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STAFF MEMORANDUM

Meeting Date: **Thursday, May 18, 2023**
DATE: May 15, 2023
TO: Urban Design Commission
FROM: Shubee Sikka, Urban Designer
SUBJECT: **Additional Review Information**

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the members of the Urban Design Commission (UDC) and the public with technical information and planning analysis which may be useful in the review and decision-making process of the UDC. The Department of Planning and Development's intention is to provide a balanced view of the issues with the information it has at the time of the application's review. Additional information may be presented at the meeting that the UDC can take into consideration when discussing Sign Permit, Fence Appeal applications or Design Reviews.

Dear UDC Members,

The following is a brief discussion of the sign permit applications that you should have received in your meeting packet and staff's recommendations for these items.

I. Roll Call

II. Regular Agenda

Sign Permits

1. 271-283 Auburn Street – The Dental Specialists

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The property located at 271-283 Auburn Street is within Business 1 zoning district. The applicant is proposing to install the following sign:

1. One wall mounted principal sign, internally illuminated, with approximately 20 sq. ft. of sign area on the western façade facing Auburn Street. The application says that the sign is internally illuminated but there is external illumination

shown in photos. Staff reached out to the applicant about the illumination but hasn't heard back yet.

TECHNICAL REVIEW:

- The proposed wall mounted principal sign appears to be consistent with the dimensional controls specified in §5.2.8. Per the Zoning Ordinance, one principal sign is allowed, which the applicant is not exceeding, and on this façade of 25 feet, the maximum size of the sign allowed is 75 sq. ft., which the applicant is also not exceeding.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the principal sign as proposed on the condition that the applicant clarifies if the sign is internally or externally illuminated.

2. 43-53 Lincoln Street – Focus Real Estate

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The property located at 43-53 Lincoln Street is within a Business 1 zoning district. The applicant is proposing to install the following signs:

1. One wall mounted split principal sign, internally illuminated, with approximately 25 sq. ft. of sign area on the southern building façade facing Lincoln Street.
2. One wall mounted split principal sign, non-illuminated, with approximately 10 sq. ft. of sign area on the southern building façade facing Lincoln Street.

TECHNICAL REVIEW:

- Both the proposed wall mounted split principal signs appear to be consistent with the dimensional controls specified in §5.2.8. Per the Zoning Ordinance, two split principal signs are allowed, which the applicant is not exceeding, and on this façade of 33.5 feet, the maximum size of the total signage allowed is 100 sq. ft., which the applicant is also not exceeding. Per Zoning Ordinance §5.2.8, *“In particular instances, due to the nature of the use of the premises, the architecture of the building, or its location with reference to the street, the total allowable sign area may be divided between two wall signs which together constitute the principal wall sign.”*

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of both split principal signs as proposed.

3. 575 Washington Street – Dearborn Academy

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The property located at 575 Washington Street is within Multi-Residence 2 zoning district. The applicant is proposing to install the following signs:

1. One wall mounted principal sign, non-illuminated, with approximately 16 sq. ft. of sign area on the southern façade facing Washington Street.

2. Two flag portable signs, non-illuminated, with approximately 16 sq. ft. each of sign area on the southern façade facing Washington Street.

TECHNICAL REVIEW:

- The proposed wall mounted principal sign appears to be not consistent with the dimensional controls specified in §5.2.7. Per the Zoning Ordinance, one principal wall sign is allowed, which the applicant is not exceeding, the maximum size of the sign allowed is 10 sq. ft. which the applicant is exceeding.
- The two flag signs are portable signs which is a prohibited sign. Per the Zoning Ordinance §5.2.5.C, *“Portable signs not permanently affixed, anchored, or secured to the ground or a structure on the lot it occupies, including trailer signs and signs affixed to or painted on a vehicle permanently parked on the premises so as to serve as a sign, but excluding signs affixed to or painted on a vehicle temporarily parked on the premises”*.
- Applicant will need to apply for a dover waiver to allow all three signs. Applicant also needs to apply for an Administrative Site Plan Review.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff seeks recommendation from the Commission regarding the proposed signs. Applicant will need to apply for an Administrative Site Plan Review and seek a Dover Waiver.

