

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

<b>Address:</b>	7400 Wisconsin Avenue, Bethesda	<b>Meeting Date:</b>	10/25/2017
<b>Resource:</b>	<b>Master Plan Site #35/014-005A</b> Bethesda Post Office	<b>Report Date:</b>	10/18/2017
<b>Applicant:</b>	7400 Wisconsin LLC (Michael Domeier, Agent)	<b>Public Notice:</b>	10/11/2017
<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		

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

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

**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.

## **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 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 have returned with a revised proposal, which includes the following:

- TRUEBODY Sign: One 1'-6" high by 12'-9" wide sign at the front of the building.
- Slogan Sign: One 1'-10" high by 4' wide sign at the front of the building.
- Banner Signs: Three 8'-6" tall by 2'-4" wide banner signs at the front of the building, and four 8'-6" tall by 2'-4" wide banner signs at the left side of the building.

The proposed TRUEBODY and slogan signs will consist of cutout letters that will be mounted directly to the front of the building. These signs take inspiration from 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 (see Circle 12 for a photograph of the completed project). With that project, the Commission required that the signs be mounted into the mortar of the building, allowing for easy repairs if the signs are removed in the future, and the current applicants propose to do the same at the subject property.

The proposed banner signs will be oriented with their faces perpendicular to the building, minimizing their visibility and potential to obscure the historic building when viewing the historic building straight on. Each banner sign will be attached to two brackets (one at the top and one at the bottom) and will be interchangeable. Like the proposed TRUEBODY and slogan signs, the required hardware will be mounted into the mortar of the building.

Staff is generally supportive of the applicants' revised proposal, finding that it has less potential to detract from or overwhelm the historic building; however, staff asks for the Commission's guidance regarding the following:

- Is it appropriate to mount signs directly to the historic building, if all hardware is required to be mounted into the mortar? Staff notes that, if allowed, extra care should be taken to ensure that the proposed sign installation will not impact the historic masonry or frieze.
- Is the amount of proposed signage appropriate, or does the cumulative impact of the proposed signage have the potential to detract from the buildings character-defining features?
- To date, no information has been submitted about the proposed sign materials and/or any proposed illumination. Staff asks for the Commission's guidance regarding appropriate materials and types of illumination at this historic site.

### **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.



HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
301/563-3400

DPS-#8

# 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  
Street Number City Street Zip Code  
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  
Liber: \_\_\_\_\_ Folio: \_\_\_\_\_ 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:

- ☐ A/C ☐ Stab ☐ Room Addition ☐ Porch ☐ Deck ☐ Shed  
☐ Solar ☐ Fireplace ☐ Woodburning Stove ☐ Single Family  
☐ Fence/Wall (complete Section 4) ☒ Other: Commercial signage

1B. Construction cost estimator: \$ 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.

Brian Detwiler  
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: \_\_\_\_\_

Edt 6/21/99

**SEE REVERSE SIDE FOR INSTRUCTIONS**

5

**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 8 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.

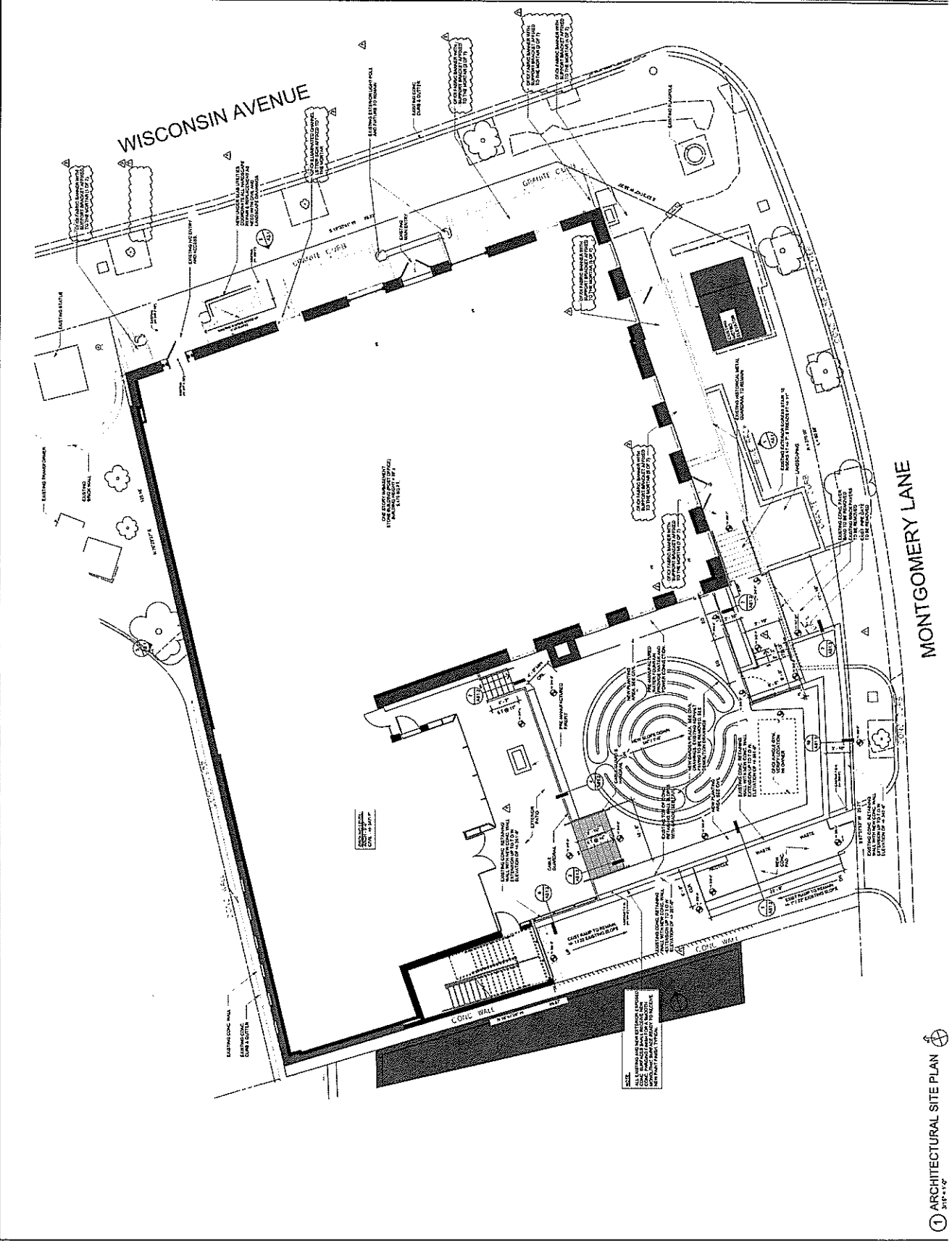
**6. TREE SURVEY**

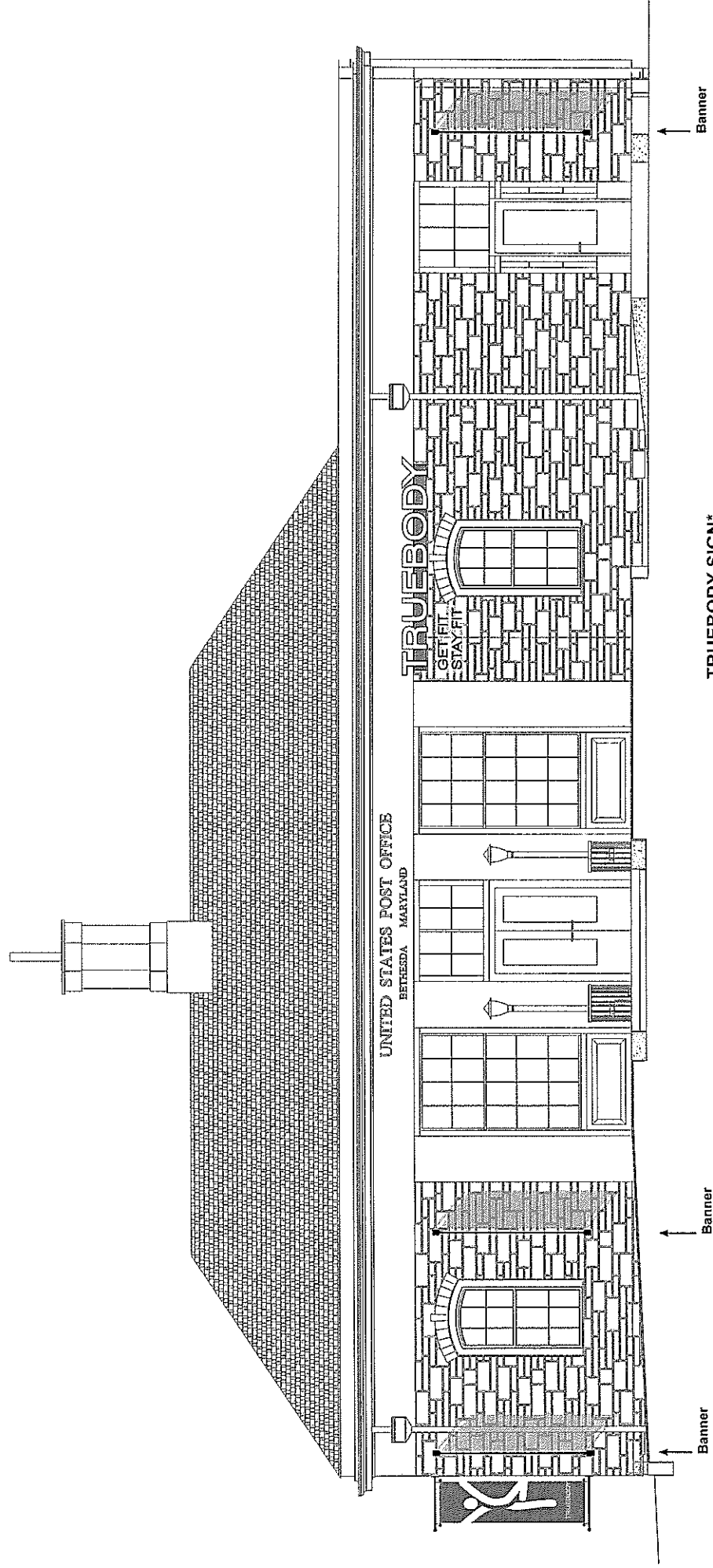
If you are proposing construction adjacent to or within the dripline of any tree 6" or larger in diameter (at approximately 4 feet above the ground), you must file an accurate tree survey identifying the size, location, and species of each tree of at least that dimension.

