

# HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

June 16, 2021

**HDRC CASE NO:** 2021-224  
**ADDRESS:** 420 BROADWAY  
**LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** NCB 432 (SAN ANTONIO LIGHT), BLOCK 16 LOT 14  
**ZONING:** FBZ T6-1,HS  
**CITY COUNCIL DIST.:** 1  
**LANDMARK:** Individual Landmark  
**APPLICANT:** Zabrina Silva/Comet Signs LLC  
**OWNER:** Hearst Newspapers Prtnrshp  
**TYPE OF WORK:** Signage  
**APPLICATION RECEIVED:** May 04, 2021  
**60-DAY REVIEW:** Not applicable due to City Council Emergency Orders  
**CASE MANAGER:** Stephanie Phillips

## REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for approval to:

1. Install one (1) set of reverse lit channel letters reading "San Antonio Express News" on the northeast façade to measure approximately 40 square feet.
2. Install one (1) set of reverse lit channel letters to include a logo that reads "SA" with channel letters reading "Express News" on the southwest façade to measure approximately 80 square feet.

## APPLICABLE CITATIONS:

### 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.

#### B. HISTORIC SIGNS

i. *Preservation*—Preserve historic signs, such as ghost signs or other signs characteristic of the building's or district's period of significance, whenever possible.

ii. *Maintenance*—Repair historic signs and replace historic parts in-kind when deteriorated beyond repair.

#### C. PLACEMENT AND INSTALLATION

i. *Location*—Place signs where historically located and reuse sign attachment parts where they exist. Do not erect signs above the cornice line or uppermost portion of a facade wall, or where they will disfigure or conceal architectural details, window openings, doors, or other significant details.

ii. *Obstruction of historic features*—Avoid obscuring historic building features such as cornices, gables, porches, balconies, or other decorative elements with new signs.

iii. *Damage*—Avoid irreversible damage caused by installing a sign. For example, mount a sign to the mortar rather than the historic masonry.

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.

#### **F. PROHIBITED SIGNS**

- i. An abbreviated list of the types of signs prohibited within San Antonio's historic districts and on historic landmarks is provided below. Refer to UDC Section 35-612(j) and Chapter 28 of the Municipal Code for more detailed information on prohibited signs.

Billboards, junior billboards, portable signs, and advertising benches.

Pole signs.

Revolving signs or signs with a kinetic component.

Roof mounted signs, except in the case of a contributing sign.

Digital and/or LED lighted signs, not to include LED light sources that do not meet the definition of a sign.

Moored balloons or other floating signs that are tethered to the ground or to a structure.

Any sign which does not identify a business or service within the historic district or historic landmark.

Any non-contributing sign which is abandoned or damaged beyond 50 percent of its replacement value, including parts of old or unused signs.

Notwithstanding the above, signs designated as a contributing sign or structure by the historic preservation officer shall not be prohibited unless or until such designation is revoked.

#### **G. MULTI-TENANT PROPERTIES**

- i. *Signage Plan*—Develop a master signage plan or signage guidelines for the total building or property.
- ii. *Directory signs*—Group required signage in a single directory sign to minimize visual color and promote a unified appearance.

### **2. Awning and Canopy Signs**

#### **A. GENERAL**

- i. *Appropriate usage*—Limit the use of awning and canopy signs to building forms that historically used awnings, most typically commercial storefronts and apartment buildings.

- ii. *Placement*—Place signs on the awning or canopy valance, the portion that is parallel with the window.

- iii. *Mounting*—Install awning hardware in a manner that does not damage historic building elements or materials.

#### **B. DESIGN**

- i. *Materials*—Fabricate awnings using fire-resistant canvas in a color that is appropriate to the period of the building.

- ii. *Shape*—Select awning shapes that reflect the door or window openings they cover. Limit valances to approximately eight to twelve inches in length.

- iii. *Lettering and symbols*—Lettering should generally be placed on the valance portion of the awning.

#### **C. LIGHTING**

- i. *Internal illumination*—Do not use internal illumination or other techniques that cause awnings to glow; however, illumination may be concealed in the awning to provide directional light to illuminate sidewalks or storefronts.

