

*Preliminary Consultation*  
**MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**  
**STAFF REPORT**

<b>Address:</b>	7400 Wisconsin Avenue, Bethesda	<b>Meeting Date:</b>	8/16/2017
<b>Resource:</b>	<b>Master Plan Site #35/014-005A</b> Bethesda Post Office	<b>Report Date:</b>	8/9/2017
<b>Applicant:</b>	7400 Wisconsin LLC (Michael Domeier, Agent)	<b>Public Notice:</b>	8/2/2017
<b>Review:</b>	Preliminary Consultation	<b>Tax Credit:</b>	N/A
<b>Case Number:</b>	N/A	<b>Staff:</b>	Michael Kyne
<b>PROPOSAL:</b>	Sign installation		

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the applicants make any revisions based on the HPC's recommendations and return for a HAWP application.

**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.

**PROPOSAL:**

- Sign installation at the front 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:**

As noted in the excerpt from *Places from the Past*, the subject property is one of three county post offices built under the Works Progress Administration. The building, which dates to circa 1938, is designed in the Classical Revival style, with many of its character defining and distinctive features visible from the public right-of-way. The subject property is located in an urban environment, with a small setback and minimal distance between the building and Wisconsin Avenue.

The applicant proposes to install signage at the front of the subject property. The applicant has proposed four different options for the proposed signage, including the following:

- Option A: One 11' high by 6.75' wide aluminum sign, with illuminated letters for business advertisement.
- Option A1: One 19' high (width not provided) aluminum sign, with illuminated letters for business advertisement.

- Option B: Four 9' high by 5.5' wide aluminum signs, one with illuminated letters for business advertisement and the others with similar figure designs.
- Option B1: Four 11' high by 6.75' wide aluminum signs, one with illuminated letters for business advertisement and the others with similar figure designs.

Staff expresses concerns with the size of the proposed signage. The proposed signs are rather large and will be intervening modern features between the public right-of-way and the primary façade of the subject property. Given the limited amount of space between the building and the public right-of-way, staff is concerned that the proposed large signs will result in visual crowding that will severely detract from the building's character defining features and not allow the building to be experienced from the public right-of-way. Staff suggests that alternatives such as moderately-sized monument signs be explored.

Staff also expresses concerns regarding the proposed number of signs for Options B and B1. With multiple large signs between the public right-of-way and the primary façade of the subject property, much of the historic building will be obscured from view. Staff suggests that the applicant explores alternatives such as placing the signs at a secondary elevation, where they will be viewed more appropriately as public art and will not detract from the subject property.

Staff seeks further guidance from the Commission's regarding the following:

- Are any of the proposed signs appropriately sized?
- Are the proposed sign locations appropriate?
- Is the proposed sign design and material appropriate?
- Are there any alternatives that may be more compatible with the subject property?

#### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the applicant make any revisions based on the Historic Preservation Commission's recommendations and return for the formal submission of a Historic Area Work Permit Application.

Prelim



DPS - #8

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
301/563-3400

APPLICATION FOR  
HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT

Contact Email: michael.domeier@smi-signs.com Contact Person: Michael Domeier  
Daytime Phone No.: 410-259-1775  
Tax Account No.: 00490661  
Name of Property Owner: 7400 Wisconsin LLC Daytime Phone No.: 301-661-3869  
Address: 2101 Wisconsin Ave NW Washington DC 20007  
Street Number City State Zip Code  
Contractor: SAM SIGNS Phone No.: 410-259-1775  
Contractor Registration No.:  
Agent for Owner: Alex Aronow Daytime Phone No.: 301-468-1132

LOCATION OF BUILDING/PREMISE

House Number: 7400 Street: WISCONSIN AVE  
Town/City: BETHESDA Nearest Cross Street: MONTGOMERY AVE  
Lot: Block: P 13 Subdivision: 0023  
Liber: Folio: Parcel: N 458

PART ONE: TYPE OF PERMIT ACTION AND USE

1A. CHECK ALL APPLICABLE:

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

CHECK ALL APPLICABLE:

- A/C  Slab  Room Addition  Porch  Deck  Shed
- Solar  Fireplace  Woodburning Stove  Single Family
- Fence/Wall (complete Section 4)  Other: Sign / ART

1B. Construction cost estimate: \$ 30,000

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/assessment

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.