4. 1185-1197 Centre Street – TD Bank

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The property located at 1185-1197 Centre Street is within a Business 1 district. The applicant is proposing to install the following sign:

1. One wall mounted principal sign, internally illuminated, with approximately 28 sq. ft. of sign area on the southern building façade facing Pleasant Street.
2. One wall mounted secondary sign, internally illuminated, with approximately 18 sq. ft. of sign area on the eastern building façade facing Centre Street.

TECHNICAL REVIEW:

- The proposed wall mounted principal sign appears to be consistent with the dimensional controls specified in §5.2.8. Per the Zoning Ordinance, one principal sign is allowed, which the applicant is not exceeding, and on this façade of 31 feet, the maximum size of the sign allowed is 93 sq. ft., which the applicant is also not exceeding.
- The proposed wall mounted secondary sign appears to be consistent with the dimensional controls specified in §5.2.8. Per the Zoning Ordinance, two secondary signs are allowed, which the applicant is not exceeding, and on this façade of 28 feet 10 inches, the maximum size of the sign allowed is 28.5 sq. ft., which the applicant is also not exceeding.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of both proposed principal sign and secondary sign.

5. 289-291 Watertown Street – Chavanni Salon

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The property located at 289-291 Watertown Street is within a Business 1 district. The applicant is proposing to install the following sign:

1. One wall mounted principal sign, externally illuminated, with approximately 32 sq. ft. of sign area on the southern building façade facing Watertown Street.
2. One wall mounted secondary sign, non-illuminated, with approximately 18 sq. ft. of sign area on the western building façade facing Faxon Street.

TECHNICAL REVIEW:

- The proposed wall mounted principal sign appears to be consistent with the dimensional controls specified in §5.2.8. Per the Zoning Ordinance, one principal sign is allowed, which the applicant is not exceeding, and on this façade of 19 feet, the maximum size of the sign allowed is 57 sq. ft., which the applicant is also not exceeding.
- The proposed wall mounted secondary sign appears to be consistent with the dimensional controls specified in §5.2.8. Per the Zoning Ordinance, two secondary signs are allowed, which the applicant is not exceeding, and on this façade of 8.3 feet, the maximum size of the sign allowed is 8.3 sq. ft., which the applicant is also not exceeding.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the proposed principal sign and secondary sign.

6. 2-4 Los Angeles Street - Allee

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The property located at 2-4 Los Angeles Street is within a Manufacturing zoning district and is the subject of a comprehensive permit (attachment A). The applicant is proposing to install the following signs (revised list since May meeting):

1. Four-sided free-standing principal sign, internally illuminated, with approximately 15 sq. ft. of sign area on each side under the bridge between buildings 1A and 1B (location #1).
2. One wall mounted secondary sign, internally illuminated, with approximately 22 sq. ft. of sign area on the southern building façade facing Midland Avenue (location #2).
3. One perpendicular secondary sign, internally illuminated, with approximately 6 sq. ft. of sign area on the southern building façade of building 1 facing Midland Avenue (location #3).

4. One wall mounted directional sign (Leasing Center), with approximately 3 sq. ft. of sign area on the southern part of building 1 facing Midland Avenue (location #4).
5. One wall mounted directional sign (Parking sign), internally illuminated, with approximately 3.2 sq. ft. of sign area on the southern building façade of building 1 facing Midland Avenue (location #5).
6. One wall mounted directional sign (Parking sign), internally illuminated, with approximately 3.2 sq. ft. of sign area (location #6). The sign is on the southern building façade of building 2 facing Los Angeles St.
7. One wall mounted directional sign (Parking sign), internally illuminated, with approximately 3.2 sq. ft. of sign area (location #7). The sign is on the southern building façade of building 2 facing Midland Avenue.
8. One wall mounted directional sign (Parking sign), internally illuminated, with approximately 3.2 sq. ft. of sign area (location #8). The sign is on the southern building façade of building 1 facing Riverdale Avenue
9. One wall mounted secondary sign, internally illuminated, with approximately 5 sq. ft. of sign area. (location #9) The sign is located on the southern building façade of building 2 facing Midland Avenue.

