter.
- (b) The commission shall instruct the director to issue a permit, or issue a permit subject to such conditions as are found to be necessary to insure conformity with the purposes and requirements of this chapter, if it finds that:
 - (1) The proposal will not substantially alter the exterior features of an historic site or historic resource within an historic district; or

- (2) The proposal is compatible in character and nature with the historical, archeological, architectural or cultural features of the historic site or the historic district in which an historic resource is located and would not be detrimental thereto or to the achievement of the purposes of this chapter; or
 - (3) The proposal would enhance or aid in the protection, preservation and public or private utilization of the historic site or historic resource located within an historic district in a manner compatible with the historical, archeological, architectural or cultural value of the historic site or historic district in which an historic resource is located; or
 - (4) The proposal is necessary in order that unsafe conditions or health hazards be remedied; or
 - (5) The proposal is necessary in order that the owner of the subject property not be deprived of reasonable use of the property or suffer undue hardship; [emphasis added] or
 - (6) In balancing the interests of the public in preserving the historic site or historic resource located within an historic district, with the interests of the public from the use and benefit of the alternative proposal, the general public welfare is better served by granting the permit.
- (c) It is not the intent of this chapter to limit new construction, alteration or repairs to any 1 period or architectural style.
- (d) In the case of an application for work on an historic resource located within an historic district, the commission shall be lenient in its judgment of plans for structures of little historical or design significance or for plans involving new construction, unless such plans would seriously impair the historic or architectural value of surrounding historic resources or would impair the character of the historic district. (*Ord. No. 9-4, § 1; Ord. No. 11-59*)

Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

The Secretary of the Interior defines rehabilitation as “the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features, which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.” Standards 2, 5, and 6 most directly apply to the application before the commission:

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials

shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.

8. Significant archaeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

STAFF DISCUSSION:

The applicants have returned with a revised proposal, which includes the following:

Letter Signs

- TRUEBODY Sign: One 1'-3" high by 10'-6" wide sign at the front of the building.
- Slogan Sign: One 1'-10" high by 4' wide sign at the front of the building.

The proposed letter signs will consist of cutout letters that will be affixed directly to the front of the building, with any required hardware mounted into the mortar to allow for easy repairs if the signs are removed in the future. These signs will be externally illuminated via a spotlight from the ground.

The applicants made several revisions to their previous proposal, attempting to address the concerns expressed by the Commission at the October 25, 2017 preliminary consultation. The scale of the proposed TRUEBODY sign has been slightly reduced, going from 1'-6" high by 12'-9" wide to 1'-3" high by 10'-6" wide (a reduction of 3" in height and 2'-3" in width). The proposed letter signs have also been moved from above the right window of the main building to above the left window of the main building. As previously noted, the proposed letter signs will no longer be internally illuminated.

Although the applicants have revised their proposal and slightly reduced the scale of the proposed TRUEBODY sign, staff finds that they have not satisfactorily addressed the Commission's previous concerns. As revised, the proposed letter signs still obscure portions of the brick relieving arch above the left window of the main building as well as portions of the entablature. Although the applicants continue to reference the UNLEASHED signage - a sign installation project at 8412 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring (Silver Spring Post Office, c. 1937, Master Plan Site #36/11), which was approved by the Commission at the March 25, 2015 HPC meeting - the scale, proportions, and design of that building allowed the signage to be installed without obscuring any character-defining features of the building. This was previously noted by the Commission at the October 25, 2017 preliminary consultation.

Staff recommends that the Commission not approve the proposed letter signs at the front of the building and that the applicant return with a revised proposal, which fully addresses the Commission's previous concerns.

Banner Signs

- Banner Signs: Four 8'-6" tall by 2'-4" wide banner signs at the left side of the building.

Due to the concerns expressed by the Commission at the October 25, 2017 preliminary consultation, banner signs are no longer proposed at the front of the building. The proposed banner signs at the left side of the building have not been revised, as the Commission voiced general support for these banners at the previous meeting. As in the previous proposal, the banner signs will be attached to two brackets (one at the top and one at the bottom) and will be interchangeable. Any required hardware will be mounted into the mortar of the building to allow for easy repairs if the banner signs are removed in the future.

Staff recommends that the Commission approve the proposed banner signs at the left side of the building.

After full and fair consideration of the applicant's submission staff finds the proposal as being consistent with the Criteria for Issuance in Chapter 24A-(b) 1 and 2, having found the proposal is consistent with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* outlined above.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Commission **approve with the conditions specified on Circle 1** the HAWP application under the Criteria for Issuance in Chapter 24A-8(b), having found that the proposal will not substantially alter the exterior features of the historic resource and is compatible in character with the district and the purposes of Chapter 24A;

and with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*;

and with the general condition that the applicant shall present the **3 permit sets of drawings, if applicable to Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) staff for review and stamping** prior to submission for the Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services (DPS) building permits;

and with the general condition that final project design details, not specifically delineated by the Commission, shall be approved by HPC staff or brought back to the Commission as a revised HAWP application at staff's discretion;

and with the general condition that the applicant shall notify the Historic Preservation Staff if they propose to make **any alterations** to the approved plans. Once the work is completed the applicant will **contact the staff person** assigned to this application at 301-563-3400 or michael.kyne@montgomeryplanning.org to schedule a follow-up site visit.



DPS - #8

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

301/563-3400

APPLICATION FOR HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT

Contact Email: bdetwiler@cobroventures.com Contact Person: Brian Detwiler
Daytime Phone No.: 240-481-7640
Tax Account No.: 00490661
Name of Property Owner: 7400 Wisconsin LLC Daytime Phone No.: 202-333-0880
Address: 7101 Bethesda Wisconsin 20814
Contractor: Sign contractor TBD Phone No.:
Contractor Registration No.:
Agent for Owner: Cobro Ventures, Inc. Daytime Phone No.: 240-481-7640

LOCATION OF BUILDING/PREMISE

House Number: 7400 Street: Wisconsin
Town/City: Bethesda Nearest Cross Street: Montgomery Ln.
Lot: Block: P13 Subdivision: 0023 Edgemoor
Parcel: N458

PART ONE: TYPE OF PERMIT ACTION AND USE

1A. CHECK ALL APPLICABLE:

- Construct Extend Alter/Renovate
Move Install Wreck/Raze
Revision Repair Reversible.

CHECK ALL APPLICABLE:

- AC Slab Room Addition Porch Deck Shed
Solar Fireplace Woodburning Stove Single Family
Fence/Wall (complete Section 4) Other: Commercial signage

1B. Construction cost estimate: \$ 10,000

1C. If this is a revision of a previously approved active permit, see Permit #

PART TWO: COMPLETE FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION AND EXTEND/ADDITIONS

2A. Type of sewage disposal: 01 WSSC 02 Septic 03 Other:
2B. Type of water supply: 01 WSSC 02 Well 03 Other:

PART THREE: COMPLETE ONLY FOR FENCE/RETAINING WALL

3A. Height feet inches

3B. Indicate whether the fence or retaining wall is to be constructed on one of the following locations:

- On party line/property line Entirely on land of owner On public right of way/easement

I hereby certify that I have the authority to make the foregoing application, that the application is correct, and that the construction will comply with plans approved by all agencies listed and I hereby acknowledge and accept this to be a condition for the issuance of this permit.

Signature of owner or authorized agent

October 4, 2017

Date

Approved: For Chairperson, Historic Preservation Commission

Disapproved: Signature: Date:

Application/Permit No.: Date Filed: Date Issued:

815576

**THE FOLLOWING ITEMS MUST BE COMPLETED AND THE
REQUIRED DOCUMENTS MUST ACCOMPANY THIS APPLICATION.**

1. WRITTEN DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

- a. Description of existing structure(s) and environmental setting, including their historical features and significance:

The existing structure is the Old Post Office in downtown Bethesda, which is currently undergoing a major renovation and expansion that has been previously approved and permitted. The entire exterior of the existing structure is considered historic, with architecture that is illustrative of the period in which it was built.

- b. General description of project and its effect on the historic resource(s), the environmental setting, and, where applicable, the historic district:

The subject of this application is commercial signage to accompany the new business (a health club) that will occupy the building. All proposed signage will be mounted to the mortar so as to preserve the existing stone. If the signs are removed, the mortar can be easily repaired to restore the original facade.

Inspiration for the signage comes from the "Unleashed" renovation at another historic post office on Georgia Ave. in Silver Spring. Inspiration for the fabric banners comes from historic hotels and museums that are often seen in the DC metro area. The intention is that the signage will have minimal impact on the historic views of the building.

2. SITE PLAN

Site and environmental setting, drawn to scale. You may use your plat. Your site plan must include:

- a. the scale, north arrow, and date;
- b. dimensions of all existing and proposed structures; and
- c. site features such as walkways, driveways, fences, ponds, streams, trash dumpsters, mechanical equipment, and landscaping.

3. PLANS AND ELEVATIONS

You must submit 2 copies of plans and elevations in a format no larger than 11" x 17". Plans on 9 1/2" x 11" paper are preferred.

- a. Schematic construction plans, with marked dimensions, indicating location, size and general type of walls, window and door openings, and other fixed features of both the existing resource(s) and the proposed work.
- b. Elevations (facades), with marked dimensions, clearly indicating proposed work in relation to existing construction and, when appropriate, context. All materials and fixtures proposed for the exterior must be noted on the elevations drawings. An existing and a proposed elevation drawing of each facade affected by the proposed work is required.

4. MATERIALS SPECIFICATIONS

General description of materials and manufactured items proposed for incorporation in the work of the project. This information may be included on your design drawings.

5. PHOTOGRAPHS

- a. Clearly labeled photographic prints of each facade of existing resource, including details of the affected portions. All labels should be placed on the front of photographs.
- b. Clearly label photographic prints of the resource as viewed from the public right-of-way and of the adjoining properties. All labels should be placed on the front of photographs.

6. TREE SURVEY

If you are proposing construction adjacent to or within the dripline of any tree 6" or larger in diameter (at approximately 4 feet above the ground), you must file an accurate tree survey identifying the size, location, and species of each tree of at least that dimension.

7. ADDRESSES OF ADJACENT AND CONFRONTING PROPERTY OWNERS

For ALL projects, provide an accurate list of adjacent and confronting property owners (not tenants), including names, addresses, and zip codes. This list should include the owners of all lots or parcels which adjoin the parcel in question, as well as the owner(s) of lot(s) or parcel(s) which lie directly across the street/highway from the parcel in question.