*Michael Domeier*  
Signature of owner or authorized agent

7/24/17  
Date

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_ For Chairperson, Historic Preservation Commission

Disapproved: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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

5



**architecture incorporated**  
 1000 WOODBURN DRIVE, SUITE 200  
 BETHESDA, MD 20814  
 TEL: 301.279.2233  
 FAX: 301.279.2277  
 WWW.AICORP.COM

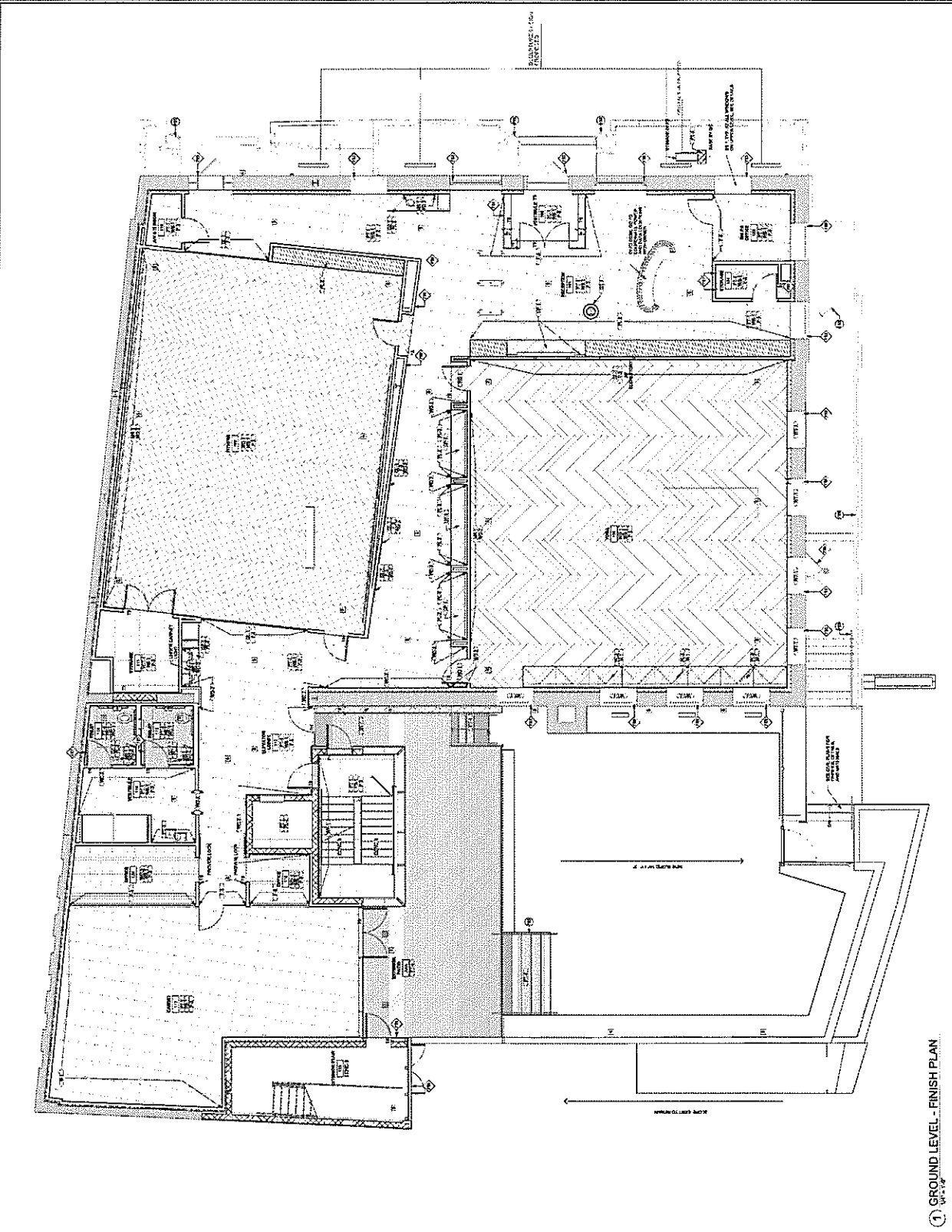
**BRIDGES FITNESS & YOGA  
 RENOVATION & ADDITION**  
 BETHESDA, MD 20814

Project: 111851  
 Sheets: 01/01  
 Date: 8/16/14

**FINISH PLAN**

Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"  
 Drawn: CHS  
 Check: CMB  
 Title: 01/01

