

# HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

July 15, 2015

Agenda Item No: 12

**HDRC CASE NO:** 2015-281  
**ADDRESS:** 727 S ALAMO ST  
**LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** NCB 903 BLK LOT 15 EXC S TRI OR A-50  
**ZONING:** C2 IDZ H HS  
**CITY COUNCIL DIST.:** 1  
**DISTRICT:** Lavaca Historic District  
**LANDMARK:** Medex Medical Supplies  
**APPLICANT:** David Garcia  
**OWNER:** Francisco Velasquez  
**TYPE OF WORK:** Signage  
**REQUEST:**

The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for approval to install a reverse channel LED halo illuminated double faced blade sign. The aluminum sign will feature a capsule acrylic face with reverse channel letters and logo. The proposed signage totals 28 sq. ft. per sign-side, with an overall height of 96 inches and width of 42 inches. The sign will have a total area of 56 square feet. The sign will be installed at the second floor level of the masonry constructed building.

## APPLICABLE CITATIONS:

*Historic Design Guidelines, Chapter 6, Guidelines for Signage*

### 1. General

#### A. GENERAL

- i. *Number and size*—Each building will be allowed one major and two minor signs. Total requested signage should not exceed 50 square feet.
- ii. *New signs*—Select the type of sign to be used based on evidence of historic signs or sign attachment parts along the building storefront where possible. Design signs to respect and respond to the character and/or period of the area in which they are being placed. Signs should identify the tenant without creating visual clutter or distracting from building features and historic districts.
- iii. *Scale*—Design signage to be in proportion to the facade, respecting the building's size, scale and mass, height, and rhythms and sizes of window and door openings. Scale signage (in terms of its height and width) to be subordinate to the overall building composition.

#### C. PLACEMENT AND INSTALLATION

- iv. *Pedestrian orientation*—Orient signs toward the sidewalk to maintain the pedestrian oriented nature of the historic districts.

#### D. DESIGN

- i. *Inappropriate materials*—Do not use plastic, fiberglass, highly reflective materials that will be difficult to read, or other synthetic materials not historically used in the district.
- ii. *Appropriate materials*—Construct signs of durable materials used for signs during the period of the building's construction, such as wood, wrought iron, steel, aluminum, and metal grill work.
- iii. *Color*—Limit the number of colors used on a sign to three. Select a dark background with light lettering to make signs more legible.
- iv. *Typefaces*—Select letter styles and sizes that complement the overall character of the building façade. Avoid hard-to-read or overly intricate styles.

#### E. LIGHTING

- i. *Lighting sources*—Use only indirect or bare-bulb sources that do not produce glare to illuminate signs. All illumination shall be steady and stationary. Internal illumination should not be used.

ii. *Neon lighting*—Incorporate neon lighting as an integral architectural element or artwork appropriate to the site, if used.

#### UDC. Sec. 35-612. Signs and Billboards

**(c)Standards for Sign Design and Placement.** In considering whether to recommend approval or disapproval of an application for a permit to construct or alter signage on a building, object, site, or structure designated a historic landmark or located in a historic district, review shall be guided by the following standards in addition to any specific design guidelines approved by city council.

(1)Primary sign design considerations shall be identification and legibility. Size, scale, height, color and location of signs shall be harmonious with, and properly related to, the overall historic characteristic of the district and structure.

(2)Signs which describe, point, or direct the reader to a specific place or along a specific course, such as "entrance," "exit," and "handicap access" signs, as well as government signs, shall be reviewed by the historic and design review commission but shall not be included in total allowable signage area. Emergency signs shall be exempt from historic and design review commission approval.

(3)All graphic elements shall reinforce the architectural integrity of any building. Signs should not disfigure, damage, mar, alter, or conceal architectural features or details and should be limited to sizes that are in scale with the architecture and the streetscape. Emblems and symbols of identification used as principal structural or architectural design elements on a facade shall not be included in the total allowable signage per facade per structure when approved by the historic and design review commission. The historic and design review commission shall be guided by the building's proportion and scale when such elements are incorporated.