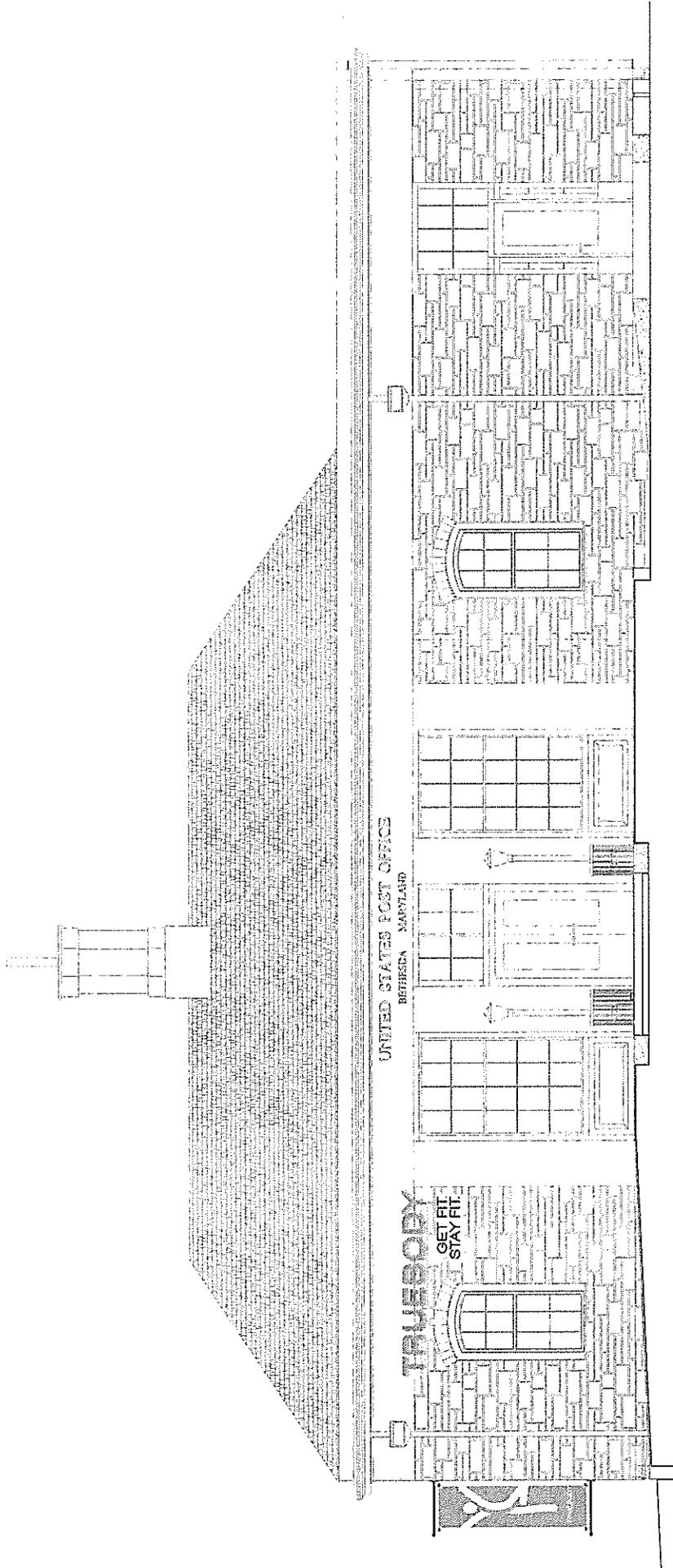
PLEASE PRINT (IN BLUE OR BLACK INK) OR TYPE THIS INFORMATION ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE.
PLEASE STAY WITHIN THE GUIDES OF THE TEMPLATE, AS THIS WILL BE PHOTOCOPIED DIRECTLY ONTO MAKING LABELS.



TRUEBODY

GET FIT. STAY FIT.

East Elevation
Wisconsin Ave



Banner Dimensions *
28" x 8' 6"

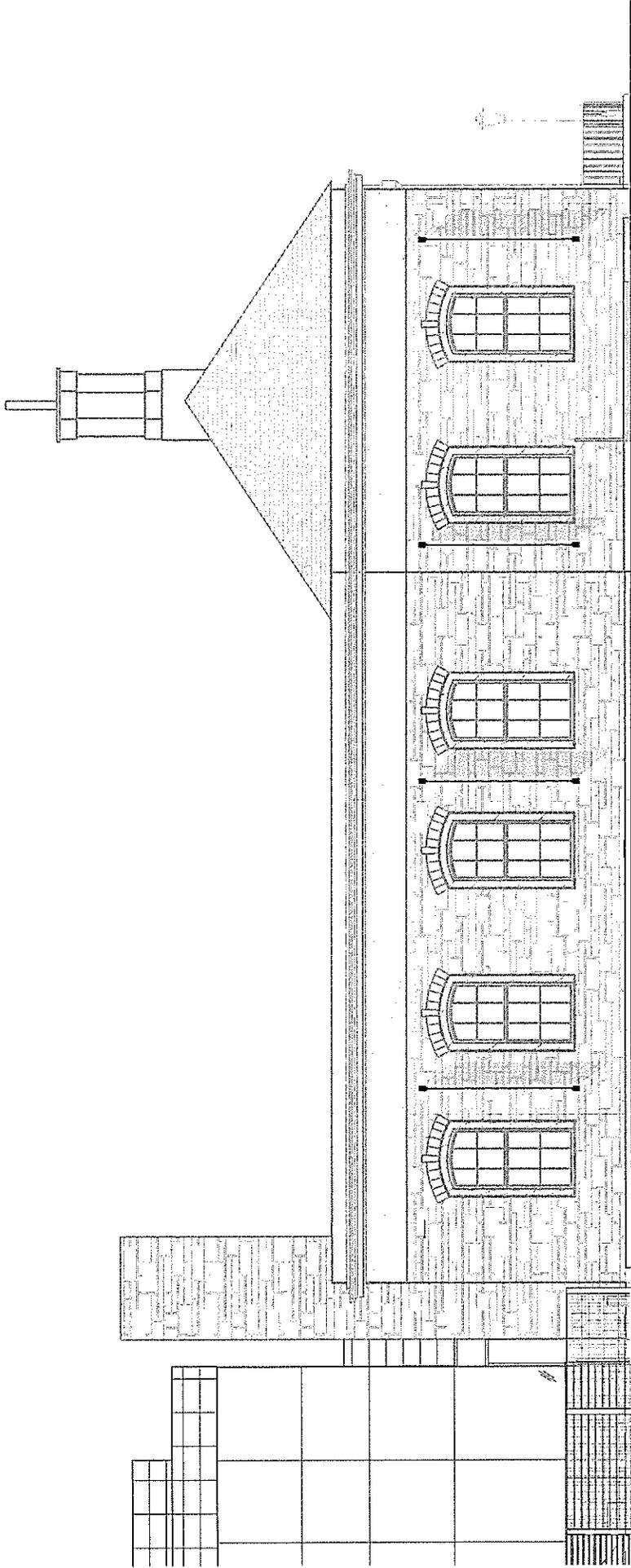
TRUEBODY SIGN*
15" x 10' 6"

GET FIT. STAY FIT.*
22" x 48"

*Dimensions are approximate

South Elevation
Montgomery Lane

 **TRUEBODY**
GET FIT. STAY FIT.



Banner Dimensions *
28" x 8' 6"

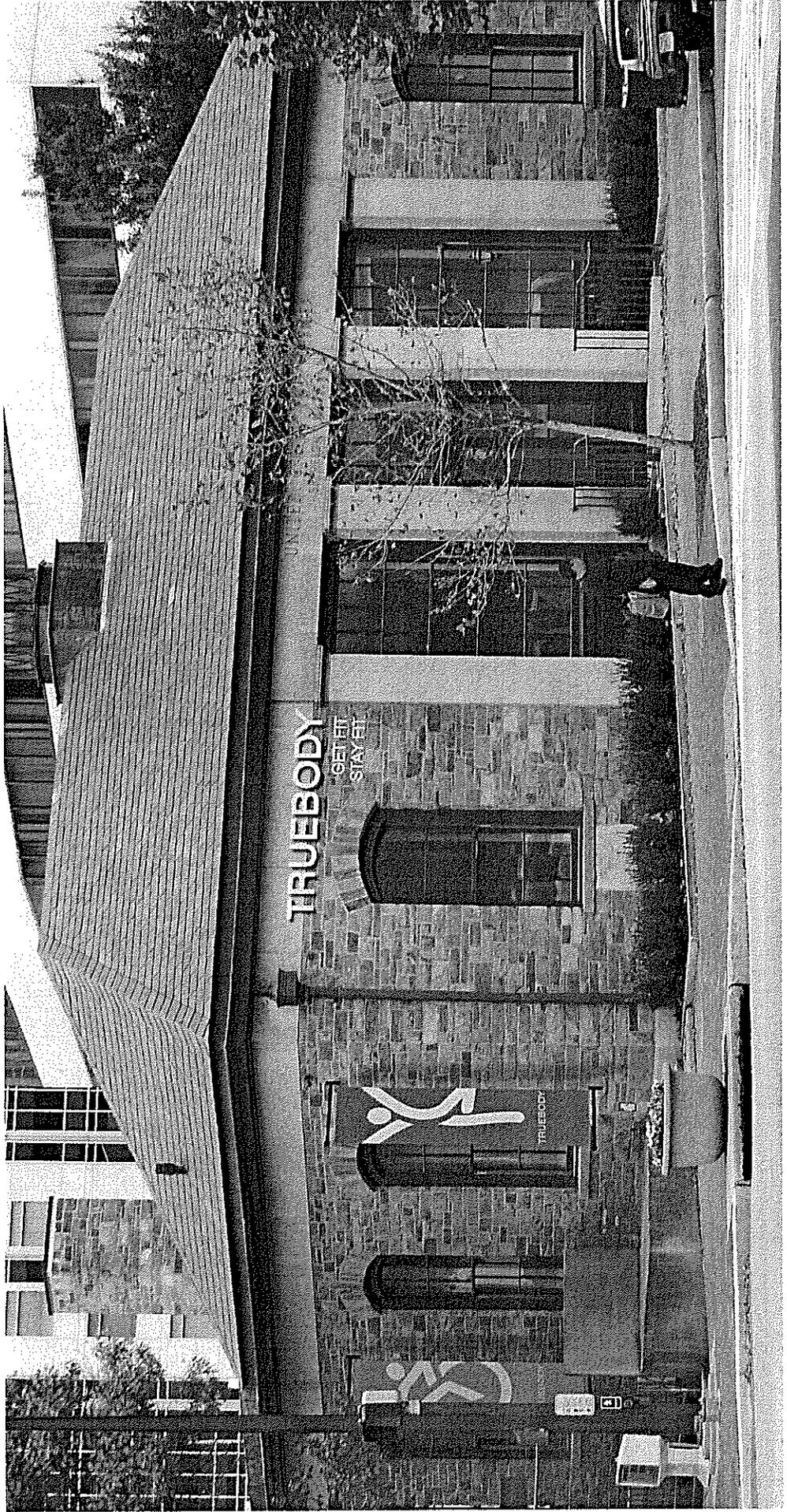

TRUEBODY
GET FIT. STAY FIT.