#### **D. METAL CANOPIES**

- i. *Placement*—Do not mount new signs or letters on historic metal canopies in a manner that destroys or conceals historic materials.

### **3. Projecting and Wall-Mounted Signs**

#### **A. GENERAL**

- i. *Mounting devices*—Construct sign frames and panels that will be used to attach signs to the wall of a building of wood, metal, or other durable materials appropriate to the building's period of construction.

- ii. *Structural supports*—Utilize sign hooks, expansion bolts, or through bolts with washers on the inside of the wall depending upon the weight and area of the sign, and the condition of the wall to which it is to be attached.

iii. *Appropriate usage*—Limit the use of projecting and wall-mounted signs to building forms that historically used these types of signs, most typically commercial storefronts. To a lesser degree, these signage types may also be appropriate in areas where residential building forms have been adapted for office or retail uses, if sized accordingly.

#### B. PROJECTING SIGNS

i. *Placement*—Mount projecting signs perpendicularly to a building or column while allowing eight feet of overhead clearance above public walkways.

ii. *Public right-of-way*—Limit the extension of projecting signs from the building facade into the public right-of-way for a maximum distance of eight feet or a distance equal to two-thirds the width of the abutting sidewalk, whichever distance is greater.

iii. *Area*—Projecting signs should be scaled appropriately in response to the building façade and number of tenants.

#### C. WALL-MOUNTED SIGNS

i. *Area*—Limit the aggregate area of all wall-mounted signs to twenty-five percent of a building facade.

ii. *Projection*—Limit the projection of wall-mounted signs to less than twelve inches from the building wall.

iii. *Placement*—Locate wall signs on existing signboards—the area above the storefront windows and below the second story windows—when available. Mount wall signs to align with others on the block if an existing signboard is not available.

iv. *Channel letters*—Avoid using internally-illuminated, wall-mounted channel letters for new signs unless historic precedent exists. Reverse channel letters may be permitted.