TECHNICAL REVIEW:

- The proposed free-standing principal sign appears to be not consistent with the dimensional controls specified in §5.2.8. Per the Zoning Ordinance, Sign area of a free-standing sign is defined as the entire area of one side of such sign such that two faces which are back-to-back are counted only once. Since this sign has four sides, the applicant will need to seek relief for it. Per the Zoning Ordinance, one free-standing principal sign is allowed, which the applicant is not exceeding, the maximum size of the sign allowed is 35 sq. ft. and height of 16 feet, which the applicant is also not exceeding. Per Zoning ordinance §5.2.13 “A. *In particular instances, the City Council may grant a special permit to allow free-standing signs and exceptions to the limitations imposed by this Sec. 5.2 on the number, size, location and height of signs where it is determined that the nature of the use of the premises, the architecture of the building or its location with reference to the street is such that free-standing signs or exceptions should be permitted in the public interest.*
B. In granting such a permit, the City Council shall specify the size, type and location and shall impose such other terms and restrictions as it may deem to be in the public interest and in accordance with the 780 CMR. All free-standing signs shall not exceed 35 square feet in area, or 10 feet in any linear dimension, or 16 feet in height from the ground, except as further described in Sec. 5.2.7.” There is an existing Comprehensive Permit for this property, the applicant will need to apply for a consistency ruling to the Commissioner of ISD.
- Both the proposed 22 sq. ft. and 5 sq. ft. secondary signs (location #2 & 9) appear to be consistent with the dimensional controls specified in §5.2.8. Per the Zoning Ordinance, two secondary signs are allowed, which the applicant is not exceeding,

and on this façade of 224 feet, the maximum size of the sign allowed is 50 sq. ft., which the applicant is also not exceeding.

- One proposed 6 sq. ft. perpendicular secondary sign (location #3) appears to be not consistent with the dimensional controls specified in §5.2.8. Per the Zoning Ordinance, two secondary signs are allowed, which the applicant is exceeding.
- One proposed 3 sq. ft. directional sign (location #4) appears to be consistent with the dimensional controls specified in §5.2.8. Per the Zoning Ordinance, directional signs of up to 3 sq. ft. are allowed, which the applicant is not exceeding.
- Four proposed 3.2 sq. ft. directional signs (locations #5-8) appear to be not consistent with the dimensional controls specified in §5.2.8. Per the Zoning Ordinance, directional signs of up to 3 sq. ft. are allowed, which the applicant is exceeding.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends the applicant apply to the Commissioner of Inspectional Services Department (ISD) for a Consistency Ruling since there is an existing Comprehensive Permit for this property. Staff has the following recommendations about each sign:

- Four-sided free-standing principal sign (location #1) – apply for consistency ruling to the Commissioner of ISD.
- Two 22 sq. ft. and 5 sq. ft. secondary signs (locations #2 & 9) – recommend for approval.
- One 6 sq. ft. perpendicular secondary sign (location #3) – apply for consistency ruling to the Commissioner of ISD.
- One proposed 3 sq. ft. directional sign (location #4) – recommend for approval.
- Four proposed 3.2 sq. ft. directional signs (locations #5-8) – apply for consistency ruling to the Commissioner of ISD.

Comprehensive Sign Package

1. 1-55 Boylston Street – The Street (continued from March meeting)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The property located at 1-55 Boylston Street is within Business 4 zoning district and has a comprehensive sign package authorized by a special permit via Board Order #218-22.

The Street Comprehensive Sign Package was first developed and approved through special permit in February of 2013. The package was amended in April of 2020 and then in 2022 with a refreshed set of free-standing signs and re-organized set of wall sign elevations. The applicant is coming back for another amendment to add tenant, directory, capital, and wayfinding signage for 27 Boylston Street. The current proposal reflects the additional directory, tenant, wayfinding signs and extension of sign bands for 27 Boylston Street. At the recommendation of the planning department, the updated elevations and sign bands were developed for 27 Boylston Street.