(4)Graphics and signage may be illuminated by indirect, internal, or bare-bulb sources, providing that glare is not produced; by indirect light sources concealed by a hood or diffuser; by internal illumination with standard opal glass or other translucent material or with an equal or smaller light transmission factor. All illumination shall be steady and stationary. Neon lighting may be permitted when used as an integral architectural element or artwork appropriate to the site. For purposes of this subsection, "glare" shall mean an illumination level of at least six (6) Lux at the property boundary. If internal illumination is used, it should be designed to be subordinate to the overall building composition.

**(d)Proportion of Signs.** For all signage, width and height must be in proportion to the facade, respecting the size, scale and mass of the facade, building height, and rhythms and sizes of window and door openings. The building facade shall be considered as part of an overall sign program but the sign shall be subordinate to the overall building composition. Additionally, signs should respect and respond to the character and/or period of the area in which they are being placed.

#### **(e)Number and Size of Signs.**

(1)**Number and Size.** The historic and design review commission shall be guided in its decisions by the total number of businesses or services per building and the percentage of floor space occupied by each business or service. Applicants may apply for up to three (3) signs total, with total signage per facade no bigger than twenty (20) percent of the proposed facade it will be placed upon. Total signage for all applicants shall not exceed fifty (50) square feet unless the historic and design review commission recommends additional signs and/or total footage. Notwithstanding the above, signs may not exceed the maximum size and height limitation for signage contained in chapter 28, article 9. The applicant is strongly advised to coordinate his signage plan with signage plans of other building tenants. It is also recommended that the building owner or their agent develop a master signage plan or signage guidelines for the total building or property. If a property has an approved master signage plan on file with the office of historic preservation, applications for signage may be approved administratively at the discretion of the historic preservation officer provided that they comply with such master signage plan. This provision does not apply to districts and landmarks in river improvement overlay (RIO) districts, which shall be guided by [35-678](#) and [35-681](#), respectively.

(2)**Sign Area.** The sign area shall be determined in the following manner:

**A.Sign Areas.** The area of a sign shall be computed on the actual area of the sign. Sign area shall be calculated as the area within a parallelogram, triangle, circle, semicircle or other regular geometric figure including all letters, figures, graphics or other elements of the sign, together with the framework or background of the sign. The supporting framework of the sign shall not be included in determining sign area unless such supporting framework forms an integral part of the sign display, as determined by the historic preservation officer. If the sign is located on a decorative fence or wall, when such fence or wall otherwise meets these or other ordinances or regulations and is clearly incidental to the display itself, the fence or wall shall not be included in the computation of the sign area. In the cases of signs with more than one (1) sign face, including but not restricted to double-faced signs, back-to-back signs, overhanging signs, and projecting signs, each side of the sign shall be included in total allowable signage area.

**B.Channel Letter Signs.** For channel letter signs, the sign area shall be the smallest rectangle that will encompass the limits of the writing, including spaces between the letters. Each advertising message shall be considered separately.

(3)**Building Identification Signs.** An additional building identification sign may be placed on a building with multiple tenants, if the building name is not the same as the business(s) housed within and such sign is approved as provided for in this section. This type of sign is to identify a building as a destination and shall not be included in the total allowable signage area.

