

**HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION
MARCH 25, 2019
APPLICATION FOR A HISTORIC SIGN PERMIT
SB-2018-215268, SB-2019-001085-86
Day Building
319 Congress Avenue**

PROPOSAL

Install a blade sign and awning-mounted letters.

PROJECT SPECIFICATIONS

The proposed project has two parts:

- 1) Install a blade sign to the right of the entrance. The sign will be manufactured of aluminum, with painted acrylic letters and logo, and mounted on the awning.
- 2) Install awning-mounted logo and letters on the left bay. The logo and letters will be approximately 2'4" high and 18' long, with a total area of approximately 42 square feet. The proposal has been revised to comprise separate letters, not entire words.

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW

Guidelines for signs on historic landmarks include:

Number of signs. The Commission allows one sign per building, unless the building has multiple tenants; in this case, the Commission may allow one sign per façade module, if the façade modules correspond to tenant spaces. The Commission may also allow one sign for each street frontage if the building is at an intersection. A single directory sign is appropriate for a large building with multiple tenants.

The proposed project includes two signs on the left structural bay. Though both bays will be occupied by the same business, the bays traditionally correspond to separate tenant spaces. The proposed project does not meet this guideline.

Sign types. The Commission may allow window signs, awning signs, projecting signs, and flush mounted signs for most commercial buildings. Freestanding signs are allowed for office and retail uses in historic residential buildings.

The proposed project includes awning-mounted letters. The guidelines allow awning signs but do not address signs mounted atop an awning. Google Street View from 2011 through 2018 shows awning-mounted letters reading "ANNIES" in the approximate location of the proposed signage. The proposed letters extend across the left bay, while the existing (or past) letters extended across roughly half of the same bay.

Sign size. The maximum size for signs depends on the sign type. Projecting (blade) signs may be up to 6 square feet. Awning signs may be the lesser of 20% of the awning panel or 8 square feet.

The proposed blade sign is less than 6 square feet. The awning-mounted letters have an area of approximately 42 square feet.

Sign Design, Coloring and Materials. Use simple shapes, such as rectangular or oval signs. The Commission recommends painted wood or metal signs with matte finishes for all signs; plastic, reflective materials, and unfinished surfaces are not allowed. Limit the colors used in a sign to no more than three. For sites with multiple signs, all signs should have

corresponding or matching designs, coloring and materials. Signs should match or complement the existing color scheme of the building to the maximum extent feasible.

The proposed blade sign has a somewhat elaborate shape, but it is small; staff does not believe that the shape will be distracting. The sign will be fabricated from metal, with a black and white color scheme. Both signs have corresponding designs, coloring, and materials. The proposed project somewhat meets this guideline.

Lettering. *No more than two typefaces are allowed. Avoid lettering which appears too contemporary in the sign.*

It appears that three typefaces are used in the proposed logo and sign. The third typeface only comprises the “WM” in the center of the logo. The proposed project does not meet this guideline, but staff does not believe that the third typeface will be distracting.

Lighting. *Lighting must be indirect, and may be accomplished through shielded incandescent lights attached to the top of the sign, “halo” lighting, or recessed can lighting in awnings. Internally-lit cabinet signs are not allowed for signs on historic buildings or within the historic districts.*

The logo sign has acrylic push-through letters and graphics with halo illumination. The blade signs are not internally illuminated. The proposed project meets this guideline.

Neon Signs. *Neon signs are prohibited on pre-1950 building facades; an exception may be made for existing pre-1950 neon signage, or with photographic proof of a historic (pre-1950) neon sign on the building, but only if the neon sign does not detract from the historic character of the building or area. The Commission may consider limited neon on a post-1950 façade, but encourages backlit neon over exposed neon.*

Not applicable.

Sign Placement. *Flush-mounted and projecting (blade) signs should be positioned near the business entrance immediately above the principal entry to the business. Single-tenant signs are not allowed over doorways serving multiple tenants. As required by the city land development code, the bottom of the sign shall be a minimum of nine (9) feet above the sidewalk. When feasible, place signs to align with others in the block. Signs should not obscure or cover architectural elements, such as windows, decorative banding, or other ornamentation.*

The blade sign is positioned near the business entrance. The pilaster capitals are somewhat visible beyond the letters. The proposed project somewhat meets this guideline.

Sign Mounting. *New signs should utilize existing mounting apparatus whenever possible. If new bolt holes or brackets are necessary for sign installation, care should be taken to ensure that installation does not damage historic building materials in any way. Bolting through mortar joints avoids damage to historic stone or brick.*

Both signs are proposed to be mounted on the non-historic awning. The proposed project meets this guideline.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Suspend the blade sign(s) from the awning; separate and lighten letters on the awning sign. Two changes have been made: One blade sign has been removed and the other is suspended from the awning; the letters on the awning sign have been separated.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Consider the request.

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Photos

319 Congress Avenue.



Detail of structural bay with primary entrance.