**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 MAILING LABELS.





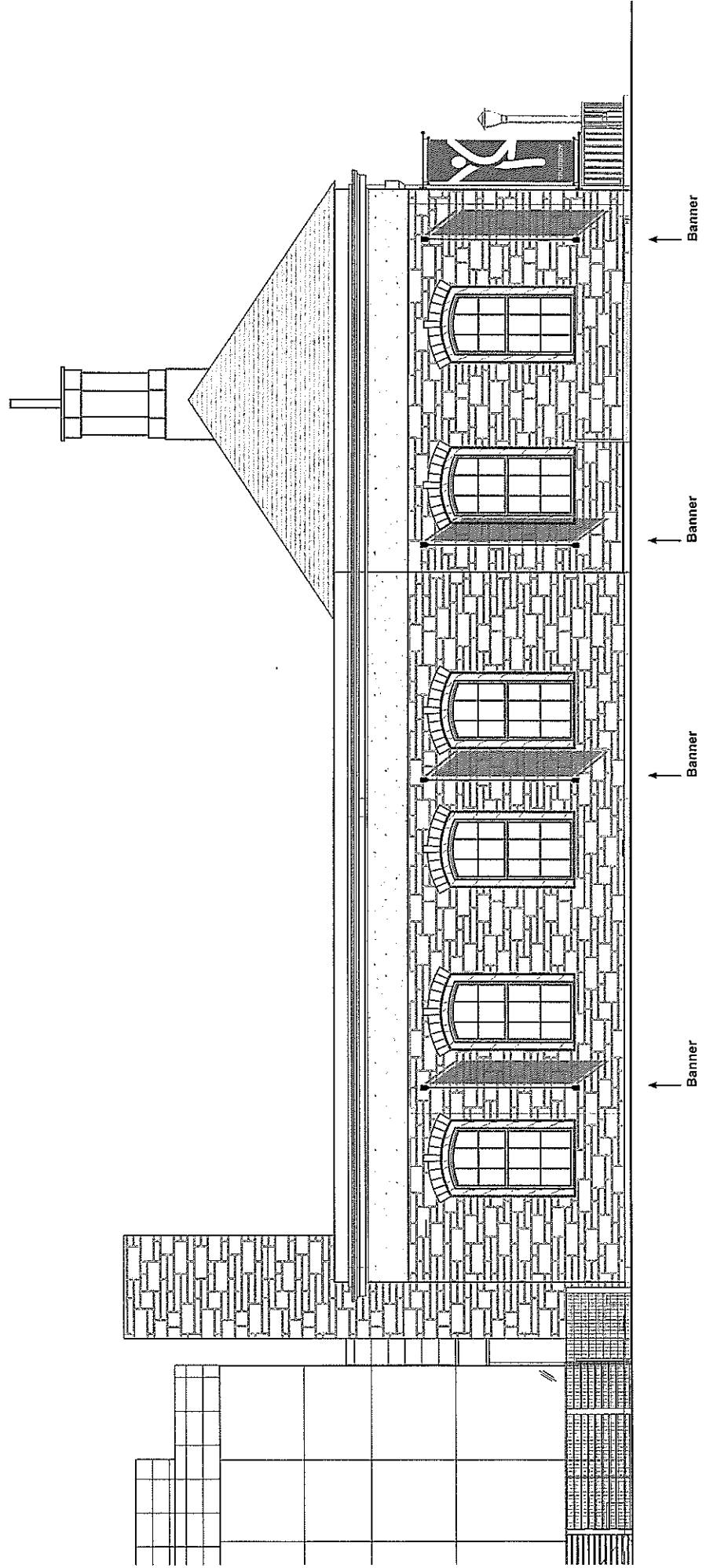
**TRUEBODY SIGN\***  
18" x 12' 9"

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

**Banner Dimensions \***  
28" x 8' 6"

*\*Dimensions are approximate*





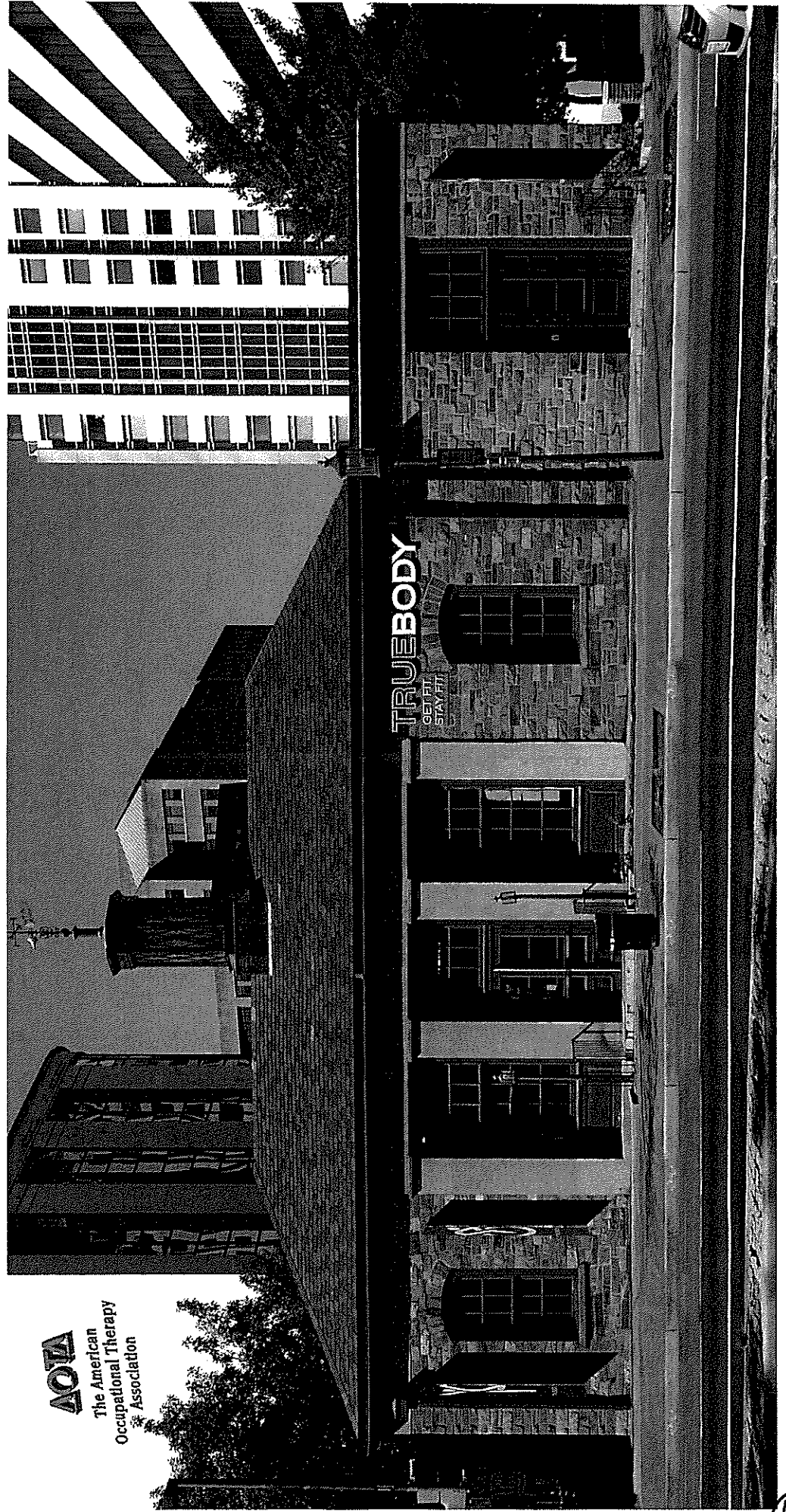


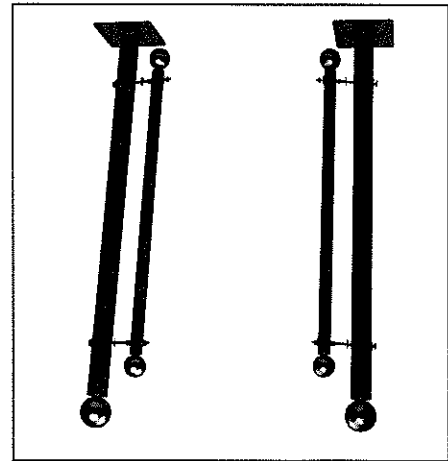
TRUEBODY

GET FIT. STAY FIT.