### FINDINGS:

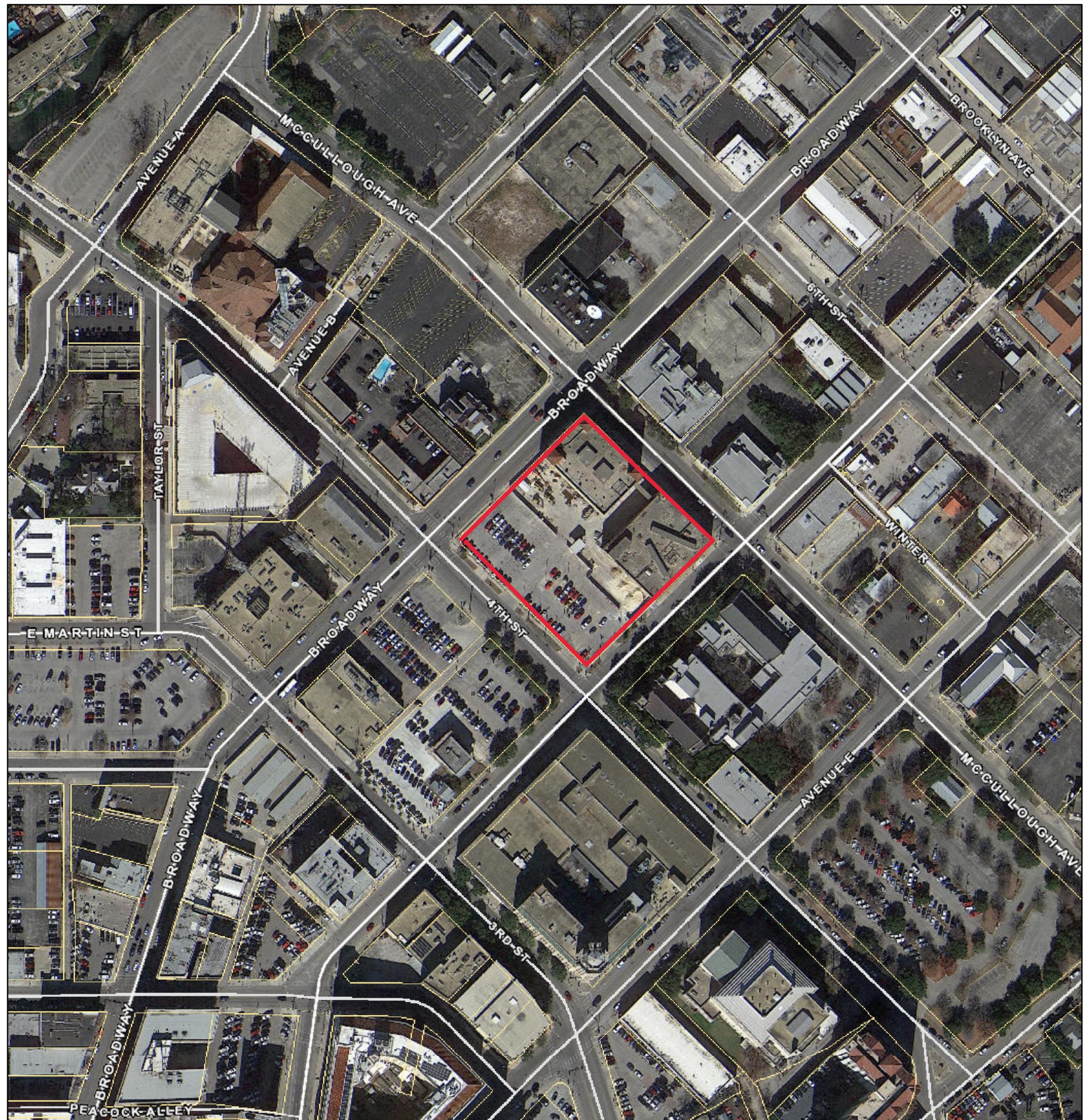
- a. The Light Building was constructed circa 1931 as the home of the San Antonio Light newspaper on the corner of Broadway and McCullough. The structure features five stories with ornamental detailing on both street sides and a stucco façade. The structure is an individual local landmark and was recently restored. The applicant is requesting two new wall mounted tenant signs.
- b. LOCATION – The applicant has proposed to install two new wall-mounted signs. One will be located on the northeast corner of the tower facing Broadway & McCullough to read “San Antonio Express-News.” This sign will be located above the first pair of windows on this elevation in the stucco banding. Another will be located on the southwest facade facing Broadway & 4<sup>th</sup> St to read “SA Express-News.” According to the Historic Design Guidelines, signs should be placed where historically located and reuse sign attachment parts where they exist. Signs should not be erected above the cornice line or uppermost portion of a facade wall, or where they will disfigure or conceal architectural details, window openings, doors, or other significant details. Wall signs should be located on existing signboards or mounted to align with others on the block if an existing signboard is not available. While staff finds the location of the Broadway & 4<sup>th</sup> St sign to be consistent with historic sign patterns and locations, staff finds that the proposed sign facing Broadway & McCullough - located between sets of windows - is not consistent. Historically, signs at similar prominent intersections featured double-sided blade signs or hanging signs, similar to the one installed presently on the building. The proposed location of this sign is not historically common and visually competes with the character defining window pattern and rhythm of the façade. Staff finds that the applicant should propose an alternative location for this sign.
- c. SQUARE FOOTAGE – Between the two signs, the overall square footage to be introduced is equal to approximately 120 square feet. An existing double-sided projecting sign reading “The Light” exists at the corner of Broadway & McCullough. While the Guidelines generally recommends no more than three signs totaling 50 square feet per building, the Guidelines also state that signage should be appropriate for the size, scale, and design of a building. The proposed square footage is appropriate for the scale of the existing building.
- d. MATERIAL & DESIGN – The applicant has proposed two reverse lit channel letter signs with painted bronze aluminum faces. According to the Guidelines, wall-mounted signs should not feature internal illumination and should be constructed of durable materials that are consistent with the overall style of the building. Colors should be limited to a maximum of three and be legible. Staff finds the sign material appropriate, but as noted in finding b, finds that item 1, the sign facing Broadway and McCullough, should be revised for an alternate location, such a projecting arm or blade sign at the ground level.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of the proposed sign installation based on findings a through d with the following stipulations:

- i. That the applicant proposes an alternative location for the sign facing McCullough, such as a projecting arm or blade sign at the ground level, as noted in finding b. The applicant is required to submit updated drawings and specifications to staff for review and approval prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness.