**F1.2**



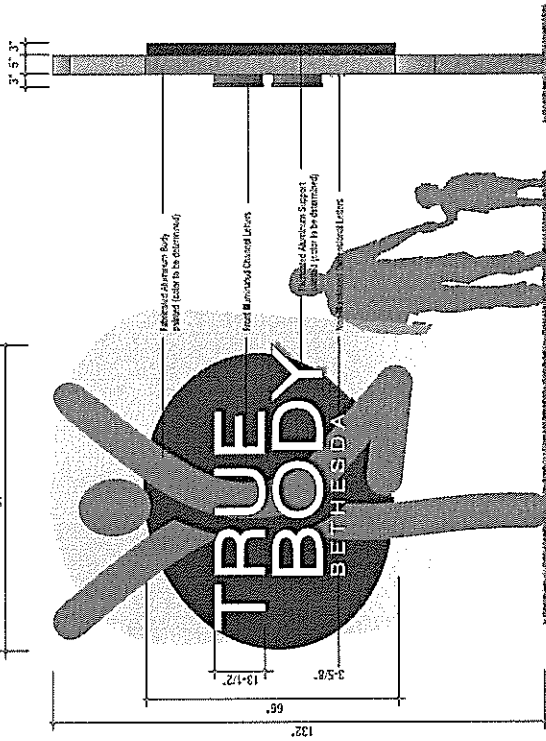
① GROUND LEVEL - FINISH PLAN  
 8/16/14

**Sculpture Sign | Building ID**  
Illuminated / Single Sided

Opt. A

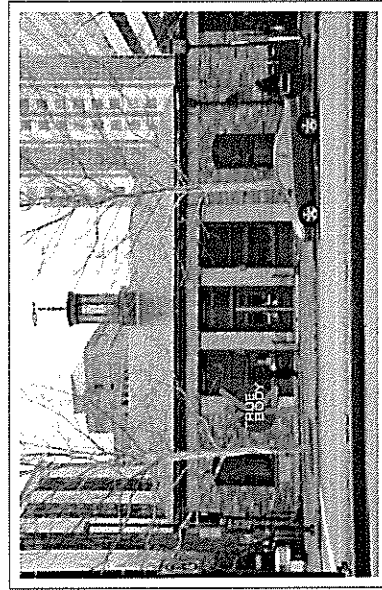
DESIGNED BY

**SMI Sign Systems, Inc.**  
Integrated sign solutions



Front Elevation  
Scale: 3/8" = 1'

Side Elevation  
Scale: 3/8" = 1'



Building Front Elevation  
Scale: Not to Scale

3003 Cornell Plaza • Frederick, MD • 21703  
Tel: 301-468-1132 Fax: 301-230-6646

**SALES REPRESENTATIVE**

NAME: Max Atorow  
PHONE: 301-468-1132 (111)  
EMAIL: max@smisigns.com

**PROJECT MANAGER**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_  
EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