AOTA

The American  
Occupational Therapy  
Association





**Banner Bracket Example**  
*exact bracket to be determined*



by petco

unleashed

NOW  
OPEN

5000

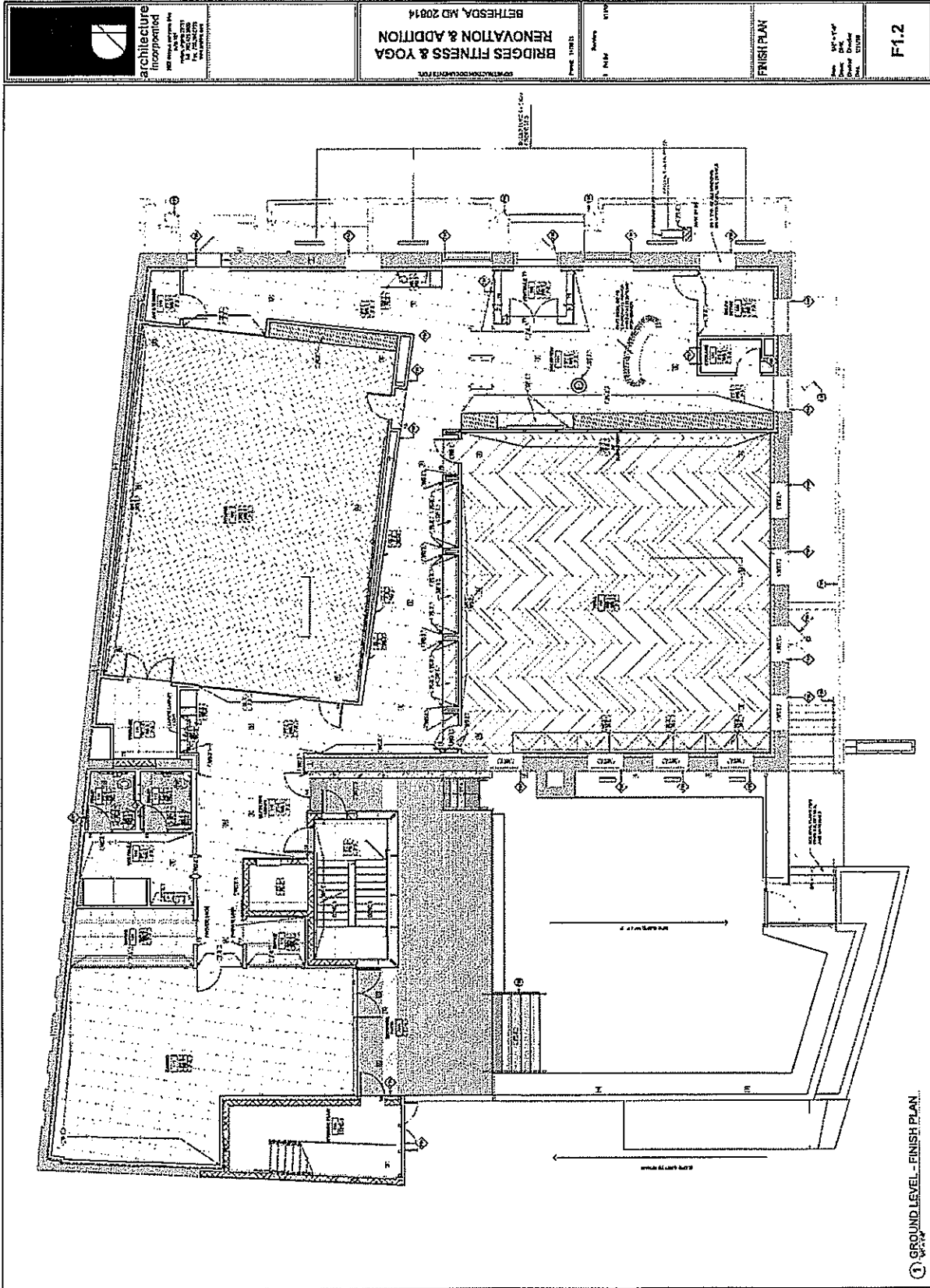
8412 Georgia Ave., Silver Spring  
Silver Spring Post Office

(12)

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

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

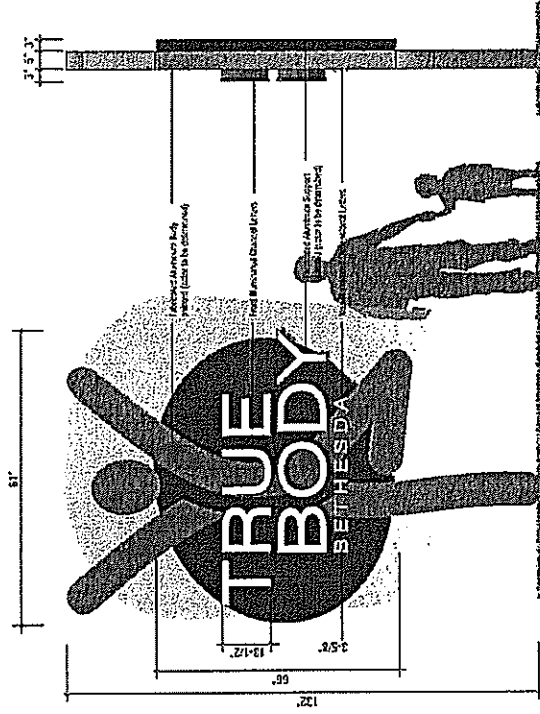
# **PREVIOUS PROPOSAL**



# Sculpture Sign | Building ID

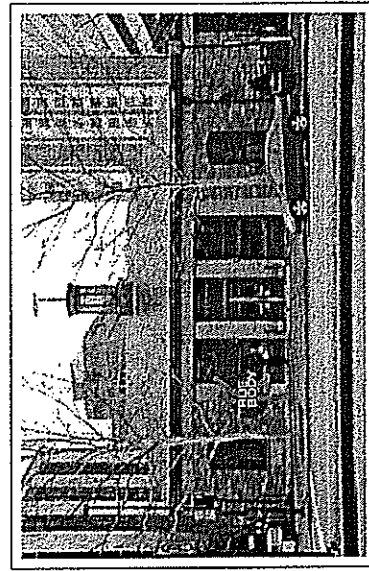
Illuminated / Single Sided

Opt. A



Front Elevation  
Scale: 3/8" = 1'

Side Elevation  
Scale: 3/8" = 1'



Building Front Elevation  
Scale: 1/4" = 1'

## DESIGNED BY

**SMI Sign Systems, Inc.**

Integrating sign solutions —  
3903 Cornelia Place • Frederick, MD • 21703  
TEL 301-468-1132 FAX 301-230-0048

## SALES REPRESENTATIVE

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

## PROJECT MANAGER

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

## PROJECT DESIGNER

NAME: Alex

DATE: 04/27/17

FILE PATH: X:\2017\TrueBody\170817 - Mechanical Sign Bethesda\Design

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

REVISIONS: 06/01/17

06/20/17

07/19/17 07/25/17

## DESIGNED FOR

**TRUEBODY**  
301-468-0048

I hereby certify that I have prepared all details on this set of signs, including including and quantity, on my own and that I am a duly licensed, independent sign designer.

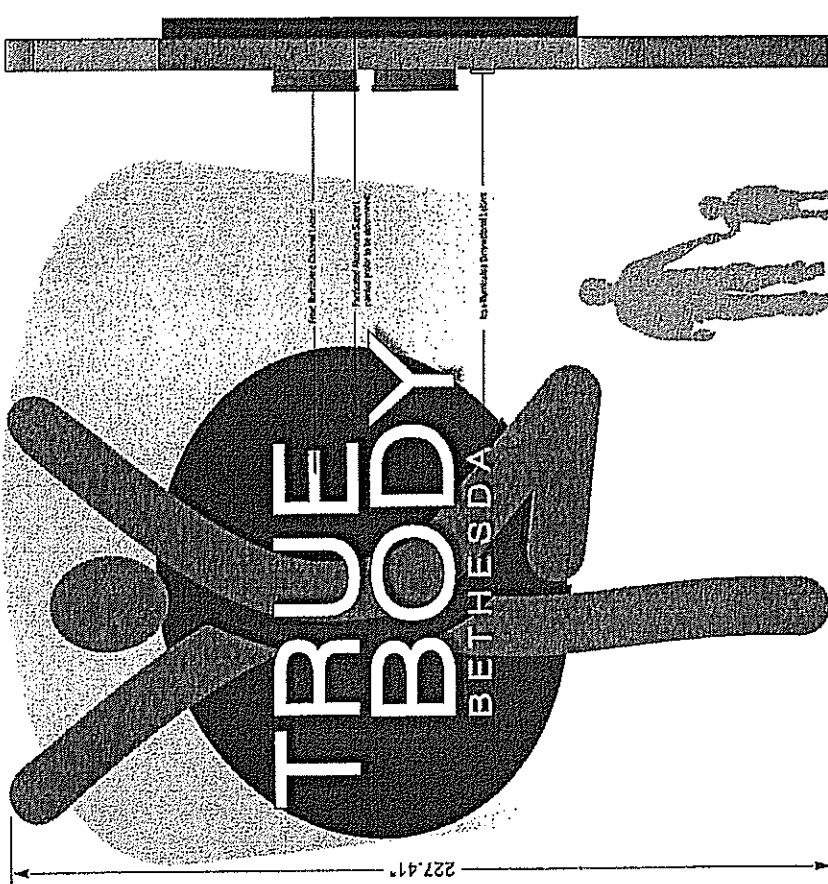
Approved By: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