TRUEBODY

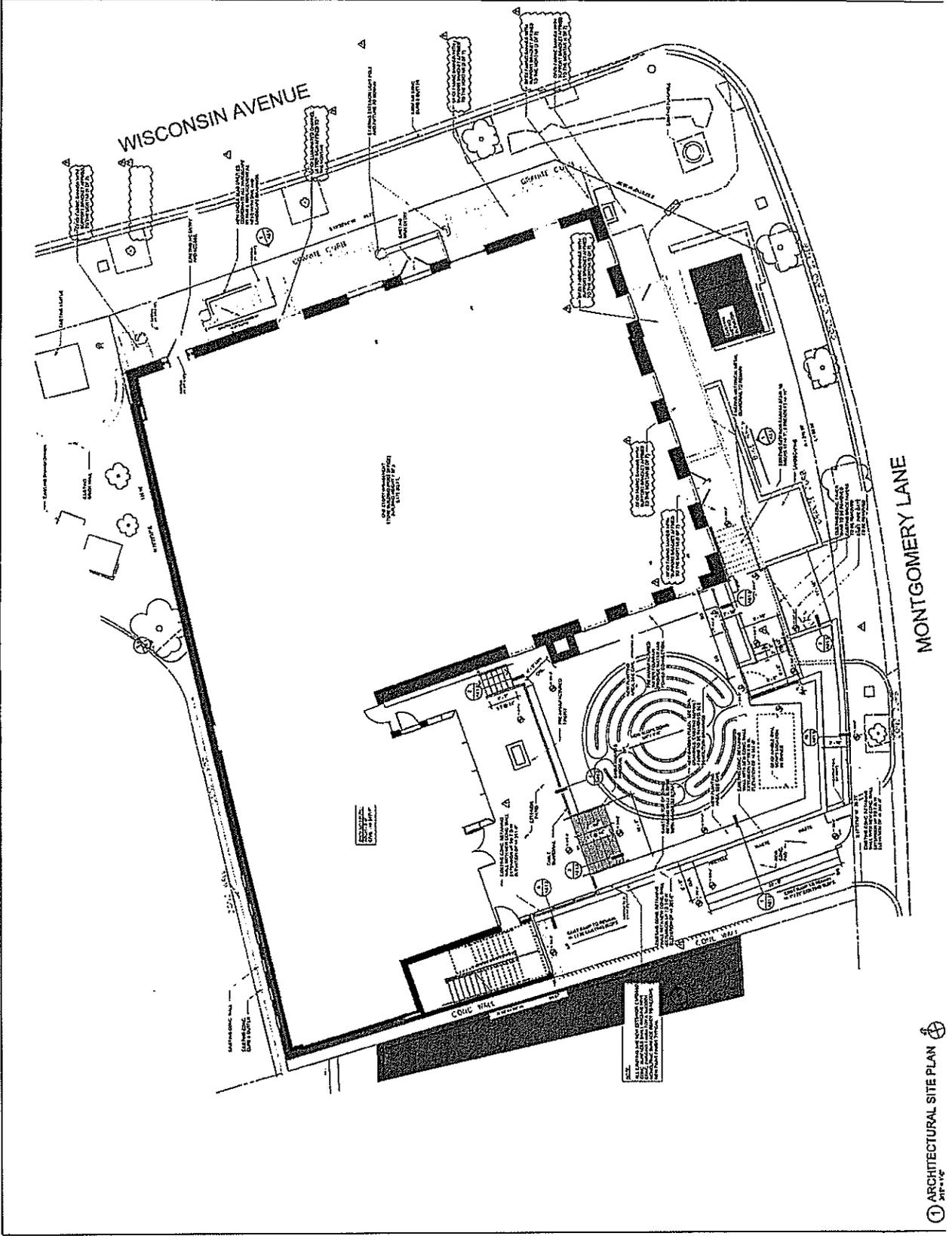
GET FIT STAY FIT.



**HAWP APPLICATION: MAILING ADDRESSES FOR NOTIFYING
[Owner, Owner's Agent, Adjacent and Confronting Property Owners]**

<p>Owner's mailing address</p> <p>7400 Wisconsin LLC c/o Donohoe Real Estate Services 7101 Wisconsin Ave. Suite 700 Bethesda, MD 20814 Attn: James Falcone</p>	<p>Owner's Agent's mailing address</p> <p>Cobro Ventures, Inc. 1000 Wilson Blvd. Suite 1800 Arlington, VA 22209 Attn: Brian Detwiler</p>
<p align="center">Adjacent and confronting Property Owners mailing addresses</p>	
<p>Paul F. Sullivan 4709 Montgomery Lane Bethesda, MD 20814</p>	<p>Kamapa LLC 4711 Montgomery Lane Bethesda, MD 20814</p>
<p>Jemal's Dirty Nelly's LLC 4714 Montgomery Lane Bethesda, MD 20814</p>	<p>American Occupational Therapy Association 4720 Montgomery Lane Bethesda, MD 20814</p>
<p>Bainbridge Wisconsin Avenue Apartments LLC 7340 Wisconsin Avenue Bethesda, MD 20814</p>	<p>7345 Wisconsin Avenue LP 7345 Wisconsin Avenue Bethesda, MD 20814</p>
<p>Mahjoubi Mahmoud 7347 Wisconsin Avenue Bethesda, MD 20814</p>	<p>Pheasandon LLC 7351 Wisconsin Avenue Bethesda, MD 20814</p>
<p>Montgomery County 7359 Wisconsin Avenue Bethesda, MD 20814</p>	<p>GCCFC 2007-GG9 Wisconsin Avenue LLC 1 Bethesda Metro Center Bethesda, MD 20814</p>
<p>TrizecHahn Wisconsin Avenue LP 7475 Wisconsin Avenue Bethesda, MD 20814</p>	

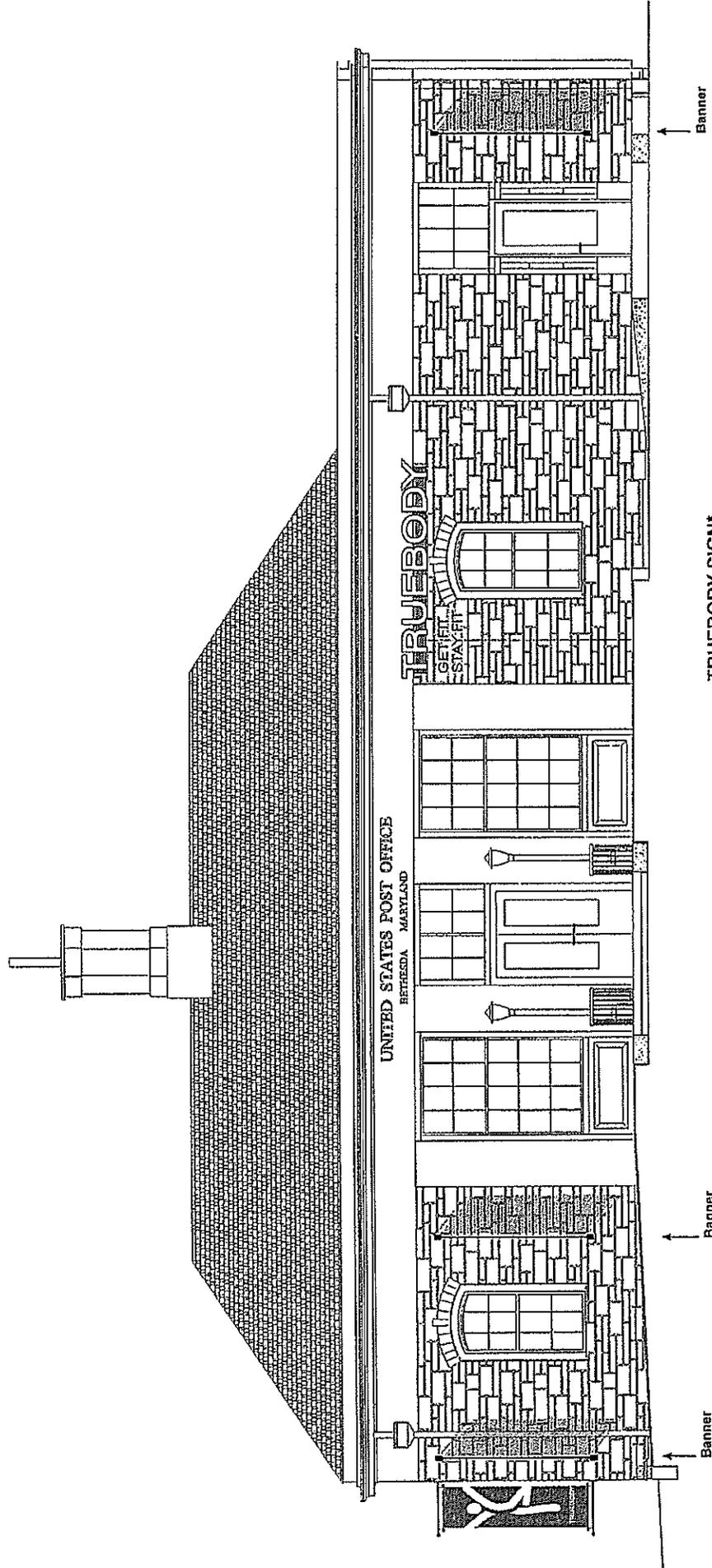
October 25, 2017
Proposal





GET FIT. STAY FIT.

East Elevation
Wisconsin Ave



TRUEBODY SIGN*
18" x 12' 9"

GET FIT. STAY FIT.*
22" x 48"

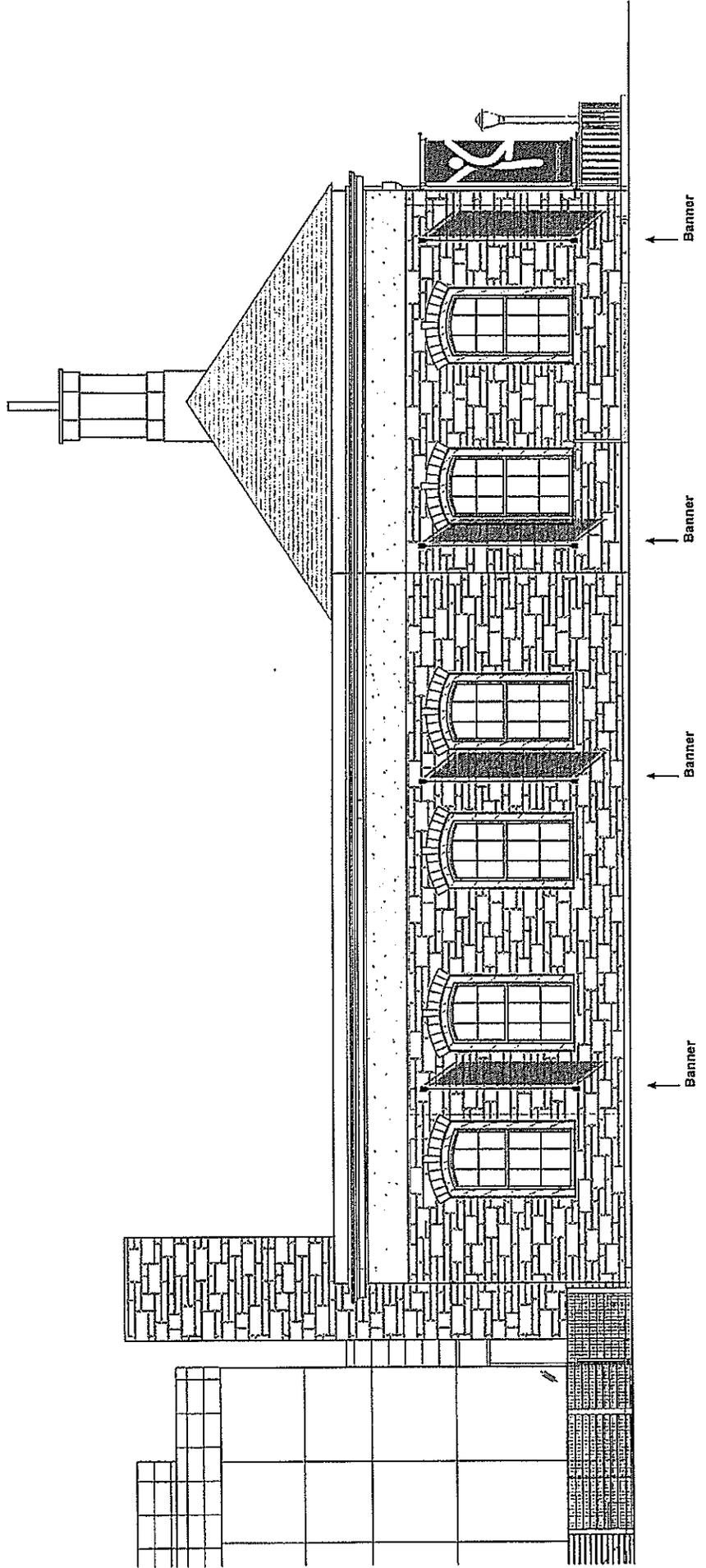
Banner Dimensions *
28" x 8' 6"

