



CITY COUNCIL

Evidentiary Hearing

**HARB Appeal Hearing
525 Penn St.
Tuesday, January 12, 2021
5 pm
Virtual Hearing**

The purpose of the HARB appeal hearing is to consider the request of the property owner to appeal the denial in Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) for:

1. The proposal for the installation of a 2'-10" x 15'-10" internally illuminated channel lettered sign to read "MoraviaHealth" in green letters, with logo, above the first floor storefront, and the installation of a 34" x 59" vinyl cling sign to read "MoraviaHealth Home Healthcare Services 610-710-8888 www.MoraviaHealth.com", with logo, in the center glass panel at the first floor storefront at 525 Penn Street was presented by the Historic Preservation Specialist.
2. The proposal for the installation of a 2'-10" x 15'-10" internally illuminated channel lettered sign to read "MoraviaHealth" in green letters, with logo, above the first floor storefront, and the installation of a 34" x 59" vinyl cling sign to read "MoraviaHealth Home Healthcare Services 610-710-8888 www.MoraviaHealth.com", with logo, in the center glass panel at the first floor storefront as proposed, presented and shown on the specifications submitted on 9/2/2020 was DENIED based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings, Standard #2 ("The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided."), Standard #5 ("Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved."), and due to the fact that the proposed signage does not meet the requirements of the HARB Sign Policy.
3. The HARB recommends that the applicant return to the Board with a revised proposal to include a percentage of coverage of the display window glass that meets the requirements of the HARB Sign Policy, and is encouraged to include external, as opposed to internal, illumination of the proposed channel lettered sign in accordance with the HARB Sign Policy.

Building description, period, style, defining features: This 5-story, attached, masonry commercial building is located in the Callowhill Historic District. The upper four stories constitute a 4-story bay window punctuated by belt courses that define the floor levels. The center windows

on the fifth floor are grouped under an elliptical arch. At the corners of the fifth floor, the Mansard roof is visible. One-over-one double hung windows are grouped but separated by pilasters with decorative detailing. The first floor retains a historically appropriate storefront with two double door entryways. It was built late in the 19th Century and is a hybridized Classical Revival style. The building received a site quality rating of 118 in the 1979 Historic Sites Survey and is a significant contributing site in the Callowhill Historic District.

Composite Index Rating: 118

SIS 2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided. **SIS 5.** Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved. **HARB Sign Policy**

I. Testimony from Applicant (No more than 10 minutes)

Property Owner: ISLA, LLC

Applicant: Mark Christman, Drafting Solutions II, LLC

Applicant's Address: 1500 Walnut St., Suite 1900, Philadelphia, PA 19102

During the hearing process, applicants are cautioned not to address the Administrative staff present but to make their presentation directly to City Council. The applicant may ask the President of Council or the Hearing Master to relay a question to Administrative staff.

- **Council's Cross Examination**

II. Testimony from City Staff (No more than 10 minutes)

- **Council's Cross Examination**

III. Other Testimony and Evidence

IV. Public Comment (No More than 3 minutes per speaker)

V. Rebuttal by Applicant (No more than 5 minutes)

VI. Announcement of expected date of decision

City Council will render a decision by adopting a resolution at the January 25 Regular Meeting of Council.

VII. Adjourn

**THE READING BOARD OF HISTORICAL ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
CITY OF READING, PENNSYLVANIA
September 15, 2020**

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chairperson Erin Weller who noted the presence of a quorum. Due to the COVID-19 Emergency Declaration, the public is prohibited from attending the regular HARB meetings. The HARB held the September 2020 meeting using a virtual meeting application of which was recorded and posted on the City's Website. Public comment for the HARB meeting was required to be submitted in writing through email to the Historic Preservation Officer by 5:00 pm on day of the meeting to allow for the distribution of the comment submitted to HARB members prior to the start of the meeting. Ms. Johnson noted that no public comment was received.

Ms. Weller asked if there were any conflicts of interest, and no conflicts were indicated.

A. Roll Call

MEMBERS PRESENT

Erin Weller - Chairperson
Aaron Booth
Nigel Walker
Rick Polityka

STAFF PRESENT

Amy W. Johnson

OTHERS PRESENT

Daniel S. Caisaguano, 534 Minor St.
Erendira Caisaguano, 534 Minor St.
Father Thomas Orsulak, 322 S. 5th St.
Darlene Hertzog, 322 S. 5th St.
Mike Simpson, 322 S. 5th St.
William B. Meister, 1711 Hampden Blvd.
John McCloskey, 401 Penn St.
Justin Walton, 401 Penn St.
Skylar Gingrich, 401 Penn St.
Brad Waples, 4-20 S. 4th St.
David N. Peris, City of Reading Zoning Admin.

B. REVIEW OF MINUTES FOR PREVIOUS MEETINGS:

There were no minutes written of previous meetings submitted for review.