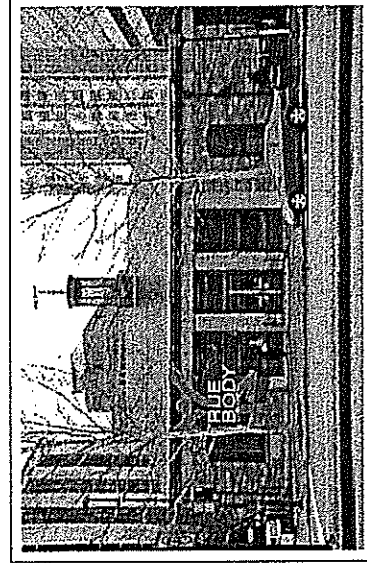
SMI Sign Systems, Inc. is not responsible for the accuracy of the information provided on this set of signs. The user of this set of signs is responsible for the accuracy of the information provided on this set of signs. The user of this set of signs is responsible for the accuracy of the information provided on this set of signs.



Opt. A1



Side Elevation



Building Front Elevation  
Scale: Not to Scale

DESIGNED BY

**SMI Sign Systems, Inc.**

Integrated sign solutions  
3900 Conrad Place • Frederick, MD • 21703  
Tel: 301-468-1132 Fax: 301-420-0416

SALES REPRESENTATIVE

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

PROJECT MANAGER

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

PROJECT DESIGNER

NAME: Alex

DATE: 04/27/17

FILE PATH: X:\\_2017\TrueBody\70947 - Monument Sign Bethesda\Design

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

REVISIONS: 06/01/17

06/20/17

07/19/17 07/25/17

DESIGNED FOR

**TRUEBODY**  
BETHESDA

I hereby certify that I have checked all details of this sign and layout including location, and confirmed all details and specifications to be correct, and that this is the final production.

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

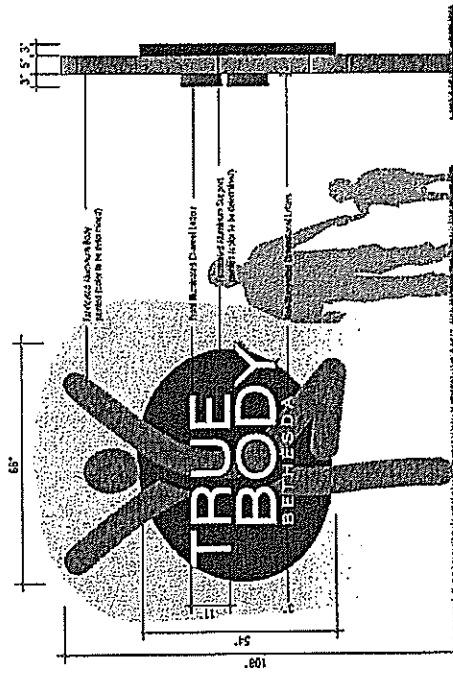
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

SMI Sign Systems, Inc. is not responsible for the results of signs which are produced without proper installation. Signs must be installed according to the instructions provided in the sign manual. If the sign is not installed correctly, the results may be different from those shown in the manual. SMI Sign Systems, Inc. is not responsible for the results of signs which are produced without proper installation.

*(Handwritten signature)*

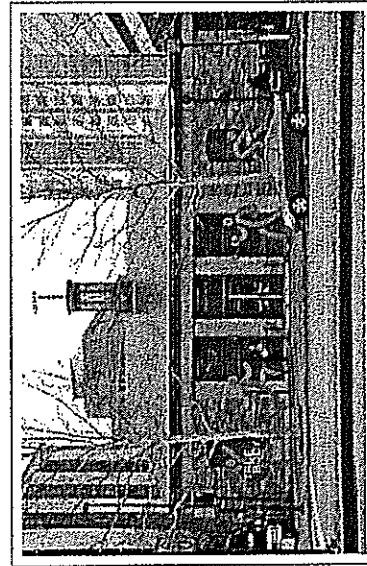
# Sculpture Sign | Building ID

Illuminated / Single Sided



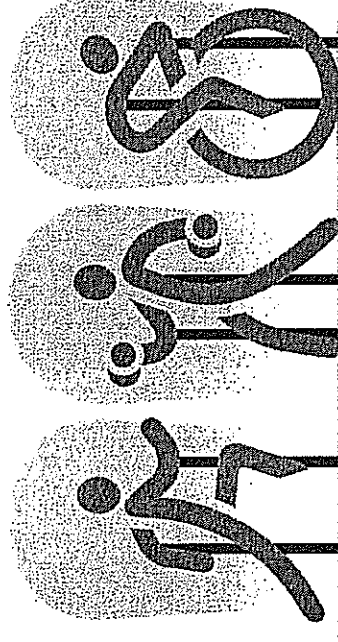
Front Elevation  
Scale: 3/8" = 1'

Side Elevation  
Scale: 3/8" = 1'



Building Front Elevation  
Scale: 1/8" = 1'

Opt. B



Additional Sculptures  
Scale: Not to Scale

DESIGNED BY

**SMI Sign Systems, Inc.**

Integrated sign solutions

3003 Cornwell Place - Frederick, MD - 21703  
Tel: 301-458-1132 Fax: 301-200-9948

SALES REPRESENTATIVE

NAME: Max Amdur  
PHONE: 301-458-1132 (111)  
EMAIL: max@smisigns.com

PROJECT MANAGER

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

PROJECT DESIGNER

NAME: Alex

DATE: 04/27/17

FILE PATH

X:\2017\TrueBody\70347 - Monument Sign\808554\Design

PAGE

REVISIONS: 06/01/17

06/20/17

07/19/17

DESIGNED FOR

**TRUEBODY**  
BETHESDA

I hereby certify that the design of this sign is the work of the designer named above and that I am a duly licensed professional sign designer in the State of Maryland.

Approved By:

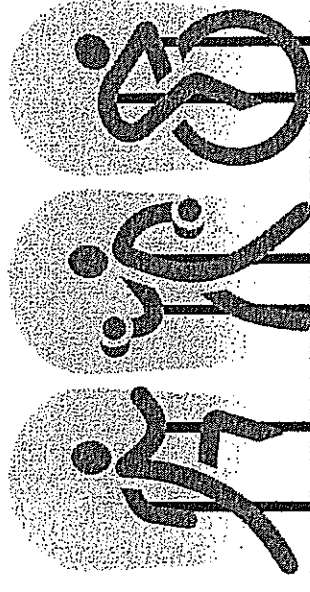
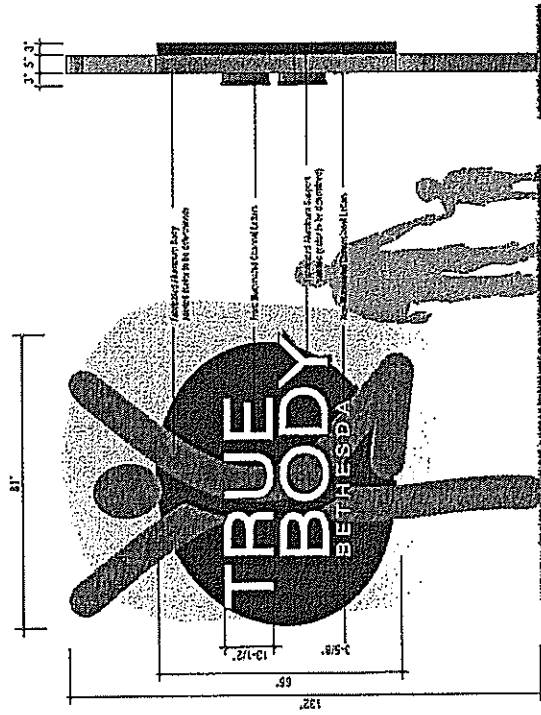
Date:

SMI Sign Systems, Inc. is not responsible for the design of any sign that is not approved by the State of Maryland. The designer is responsible for obtaining all necessary permits and approvals from the appropriate authorities. The designer is not responsible for the construction or installation of the sign.