*Dimensions are approximate



South Elevation
Montgomery Lane

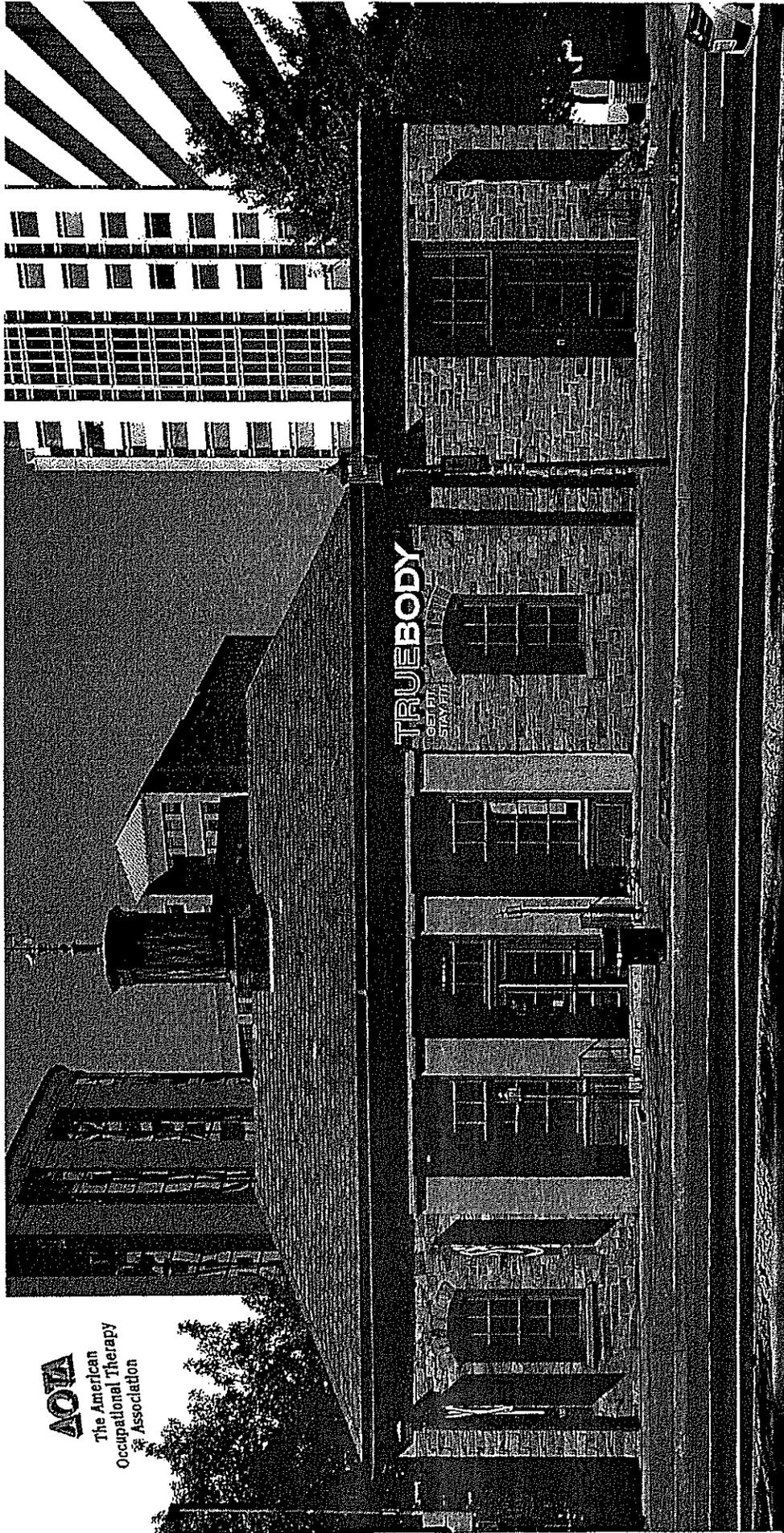

TRUEBODY
GET FIT. STAY FIT.



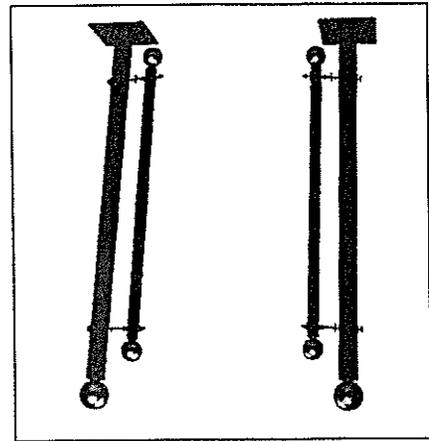
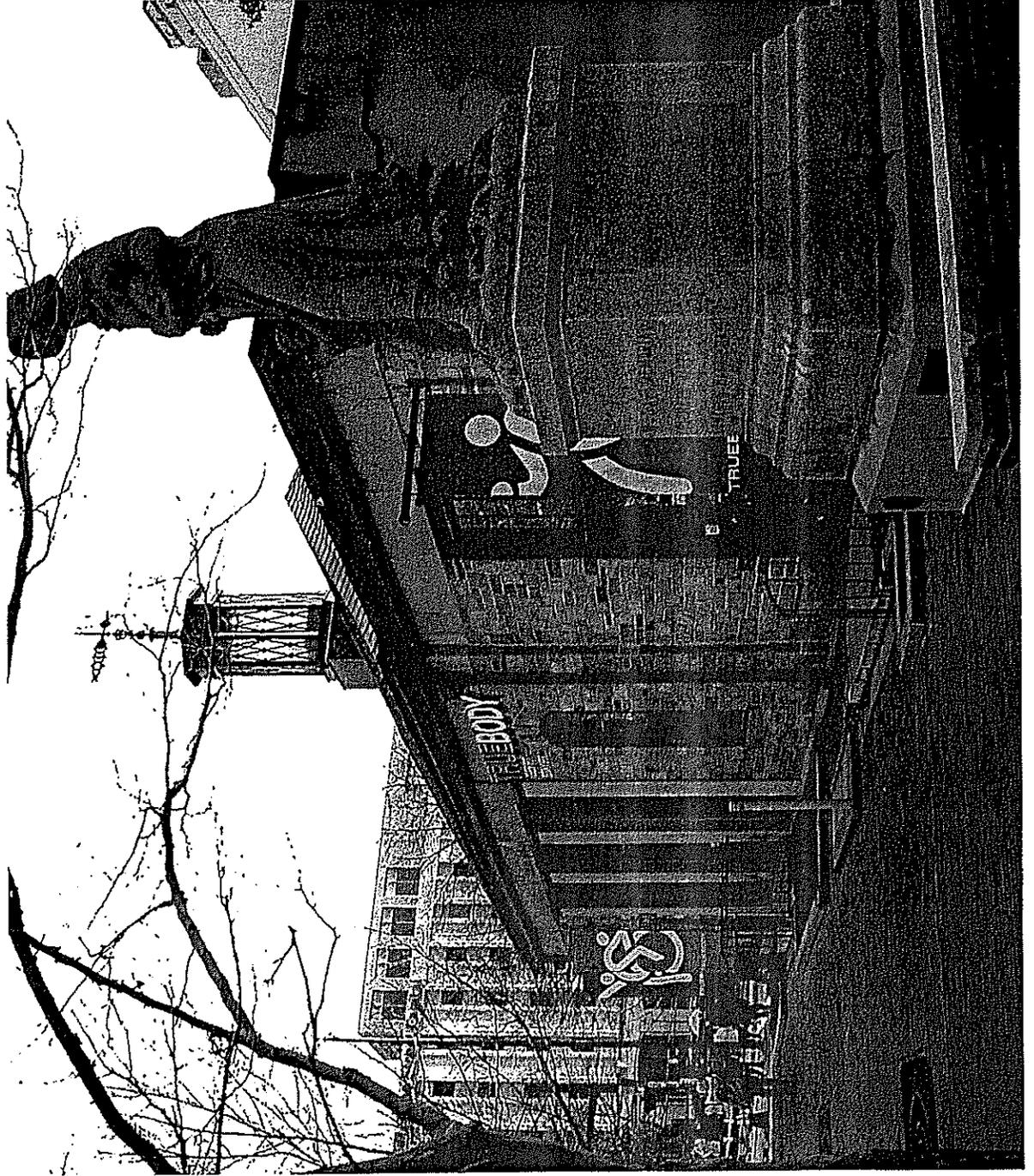

TRUEBODY

GET FIT. STAY FIT.

AOTA
The American
Occupational Therapy
Association



TRUEBODY
GET FIT. STAY FIT.



Banner Bracket Example
exact bracket to be determined



8412 Georgia Ave., Silver Spring
Silver Spring Post Office

1 THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

2

3

4 - - - - - X

5 HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT - :

6 10201 Menlo Avenue : HPC Case No. 31/07-17G

7 - - - - - :

8 PRELIMINARY CONSULTATION - :

9 5813 Surrey Street :

10 - - - - - :

11 PRELIMINARY CONSULTATION - :

12 7400 Wisconsin Avenue :

13 - - - - - :

14 - - - - - X

15 A meeting in the above-entitled matter was held on
16 October 25, 2017, commencing at 7:49 p.m., in the MRO
17 Auditorium at 8787 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, Maryland
18 20910, before:

19 COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- 20 Bill Kirwan, Chair
- 21 Sandra Heiler
- 22 Marsha Barnes
- 23 Kenneth Firestone
- 24 Richard Arkin
- 25 Eliza Voigt
- Robert Sutton

Deposition Services, Inc.

12321 Middlebrook Road, Suite 210
Germantown, MD 20874

Tel: (301) 881-3344 Fax: (301) 881-3338

info@DepositionServices.com www.DepositionServices.com

ALSO PRESENT:

Phillip Estes

Michael Kyne

Daniel Bruechert

APPEARANCES

STATEMENT OF:

PAGE

Minter Farnsworth

17

Jennie Ritchie

20

Tori Lehmanz

23

Kerstin Florian-Staguhn

25

Harry Volce

28

Lynn Bush

31

Emily Volce

33

Johannes Staguhn

35

Catherine Lowry

40

Diane Cameron

42

Mike Livermore

44

Tahani Share

67

Dan Rosenthal

68

Brian Detweiler

81

John Porter

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1 back. So we look forward to seeing you for a HAWP.

2 MS. SHARE: Thank you.

3 MR. KIRWAN: All right, thank you. The next
4 last preliminary consultation tonight is II.B at 7400
5 Wisconsin Avenue, Bethesda. The former Bethesda Post
6 Office site.

7 MR. KYNE: Yes. And we do have a presentation.
8 So, 7400 Wisconsin Avenue, Bethesda. This is a Master
9 Plan Site, the Bethesda Post Office. This is a second
10 preliminary consultation. The site, again it's a Master
11 Plan site, classical revival style, circa 1938. And the
12 applicants appeared for a prelim at the August 16th
13 meeting. At that time, the applicant proposed four
14 different options for sign installation that ranged from
15 one to four, 9 to 19 feet tall freestanding figures at the
16 front of the property. And the Commission did not support
17 of any of these options, finding that they overwhelmed and
18 detracted from the building.

19 So we have a new proposal for sign installation
20 at the front and left side tonight. And just to
21 familiarize you with the site a bit, we have some
22 photographs. The same photographs from back in the Summer,
23 as you can maybe tell. And again, plans for reference.
24 And the Commission did request in the worksession that I
25 get copies of the -- color copies of the plans. And I do

1 have those on our X drive if we want to look at those when
2 I conclude here.

3 And this is an example just down the street.
4 This is the Silver Spring Post Office at 8412 Georgia
5 Avenue. And this project was approved by the HPC back in
6 2015. And the applicable guidelines are the Secretary of
7 Interior Standards for Rehabilitation. Again, the
8 applicants have returned with a revised proposal. It
9 includes the following signage, a TRUEBODY sign, which is
10 one, 1 foot, 6 inch high by 12 feet, 9 inch wide sign at
11 the front of the property, or front of the building. The
12 slogan sign which is directly underneath, which is one, 1
13 foot, 10 inch high by 4 feet wide sign at the front of the
14 building. And then a series of banner signs which would
15 include three, 8 foot, 6 inch tall by 2 foot, 4r inch wide
16 banner signs at the front, and four of similar size, or
17 the same size at the left side.