# City of San Antonio One Stop



May 26, 2021

1:2,000

0 0.0225 0.045 0.09 mi  
0 0.035 0.07 0.14 km

# San Antonio Express-News

- Proposal Drawing**  
 Final Drawing

Client: Graystreet Light LP  
420 Broadway LP  
Location: 301 Avenue E  
San Antonio, TX 78205  
Salesperson: Carter  
Prj. Mngr.: Debbie  
Date: 04/22/2021  
Designer: Jocelyn  
File Name: 60022 San  
Antonio Express-News RLCL  
R2  
Proposal #: 60022  
Job #: n/a



**Photo Survey - Existing**



**Photo Survey - Proposed - DAY VIEW**  
**CUSTOMER APPROVAL**

APPROVED BY: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_



**Photo Survey - Proposed - NIGHT VIEW**

Revisions (M/D/Y)-(initials): desc.  
R2/4.27.21/JY: B-enlarged.  
R1/4.26.21/JY: rev. pg 4.



License #: 18010

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San Antonio, TX 78219  
(210) 341-7244

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2703 Mockingbird Lane  
Dallas, TX 75235  
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**Scope of Work:**

Fabricate and install one (1) new set of reverse lit channel letters.  
Bronze .alum. faces ptd.  
3" Bronze alum. returns.  
Internally illuminated with white LED.  
Install on existing fascia with 1 1/2" stand off.