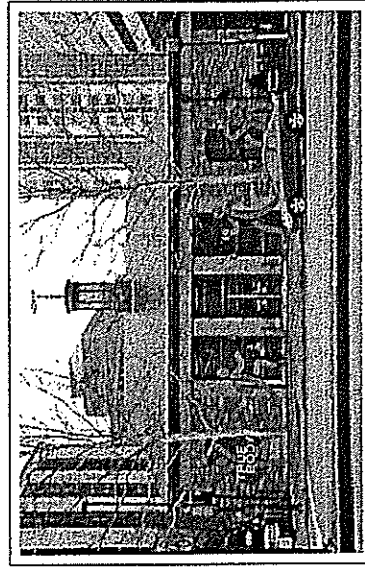
*[Handwritten signature]*

## Sculpture Sign | Building ID

**illuminated / Single Sided**



Front Elevation  
Scale: 3/8" = 1'

Side Elevation  
Scale 3/8"=1'

Opt.

DESIGNED BY

**SMI Sign Systems, Inc.**

—integrated, open solutions—

3903 Cornwell Place • Frederick, MD • 21704  
Tel: 301-458-1132 Fax: 301-270-9048

**SALES REPRESENT.**

NAME	Max Aronow
PHONE	301-468-1132 (111)
EMAIL	max@smileshons.com

## PROJECT MANAGER

ગામડા  
અમદાવાદ  
ગામડા

## PROJECT DESIGNER

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
Alex \_\_\_\_\_

DATE 04/27/17

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Sign\Bates.sda\Design

PAGE

REVISIONS 06/01/17

06/20/17

07/19/17	07/25/17
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**DESIGNED FOR**

**TRUEBODY**  
ESTIMOTEX

For further information, contact the author at [carol@carolmccann.com](mailto:carol@carolmccann.com) or call 800-451-7273.

**Approved By:**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Let the children know that the teacher is not only a friend but also a helper. The teacher should be kind and gentle, and should be able to help the children in their studies. The teacher should be able to help the children in their studies. The teacher should be able to help the children in their studies.

1 THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

2

3

4 - - - - - X  
5 PRELIMINARY CONSULTATION - :  
6 7400 Wisconsin Avenue :  
7 - - - - - :  
8 PRELIMINARY CONSULTATION - :  
9 25911 Frederick Road :  
10 - - - - - :  
11 - - - - - X

9

10 A meeting in the above-entitled matter was held on  
11 August 16, 2017, commencing at 7:35 p.m., in the MRO  
12 Auditorium at 8787 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, Maryland  
13 20910, before:

14 COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- 15 Bill Kirwan, Chair  
16 Sandra Heiler  
17 Marsha Barnes  
18 Kenneth Firestone  
19 Richard Arkin  
20 Eliza Voigt  
21 Robert Sutton

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25

ALSO PRESENT:

Phillip Estes

Michael Kyne

Dan Bruechert

APPEARANCES

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1 VOTE.

2 MR. KIRWAN: The motion passes unanimously. Those  
3 historic area work permits have been approved this evening.  
4 We want to thank the applicants who worked with Staff very  
5 diligently to make those easily approvable by the Commission  
6 tonight. We're going to move on to the next item on our  
7 agenda, which are the preliminary consultations. And, we'll  
8 start off with case II.A at 7400 Wisconsin Avenue in  
9 Bethesda.

10 MR. COHEN: Is this our spot?

11 MR. KIRWAN: Yeah, we have a Staff Report we're  
12 going to start off with.

13 MR. KYNE: And again, thank you, Mr. Chairman. And  
14 we do have a Staff Report for this project. Again, 7400  
15 Wisconsin Avenue, Bethesda. This is a Master Plan Site known  
16 as the Bethesda Post Office. It dates to circa 1938 in its  
17 classic revival style. The proposal tonight is for a sign  
18 installation at the front of the property. And I have some  
19 photographs here so I can walk you around. These are from  
20 today.

21 And you can't see most of the facade right now  
22 because of the fencing. But I did try to peek behind. And  
23 please pay particular attention to the height of the windows  
24 in regard to a later comment. And this is on the left side  
25 and moving around to the previously proposed rear addition

1 that dates to 2015. And we do have the plans in front of us  
2 here, and we can come back to these if we need to. And the  
3 applicable guidelines in this case are the Secretary of  
4 Interior Standards for Rehabilitation.

5 And, on to Staff discussion. This echoes much of  
6 what you saw in the Staff Report. As noted in the excerpt  
7 from Places From The Past, the subject property is one of  
8 three county post offices built under the Works Progress  
9 Administration. The building which dates to circa 1938 is  
10 designed in the classic revival style with many of its  
11 character defining distinctive features visible from the  
12 public right-of-way, particularly the front, as we saw in the  
13 photographs.

14 The subject property is located in an urban  
15 environment with a small setback and minimal distance between  
16 the building and Wisconsin Avenue. And, on to the applicants  
17 proposal. Again, to install signage at the front of the  
18 property. And they have provided four options. Option A,  
19 which is one ~~11-foot-high~~11-foot-high by 6.75 feet wide  
20 aluminum sign with illuminated letters for business  
21 advertisement; Option A1 is one 19 foot high, the width was  
22 not provided, aluminum sign with illuminated letters for  
23 business advertisement; Option B, four 9 foot high by 5.5  
24 feet wide aluminum signs, one with illuminated letters for  
25 business advertisement, and the others with similar figure



1 designs. And then Option B1, four ~~11-foot-high~~11-foot-high  
2 by 6.75 feet wide aluminum signs, one with illuminated  
3 letters, and the others with similar designs.

4 And, Staff does express concerns with the size of  
5 the proposed signage. The proposed signs are rather large  
6 and will be intervening modern features between the right-of-  
7 way and the primary facade of the subject property. And,  
8 given the limited amount of space between the building and  
9 the public right-of-way, Staff has concerns that the proposed  
10 large signs will result in visual crowding that will severely  
11 detract from the building's character-defining feature and  
12 not allow the building to be experienced from the right-of-  
13 way.

14 Staff suggests that alternatives such as moderately  
15 sized monument signs be explored. And Staff also expresses  
16 concerns regarding the proposed number of signs for Options B  
17 and B1, with multiple large signs between the public right-  
18 of-way and the primary facade, much of the historic building  
19 will be obscured from view when traveling on Wisconsin  
20 Avenue.

21 Staff suggests that the applicant explores  
22 alternatives such as placing the signs at a secondary  
23 elevation, such as on the left side, or near the addition at  
24 the rear where they will be viewed more appropriately as  
25 public art, and will not detract from the property. And, I

1 seek the Commission's guidance regarding the following four  
2 items. Are any of the four signs appropriately sized? Are  
3 the proposed sign locations appropriate? Is the proposed  
4 sign design and material appropriate? And, are there any  
5 alternatives that may be more compatible with the subject  
6 property?

7           And, I did want to add one note here at the end.  
8 That, at the December 3, 2014 preliminary consultation for  
9 the rear addition, which we mentioned earlier, there was much  
10 discussion and concern about the appropriateness of the  
11 previously proposed and approved monument sign at the front  
12 of the building, although that sign was much more modest in  
13 scale and design. And, in fact, that sign was lower than the  
14 bottom of the windows that we saw on the facade. And I'm  
15 just guessing, that looks like it may be no more than two and  
16 a half feet, and that's being generous. So, just keep that  
17 in mind that the Commission was concerned about the sign at  
18 that time, and these are much larger, and have much more  
19 potential to detract. So, with that, I can take any  
20 questions you have for me, and I'll turn it over to the  
21 Commission.

22           MR. KIRWAN: Okay, great. I think, Michael, I've  
23 got the approved HAWP in front of me, and the sign that we  
24 did approve originally was actually more like 3 foot 4, in  
25 height, maybe even taller than that. Maybe close to 5 feet

1 in height at its tallest point. But I think the, my memory  
2 of that deliberation was that we worked very hard with that  
3 applicant to get the signs as low as possible, and we were  
4 concerned about blocking views and windows, and the original  
5 doors and things like that.

6 MR. KYNE: And, that is correct. In reading the  
7 transcript there was, again, much discussion about the  
8 signage, and the proposal at that time was for a moderately  
9 scaled monument sign that was to be mostly disguised in the  
10 landscaping that was proposed at the front. And, I believe  
11 that the material was supposed to be clear, so that it  
12 provided visibility of the facade even where it would  
13 obscure. So, yes, I'm just asking you keep that in mind.

14 MR. KIRWAN: That's right. Okay. Thank you. Any  
15 questions for Staff? Yes, Commissioner Arkin?

16 MR. ARKIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Two  
17 questions. Do we have any color rendition of what's  
18 proposed?

19 MR. KYNE: I do not have a color rendition in the  
20 presentation in front of you, and I cannot recall if the  
21 applicants did submit a color version of this. But, I'm  
22 fairly certain that they did, and it's just an oversight on  
23 my part for not including it. Sorry about that.

24 MR. ARKIN: The second question --

25 MR. COHEN: We have some materials here. Sorry for

1 interrupting. But, I wanted to say that due to a little  
2 miscommunication on our own side, I really apologize for  
3 this, but we, we prematurely gave you some signs to consider.  
4 They're essentially in the same --

5 MR. KIRWAN: I'm going to stop you for a second,  
6 because we're not ready for testimony from the applicant.

7 MR. COHEN: Oh, sorry.

8 MR. KIRWAN: So we'll get to that.

9 MR. COHEN: Sorry, sorry. I was going to say we  
10 had a packet of information in case you wanted to look at it.  
11 Sorry.