#### **FINDINGS:**

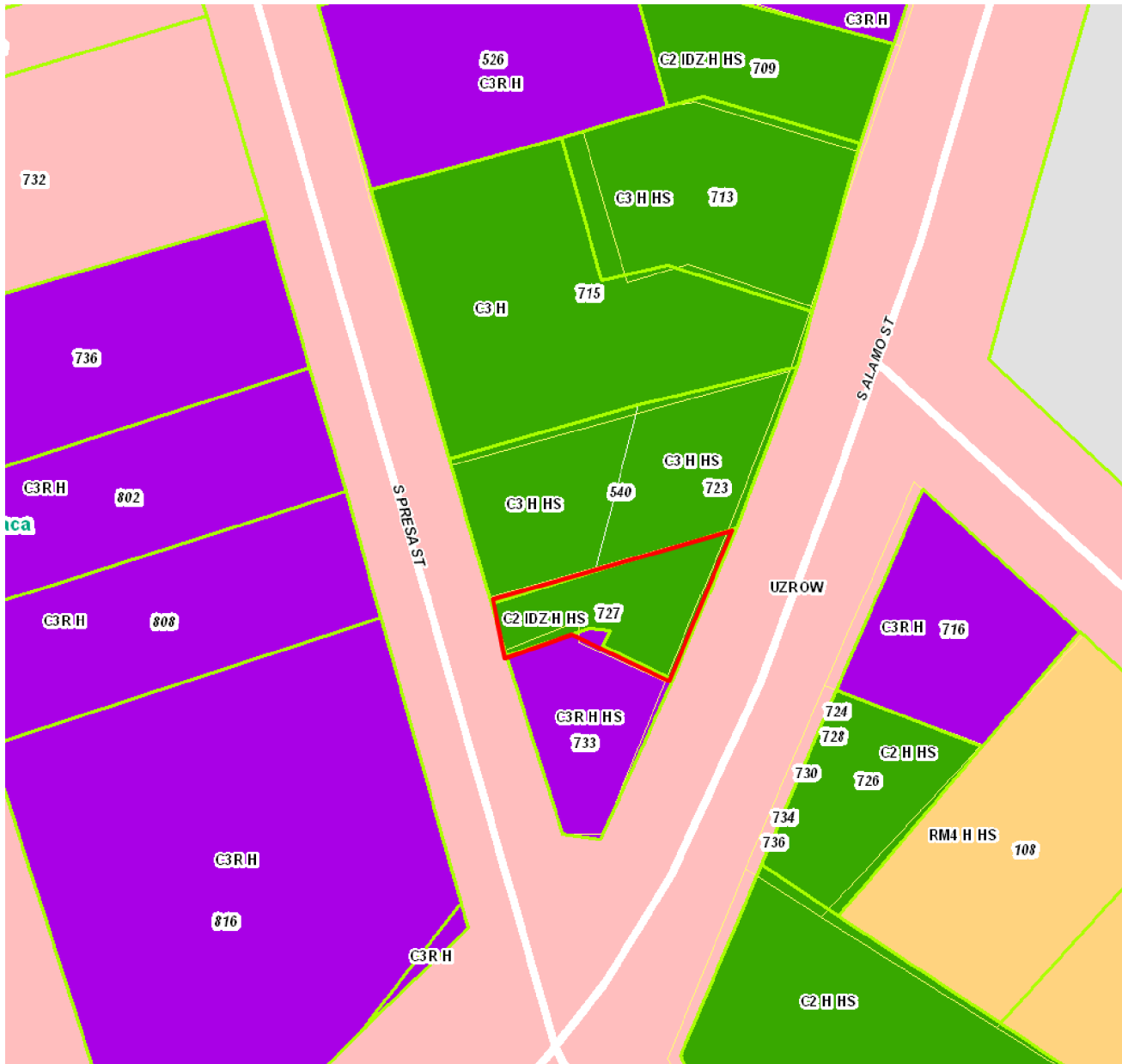
- a. The proposed sign is consistent with the Guidelines for Signage 1.A.ii-iii. & 1.Civ. in terms of the design, placement, type and scale. The proposed graphic elements and scale of the sign reinforce the architectural integrity of the building and streetscape along S. Alamo. This is consistent with the UDC sec. 35-612(c).
- b. According to the Guidelines for Signage, total requested signage for a building should not exceed 50 square feet. The proposed blade sign is approximately 56 square feet with both sides counted. This is not consistent with the Guidelines for Signage 1.A.i. or the UDC sec. 35-612(e)(1&2).
- c. According to the Guidelines for Signage 1.D., signs should be constructed of durable materials, consist of three colors or less and be easily read. The applicant has proposed to construct this sign of aluminum, and feature the simplistic graphic and name in black and white. This is consistent with the Guidelines.
- d. The Guidelines for Signage 1.E.i. state that only indirect or bare-bulb sources that do not produce glare to illuminate signs should be used, that all illumination shall be steady and stationary and that internal illumination should not be used. While the proposed sign will be lit by internal LED lights, the LED bulbs will not produce glare and will remain steady and stationary. This is consistent with the Guidelines.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval with the stipulation that the sign not exceed the maximum area permitted (50 square feet).