I. II. HEARING OF APPLICATIONS:

ITEM #3 - RESOLUTION #35-20- It is proposed to install a 2'-10" high x 15'-10" long internally illuminated channel lettered sign to read "MoraviaHealth" in green letters, with logo, above the first floor storefront, and to install a 34" wide x 59" high vinyl cling sign to read "MoraviaHealth"

Home Healthcare Services 610-710-8888 www.MoraviaHealth.com", with logo, in the center glass panel at the first floor storefront at 525 Penn Street, Reading, PA.

Property Owner: Isla, LLC

Owner's Address: 525 Penn St., Reading, PA 19601

Applicant: Mark C. Christman, Drafting Solutions II, LLC

Applicant's Address: 1500 Walnut St., Suite 1900, Philadelphia, PA 19102

Building description, period, style, defining features: This 5-story, attached, masonry commercial building is located in the Callowhill Historic District. The upper four stories constitute a 4-story bay window punctuated by belt courses that define the floor levels. The center windows on the fifth floor are grouped under an elliptical arch. At the corners of the fifth floor, the Mansard roof is visible. One-over-one double hung windows are grouped but separated by pilasters with decorative detailing. The first floor retains a historically appropriate storefront with two double door entryways. It was built late in the 19th Century and is a hybridized Classical Revival style. The building received a site quality rating of 118 in the 1979 Historic Sites Survey and is a significant contributing site in the Callowhill Historic District.

Composite Index Rating: 118

Proposed alterations: It is proposed to install a 2'-10" high x 15'-10" long internally illuminated channel lettered sign to read "MoraviaHealth" in green letters, with logo, above the first floor storefront, and to install a 34" wide x 59" high vinyl cling sign to read "MoraviaHealth Home Healthcare Services 610-710-8888 www.MoraviaHealth.com", with logo, in the center glass panel at the first floor storefront at 525 Penn Street.

SIS 2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided. **SIS 5.** Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved. **HARB Sign Policy**

Discussion:

- Because a representative for the project was not in attendance, Ms. Johnson explained the project to the Board.
- Ms. Weller asked Ms. Johnson to summarize the Executive Committee's comments.
- Ms. Johnson informed the Board that the Executive Committee found the proposed internally illuminated channel letter sign to be appropriate and presented the color samples for the face of each letter and the return of each letter (to be in brushed aluminum) to the Board.
- Ms. Johnson stated that the color sample for the face of the letters is close to the color shown in the mock-up of the sign.
- Ms. Johnson noted that the HARB has approved internally illuminated channel lettered signs in the 500 Block of Penn Street previously and therefore the proposal for the design of the sign is historically appropriate.
- Ms. Johnson stated that the Executive Committee noted that the proposed sign is not centered above the storefront, as per the mock-up, and recommended that the sign be centered above the entire width of the storefront.
- Ms. Johnson stated that the vinyl cling sign proposed for the central first floor storefront window panel is to cover one hundred percent of the window panel, and the existing individual vinyl lettered signs in the storefront windows on either side of the central panel are to remain. Therefore, the existing signs must be factored into the calculations for the overall sign coverage.
- Ms. Johnson stated that she informed the applicant that the Board will not be able to approve one hundred percent coverage of the central window panel as it does not meet the HARB Sign Policy

of which states that a maximum of thirty percent of a storefront window can be covered with signage. Ms. Johnson stated that she informed the applicant of this fact and the applicant stated that he understood, would like to proceed with the request for the proposal as submitted, and will plan to appeal the HARB's decision to City Council if the request is denied.

- Ms. Johnson informed the Board that the building is 26.5 feet wide and therefore the maximum amount of signage allowed on the front façade is 53 square feet. Ms. Johnson explained that she estimated the square footage of the proposed signage and stated that the proposed channel lettered sign is approximately 48 square feet and the proposed vinyl cling sign is 13.72 square feet. Thus, the two proposed signs equal 61.72 square feet and with the existing vinyl cling signs in the storefront windows adding to the total amount of signage area, the proposed signage exceeds the maximum square footage of signage allowed for the building.
- Ms. Weller inquired as to whether the applicant has applied for a Zoning Permit for the proposed signs.
- Mr. Peris replied that he checked the Zoning Office records before the meeting and it did not appear that a Zoning Permit application has been received as of yet.
- Mr. Booth stated that he understands the desire for the signage to be illuminated due to the fact that it is proposed to be installed under the large bay window projection of which is not a well-lit area.
- Mr. Booth stated that unfortunately the Sign Policy discourages internal illumination and suggested identifying an external light source that could be mounted to the underside of the bay window projection that would shine down onto the proposed signage.
- Ms. Johnson requested that if a motion is made requiring external illumination, the applicant be required to return to the HARB for approval of the light fixtures.
- Ms. Johnson further noted that Mr. Booth is correct that the HARB Sign Policy does discourage internal illumination. However, the HARB has previously approved an internally illuminated channel lettered sign at 535 Penn St. and at other locations in the 400 and 500 Blocks of Penn Street.
- Mr. Booth noted that the Board has typically approved internally illuminated signs where there has been one installed previously. Mr. Booth noted that the proposed sign is a new internally illuminated channel letter signage installation and the Board has to decide whether or not this particular installation is appropriate.
- Ms. Walker stated that she doesn't feel comfortable making a motion to approve internally illuminated signage and signage that exceeds the maximum allowance of 30 percent storefront window coverage, of which does not meet the HARB Sign Policy.
- Ms. Walker made a motion to deny the applicant's proposal as submitted and presented, and requested that the applicant return to the Board with a proposal that meets the guidelines of the HARB Sign Policy.
- Mr. Booth suggested that the resolution state that a revised proposal should include a percentage coverage for signage of the storefront window that meets the HARB Sign Policy and it is encouraged to include a proposal for external illumination. However, if the applicant wishes to return to the Board with a proposal for a smaller internally illuminated sign, in keeping with the maximum square footage allowance for signage, the Board can review it and has the discretion to review or deny the sign. In turn the applicant can appeal the HARB's decision if the proposal is denied.