12 MR. KIRWAN: Okay, thank you. Go ahead,  
13 Commissioner Arkin.

14 MR. ARKIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The second  
15 question is, is there a county sign ordinance or are there  
16 standards or guidelines for the Bethesda district, or  
17 anything, any other standards that we should consider in  
18 deciding on this?

19 MR. KYNE: There are certainly county sign  
20 ordinances. I'm not terribly familiar, so I can't recite  
21 them to you. And with the other legislation you mentioned,  
22 I'm not familiar at all. So, I can't really answer your  
23 question but, my recollection of the county sign ordinance is  
24 that there is allowed one sign, one business advertisement  
25 sign per entrance, but that may just be for signs that are

1 actually attached to the building. If anyone on the  
2 Commission knows better, then I would ask them to chime in,  
3 but that seems to be my recollection.

4 MR. KIRWAN: I presume the applicant's done some  
5 research into that, so we'll ask the applicant the question.

6 MR. ARKIN: Thank you very much.

7 MR. FIRESTONE: Michael, did you have any  
8 illustrations of what we originally approved, the signage?

9 MR. KYNE: Unfortunately, I do not, and that wasn't  
10 included in the Staff Report, and again, that was probably an  
11 oversight on my part for not including it in this  
12 presentation tonight. The request to see that information  
13 came in from the Chairman, and came after the Staff Report  
14 was received by the Chairman, so again, it wasn't included in  
15 the Staff Report. The project originally wasn't mine, so I  
16 have to admit that I do not recall that discussion until I  
17 went back and looked. But again, unfortunately, I do not  
18 have it here tonight.

19 MR. KIRWAN: Just for the record, I'm passing  
20 around my Ipad which has the illustration in the original  
21 HAWP application that we approved showing the sign on the  
22 front facade. And I'm sorry I don't have lock rotation  
23 activated on there. I see everybody struggling with the  
24 spinning. Any other questions for Staff? All right, very  
25 good. We turn to you for your testimony tonight. We can

1 give you seven minutes for your testimony. We'd appreciate  
2 it if you stick to that, and before any of you speak, just  
3 state your name for the record.

4 MR. COHEN: Sure. My name is Elon Cohen, I'm the  
5 CEO of True Body Fitness, which is the business that is  
6 moving into the facility. The old post office building. So,  
7 you probably recall seeing us a long time ago before we began  
8 the construction, and it's been a long arduous process.  
9 We're glad it's finally coming together, in part due to the  
10 special nature of the building, which we've been very careful  
11 about. And, so we're now at the point where we're looking at  
12 signage before we open our doors to business.

13 So we came up with a new concept, it's true,  
14 compared to what we, you know, had preliminarily talked about  
15 a long time ago, before we really put a tremendous amount --  
16 I mean, the initial proposal was more about the modifications  
17 to the building or the adjunct space, which was the large  
18 glass tower and the loading dock of the post office that was  
19 being completely redone. And so, now we hadn't put  
20 tremendous amount of thought into signage at the time. Since  
21 then, we've had a chance to look at that some more. We came  
22 up with a new concept. Actually, with your permission, can  
23 we give you some color renditions? And there's actually a  
24 slight change to what we have submitted. ~~So~~So, I really do  
25 apologize for that. That was prematurely submitted, I think.

1           MR. KIRWAN: We can pass it down the dais. We can  
2 do our best to review it, but we probably can't do it justice  
3 in such short amount of review time.

4           MR. COHEN: Understood. Yeah. So, it's a little  
5 different, but it does have some similarities to what you  
6 already looked at with the large figures. They're smaller  
7 now, I think. But our concept here was to do something where  
8 we could -- of course, you know, from a commercial  
9 perspective, we would like people to know what we are doing  
10 in the space and what kind of business it is. And, of  
11 course, we understand there's also other considerations with  
12 the historic nature of the building. We tried to strike a  
13 balance.

14           Our goal was to maybe, sort of split the sign, if  
15 you will, into, actually have a smaller sign and actually  
16 create a street art project that would be something that  
17 would, we thought was very much in fitting with some of the  
18 other things we see in Bethesda, where there's a lot of art.  
19 There are a lot of colorful signs. We also drew some  
20 inspiration from these, you've probably seen them, these  
21 large B type, letter B signs that are all around Bethesda.  
22 Tried to use a similar kind of structure in terms of the  
23 width of the metal band that's being used for the figures.

24           So, we wanted to make a street art project. We  
25 thought that the juxtaposition of something modern with the

1 historic building was the right way to do that. We wanted  
2 something see through so that the figures are very see  
3 through so we can still see the building. They're set off,  
4 and they're offset from the building as far as we can. And  
5 the only thing that's, we think, so we're trying actually to  
6 not occlude any of the building by making the structures as  
7 thin and see through as possible and make it an art project.

8           We are concerned that, you know, from the  
9 commercial perspective also that, the very low sign with cars  
10 parked -- oftentimes there are cars that are stationary in  
11 front of the building, you generally will never see the sign.  
12 We think that it would sort of not be that viable from the  
13 perspective of actually letting the world know that we have a  
14 business there, and what we are doing there. So, we tried to  
15 strike that balance. And, I think I would probably defer to  
16 our architect to speak more to the concept in more detail.

17           MR. DRURY: Yeah, thank you. I'm William Drury, as  
18 the architect on the building renovation.

19           MR. KIRWAN: Did you state your name for the  
20 record?

21           MR. DRURY: William Drury.

22           MR. KIRWAN: Okay.

23           MR. DRURY: I think one of the things that, as  
24 we've been out there for the past year and a half building,  
25 was the energy level on the street, the intersection, and



1 looking at the signage that we had earlier. It felt like  
2 well maybe we could bring some, play off of the energy that  
3 is on the street, and introduce the streetscape, the street  
4 art type of an approach that would possibly then work with  
5 that. As I say, that intersection, the amount of traffic  
6 that's occurring there and you have the elevator coming down  
7 from the Metro at that same location.

8           So, as Elon said, you know, we were looking at  
9 these as a rather porous signage piece of art that would  
10 allow us to see the building itself through the signage, and  
11 expect to see lots of people on the street near the entrances  
12 to the building both coming and going from the Metro elevator  
13 and in that general area.

14           MR. KIRWAN: Okay. Does that conclude your  
15 testimony?

16           MR. DRURY: Yes.

17           MR. KIRWAN: Okay, thank you. Do we have questions  
18 for the - yes, Commissioner Arkin?

19           MR. ARKIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to  
20 pose my initial question to you in saying that, could you  
21 describe what sign ordinances, or standards, or public arts  
22 ordinances or standards would apply to this project?

23           MR. COHEN: I actually am not, I think we have our  
24 signage expert here with us. Would you be able to speak to  
25 that?

1           MR. KIRWAN: I'm sorry, you're going to have to  
2 come up to the dais and state your name for the record before  
3 you can provide testimony.

4           MR. DOMEIER: Hi, I'm Mike Domeier. The lettering  
5 portion of what you're looking at, and the things that were  
6 proposed earlier are within the ordinance that's allowed for  
7 that building. It doesn't, if you added up all of the space  
8 for the sculptural items, it would be beyond, you know, what  
9 would be allowable. But, in many municipalities the signage  
10 is kind of measured off by itself, a box put around the  
11 signage itself. ~~So~~So, the signage itself is within that  
12 ordinance, the square footage allowance.

13           MR. ARKIN: Well, my question related to what  
14 applies in this county and in this district. What are the  
15 requirements concerning logos or other?

16           MR. DOMEIER: There's no restriction on that.  
17 However, with the historic nature of the property, and being  
18 in a historic district, there's a different purview.  
19 Sometimes the county's rules don't apply within a historic  
20 district. But typically, under the typical ordinance for the  
21 county, it's well within what you're allowed to do.

22           MR. ARKIN: Thank you.

23           MR. KIRWAN: Just to clarify, this is not a  
24 historic district. This is a Master Plan Resource.

25           MR. DOMEIER: Okay.

1           MR. ARKIN: And, in the illustrations that you sent  
2 around, the True Body type, how is -- what are the  
3 measurements of that, and how is it constructed? Is it, how  
4 is it lit?

5           MR. DOMEIER: I can tell you the construction  
6 details, measurements I don't know. Some of those designs  
7 were kind of brought to bear in the ninth hour after we had  
8 already submitted. So, I don't have a lot of information on  
9 that. How it's built is, the lettering will be internally  
10 illuminated with LED's. The faces would be an acrylic, and  
11 then the side would be a fabricated aluminum structure.

12           MR. ARKIN: And there would be no panel or outline  
13 around it of any kind?

14           MR. DOMEIER: No.

15           MR. ARKIN: Thank you. The associated question  
16 was, are there rules or standards, or guidelines regarding  
17 public art, or semi-public art that would apply?