#### **CASE MANAGER:**

Alyson Smith





## 727 S. Alamo

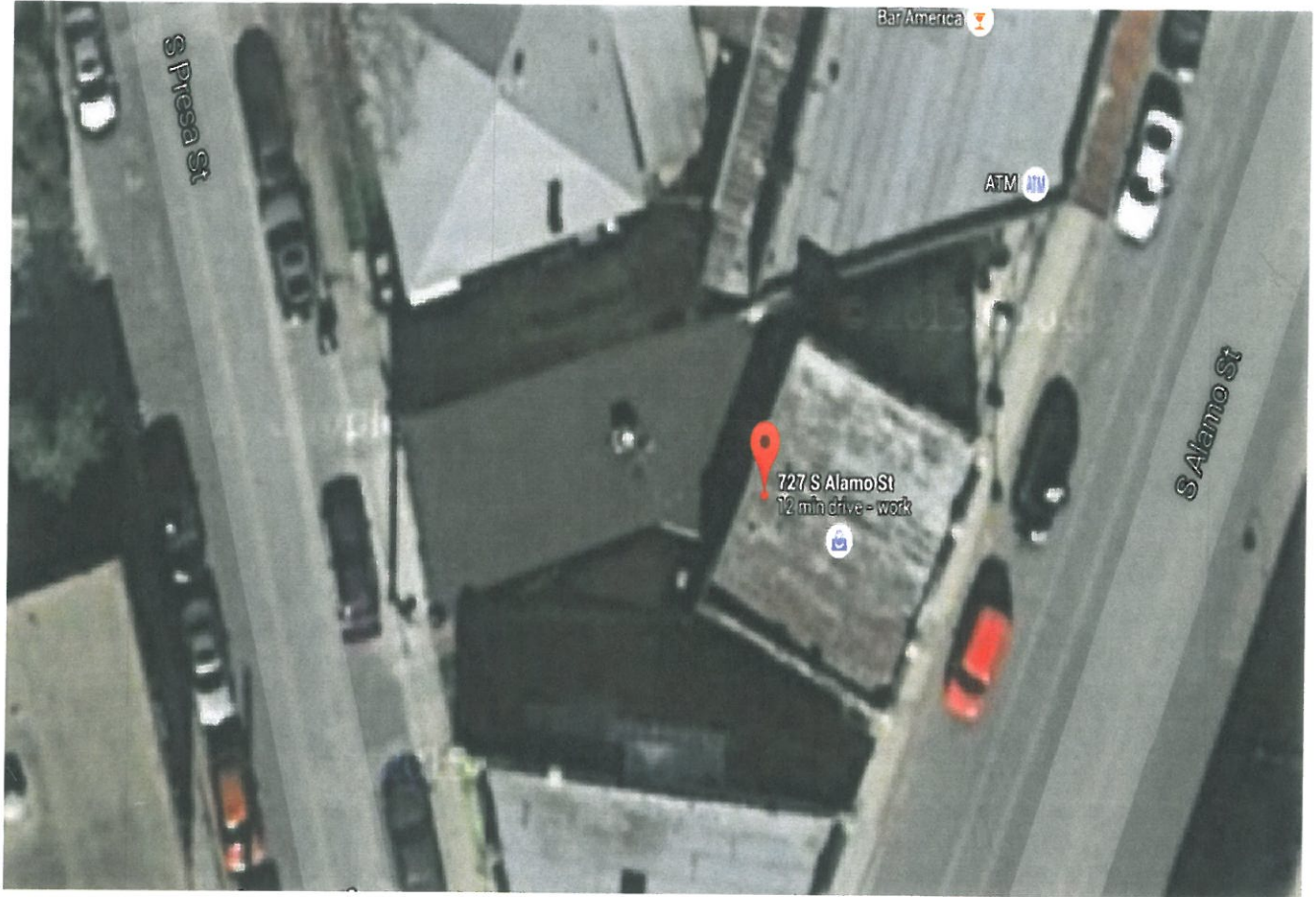
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605 W. RHAPSODY DR.  
SAN ANTONIO TX. 78216  
210-897-2752