**PROJECT DESIGNER**

NAME: Alex

DATE: 04/27/17

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PAGE: \_\_\_\_\_

REVISIONS: 06/01/17

06/20/17

07/19/17 07/25/17

DESIGNED FOR

**TRUEBODY**  
S E T - C S D A

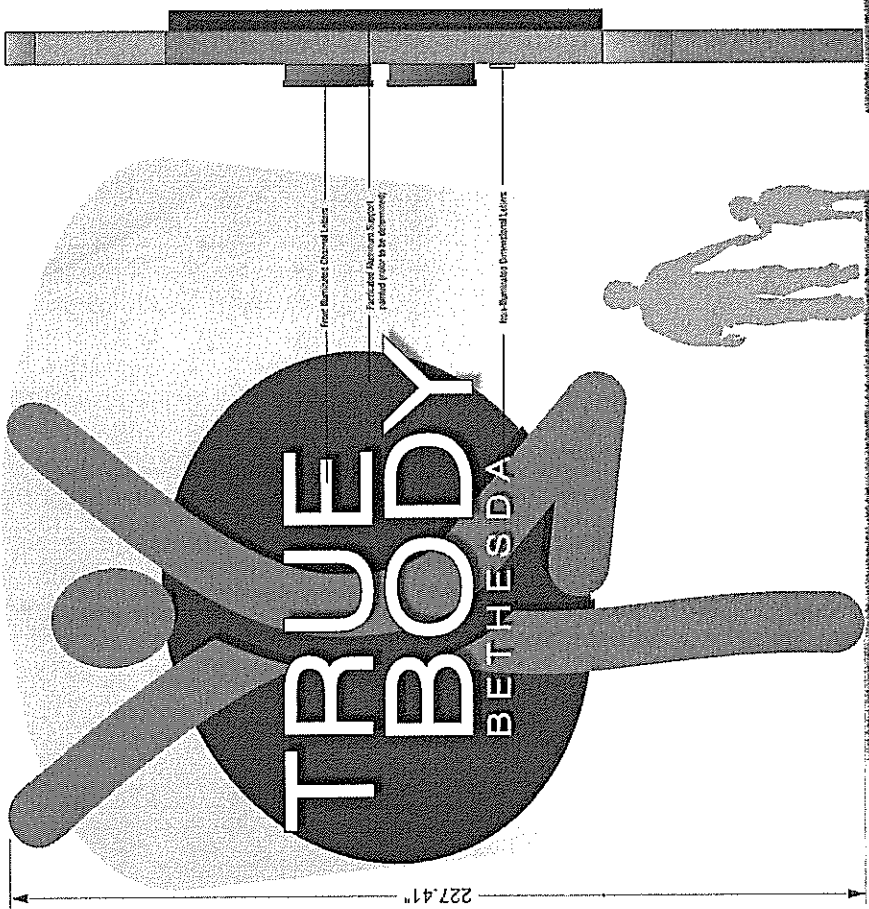
I hereby read these enclosed drawings and specifications and agree to the conditions and terms of the contract. I authorize you to proceed with the work shown hereon.

Approved By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

SMI Sign Systems, Inc. is not responsible for construction of the sign shown hereon. After customer approval, changes to drawings, layout, materials, or any aspect of the sign may be made without the written approval of SMI Sign Systems, Inc. All work shall be done in accordance with the contract documents and specifications.

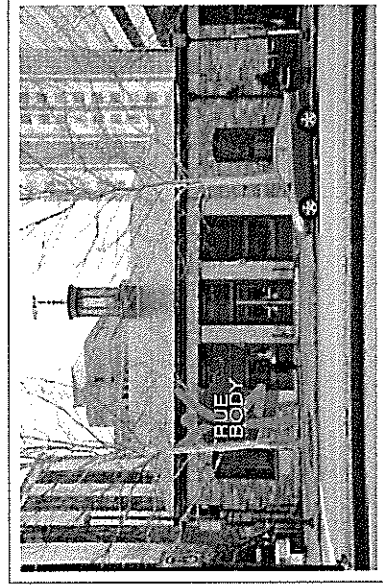
7

Opt. A1



Scale 3/8" = 1'

Side Elevation



Building Front Elevation  
Scale: Not to Scale

**DESIGNED BY**

**SMI Sign Systems, Inc.**  
integrated sign solutions

3503 Cornett Place - Frederick, MD - 21703  
Tel: 301-468-1132 Fax: 301-230-8049

**SALES REPRESENTATIVE**

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**PROJECT MANAGER**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_  
EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

**PROJECT DESIGNER**

NAME: Alex

DATE: 04/27/17

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PAGE: \_\_\_\_\_

REVISIONS: 06/01/17

06/20/17

07/19/17 07/25/17

**DESIGNED FOR**

**TRUEBODY**  
BETHESDA

I verify that I have checked all details in this copy and layout including spelling and grammar for each page and find it to be correct. I authorize this job to begin production.