18 The proposed TRUEBODY and slogan signs will
19 consist of cutout letters that will be mounted directly to
20 the building. The proposed banner signs will be oriented
21 with their faces perpendicular to the building to minimize
22 their visibility when looking straight on. Each banner
23 sign will be attached to two brackets, one at the top and
24 one at the bottom. And the signs will be interchangeable.
25 And the hardware for all of the proposed signs will be

1 mounted into the mortar of the building allowing for easy
2 repairs if the signs are removed in the future. And this
3 is something that we required for the Unleashed project,
4 which we had seen a moment ago.

5 And Staff is generally supportive of the revised
6 proposal. I do find that it has less potential to detract
7 from the building. However, Staff does have the following
8 concerns or questions for the Commission. Is it
9 appropriate to mount signs directly to the historic
10 building if all hardware is required to be mounted into
11 the mortar? And, if so, Staff does note that extra care
12 should be taken to ensure that the sign installation will
13 not impact the masonry or the frieze. I just want to make
14 sure that that's clear, probably by a condition if we
15 decide that this is approvable as a HAWP.

16 Is the amount of proposed signage appropriate,
17 or does the cumulative impact of the proposed signage have
18 the potential to detract from the building's character-
19 defining features? To date, no information has been
20 submitted about the proposed sign materials, or any
21 proposed illumination. So Staff asks for the Commission's
22 guidance regarding appropriate materials and types of
23 illumination at this site. And, with that, I will
24 conclude my presentation, and I think this is a vast
25 improvement, so I think the applicants may be ready to

1 come back with a HAWP. But, I can take any questions that
2 you might have for me.

3 MR. KIRWAN: Any questions for Staff?

4 MS. HEILER: Do you know how the Unleashed sign
5 is applied to the Silver Spring Post Office? Into the
6 mortar?

7 MR. KYNE: Yes. It is mounted directly to the
8 mortar. That was a condition of the approval back in
9 2015. The reason why I specified that we would probably
10 want to make a strong condition, if this one comes back as
11 a HAWP, is I'm not sure that that condition was followed
12 through with on that project. That wasn't one of my
13 projects but, I had heard that it may not have been. So,
14 again, we would want to make sure that we impose some
15 strong language via a condition if they come back with
16 this proposal.

17 And just bear with for a moment, and I will get
18 the color copies. So, here is the proposed. And let me
19 just make this full screen. And then looking from an
20 oblique angle so we can see the banner signs. And then,
21 actually, let me pull up the packet. So this is what the
22 example that was approved in 2015. This is the result.
23 And we can see a little bit of the installation here.

24 MR. KIRWAN: Michael, is that the only sign on
25 that facade?

1 MR. KYNE: That is the only sign on that facade.
2 And whatever is most beneficial to the Commission, I can
3 leave this up as an example, or I can pull the plans back
4 up. Whatever you prefer. Just direct me and I'll do it.

5 MR. KIRWAN: You have the color drawings of the
6 proposal, is that what you're saying by plans?

7 MR. KYNE: Yes.

8 MR. KIRWAN: Okay. Yeah, I'd like to see those.
9 That's it.

10 MR. KYNE: That and the first one.

11 MR. KIRWAN: Okay, thank you.

12 MR. FIRESTONE: Is it okay if I go ahead?

13 MR. KIRWAN: Question? Yeah, go ahead.

14 MR. FIRESTONE: A couple of questions, Michael.
15 When we originally approved the HAWP for the renovation of
16 this building and the addition, there were some signage
17 requests at that time that we approved along with the
18 original HAWP, is that correct?

19 MR. KYNE: That's right. There was one monument
20 signed approved at the front of the building. I believe
21 that the Commission required at that time for the sign to
22 be -- for the monument itself to be clear, so that you
23 could see through it, and for it to be no taller than the
24 bottom of the windows at the front. So that's what was
25 initially approved. The applicants, the reason that

1 they've come back to you twice with a prelim, they
2 determined that that signage wasn't enough to advertise
3 the business that they want to put into this building, so
4 they're looking for some other options. When they came
5 back to meet with Staff, we suggested that they look at the
6 example as perhaps one way they could approach this, and
7 they wanted to come get your feedback tonight.

8 MR. FIRESTONE: Then the other question I have
9 concerning the Unleashed example, are they about the same
10 size or is the Unleashed example slightly smaller? And I
11 notice the Unleashed example does not have the little
12 slogan sign underneath.

13 MR. KYNE: That's a good question. I think that
14 the proposed sign for this building is larger, at least
15 slightly larger than the Unleashed example. I don't,
16 unfortunately, have the dimensions of the Unleashed sign
17 but, I believe that this one may be a little larger. The
18 applicants, I'm sure that they visited the site down the
19 street, so they may be able to provide some insight there.
20 But I do think that this one is probably larger.

21 MR. FIRESTONE: Yeah, because I just get the
22 feeling that this overwhelms the building more so than the
23 sign did on the Silver Spring Post Office.

24 MR. KIRWAN: I think if you bring back up the
25 one, one of the things about that I think is the case, is

1 that it doesn't cover up any of the character-defining
2 features of the resource. It sort of sits in the brick
3 field above the window header. Whereas the other one sort
4 of is half over the entablature.

5 MR. ARKIN: Also, a larger facade it seems.

6 MR. KYNE: I would guess that the example we're
7 seeing in front of us, looking at the window, I don't know
8 how big that window is, but I would guess it's no larger
9 than six feet, seven feet, something like that. But I'm
10 just guessing.

11 MR. KIRWAN: Right, okay.

12 MR. ARKIN: Do you have an elevation, the south
13 elevation?

14 MR. KYNE: So you're looking for the left side,
15 correct?

16 MR. ARKIN: The left side.

17 MR. KIRWAN: Montgomery Avenue, yeah.

18 MR. KYNE: We do, but we don't have a color
19 example.

20 MR. ARKIN: There's no signage on the south
21 elevation, but the banner --

22 MR. KYNE: Yeah, so again, you're seeing the
23 four banner signs, and we're seeing, as mentioned in the
24 Staff Report, we're looking straight on, the visibility is
25 minimal at best because they're mounted perpendicular to

1 the building.

2 MR. ARKIN: Can you show the banners?

3 MR. KYNE: Sure.

4 MR. ARKIN: Do you have something showing the
5 banners?

6 MR. KYNE: The banners will be similar to the
7 three that we see here on the front. In fact, they'll be
8 the same exact size, and they'll be mounted with the same
9 type of hardware.

10 MR. ARKIN: Do you have a rendering of that, or
11 a drawing of that?

12 MR. KYNE: Just the three you see in the front
13 of you, but --

14 MR. ARKIN: Just that one? And they're how many
15 on the side elevation?

16 MR. KYNE: There are four on the left side, or
17 as you referred to it, the south side. And there are
18 three on the front.

19 MR. ARKIN: The third one, I see -- where's the
20 third one? The third banner?

21 MR. KYNE: So there are two at the extreme left,
22 and then there is one at the extreme right.

23 MR. KIRWAN: Show the rendering from the street.
24 The rendering from the street makes it very clear.

25 MR. ARKIN: I'm only seeing two. I'm missing

1 the third one. I can't see it.

2 MR. KYNE: The third one, if you look at the
3 image in front of you, directly behind the monument.

4 MR. KIRWAN: There's a blue banner, a gold
5 banner, and then a red banner just behind the gold banner.

6 MR. ARKIN: Oh. The statute, the Madonna of the
7 Trail, the national road statute, is that designated as a
8 historic site?

9 MR. KYNE: I certainly don't think it's included
10 in the designation for this building. I don't know if has
11 its own designation.

12 MS. HEILER: I believe that the DAR had this
13 designated, so it is protected and designated as historic
14 in the county.

15 MR. KYNE: Good. Dan, has just informed me that
16 he's aware that the monument is designated as a master
17 plan site on its own.

18 MR. ARKIN: Thank you, Dan.

19 MR. KIRWAN: Do you have a question?

20 MS. HEILER: Yes, I have a question for you.
21 You mentioned that in putting up the Unleashed sign they
22 didn't necessarily follow these very strict guidelines.
23 Do you know whether it actually did some damage to the
24 building or not?

25 MR. KYNE: If they didn't follow those

1 guidelines, then I'm sure that it did do some damage to
2 the building because it would be much harder to replace
3 the bricks if they'd been directly impacted than it would
4 to replace the mortar, which is expected to be, you know,
5 to receive maintenance from time to time anyway.

6 MR. ARKIN: When a situation like that happens,
7 when an applicant doesn't follow the conditions, what
8 option does the Commission or the county have?

9 MR. KYNE: Typically, the complainant would
10 contact DPS and notify them that a work permit was not
11 executed as approved, and then DPS would send an inspector
12 out. Unfortunately, the HPC and Staff, we don't have an
13 enforcement arm, so we can't do anything about it
14 ourselves, but DPS would sort of be the agency that we
15 utilize for that.

16 MR. ARKIN: Thank you.

17 MR. KIRWAN: Any other questions for Staff? If
18 not, we invite the applicant to please come forward. We
19 can give you seven minutes for your testimony, and I think
20 you know the drill, but make sure you state your name for
21 the record before you speak, and be mindful of the
22 microphone, the little black mouse there.

23 MR. DETWEILER: My name is Brian Detweiler. We
24 just want share that we've endeavored to work very closely
25 with Staff to come up with some alternatives that would be

1 acceptable. Obviously, Unleashed was our primary sort of
2 motivation here because of the similarities between the
3 two structures. We certainly want to do everything to
4 preserve the facade. Willing to do whatever construction,
5 whatever requirements are needed, and as we talked about
6 affixing it directly to the mortar. You know, we are, I
7 think, we are open to, you know, other ideas or
8 suggestions at this point because we have kind of run out
9 of ideas, if this current option is not acceptable to you.
10 And so we would appreciate, you know, if you have any
11 other concrete suggestions, we would appreciate those as
12 well.

13 MR. KIRWAN: All right, thank you. Any
14 questions for the applicants?

15 MS. VOIGT: I have a question.

16 MR. KIRWAN: Commissioner Voigt.

17 MS. VOIGT: Thank you for your patience. So we
18 didn't know the material of the sign on the one that's
19 stuck on the building, not the banners. Is it internally
20 lit plastic sign?

21 MR. DETWEILER: I mean, I think we would follow
22 the same lead as the Unleashed example, which I believe is
23 internally lit. That would be a preference, but again, if
24 that's a problem, we can consider alternatives.

25 MR. KIRWAN: Any other questions? Yes,

1 Commissioner Barnes.

2 MS. BARNES: As Commissioner Firestone was asking
3 of Staff, when we approved the original HAWP, we did approve
4 signage, and my question for you would be, if you were to use
5 the sign originally approved, with the banners, would that
6 give you the kind of visibility you feel you need? I raise
7 this because I am troubled, even though I understand you
8 followed the Unleashed example. I'm troubled by your
9 proposed sign because it seems to overlap on part of the
10 entablature. If you bring it down it gets to the -- and I'm
11 not sure what the proper term is --

12 MS. VOIGT: Eyebrow.

13 MS. BARNES: -- the arch above the window. So,
14 for me, the question is, if you had the banners which
15 incorporate the very striking kinetic figures you wanted
16 to put out the last time, could you use those and the sign
17 that was originally approved and have the visibility you
18 feel you need?

19 MR. DETWEILER: So our concern with the
20 originally proposed sign is that it doesn't capture the
21 view from the front. That sign was, I believe was
22 perpendicular to the building, and so people driving down
23 the road wouldn't actually be able to see.