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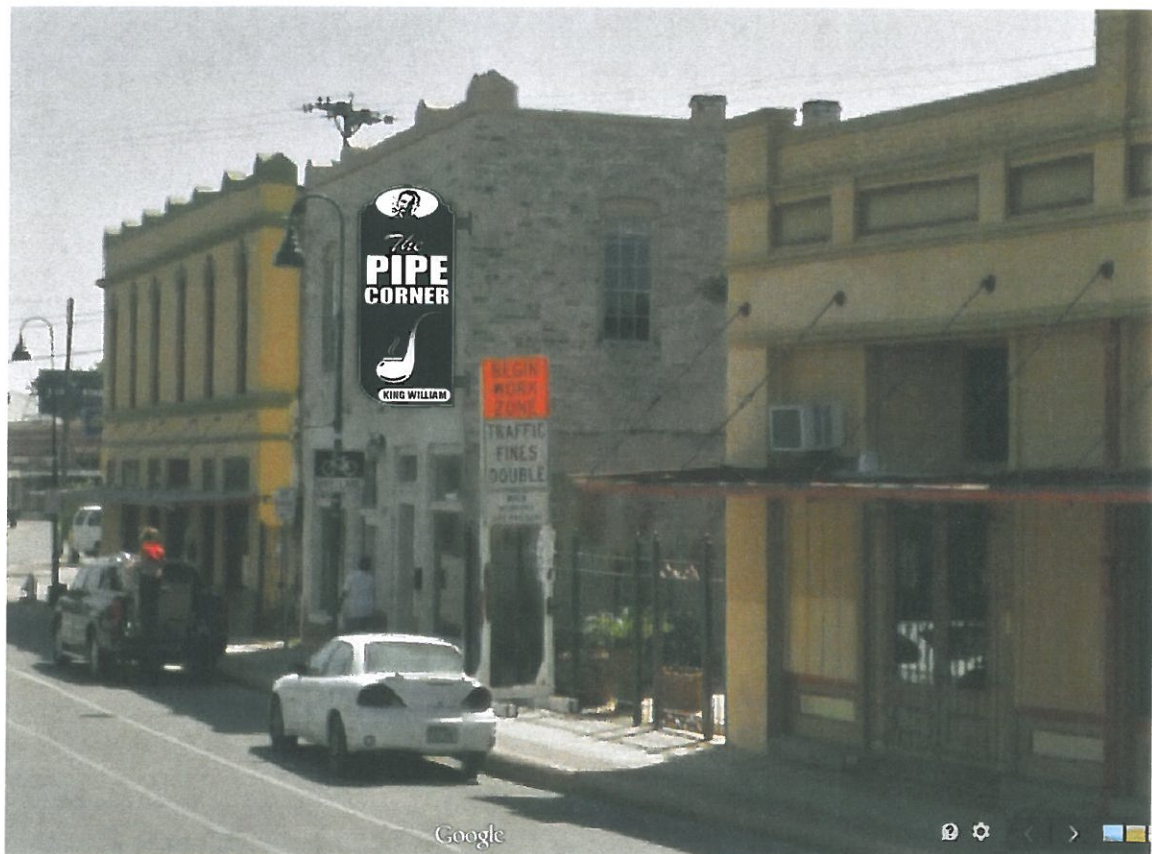
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