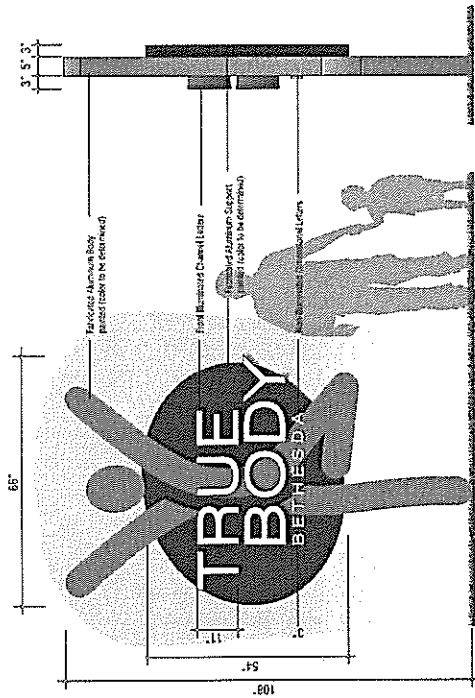
Approved By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

SMI Sign Systems, Inc. is not responsible for the accuracy of the information provided in this document. It is the responsibility of the client to provide accurate information. SMI Sign Systems, Inc. will not be held liable for any errors or omissions in this document. SMI Sign Systems, Inc. is not responsible for the accuracy of the information provided in this document. It is the responsibility of the client to provide accurate information.



# Sculpture Sign | Building ID

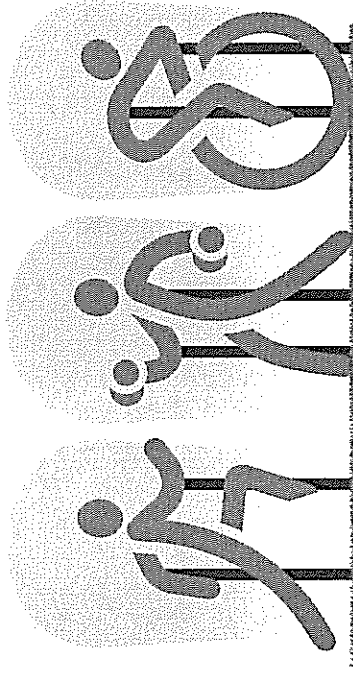
Illuminated / Single Sided



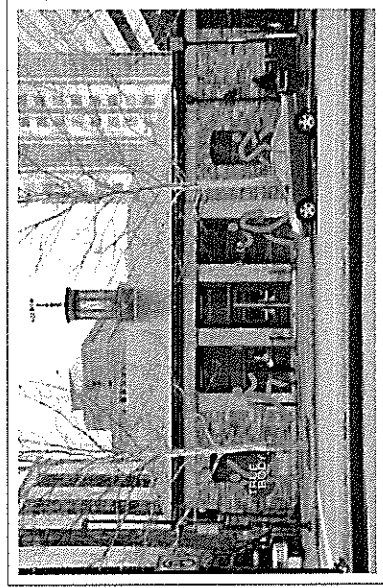
Front Elevation  
Scale: 3/8" = 1'

Side Elevation  
Scale: 3/8" = 1'

Opt. B

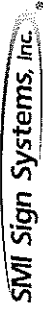


Additional Sculptures  
Scale: Not to Scale



Building Front Elevation  
Scale: Not to Scale

**DESIGNED BY**



3003 Cornell Place • Frederick, MD • 21703  
Tel: 301-468-1132 Fax: 301-235-9946

**SALES REPRESENTATIVE**

NAME: Max Aonow  
PHONE: 301-468-1132 (111)  
EMAIL: max@smisigns.com

**PROJECT MANAGER**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_  
EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

**PROJECT DESIGNER**

NAME: Alex  
DATE: 04/27/17

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REVISIONS: 06/01/17

06/20/17

07/19/17

**DESIGNED FOR**



I hereby read and have checked all details of this, and have found nothing requiring correction and guarantee the work shall not fail to be correct. I authorize this job to begin immediately.

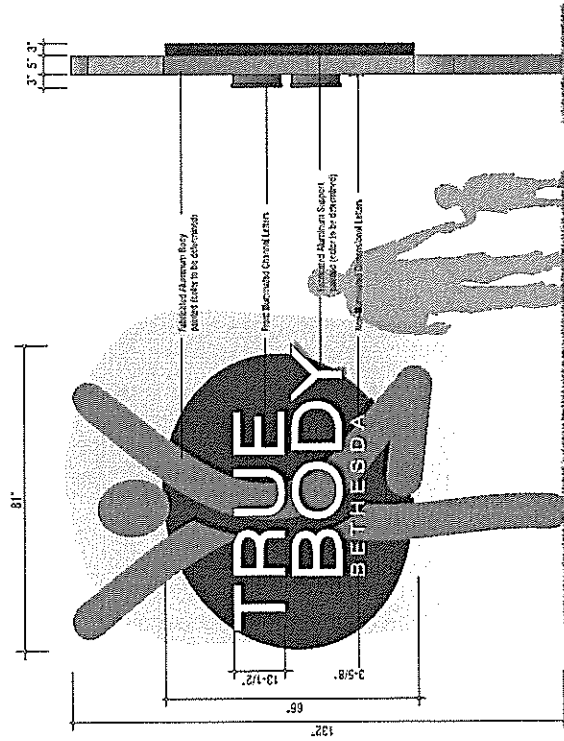
Approved By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