**Colors:**

- Bronze



**A**

**REVERSE LIT CHANNEL LETTERS**

**QTY: ONE (1) SET**

**Scale: 1" = 1'-0"**



**VECTOR ART REQUIRED  
PRIOR TO PRODUCTION.**



**FIELD SURVEY REQUIRED  
PRIOR TO PRODUCTION.**

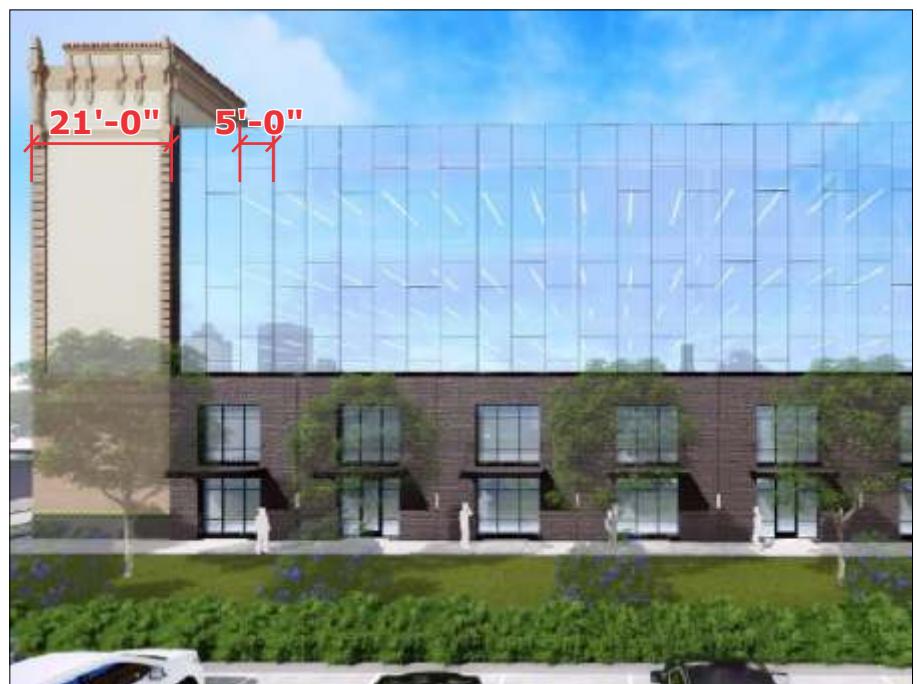
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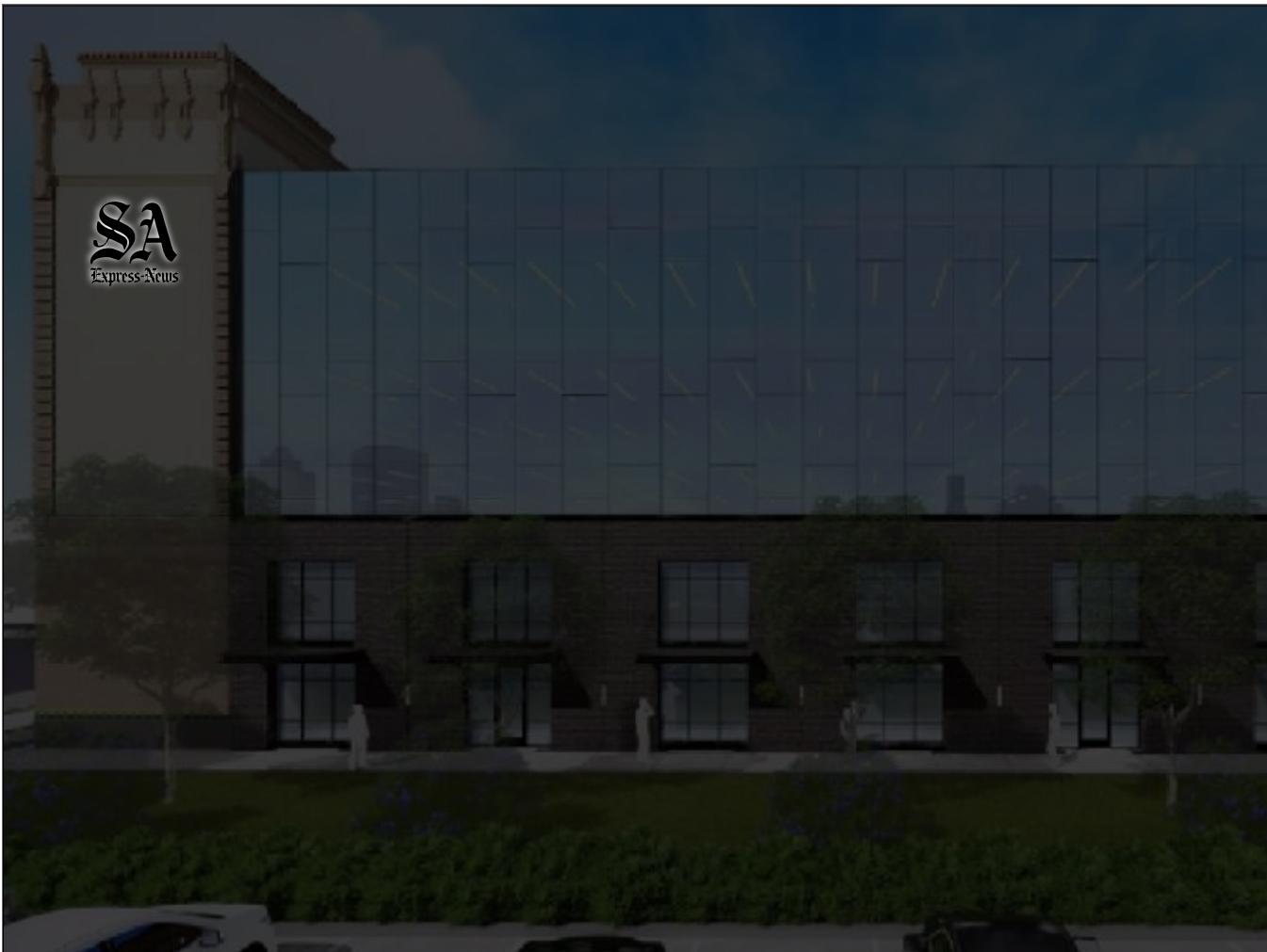


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**REVERSE LIT CHANNEL LETTERS**

**B**  
QTY: ONE (1) SET

Scale: 3/4" = 1'-0"