Motion: Resolution No. 35-20 - The Historical Architectural Review Board, upon motion by Ms. Walker and seconded by Mr. Booth, adopted the proposal to DENY a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed work described herein and specified the following:

4. The proposal for the installation of a 2'-10" x 15'-10" internally illuminated channel lettered sign to read "MoraviaHealth" in green letters, with logo, above the first floor storefront, and the installation of a 34" x 59" vinyl cling sign to read "MoraviaHealth Home Healthcare Services 610-710-8888 www.MoraviaHealth.com", with logo, in the center glass panel at the first floor storefront at 525 Penn Street was presented by the Historic Preservation Specialist.
5. The proposal for the installation of a 2'-10" x 15'-10" internally illuminated channel lettered sign to read "MoraviaHealth" in green letters, with logo, above the first floor storefront, and the installation of a 34" x 59" vinyl cling sign to read "MoraviaHealth Home Healthcare Services 610-710-8888 www.MoraviaHealth.com", with logo, in the center glass panel at the first floor storefront as proposed, presented and shown on the specifications submitted on 9/2/2020 was DENIED based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings, Standard #2 ("The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided."), Standard #5 ("Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved."), and due to the fact that the proposed signage does not meet the requirements of the HARB Sign Policy.
6. The HARB recommends that the applicant return to the Board with a revised proposal to include a percentage of coverage of the display window glass that meets the requirements of the HARB Sign Policy, and is encouraged to include external, as opposed to internal, illumination of the proposed channel lettered sign in accordance with the HARB Sign Policy.

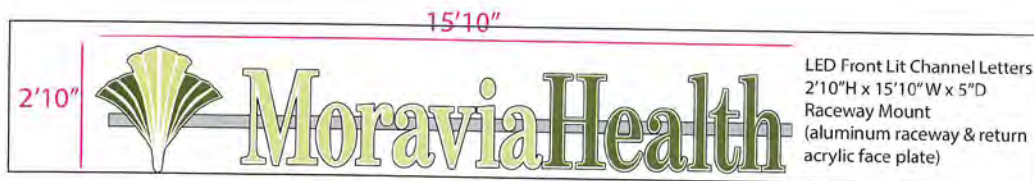
The motion to DENY the above work was approved unanimously.



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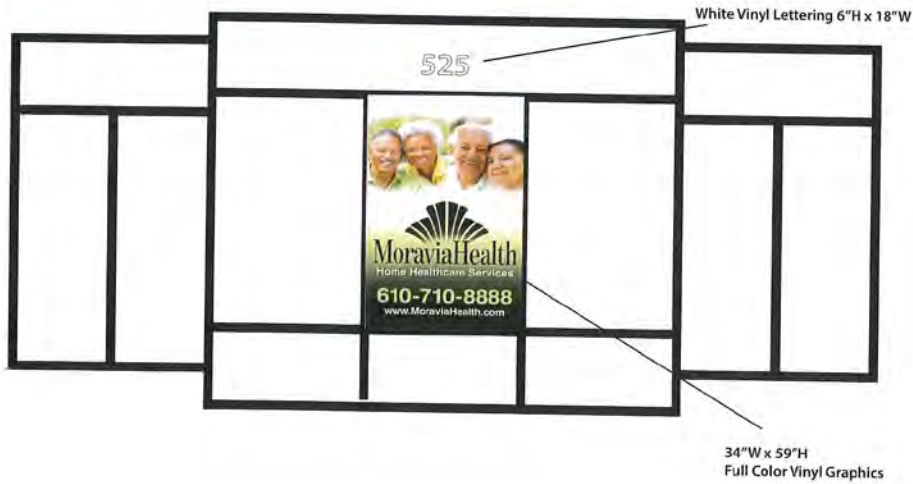


05.23.2018 11:51



Raceway: PMS429C
Returns: White
Trim Cap: White
Face:

3/16" Acrylic Face (Digital Print)
1" Trimcap (Standard Stock Color)
5" .040 Returns (Standard Stock Color)
White Aluminum ACM Backs
Single Stroke LED Illumination
Total Intensity: 13.8K Lumens



9/2/2020



LED Back Lit Channel Letters
2'10"H x 15'10"W x 5"D
Raceway Mount