SMI Sign Systems, Inc. is not responsible for damages or injury to property or persons. Changes to drawings, specifications and details of construction shall be the responsibility of the client. SMI Sign Systems, Inc. will not be held responsible for damages or injury to property or persons.

# Sculpture Sign | Building ID

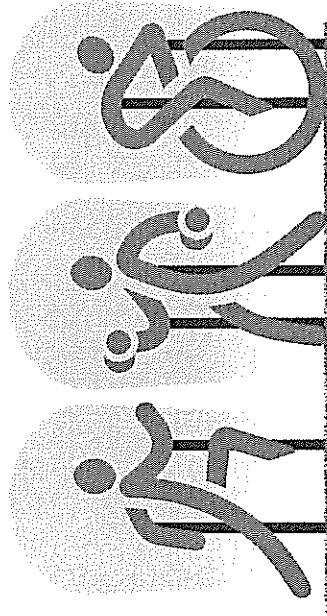
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Opt. B1

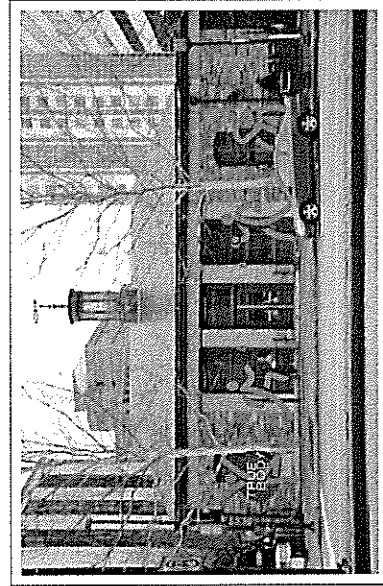


Front Elevation  
Scale: 3/8" = 1'

Side Elevation  
Scale: 3/8" = 1'



Additional Sculptures  
Scale: Not to Scale



Building Front Elevation  
Scale: Not to Scale

DESIGNED BY

**SMI Sign Systems, Inc.**  
Integrated sign solutions

3903 Cornell Place - Frederick, MD - 21703  
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SALES REPRESENTATIVE

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PROJECT MANAGER

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_  
EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

PROJECT DESIGNER

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ ALBX: \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE: 04/27/17

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REVISIONS: 06/04/17

06/20/17

07/19/17 07/25/17

DESIGNED FOR

**TRUEBODY**  
BETHESDA

I accept that I have checked all details of this sign and I hereby certify, signing this permit, that the sign will be installed in accordance with the approved design and that I warrant the sign will be installed in accordance with the approved design.

Approved By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

SMI Sign Systems, Inc. is not responsible for any damage to the sign or building caused by fire, lightning, flood, wind or any other act of nature. The liability of the sign is limited to the sign itself. SMI Sign Systems, Inc. is not responsible for any damage to the sign or building caused by fire, lightning, flood, wind or any other act of nature.

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

<p><b>Owner's mailing address</b></p> <p>7475 WISCONSIN AVE          SUITE 102          BETHESDA MD 20814</p>	<p><b>Owner's Agent's mailing address</b></p> <p>MICHAEL DOMBER          5 MI SIGNS          3903 CORNELL PLACE          FREDERICK MD 21703</p>
<p align="center"><b>Adjacent and confronting Property Owners mailing addresses</b></p>	
<p>TMG II Bethesda Hotel LP          c/o The Meridian Group          3 Bethesda Metro Cntr #1400          Bethesda MD 20814</p>	
<p>Paul Sullivan          4709 Montgomery Lane          Bethesda MD 20814</p>	
<p>TRIZECHAHN WISCONSIN AVE LTD,          PTNSH ET AL</p> <p>P.O. Box 4900          DEPT 113          SCOTTSDALE AZ 85261</p>	