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APPROVED BY: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

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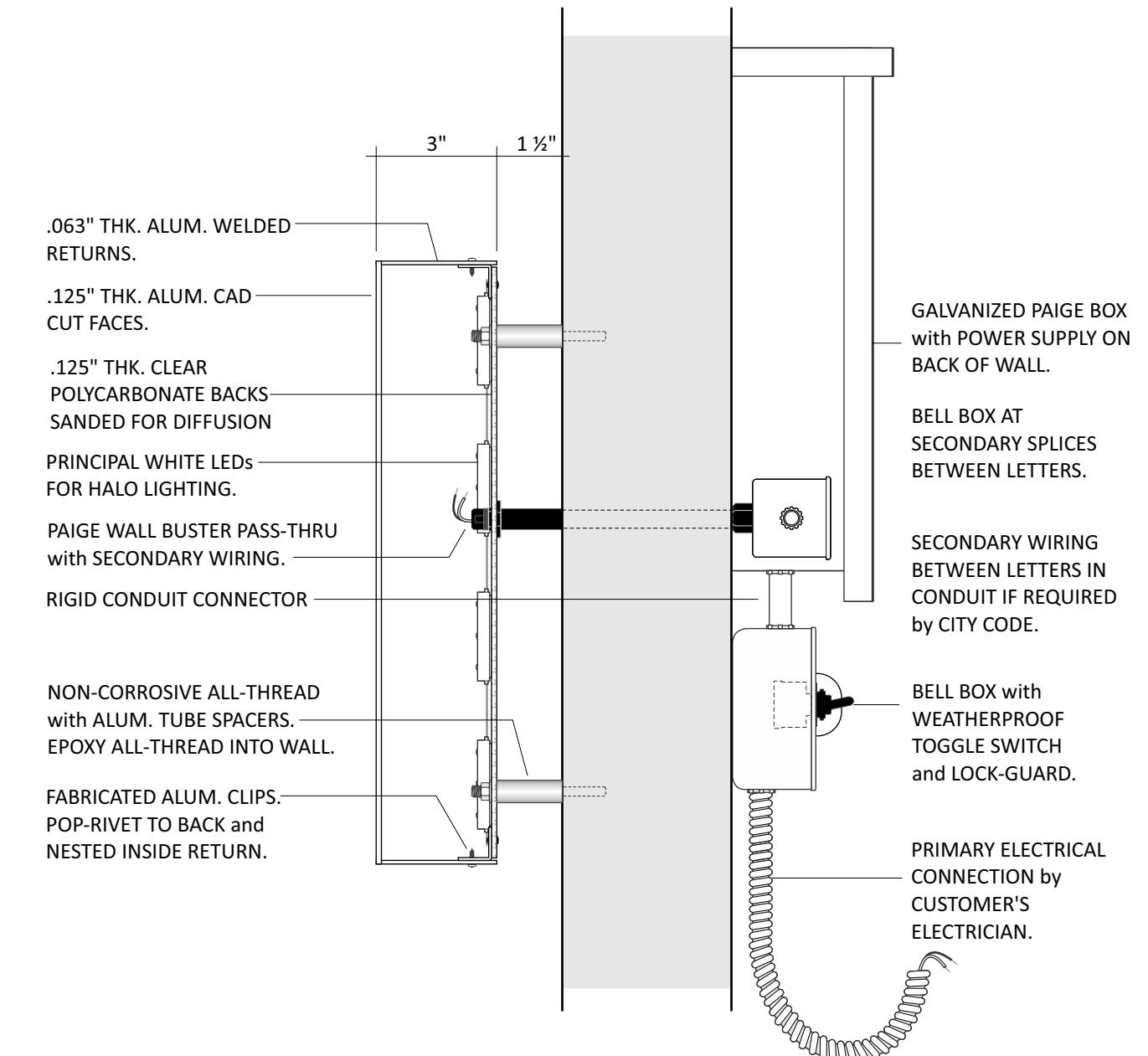
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**SECTION (VERT)**

3" = 1'-0"

REVERSE CHANNEL LETTER w/ CLOUD BACKER

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