24 MS. HEILER: I thought it was parallel to the
25 building.

1 MR. KYNE: I believe that it was parallel if
2 you're asking Staff. I believe that it was parallel to
3 the building directly beneath the right side window,
4 perhaps the left. But I think it was underneath the right
5 side window, parallel to the building. Again, it had a
6 low profile. It did not exceed the height of the window.

7 MS. BARNES: Right. So the question is, I take
8 your point that you felt that wasn't giving you the
9 visibility you needed for pedestrians and passengers stuck
10 at the traffic light. But if you have the banners and
11 that sign, do you accomplish what you need?

12 MR. DETWEILER: So there was another concern as
13 well. Staff had, and again, I apologize, none of us were
14 present for that, that was several year ago, and there
15 have been many iterations since. One of our other
16 concerns was that the recommendation was that sign be
17 translucent, and through our research, making a
18 translucent sign that actually -- we found that to be sort
19 of enigmatic to make a sign that actually shows what your
20 company is, but still be able to see what's behind it. It
21 also approves to be extremely expensive to construct a
22 sign like that. And so, we were hoping for something of a
23 more solid quality like what we've presented here to, you
24 know, show that we are indeed a business separate from the
25 post office.

1 MR. KIRWAN: I don't think we were suggesting
2 that the letters be transparent. I think it was the big
3 rectangular backing to the letters we were suggesting be
4 transparent. The letters would still be solid and could
5 be lit. So in effect, that would be the same thing you're
6 sticking on the wall here. It's just letters which are
7 lit, and there's nothing around them. What's around them
8 is air. So what were suggesting with the ground mounted
9 sign was there was a big rectangle that was solid, and we
10 were saying the big rectangle the letters are mounted on,
11 that should be translucent. The letters can, of course,
12 be solid and opaque.

13 MR. PORTER: My name is John Porter, I'm the
14 designer for the company that has been trying to come up
15 with these ideas. And, so we did take that, you know, we
16 went back and looked at, took your proposal, your
17 suggestion the last time and based on the dimensions that
18 you were suggesting that sign be. But it basically had to
19 still be below the window sill of the building which, has
20 a very, very minimal height. And for our sign and for the
21 name of the company, it was very hard to put something
22 that was readable from any distance on that size. Even if
23 they were opaque letters on a glass background, with the
24 distraction of everything that's around that building, the
25 brick and everything like that, it just ends up to being

1 invisible anyway, which was something that we're trying to
2 overcome as part of the business. And I don't think we
3 would have even --

4 MR. KIRWAN: But, the problem is that's what
5 we're trying to achieve with the signage is for it to be
6 minimally visible.

7 MR. PORTER: Yeah. Right, exactly. We wouldn't
8 have even thought of this idea that we're presenting today
9 if Staff hadn't suggested it to us. This was something
10 that we thought was verboten to attach anything to the
11 building. So, we never even in our design meetings or
12 proposals, ever considered this as a possibility. And it
13 was only because Staff suggested this, with this other
14 option that we even looked at it. So, my attempt in doing
15 this was try to obscure as little of the building as
16 possible, and still fit something that was of some size.
17 And personally, I think this is probably within six inches
18 in length of the other sign. It's very similar in size.
19 I think what makes it look bigger is basically the scale
20 of the building is completely different.

21 MR. KIRWAN: Other questions?

22 MS. BARNES: So looking at the building, if you
23 were to move your sign to the right so that it would be --
24 because I think that's not a -- is it a perfectly flat
25 surface all the way?

1 MR. PORTER: No. There's a turn.

2 MS. BARNES: There's a little turn. If it were
3 just between that little turn and the door where you
4 would, I think, be able to not be on the entablature, but
5 don't run into the problem of the window.

6 MR. KIRWAN: The door on the right.

7 MS. BARNES: The door on the right.

8 MR. KIRWAN: Which is also an addition that was
9 made on the original resource.

10 MS. BARNES: Right. I mean, is that something
11 that would be feasible?

12 MR. DETWEILER: Could we take down the street
13 lights?

14 MS. BARNES: Street lights are not within the
15 remit of the Commission.

16 MR. DETWEILER: I mean, you can see in this
17 picture that the street light that would block.

18 MR. KIRWAN: Well, from this one vantage point.
19 There's multiple vantage points where the street light
20 comes out of the view of that part of the wall.

21 MS. BARNES: I mean, if your concern is to
22 deal with passersby on the other side of Wisconsin Avenue,
23 people in cars, it's not going to be people who are on
24 that side of Wisconsin Avenue looking up and seeing your
25 sign. They're going to see your banners. But the

1 passengers in the car, or the people on the other side of
2 Wisconsin Avenue, would be able to read your sign
3 regardless of the street light.

4 MR. FIRESTONE: Keeping with what was just said,
5 if you would turn the sign 90 degrees so it was then a
6 vertical sign instead of a horizontal sign, it could fit
7 on that place basically between, at the view we're looking
8 at now, between the door and the street light. That might
9 be a way to solve it.

10 MR. DETWEILER: We have considered vertical
11 lettering, and it doesn't appeal to us for a variety of
12 reasons, but I appreciate the suggestion.

13 MR. KIRWAN: Commissioner Arkin?

14 MR. ARKIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Jumping to
15 a different topic. The vertical banners, will those be
16 lit?

17 MR. DETWEILER: We currently have no intention
18 to add any additional lighting. I mean, these are just
19 fabric banners that we can change seasonally, or you know,
20 as they get worn they can easily be replaced. We have
21 intention at the moment to provide additional sort of
22 landscape lighting to highlight them.

23 MR. ARKIN: I think a second question. There
24 will be no other occupants in this part of the building,
25 is that correct?

1 MR. DETWEILER: Correct.

2 MR. ARKIN: But there will be additional
3 occupants of the addition, is that correct?

4 MR. BEDWEILLER: No. This is all one business.

5 MR. ARKIN: One business, okay. The juice bar
6 is not separately --

7 MR. BEDWEILLER: In fact, there's no longer a
8 juice -- so that originally, again, so much has changed
9 from the very original design. Now it's just continuous
10 exercise space.

11 MR. ARKIN: Okay. If you're thirsty you have to
12 go somewhere else.

13 MR. DETWEILER: Or drink water.

14 MR. ARKIN: In my mind, it's kind of hard to
15 compare the signage on the Silver Spring Post Office,
16 which was a much grander building actually. Silver Spring
17 at the time that these buildings was built was a much
18 bigger non-city than Bethesda was. Bethesda was kind of a
19 backwater. Silver Spring was where the development was
20 taking place, and I suspect that's part of the reason that
21 a larger building was built. But the Unleashed sign seems
22 to be entirely on the brick. It seems to miss the, that
23 entablature over the window, and is under the entablature
24 underneath the cornice. Is there any way that -- what
25 would happen if you reduced the sign of the TRUEBODY so

1 that it would miss, it wouldn't be across the entablature
2 as it is now on top, and still avoided covering the
3 eyebrow?

4 MR. BEDWEILER: Oh. Right, that's what I was
5 going to say. I don't know -- there seems to be maybe
6 eight inches.

7 MR. PORTER: Eight to 12, 10 inches.

8 MR. ARKIN: Not enough. I have to say, I am
9 not troubled by the get fit, stay fit, assuming you could
10 take care of the mortar properly. Because TRUEBODY
11 without get fit, stay fit, doesn't seem to convey the idea
12 that this is a gymnasium that you're advertising.

13 MR. BEDWEILER: And that was exactly our concern.
14 You hit it right on.

15 MR. ARKIN: I am concerned about the number of
16 the banners. I think --

17 MR. KIRWAN: Do you want to save this for
18 deliberations or?

19 MR. ARKIN: Yes.

20 MR. KIRWAN: Okay. I mean, we're sort of asking
21 questions now, and I think we can --

22 MR. ARKIN: Well, let me structure it this way.
23 Have you considered perhaps fewer banners on the front and
24 on the side?

25 MR. BEDWEILER: Sure. I mean, we thought that

1 we would aim high, and if you ask us to do less, then that
2 is something that we could consider.

3 MR. PORTER: We were trying to get four on the
4 front. We've gone down to three because we can't, there's
5 wheelchair access, handicap access that we couldn't block.

6 MR. ARKIN: Well, we can't block that. Thank
7 you.

8 MR. SUTTON: How important are the banners to
9 your design?

10 MR. BEDWEILER: Well, I think they're maybe not
11 quite as equally important as the primary sign, but as we
12 pointed out, we do want to capture traffic from, you know,
13 foot traffic from people going by so that they can see it
14 without having to stop and look up at another sign. So we
15 endeavored to create some sort of solution where people
16 could see it from the sidewalk. And we were sort of
17 inspired by, you know, what you see off of like old hotels
18 in downtown D.C. often have sort of flags or banners in
19 sort of a similar manner, off their front facade. And
20 that's what sort of gave us the inspiration for it.

21 MR. PORTER: Part of it also is the branding for
22 the business, is those figures that's part of logo which
23 can't be incorporated in the sign as it is. So we're
24 trying to carry that onto the building and add some color
25 as well.

1 MR. ARKIN: One more question, am I interrupting
2 you?

3 MR. SUTTON: No.

4 MR. ARKIN: The main door is still the door
5 underneath the post office sign, is that correct?

6 MR. PORTER: Correct.

7 MR. ARKIN: Does the door on the right, that is
8 a functional door, but it's an auxiliary door?

9 MR. PORTER: It's handicapped access.

10 MR. ARKIN: Okay. Thank you.

11 MR. KIRWAN: Any other questions for the
12 applicant? All right, then if not, we can move into
13 deliberations. I'll just go ahead again and kick things
14 off. So, I think Staff touched upon this in their Staff
15 Report about asking us the question of whether there was a
16 cumulative effect of all the signs on the front facade,
17 and I think there is. I think it's an overwhelming effect
18 on the front facade.

19 I think the combination of the banners as well
20 as the TRUEBODY sign, and the scale and its positioning
21 covering the entablature, are problems for me. I'm less
22 concerned about the Montgomery Avenue facade. I think
23 that may be the appropriate place for the banners, but I
24 don't think the front facade is. I think going back to
25 the Unleashed sign, I think we've already kind of

1 discussed this to a certain effect, but I think the fact -
2 - the aspect of it where it does not overlap important
3 elements of the facade, I think is really important for
4 its success on that building. And it's the only sign on
5 that building. That's the only thing on that front
6 facade.

7 And to me that allow the main historic facade to
8 still, you know, be the primary dominant element of this.
9 I think what's happening to me with this combination of
10 the banners and the TRUEBODY sign is there's just a little
11 bit too much going on. And the one particular exhibit
12 that brings that home to me is the photographic rendering
13 of walking down south on Wisconsin where we see the
14 beautiful arched window underneath the TRUEBODY sign, but
15 we don't see it's paired window on the other side of the
16 entrance because the two banners are completely blocking
17 it. And for me, that completely changes the reading of
18 this facade. And that's what we're trying to avoid with
19 signage is, is an impact to the reading of this beautiful
20 facade.

21 I also think the banner that's closest to the
22 memorial is beginning to overwhelm the memorial as well.
23 The scale of that character is very distracting when
24 you're seeing the scale of the Madonna on that statute.
25 So, my recommendation on the best direction to go is to

1 find a better alternative location for the TRUEBODY sign.
2 I can accept that being on that facade if it's the only
3 sign on that facade. I think the banner should not be on
4 this facade. I'm okay with the position of the banners
5 marching down Montgomery Avenue. I think that's fine, and
6 that can be that street art component that you were
7 talking about at the last hearing. But I think on this
8 facade, this really needs to be a minimal impact on this
9 very important facade of this resource.