18           MR. DOMEIER: I can't answer that question. I  
19 don't know.

20           MR. ARKIN: Thank you.

21           MR. KIRWAN: Commissioner Heiler?

22           MS. HEILER: Yes. Is the doorway in the center of  
23 the building on Wisconsin Avenue there the primary entrance  
24 into your business? And, what about the -- are there other  
25 entrances, for example, the doorway that's to the far right

1 or door on the side of the building, are they also entrances  
2 into your business?

3 MR. DRURY: These are the two -- this is the  
4 primary entrance in the center. And, it is the ADA exit on  
5 the right side of the building with the ramp there.

6 MS. HEILER: Thank you.

7 MR. KIRWAN: Commissioner Firestone?

8 MR. FIRESTONE: When you were coming up with this  
9 signage idea, were you mainly thinking the audience for these  
10 signs being cars driving by on Wisconsin Avenue or  
11 pedestrians walking directly in front of the building?

12 MR. COHEN: I think it's really both. I don't  
13 think we have a bias toward one or the other.

14 MR. FIRESTONE: Because I just get the feeling that  
15 the signage might be overwhelming and not really something  
16 that a pedestrian right there in front could appreciate. I  
17 don't know if they could see your signage on top of the  
18 building, and I think these other things might be just a  
19 little overwhelming to a pedestrian walking by, because to me  
20 they definitely overwhelm the building.

21 MR. COHEN: Okay.

22 MR. KIRWAN: Commissioner Voigt?

23 MS. VOIGT: Yes. I just have a question about what  
24 the sign is on. So it looks like -- is it attached to the  
25 building?

1           MR. COHEN: No. It's freestanding.

2           MS. VOIGT: So it's freestanding on these four --

3           MR. COHEN: Oh, you're talking about the lettering?

4           MS. VOIGT: Yes. It looks like --

5           MR. COHEN: So there are posts. There are posts,  
6 and we believe, not necessarily the case that we would need  
7 the center post. Right here you'll see four posts, so  
8 structurally we may be able to just do it with the two posts  
9 on the left and right.

10           MS. VOIGT: Great. So, none of this signage is  
11 touching the building?

12           MR. COHEN: Nothing touches the building. That was  
13 the goal.

14           MS. VOIGT: And, did you, as Commissioner  
15 Firestone, did you consider anything that's kind of more  
16 perpendicular so if you're walking along Wisconsin Avenue?

17           MR. COHEN: Yeah. I think as Commissioner  
18 Firestone mentioned, we wanted to do something that would be  
19 visible from the sidewalk, also the sidewalk across the  
20 street, and also for the cars as well. There's obviously a  
21 lot of car traffic. So, just in general, we felt that  
22 something that was just perpendicular would be, you know,  
23 less visible in general, might be easily overlooked. So, we  
24 thought that that wasn't really, from our perspective, doing  
25 the job. But at the same time, we wanted to do something

1 that was, again, not going to, we thought, not overwhelm the  
2 building because we thought it was a little bit more see  
3 through, and also, and more treated like sculpture.

4 MR. KIRWAN: Any other questions?

5 MS. BARNES: First of all, thank you for bringing  
6 these, because they're quite helpful. I thought I noticed in  
7 some of the photographs presented by the Staff that you're  
8 using blue trim, or is that my imagination?

9 MR. COHEN: On the building?

10 MS. BARNES: Maybe it's just the coloring.

11 MR. COHEN: It might be the coloring, because we're  
12 not using the blue --

13 MR. DRURY: Blue trim where?

14 MR. COHEN: On the building itself.

15 MR. DRURY: Oh. No.

16 MS. BARNES: Okay. I think it was perhaps the  
17 lighting. I think it was one of those that just came around.  
18 So, you have this proposal for these four kinetic figures in  
19 front of the building, and we have very close to this  
20 building a statute grouping that's been there for a long  
21 time. And, my concern with the four on the front, while I  
22 think they're rather fun, is that it does sort of overwhelm  
23 and clutter the front of the building. One question that I  
24 have, and I've noticed as you've been working, you see the  
25 building lit up from the inside. Is there any possibility

1 that adjacent to the front door on the inside you might see  
2 these figures as you drove by seeming to be working out or  
3 something?

4 MR. COHEN: On the inside? We hadn't considered  
5 that. We can think about that.

6 MS. BARNES: But I would ask that you consider  
7 that. Also, as was noted in the Staff Report, there's a very  
8 small area between the building and the public right-of-way,  
9 and I would, were I in your shoes, also be concerned about  
10 potential for problems when you have snow removal and other  
11 things. But for me, the big concern is, if you put this big  
12 sign of words above the door, and then you have the kinetic  
13 figures, you rather overpower the building. So, my question  
14 might be, could you do a kinetic figure as you're coming down  
15 the side street leading you in to the entrance where you put  
16 your addition?

17 MR. COHEN: Thank you for the suggestion. May I  
18 ask a question as well? Is that okay, if I ask the community  
19 a question?

20 MR. KIRWAN: Not right now, no.

21 MR. COHEN: Sorry?

22 MR. KIRWAN: No.

23 MR. COHEN: No? Okay.

24 MR. KIRWAN: No. You're responding to question  
25 right now. We're asking you the questions right now. We can

1 give you an opportunity to ask us questions.

2 MR. COHEN: Sure, okay. Appreciate it.

3 MR. SUTTON: I personally think the building is the  
4 work of art. And I think anything that is put in front or on  
5 top of the building detracts from that, from the art of the  
6 building itself. I was not part of the Commission when the  
7 project came here before, so I'm not familiar with what was  
8 proposed before. But, I really think this is just way  
9 overwhelming. I think it really detracts from the building,  
10 and personally, I live in Bethesda, I enjoyed going by the  
11 building. I used to enjoy going to the post office there.  
12 Can't do that anymore. But, I really think this whole thing  
13 is way overwhelming, and just, I wasn't aware that there had  
14 been a sign approved earlier. But looking at the pictures of  
15 that, I think that's the way that this should go. I think it  
16 should be something not overwhelming to the site of the  
17 building, and I just think this whole -- I mean, I think it's  
18 lovely.

19 MR. KIRWAN: Commissioner, I apologize for  
20 interrupting, but I think you're getting into deliberations  
21 expressing you're view point.

22 MR. SUTTON: No, I'm not. I am not getting into  
23 deliberations. I'm just saying that I think it's  
24 overwhelming, and that's my recommendation.

25 MR. KIRWAN: Do you have any questions for the



1 applicant? Any other questions for the applicant?

2 MR. SUTTON: No.

3 MR. KIRWAN: Okay, thank you. Commissioner Arkin?

4 MR. ARKIN: Mr. Cohen, I believe it was you who  
5 testified earlier that you were concerned about parking  
6 interfering with visibility. But in the picture that's on  
7 the screen, in the renditions you showed us there are no cars  
8 shown. There appear to be no parking meters, no signs. Is  
9 parking permitted in front of the building?

10 MR. COHEN: No, I think I misspoke. Parking, it's  
11 really more just there are a lot of cars that are always  
12 positioned there.

13 MR. ARKIN: You're talking about the traffic  
14 moving?

15 MR. COHEN: Yeah. There's almost always cars in  
16 front of the building.

17 MR. KIRWAN: When the light is red there'd be cars  
18 there. But when the light's green, there wouldn't.

19 MR. COHEN: Right, they stack.

20 MR. ARKIN: Thank you.

21 MR. KIRWAN: Any other questions for the applicant?  
22 All right. If you did have a question for us?

23 MR. COHEN: Yeah. So, in terms of the general  
24 reaction -- first of all, I appreciate all your comments and  
25 your ideas -- just to give us some direction, because it

1 seems like --

2 MR. KIRWAN: Well, we're going to do that in a  
3 second. That's what our deliberations are about. We're  
4 going to go down the dais and give you our thoughts on the  
5 matter.

6 MR. COHEN: Okay. My question was really more  
7 about --

8 MR. KIRWAN: And we'll sum it up at the end.

9 MR. COHEN: Okay. Can I still ask the question, is  
10 that okay?

11 MR. KIRWAN: Yes.

12 MR. COHEN: So it's really more about sort of  
13 separating the sign that's on top? Right, because part of  
14 the discussion was about the sculptures in front, and part of  
15 it was about the sign on top. Can we get a little bit more  
16 of your, maybe we'll get it during the deliberations about  
17 the sign on top?

18 MR. KIRWAN: I think you will. I think you'll hear  
19 a lot on these signs.

20 MR. COHEN: Okay.

21 MR. KIRWAN: All right, well that concludes things.  
22 Let's do move into deliberations. I think it's important in  
23 a preliminary consultation for the applicants to hear from  
24 all of us. So I would appreciate everybody speaking up on  
25 this matter so they can best gauge how to move forward, and

1 Staff can best advise them on next steps. I'll just kick  
2 things off.

3 I think there's, and again, I do appreciate the  
4 color renderings, they definitely help. The black and white  
5 images almost made the figures blend in with the building  
6 which, fortunately, I could read through that, but I think  
7 that could be deceiving to others. But, you know, I can  
8 appreciate the interest in this sidewalk art concept. My, as  
9 some of the Commissioners have already hinted at, my opinion  
10 is that kind of stuff should occur down near the more modern  
11 addition that's being done. I mean, I think that's the  
12 appropriate place for that kind of street art.