The applicant is proposing to amend the special permit for the following signs:

1. Three new wall directory signs on the eastern façade of 27 Boylston Street (W5).
2. Three new column capital signs on the eastern façade of 27 Boylston Street (W6).
3. Three new directory signs on the southern façade of 27 Boylston Street (W5).
4. One free-standing vehicular directional sign, with 3 sq. ft. of sign area, in a landscaped island north of 27 Boylston Street (M3).
5. The applicant has also extended sign bands and tenant sign locations for 27 Boylston Street south and west elevation.

As per the Waivers in the previously approved Comprehensive Sign Package, Wall Directory Signs and Blade Panel and Column Signs are described as:

“Wall Directory Signs

Wall directory signs may include multiple tenant names of tenants within any building on the property. The selection of tenant names may change at the discretion of the owner. Each tenant sign may be up to 100 square feet.

Blade Panel and Column Capital Signs

Subject to conformity to the maximum area requirements established by special permit waiver, blade panel and column capital signs may change at the discretion of the owner following review and approval by the Owner and the Planning Department, following consultation with the Urban Design Commission.”

TECHNICAL REVIEW:

- UDC reviewed this application at the February and March meeting and recommended the submitted sign package for approval at the March meeting. UDC made the following decision at the March meeting:
MOTION: Mr. Kaufman made a motion to recommend the comprehensive sign package for approval 1-55 Boylston Street with an exception. Mr. Doolin seconded the motion, and none opposed. All the members present voted, with a 4-0 vote, Michael Kaufman, Jim Doolin, John Downie, and William Winkler in favor and none opposed. The only exception is to remove signage from the columns.
- The applicant realized after the March meeting that one of the sign bands was missing from the approved sign package. Please see the note below from the applicant regarding it.

NOTE FROM THE APPLICANT:

“In the process of going to submit our Comprehensive Signage Package for special permit we realized that the primary tenant sign band for the Southern patio tenant spaces on the south (Route 9 side) of 27 Boylston was missing from the package that you approved. This

sign band was approved in the previous package and inadvertently got dropped off of the current package. I truly apologize for this oversight. I would like to request your endorsement that we can include this missing primary sign band on the package that will be officially filed for special permit. Below is a summary of the change.

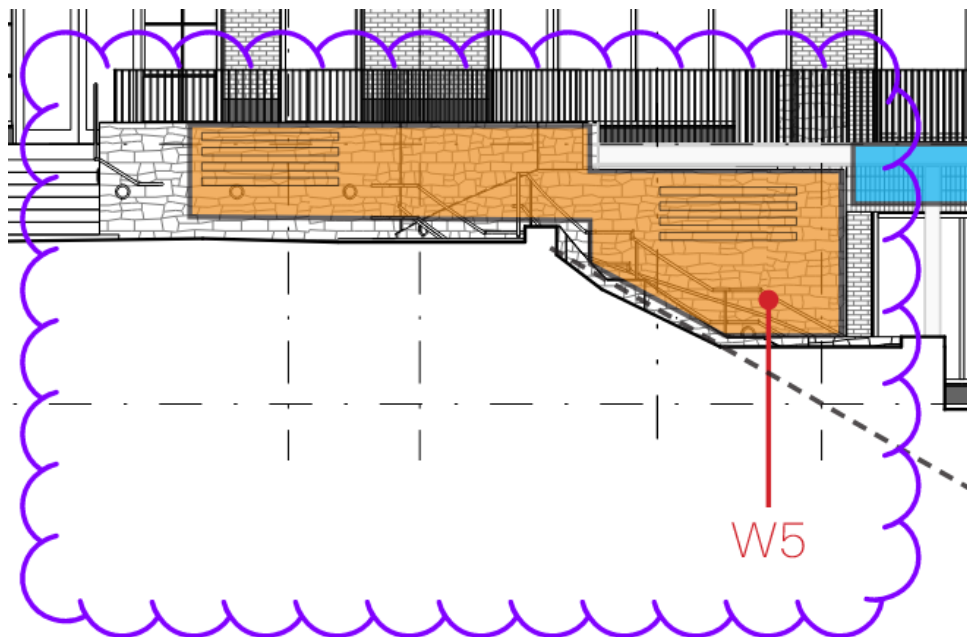
South Building Elevation pointing out the wall that I am referencing (below).