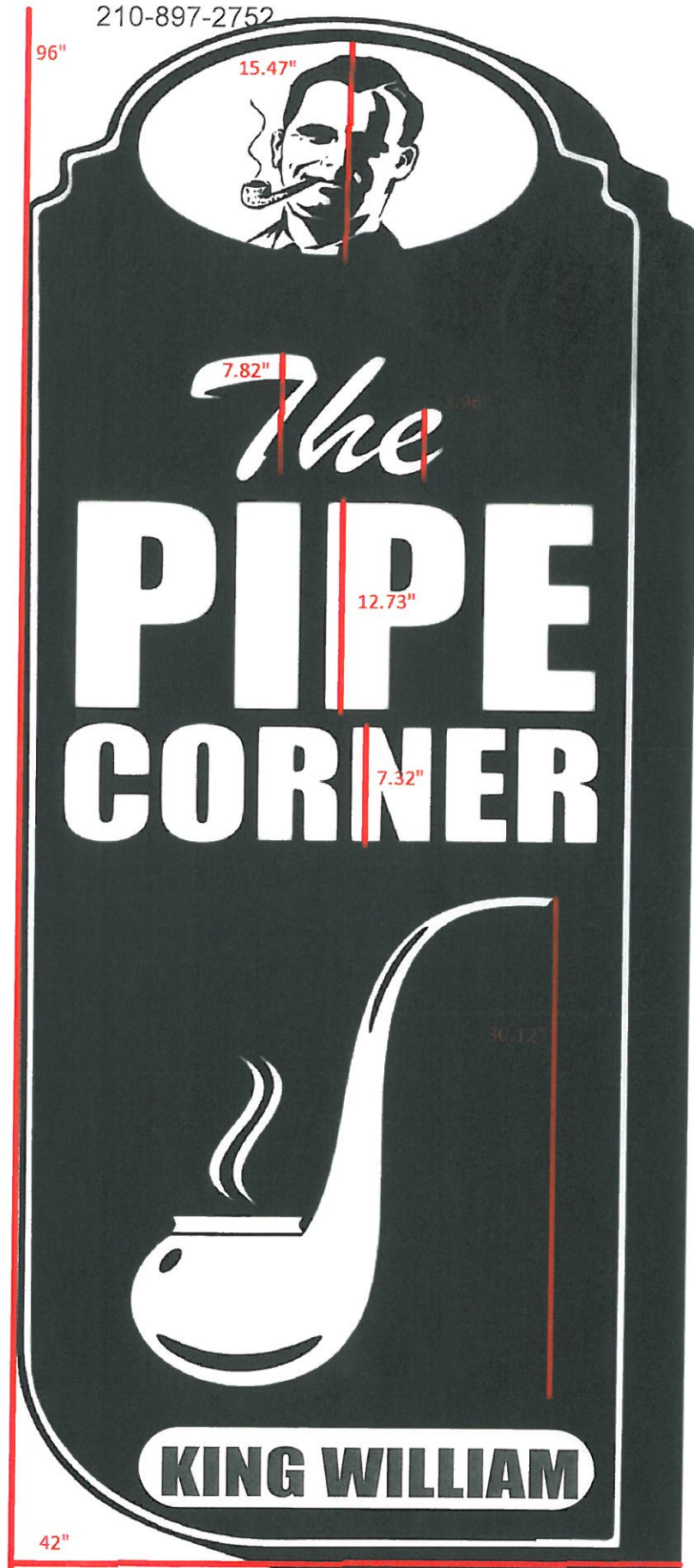
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Metal Box Aluminum  
Black Color