13 I think what's been proposed, I think, actually  
14 with these figures it changes the scale of the building.  
15 It's confusing to understand what the human scale is, and  
16 what this building is designed to reflect because of the tall  
17 transoms and the height of these figures on the front facade.  
18 I also think, you know, despite the attempts to pull it off  
19 of the facade, I think it obstructs too much of the historic  
20 resource. I think this primary facade is the most important  
21 facade of this resource on Wisconsin Avenue. And all this  
22 obstruction by these figures, I think, is detrimental to the  
23 preservation and interpretation of this resource.

24 I also think the scale of the figures in both the  
25 quantity, the amount of signage that you're proposing for

1 this front facade is overwhelming to me. I mean, I think  
2 it's just way too much. I particularly don't like the True  
3 Body Gift That Stay Fit banner on top of the doors. I think  
4 your previous what was submitted did not include that in the  
5 application, and I think that's definitely the wrong  
6 direction to go in on this building. I think something much  
7 closer to, at least on this front facade, something much  
8 closer to what was proposed before, one single sign that  
9 makes a very simple understated statement.

10 And, if you want to explore a street art concept  
11 idea like what you have on Montgomery Lane, but I would  
12 again, argue it should be slid down closer to the addition  
13 and off of this resource. I think that's the place to do  
14 this, whether it's perpendicular to the building, or parallel  
15 to the building, that's for you to sort out and figure out  
16 what you can do in public space and what's on your property.

17 So again, I don't see really anything on here. I  
18 think you kind of have to go back to the beginning, and go  
19 back to the previously approved HAWP, and come back, work  
20 with Staff, and come back to us with a very different  
21 proposal than what I think what exhibits here. We can go in  
22 either direction.

23 MS. HEILER: Yes, I would like to agree with  
24 Commissioner Sutton that the building itself is the work of  
25 art. And that I think putting the figures in front of it

1 detract from that. And, as Commissioner Barnes had noted,  
2 this statute next to this, the Madonna of the Trail is the  
3 statute that's been there a long time, and this creates  
4 clutter. I think that the lettering that, although it  
5 doesn't touch the building and is above this, it is so large,  
6 it's very distracting, and really detracts from the building  
7 itself. The True Body.

8 I can imagine the signage that you have on the  
9 Montgomery Lane as the Chairman has suggested, keeping that  
10 and moving it closer to the new addition, I would even  
11 simplify that. This is a lot of figures. It's a very, you  
12 know, on Montgomery Lane it has far less impact on the  
13 historic building, but it has some. And so, keeping that  
14 kind of thing somewhat simplified and moved to Montgomery  
15 Lane with a much simpler structure of the sign in front of it  
16 I think is the only way that this can possibly get approval.  
17 This is an important building. It's good that you preserved  
18 it. We'd like to continue to preserve it and the look of it.

19 MR. FIRESTONE: I'm going to concur with what the  
20 previous Commissioners have said about this. To me this is a  
21 very dignified and very significant building in downtown  
22 Bethesda. It's been there since before World War II,  
23 obviously. That's also coupled with the Madonna of the Trail  
24 statute, just up the street from here. And, I feel that the  
25 signage and so-called street art just totally overwhelms the

1 building. It detracts from it and diminishes its dignity.  
2 It's just overwhelming. It's just too much. I think the  
3 original signage that was proposed when you got approval for  
4 this originally through all these modifications was great.  
5 I'm was very much in favor of that signage. If this had come  
6 in when we had the original proposal, the original  
7 application, I would have voted to deny it. This is just to  
8 me not acceptable considering the significance and dignity of  
9 the building. It shouldn't be overwhelmed by this.

10 And as far as what regulations apply on the  
11 signage, I don't think what the county says you can and  
12 cannot do really applies. It's what we say at this point.

13 MS. BARNES: I have some sympathy with your desire  
14 to more prominently advertise the function of the building.  
15 We had insisted that the United States Post Office, which is  
16 etched in the stone above the main entrance stay, and I can  
17 understand that you want to show off its new purpose,  
18 although maybe you'll still get some guys who wonder in  
19 thinking they can buy postage stamps.

20 But, the proposal before us in this nice color  
21 print that you've brought is really not acceptable. It just  
22 clutters up the building. I would be supportive of using  
23 one, possibly two of the figures on the side going down  
24 Montgomery Lane. I would encourage you to also consider  
25 whether the people who are in charge of arts in the public

1 district would consider using one of these figures near,  
2 somewhere out on the sidewalk as a way of helping you with  
3 that announcement of your business. But I think we would  
4 like to see the more discreet sign on Wisconsin Avenue.

5 MR. ARKIN: What you presented here really has  
6 three parts, or I should say four parts. There's the text,  
7 True Body, the name of your company. Then there is  
8 essentially what looks to be a motto. It's not a sign saying  
9 True Body Fitness Center or something of that sort which  
10 would be identified. And that's on a structure which  
11 actually, tremendously interferes with the lines of the  
12 building.

13 The building is a neo-classical building, and the  
14 lines of the building and the shapes of the massing of the  
15 building, the shapes of the building are extremely important.  
16 And, I think that structure interferes with it too. Then you  
17 have what appear to be four separate pieces of public art,  
18 separate but related pieces of public art. And the signage  
19 for example, a structure B with a star where the art shine,  
20 which I believe is a sign that's erected several places by  
21 the Bethesda Urban District, which is in essence a  
22 municipality or has many of the functions of a municipality.  
23 That's in the public way, I'm not sure that it's a good  
24 analogy.

25 I think it's important, it's very important for you

1 to have a sign that's visible that identifies what you do so  
2 people can find you and be attracted to you. I like the idea  
3 of urban art. There may be some standards. You might want  
4 to check further with the county, and the with the Bethesda  
5 Urban District about how art pieces of sculpture can and  
6 should be used within the Urban District. Typically, sign  
7 restrictions, sign requirements, sign guidelines are in  
8 addition to zoning requirements and are in addition to  
9 historic preservation requirements. They have a growing pile  
10 of things to comply with rather than things to substitute.

11 I am fully in agreement with what's been said  
12 before. I think every aspect of the sign, except for the  
13 motto, "Get Fit Stay Fit" is too big. It really overwhelms  
14 the scale of the building. This would, actually, the text is  
15 so large, and figures are so large, that it would overwhelm  
16 just about anything than a large multi-story building. And I  
17 think you need to look at it from another way. I like the  
18 creativity, and I think the figures are a good start and  
19 might be used in some way. Or one of them could be used as a  
20 logo in addition to the True Body Fitness Center kind of  
21 thing, identifying it. I think you want to avoid casting a  
22 shadow over the Bethesda Post Office signage, because that is  
23 an architectural feature, as well as being an identifying  
24 feature.

25 You have a very difficult problem here. In working



1 this into -- working your signage into a historic building.  
2 However, you've done such a great job on adaptively reusing  
3 the historic building, adding to it in a way that complements  
4 the building, and yet contrasts with it in some ways. But, I  
5 think you can do much better than this, and I hope you do.  
6 Thank you.

7 MR. KIRWAN: Commissioner Voigt?

8 MS. VOIGT: Yeah, I'm not going to pile on, but  
9 just a couple of comments. I think that you obviously love  
10 historic buildings and you want to put your yoga studio in  
11 one of the most iconic buildings in Bethesda, so you have an  
12 opportunity as a Bethesda resident, I am going to True Body,  
13 oh, where is that? The Post Office. Everybody knows where  
14 this is. I think you can really lighten up the signage.  
15 Everybody would know where you are. You have a real  
16 opportunity here to just highlight that building. Like the  
17 square Apple Store, everybody knows the Apple Store because  
18 it's a block. Do you know what I mean? The building itself  
19 will speak for it. I think, as everyone said, on the side  
20 street you could do some of your animated figures. But, I  
21 would work with what you're already working with, which is  
22 this great building. And we will all know it's there.

23 MR. COHEN: Okay.

24 MR. SUTTON: I was trying to get to a question,  
25 instead I'll make a comment, which is, the original design

1 that was approved was a smaller sign, and I just would like  
2 to, like you to think that maybe you could do something with  
3 that size that would incorporate what you want to incorporate  
4 into a smaller area. Just a thought.

5 MR. COHEN: Understood.

6 MR. KIRWAN: Well, I think you heard from, pretty  
7 consistently from all of us. I think it's more or less back  
8 to the drawing board with the Wisconsin Avenue facade. And  
9 then, I think we're willing to entertain, you know, some sort  
10 of street art design on the Montgomery Avenue side. But I  
11 think that'll need some care and attention as well, because  
12 we do have the side elevation of our historic resource to be  
13 considerate of.

14 I would, you know, Staff is an excellent resource  
15 as far as knowing, you know, the best practices with historic  
16 preservation, and they also are a great resource know, you  
17 know, the kinds of things that we tend to approve and be  
18 sensitive to. So, I would definitely continue working with  
19 them, and I think they can be a great help in getting you to  
20 the finish line quicker.

21 MR. COHEN: Thanks for your time.

22 MR. KIRWAN: Okay. Thank you. The next item on  
23 our agenda is Preliminary Case II.B at 25911 Frederick Road  
24 in Hyattstown. Do we have a Staff Report?

25 MR. BRUECHERT: Yes, we do. Give me one second,