This is the exterior wall that runs along the outdoor stairs leading into the southern entrance to the paseo.



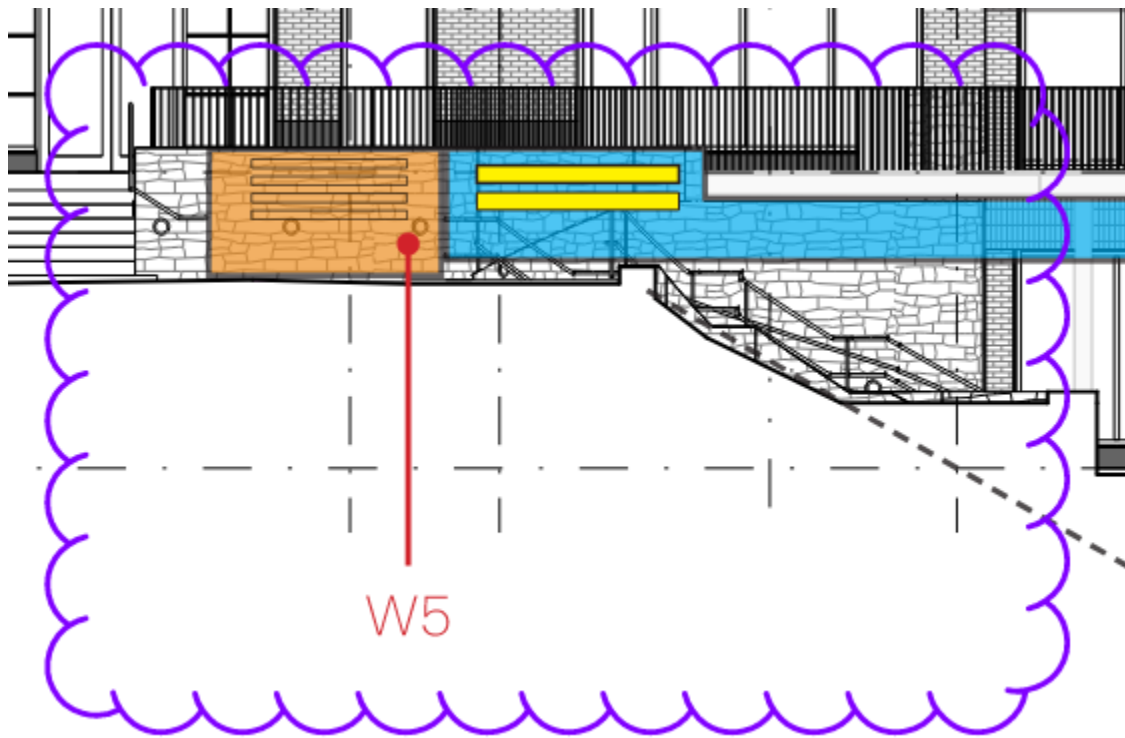
Sign Bands Shown in Package Reviewed March 2023 (below)

We showed a Wall Directory band covering this entire wall.



Sign Band that we are proposing for this wall (below)

We would like to have the directory signage remain on the left portion of the wall and to reserve the right side of this wall for a primary tenant signage band for the tenants directly to the right that are located off the southern patio and below grade. These spaces are only accessible via stairs or an exterior lift and this will be critical for these tenants as they will need signage that is visible from the street level.



We did show in the requested renderings what it would look like to have a directory sign on the left and another sign on the right (below).

With what we are proposing, the sign that says "Paseo Entrance" would be tenant signs instead. Also noting that this proposed tenant sign band was already approved by the UDC in the last package.



Thank you so much for your consideration of this request."

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff seeks recommendation regarding the changes from UDC to the Land Use Committee of the City Council.

III. Old/New Business

1. Approval of Minutes

Staff has provided draft meeting minutes from the March meeting that require ratification (Attachment B).

Attachments

- Attachment A – 2-4 Los Angeles Street - Recorded Comprehensive Permit Agreement
- Attachment B – March UDC meeting minutes