10 MS. VOIGT: So, I think that -- I personally,
11 and I wasn't here when the Unleashed sign was approved.
12 I'm not, I don't think that an internally illuminated sign
13 on a historic building is even appropriate, to be honest.
14 I'll go the other extreme. I think TRUEBODY in blue and I
15 just, I think it's a really well-lit street, and I mean, I
16 walk up and down, I live in Bethesda. I walk up and down
17 that street. It's very well-lit. I mean, I'm all about,
18 and if you Google historic building signage and in
19 Georgetown and all these historic districts, I know this
20 isn't an historic district but, this is, you know, one of
21 the few historic buildings in Bethesda. This is kind of
22 what we have left.

23 I mean, I would be much more interested in
24 seeing a metal sign with a light shining on it, as opposed
25 to, you know, some almost, I mean, all electrical sign.

1 And as far as the banners, I think it's really important
2 to have a perpendicular sign, you know, for the
3 pedestrians walking by, because they may see it and go in.
4 You know, the banners are too big, and there's too many of
5 them. But I think if you just, again, Google, you know,
6 historic signs, I think there are lots of places you can
7 find perpendicular, you know, cool looking signs that will
8 catch the pedestrians eye more than these banners that
9 take away from the building. So that's just my two cents.
10 But I appreciate you walking on this building.

11 MS. HEILER: I also, I have a serious problem
12 with the banners, and partly even with the figures.
13 There's little of historic interest left on Wisconsin
14 Avenue in Bethesda. The post office and next to it the
15 Madonna Trail are two really important things. The blue
16 guy next to the Madonna really doesn't work at all. I
17 think the banners on the front of that building are just
18 too inappropriate for the classical nature of the
19 building, and of the statute next to it. And I would
20 agree also with Commissioner Voigt that the illuminated
21 sign is a real problem on this particular building.
22 Having a separate sign, even if you light it separately,
23 is more appropriate. And the Unleashed, I have fewer
24 problems with because it's a much larger facade. So that
25 the sign doesn't leap off. You know, it doesn't cover

1 important aspects of the facade, where this does.

2 This sign appears to be very large. And finding
3 a way to put it perpendicular to the building so that
4 people could see it, lighting it separately, and doing it
5 in just a more dignified manner than the banners provide,
6 I think is the way that you need to go with this. I have
7 no problem with the banners on the side street.

8 MR. PORTER: I'm sorry?

9 MS. HEILER: I have no problem with banners on
10 the side street.

11 MR. PORTER: So it sounds like we're good with
12 the banners, okay.

13 MS. VOIGT: But that many of them?

14 MR. FIRESTONE: I'm going to concur with a lot
15 of what's been said. For starters, I think that blue
16 banner near the Madonna is just a no go. You know,
17 there's too many banners to begin with, if we're even
18 going to have banners. And that one is totally
19 inappropriate because it's going to -- the effect it's
20 going to have on another resource.

21 As far as the sign goes compared to the
22 Unleashed, it's a different scale of the building. The
23 sign doesn't obscure things. So I have a lot of problems
24 with this particular sign at that placement. I think I
25 might be willing to go with maybe one banner on Wisconsin

1 Avenue, and then whatever you want to do on the side
2 street as far as extra banners. And, you're going to have
3 to do something else with that primary sign. You know,
4 maybe rethink the idea of a vertical sign. Maybe do, you
5 know, stack the two words so it's more of a square sign,
6 and put it on the addition part of the building near the
7 handicapped door. You know, I don't know. As far as the
8 lamppost goes, yes, if you exactly, you know, 90 degrees
9 off of it, the lamppost may obscure something. But if
10 you're off it one angle or the other, it won't.

11 The other thing I question, if you're trying to
12 capture automobile traffic with this, I'm wondering how
13 many people who are driving from Gaithersburg to D.C. are
14 going to come back to use your gym? So, you know, I
15 almost think the best thing might be to go back to the
16 monumental sign which will be fine for pedestrians, and
17 maybe one banner.

18 MS. BARNES: I'm sure that you feel we're making
19 your lives very difficult, and we're actually very
20 grateful that you've undertaken to repurpose this building
21 rather than having it sit vacant. I am not troubled by
22 the use of banners on Montgomery Avenue. I'm not troubled
23 by four. I thought the Chairman made a very good point
24 when he was looking at the oblique shot where you had a
25 banner just, the yellow, the gold banner, which obscures

1 the second window which is the reading of the facade of
2 the building. I would be willing to see a banner at
3 either end of the building. I realize that is different
4 than many of my colleagues. I think that this photo is a
5 tad misleading in terms of sort of jamming up the statute
6 and the post office, and I think you could have the banner
7 and it would work.

8 I am troubled by the sign. I've tried to offer
9 a suggestion about how it might be placed elsewhere, but I
10 think the far better solution would be to somehow go back
11 to what was originally approved, which is not attached to
12 the building, but a board-like sign, and perhaps then what
13 you do if you feel it's necessary, is you get into some
14 landscape lighting that provides lighting to it at night,
15 or at dusk, or in the early morning, as you're trying to
16 attract those people before they go to work.

17 MR. SUTTON: I really don't care for the banners
18 at all. But, I think on Montgomery Avenue they're fine,
19 and to my mind, I don't care whether there are three or
20 four. I prefer none, but I could probably vote for three
21 or four on the Montgomery side. I really do not care for
22 the banners on the front at all. And, as several have
23 said, I think it would be a good idea to look at the
24 original sign that was approved, maybe not that one, but
25 something like that that's not attached to the building.

1 I think that would -- you should look at that, look at
2 other alternatives. I really don't like to see where this
3 is located, where the sign is located. I think the
4 covering of the brick and the entablature, and lighted is
5 just too much for this building.

6 MR. ARKIN: I too have a lot of trouble with the
7 banners. The banners really don't say Truebody Gym or
8 whatever, you know, come to my gym. They actually don't
9 say much of anything. They leave, I think, in the mind of
10 the passerby, a wholly different impression. And
11 particularly on Montgomery Avenue, the four banners almost
12 look like a row of vertical modern day interpretation of
13 berma shave signs. And the worst thing that I think could
14 happen both from the standpoint of the seriousness of the
15 building, and the purpose of your signage is that they
16 could become potentially a subject for humor.
17 Particularly, actually, the sign which is immediately, the
18 banner which is immediately, appears almost immediately
19 next to the Madonna of the Trail. I could even see a
20 vandal painting a speech balloon over or under the figure
21 there saying something to the lady. It's a pretty well
22 traveled street at all hours of the day and night, so I
23 doubt that there's much potential for that happening
24 unless somebody creeps by at 4:30 in the morning.

25 What I could support, I think, would be

1 something, perhaps something whimsical like that on the
2 corner of the building at Montgomery Avenue, the
3 intersection of Montgomery Avenue and Wisconsin Avenue.
4 But I still don't think it does a lot to attract attention
5 to your business. And I do also want to thank you, really
6 express my personal appreciation, and I think the
7 appreciation of the county for the effort that you have
8 made to preserve this building for future -- for today and
9 for tomorrow, explaining the past of the community. This
10 is a very serious building. If you look at it, the way it
11 was designed without any of the signage on it. And was
12 designed to express the seriousness of how people thought
13 of their community when the building was designed and
14 built.

15 Just as the Madonna is a very seriously, at
16 least intentioned statute. But you do have a business to
17 run, and a business to advertise. There has to be a
18 solution. I am not particularly fond of the idea of
19 illuminated, internally illuminated letters on the side of
20 the building. And I think there might be an approach with
21 the blade sign which would work. Perhaps more than one
22 blade sign. I think -- you really need to have a sign
23 that's near your front door to guide people to the front
24 door. You don't want to have a sign which is directing
25 people to the wrong door, particularly people who are not

1 already members, users of your facility. You don't want
2 them to walk in and see a stairway rather than somebody
3 greeting them or a reception area.

4 I think you need to rethink this. And a blade
5 sign might be possible. A vertical blade sign might be
6 possible. And I know you've already expended a tremendous
7 amount of work, and I'm sure a great deal of money in
8 trying to put this signage together. But the signage will
9 be very important in presenting your business to the
10 community, and your potential users, your potential
11 customers. I'd like to see what else you could come up
12 with, and I don't know if it's feasible to go back to the
13 original design and see if you can change that in some
14 way. But that might be worth a try. But I would also
15 think you could think of some blade signage that at least
16 would work or could be combined perhaps with a smaller
17 sign of a different design on the front facade.

18 MR. KIRWAN: Okay.

19 MR. ARKIN: Yeah, well, that's enough.

20 MR. KIRWAN: Very good. I'll just say a few
21 things in conclusion. I think, I mean, just to sort of,
22 you know, do a quick tally on things. There were four
23 commissioners who believe there should not be any banners
24 on Wisconsin Avenue. I think there were three that felt
25 the banners should at least be reduced, or reduced in

1 scale, or reduced in number or both. And there was one
2 commissioner who said absolutely no to any wall mounted
3 TRUEBODY sign. I think the trouble you're having with us
4 in these three meetings, and there was the first approval,
5 and now we've had two meetings about alternative signage,
6 is you've taken something about the signage that we were
7 perfectly fine with, and even though you didn't believe it
8 solved your needs, you didn't come back to us with a
9 variation of it that maybe satisfies your needs, or maybe
10 doesn't give us everything we were asking for, but is some
11 sort of compromise between the two.

12 You've gone and come back with, one time with a
13 completely different proposal that was very different than
14 the ground mounted signs. We had trouble with that. You
15 come back to us a third time with, you know, another very
16 different proposal, with a whole different way of doing
17 the signage which we're struggling with as well. I think
18 you'd be better advised to go back to your original
19 proposal, which we're all pretty happy with, and say,
20 okay, well, you know, the translucent thing we can't
21 really do, it's complicated, it's expensive, but we can do
22 this. We can't really keep it underneath the window sill
23 because we really need it to be visible, and here's some
24 drawings that show you how, the way we positioned it, you
25 know, does it really impact the window sills? Maybe it's

1 okay, you know, to be a little bit taller than the window
2 sill.

3 I, for one, would think that's the better place
4 to go back to, to tweak that design because it's something
5 very acceptable to us, and I think you're going to get
6 through this process much quicker. Because what I fear is
7 you're going to come back with, you know, a fourth
8 proposal that's completely different, and we're back
9 having the same discussion where, you know, a lot of us
10 don't like it, some of us like parts of it, and you know,
11 you don't really know where to go.

12 MR. PORTER: I think one of the things we came
13 away with from the last meeting is we did have a proposal
14 for a monument sign that was parallel to the building, it
15 probably went up maybe a foot above the window sill, to
16 keep it visible, and we were told that we couldn't do
17 that. So, that we had to keep the whole sign below the
18 bottom sill of the window.

19 MR. KIRWAN: I can only speak for myself. For
20 me, the figures were the big issue on that proposal.

21 MR. PORTER: All right. But we were told
22 specifically that monument was too big.

23 MR. KIRWAN: Well, and you may have, but it was
24 part of a very different -- I mean, the thing you have to
25 think about is when you present something, it's the

1 cumulative effect of everything.

2 MR. PORTER: Sure.

3 MR. KIRWAN: That's kind of the reaction I
4 started off with in my deliberation. It's all this stuff
5 you're putting on this building, and we're struggling to
6 get it down to something simple and clean, and give you
7 freedom to do it, do what you want on Montgomery, within
8 reason, what you want on Montgomery Avenue.

9 MR. PORTER: I understand that.

10 MR. KIRWAN: Have fun on Montgomery Avenue,
11 where it's a little more, it's a very different street
12 than Wisconsin. And, I just think -- and you know, let's
13 talk about that monument sign. Let's talk about the
14 issues of it. Let's focus on that as the issue, as
15 opposed to all of a sudden we have these giant super human
16 figures that we're also grappling with, and it's all just
17 too much as a package.