Reverse Channe letters  
aluminum Color finished

Reverse Channel logo  
aluminum color Finished

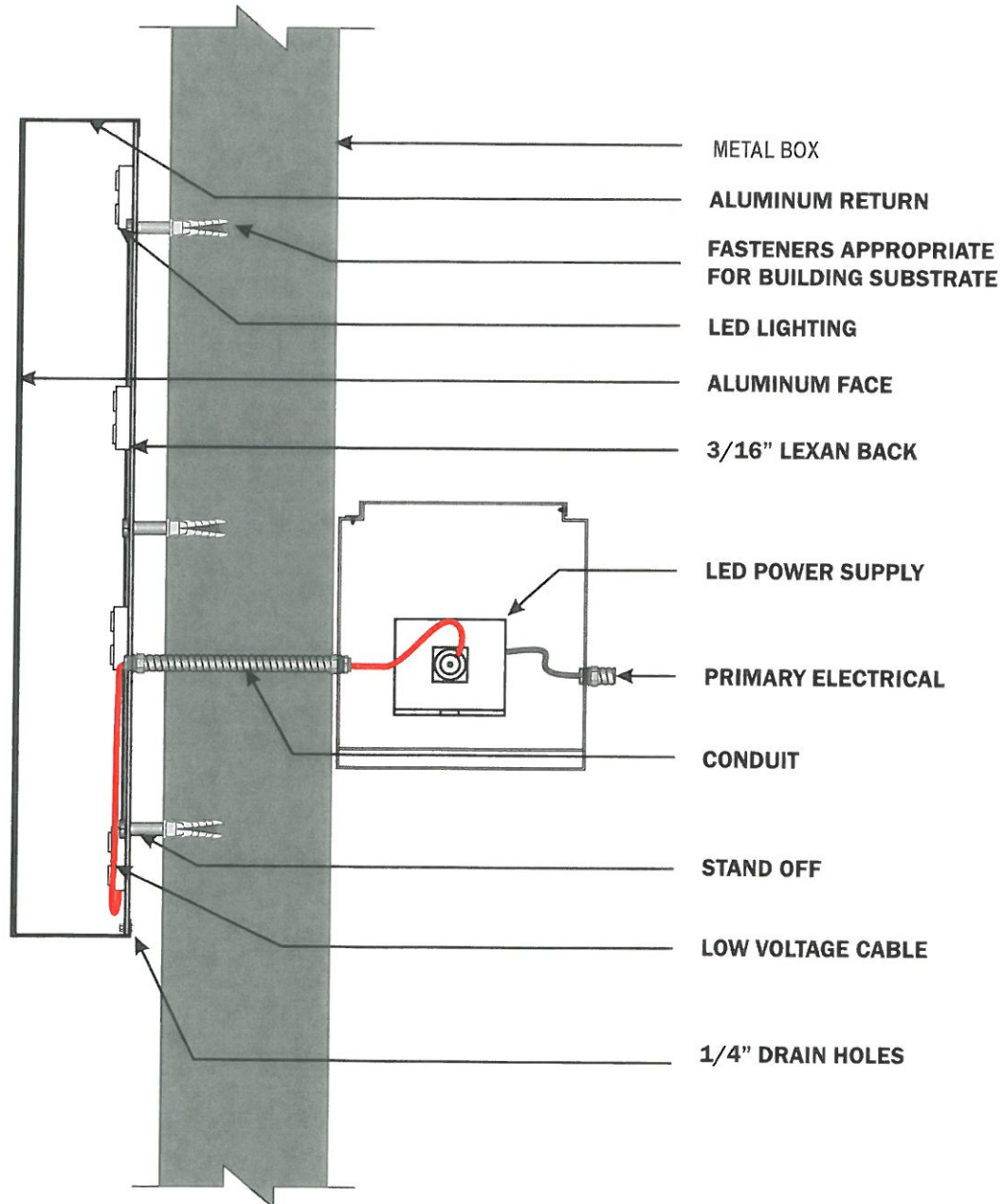
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**Reverse Channel - LED Halo Illuminated**