

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION
PERMITS IN NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICTS
AUGUST 28, 2017
NRD-2017-0064
500 Congress Avenue
Congress Avenue Historic District

PROPOSAL

Install new signage for CVS.

PROJECT SPECIFICATIONS

The applicant proposes the installation of a wall sign, 2 vertical blade signs, a storefront sign, and a sign at the receiving door on the 5th Street side. The entire building is within the Congress Avenue Historic District, but is non-contributing due to alterations. There is also a project underway to transform the facades of the building.

The proposed signs are as follows:

For Congress Avenue:

1. A 1.77-square foot internally-illuminated blade sign to the left of the principal entry. This sign will be constructed of white acrylic with a red translucent overlay.
2. A 6-square foot internally-illuminated blade sign at the second story level at the cutaway corner of the building. This proposed sign will be constructed in a metal frame with a white polycarbonate face with a red translucent vinyl overlay.
3. A 1.86-square foot non-illuminated flush-mounted sign advertising store hours.

For 5th Street:

4. A 33.07-square foot sign consisting of internally-illuminated acrylic channel letters mounted on a wire frame, mounted on the 5th Street wall of the building between the 1st and second stories.
5. A 3-square foot non-illuminated aluminum sign for the receiving door at the west end of the 5th Street elevation of the building.

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW

The Commission's sign standards for buildings within the downtown historic districts state:

I. SIGN TYPES

A. FLUSH-MOUNTED SIGNS

A flush-mounted wall sign is one that is mounted flat to the wall.

LOCATION

- Locate a flush-mounted wall sign just above the display window. Do not locate a flush-mounted wall sign above second-floor windows.
- When feasible, place a wall sign such that it aligns with others in the block.
- When planning a wall sign, determine if decorative moldings exist that could define a "sign panel." If so, locate flush-mounted signs such that they fit within panels formed by moldings or transom panels on the façade. In no case should a sign obscure significant façade features.

SIZE

- In general, the maximum wall sign area on a building should not exceed 7% of the overall façade area; in some cases, however, the Commission may consider approving a maximum of 10%, if overall compatibility with the District is demonstrated.
- The maximum height of an individual flush-mounted sign shall be 2 feet.

NUMBER OF SIGNS

- Only one flush-mounted sign shall be allowed for each distinct façade module.

B. PROJECTING SIGNS

LOCATION

- A projecting sign should be located near the business entrance, just above the door or to the side of it, near eye level. The bottom of the projecting sign, however, shall be a minimum of 9 feet above the sidewalk.

SIZE

- The maximum size of an individual projecting sign (one face) shall be 6 square feet. It may not extend from the building façade for a greater distance than 6 feet or a distance equal to 2/3 the width of the abutting sidewalk, whichever distance is less.

NUMBER OF SIGNS

- In general, only one projecting sign per building façade is allowed. However, where the Commission determines that the result would be compatible with the District, one projecting sign shall be allowed for each distinct facade module of a building.

II. SIGN MATERIALS

- Use materials that are compatible with the materials of the building façade.
- Painted wood and metal are appropriate materials for signs. Do not use unfinished materials, including unpainted wood.
- Use plastic only in limited amounts. Plastic may not be the predominant material on any sign.
- Do not use highly reflective materials.

IV. SIGN LIGHTING

- Use an external, shielded lamp to direct light at the sign. Halo lighting (pin-mounted letters over the lighting source) or recessed can lighting in awnings are acceptable.

DO NOT USE:

1. Internal illumination
2. Fluorescent lights
3. Sodium vapor lights.

STAFF COMMENTS

The size of the all the proposed signs meets the sign standards for the historic districts. The aluminum receiving door sign and the store hours wall plaque both meet all the criteria for approval, but the other signs do not – they have plastic as their primary material, and they are internally illuminated, all in violation of the Commission's sign standards.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Deny all but the receiving door aluminum sign and the store hours wall plaque and direct the applicant to re-design the signs in a material and with lighting that conforms to the historic district sign standards.