18 MR. PORTER: So, if I'm hearing you correctly, I
19 just want to make sure that I understand what you're
20 saying, that, you know, we had a kind of proposal for a
21 monument sign. If we came back with a drawing that we
22 felt -- maybe it was a little taller than the base of the
23 windows, but that was the only thing on that side of the
24 building --

25 MR. KIRWAN: Again, I can't, I don't have a

1 visual memory of what you proposed last time. It's not in
2 the packet before us, so I can't speak exactly to, I mean,
3 I can't tell you tonight, yes, we're going to approve
4 that.

5 MR. PORTER: No, I understand.

6 MR. KIRWAN: But I think that's the discussion
7 to have is let's tweak the monument ground mounted sign,
8 and maybe everybody else can sort of chime in.

9 MS. BARNES: I remember from the last time were
10 the big kinetic figures.

11 MR. KIRWAN: Yeah, that was my --

12 MS. HEILER: We do have that.

13 MR. KIRWAN: Is it in there?

14 MS. HEILER: Yeah. This is the whole proposal
15 from the previous time.

16 MR. KIRWAN: Anyway, I --

17 MR. DETWEILER: Just one comment to sort of
18 refresh your memory. One comment we received back,
19 feedback last time, was that it weighed down the side of
20 the building, and so that's what sort of --

21 MR. KIRWAN: Well, again, does Staff have that
22 and can put it up?

23 MR. DETWEILER: And while they're working that,
24 may I ask for one other point of clarification, please.
25 There were a few comments in the deliberations that talked

1 about the content of our sign, you know like, particularly
2 on the banners. The guidance we got from Staff was that
3 the Commission doesn't object -- doesn't normally comment
4 on the actual content, it's more about the existence of
5 the sign itself. Can you clarify what your position
6 actually is on that?

7 MS. BARNES: I thought I heard a couple of
8 Commissioners comment about the juxtaposition of the blue
9 banner and the statute of the Madonna of the Trail, and
10 finding that to be (indiscernible).

11 MR. KIRWAN: I think you're talking about the
12 actual wording. You're talking about the wording in the
13 sign?

14 MR. DETWEILER: Wording, pictures, whatever
15 that's on it. It was my understanding that normally what
16 the actual content of the sign was, was sort of irrelevant
17 to the discussion.

18 MR. KIRWAN: I think that's correct. I think
19 the content -- it's the scale of the sign which we are
20 more concerned about.

21 MR. DETWEILER: Okay. So the fact that there
22 are figures -- some of the comments sort of seemed to
23 object to the fact that there was actual figures that
24 didn't have words on them, and I wanted to make sure that
25 that's --

1 MS. HEILER: Actually, I believe I'm the
2 Commissioner who suggested that the juxtaposition of the
3 Madonna of the Trail statute and a figure, a banner that
4 just has a figure on it, I would not in any way comment on
5 the wording of a sign or what it says. That's actually,
6 it's a drawing. So it's far more than a sign. It's a
7 drawing of a figure juxtaposed --

8 MS. VOIGT: But it's the scale.

9 MS. HEILER: It's the scale of that that I
10 thought was incongruous.

11 MR. ARKIN: I did make a comment about the
12 subtext that you had underneath the TRUEBODY saying that,
13 what I meant to say is I had no objection to something
14 like that to identify your business. But our purview is
15 not really the text. It's the design that we're looking
16 at. I did have a question of Staff though. Is there a
17 restriction in the county's ordinance on logos and
18 signage? I know there is a restriction of some of the
19 municipalities.

20 MR. KYNE: By no means a signage expert, but I
21 don't think there is a restriction regarding logos. I
22 think there is a perhaps a restriction, and I'm not sure
23 if you've looked into this. Maybe you have, but I think
24 there is something in the ordinance regarding the number
25 of signs at each entrance, but I'm not sure if that's --

1 MR. ESTES: The county can only regulate the
2 location, placement, size, number, quantity and size, not
3 the message.

4 MR. ARKIN: And the total square footage too.

5 MR. VOIGT: But you've looked into that?

6 MR. DETWEILER: We have, yes.

7 MR. ARKIN: So, you could have -- under the
8 county rules you can have a figure or a drawing of some
9 sort, or a design other than the name.

10 MR. KIRWAN: Well, yeah, I don't think that's
11 the issue. I think what we're talking about is, we're not
12 talking about what's on the sign. You can have whatever
13 you want on the sign, but it's overwhelming scale and it's
14 overwhelming the resource, that's when we're going to
15 comment on it.

16 MR. ARKIN: Well, that's my concern too.

17 MR. KIRWAN: I think we should just end that
18 discussion.

19 MR. SUTTON: I actually like the figures that
20 you have. I don't have a problem with figures at all.

21 MR. DETWEILER: Okay. Then I might have
22 misinterpreted. Would it better to visualize if we just
23 had signs with just a blank, that had no message on it
24 whatsoever for you to consider? Because there was also
25 talk about the colors and whatnot, and I worry that that

1 might be distracting from --

2 MR. KIRWAN: No, I think you should be up front
3 with what we're going to see. You should actually be up
4 front with us.

5 MR. FIRESTONE: I personally have no problem
6 with the content or the colors. I have problems with the
7 number of signs or banners, the placement, the size, all
8 these other things. What you actually want to put in your
9 sign is up to you. We're not going to get into
10 censorship. What we're concerned about right now is the
11 physical placement on the building is, is it going to
12 detract from the building? Is it going to detract from
13 the Madonna? Figures are fine. Just not next to the
14 Madonna, for instance. Maybe not so many banners.

15 MR. DETWEILER: Thank you.

16 MR. KIRWAN: Okay. Does that clarify things a
17 little bit? I mean, we've been looking at the last
18 preliminary, and we can't find the sign.

19 MR. DETWEILER: So it's possible that this -- if
20 we may approach just to show you this picture.

21 MR. KIRWAN: Yeah, sure. Absolutely.

22 MR. DETWEILER: I don't recall if this was shown
23 in the last --

24 MR. PORTER: A version of this was proposed last
25 time, but it may not be in your record.

1 MR. KIRWAN: No, we don't have that. I've never
2 seen that. The last one you showed us, you've got it
3 right there. Was the big huge figures marching down the
4 street. So that one we haven't seen.

5 MR. PORTER: Street art.

6 MR. KIRWAN: Let's not comment on it. That's
7 not before us tonight. They need to go away and --

8 MR. FIRESTONE: Come up with something else.

9 MR. ARKIN: Maybe I should categorize what I
10 said about the figures.

11 MR. KIRWAN: All right, I think Staff can
12 hopefully help you interpret all that, and get us on a
13 solid path. But again, I really do implore you to go back
14 to the first solution, and begin there and come back to us
15 with something that is much closer to that. You know,
16 given that I think we've all consistently been okay with
17 Montgomery Avenue having some activity and banners on it,
18 was definitely, you know, I think the majority of us were
19 in agreement with that being permissible. But it's that
20 Wisconsin Avenue sign that we're trying to get a better
21 control over.

22 MR. PORTER: Can we accurately interpret all
23 these comments that we really shouldn't even try to put a
24 sign on the building? Because honestly, based on the --
25 if I take all of the accumulatively comments, I don't see

1 a place where we could put it that would basically meet
2 all of your comments. There's no place on the building to
3 put one that wouldn't either obscure -- that wouldn't
4 obscure some of the details or wouldn't lead people to the
5 wrong door.

6 MR. KIRWAN: Okay, well we had one Commissioner
7 who said absolutely not. I spoke to it being permissible
8 especially over by the right side door. That's where I
9 said a wall mounted sign could go. I think Commissioner
10 Heiler agreed with that.

11 MR. FIRESTONE: I agreed with that.

12 MR. KIRWAN: I think Commissioner Firestone did.

13 MS. VOIGT: And I like the perpendicular. I
14 think that a perpendicular sign --

15 MR. KIRWAN: We're talking about a wall mounted
16 letter sign.

17 MS. VOIGT: Oh.

18 MR. KIRWAN: Taking the one that's over the
19 arched opening and putting it somewhere else.

20 MS. VOIGT: Oh yeah, you could put it somewhere.
21 But I don't like the internally lit thing.

22 MR. KIRWAN: Okay. So internally lit is --

23 MR. ARKIN: What I was suggesting that they
24 might want to look at was a blade sign, which would be
25 mounted on the wall.

1 MR. KIRWAN: Okay, but that's a different, I
2 think we're talking about if just if you take the wall
3 mounted sign, is there any place on that facade for a wall
4 mounted sign, and --

5 MR. DETWEILER: If it wasn't internally lit and
6 we moved it closer to the accessible entrance --

7 MR. KIRWAN: Right.

8 MS. HEILER: Yes.

9 MR. DETWEILER: The general consensus something
10 like that could be --

11 MR. KIRWAN: There was a majority -- there was a
12 general consensus that that was okay.

13 MR. DETWEILER: Thank you.

14 MR. KIRWAN: I think we all spoke to that.

15 MS. HEILER: That would make it much more
16 similar to the Unleashed sign, which the buildings are
17 quite different, but it doesn't get in the way, Unleashed
18 doesn't get in the way of interpreting the main design of
19 that building. And that's what this sign is too close to
20 reaction on the building.

21 MR. PORTER: From a usability -- from our
22 standpoint, I think from my standpoint as a designer, is
23 it leads people to the wrong door, which was addressed
24 earlier. The main entrance is underneath the --

25 MR. KIRWAN: And that's for you to decide that

1 doesn't work for us.

2 MR. PORTER: Yeah.

3 MR. KIRWAN: So, maybe we go back to the ground
4 mounted and --

5 MR. PORTER: That's what we're trying to figure
6 out.

7 MR. FIRESTONE: Okay. What about if you do the
8 wall mounted, you know, mount it on the building near the
9 handicapped entrance what you've got, and then maybe a
10 very small monument sign near the actual entrance to
11 indicate that's where people who are on foot at this point
12 should come in.

13 MS. BARNES: But, if you were to do something
14 like that then, you know, we would be back to the issue of
15 too much going on.

16 MR. KIRWAN: That's an excellent point.

17 MS. BARNES: So I, for example, would withdraw
18 my support for the two banners because I wouldn't want two
19 banners, the monument sign and then the wall mount.
20 That'd be too much.

21 MR. PORTER: I feel like I've got a lot of
22 things up in the air that I have to balance here.

23 MR. KIRWAN: Again, if you go back -- there's
24 one more, as I was saying, if you go back to the original
25 proposal, there was one sign. One sign, and that was

1 okay. We accepted that. So I think there's clues to
2 where you should --

3 MR. PORTER: I hear you.

4 MS. VOIGT: And then the building could be
5 really lit from the inside and you can see cool things --

6 MR. DETWEILER: It already is. Actually, if you
7 drive by at night.

8 MR. PORTER: Thank you so very much.

9 MR. KIRWAN: All right, thank you.

10 MR. FIRESTONE: We have Staff items.

11 MR. KIRWAN: Oh, yes, I'm sorry. I'm like, I'm
12 leaving. Okay. Do we have tax credit applications?

13 MR. KYNE: We actually, we postponed those to
14 the 15th of November.

15 MR. KIRWAN: Yeah, I was about say, we didn't
16 talk about that upstairs. Do we have any minutes to
17 approve this evening?

18 MS. BARNES: Yes.

19 MS. HEILER: June 14th.

20 MR. KIRWAN: June 14th.

21 MS. BARNES: I move that we approve the June 14
22 minutes.

23 MS. HEILER: I second the motion.

24 MR. KIRWAN: Do we have any witnesses that would
25 like to testify regarding the June 14th -- do we have a