



**KNOXVILLE HISTORIC ZONING COMMISSION  
STAFF REPORT - CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS APPLICATION**

**PROPERTY ADDRESS:** 445 S Gay St 37902  
**DISTRICT:** Miller Building H-1 Landmark

**FILE NO.:** 11-J-17-HZ

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**MEETING DATE:** 11/16/2017  
**APPLICANT:** Scott Schimmel (leasee)  
**LEVEL OF WORK:** Level II. Installation of signage

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**PROPERTY DESCRIPTION:** Art Deco (c. 1935)

Miller Brothers Department Store Building. The original building at the corner of Union Avenue was constructed in 1935 in the Edwardian style, and designed by Knoxville-based architect, R. F. Graf. A 1911 addition to the north was in the same style as the original building, but an expansion in 1935 was in the Art Deco style. In 1998, the building was restored, including the recreation of original details and return of the buildings to the earliest appearance of each of the three component sections.

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► **DESCRIPTION OF WORK:**

Install horizontal projecting sign with dimensions of 8' long x 2'- 11" high x 12" or 14" thick (~24 sf of surface area per side) at a 12-foot mounting height on the second pilaster from the south of three-bay façade. Material is to be aluminum routed for lettering. Mounting will be tube supports and plates with thru-bolts into recent marble façade sheathing and attached to I-beams.

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► **APPLICABLE DESIGN GUIDELINES:**

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings.  
NPS PRESERVATION BRIEF NO. 25 - NEW SIGNS AND HISTORIC BUILDINGS

"Preserving old signs is one thing. Making new ones is another. Historic sign practices were not always "sympathetic" to buildings. They were often unsympathetic to the building, or frankly contemptuous of it. Repeating some historic practices, therefore, would definitely not be recommended. . . . The National Park Service therefore encourages businesses to fit their sign programs to the building. The following points should be considered when designing and constructing new signs for historic buildings:"

- 1) Signs should be viewed as part of an overall graphics system for the building . They do not have to do all the "work" by themselves. The building's form, name and outstanding features, both decorative and functional, also support the advertising function of a sign. Signs should work with the building, rather than against it.
- 2) New signs should respect the size, scale and design of the historic building. Often features or details of the building will suggest a motif for new signs.
- 3) Sign placement is important: new signs should not obscure significant features of the historic building . (Signs above a storefront should fit within the historic signboard, for example.)
- 4) New signs should also respect neighboring buildings . They should not shadow or overpower adjacent structures.



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5) Sign materials should be compatible with those of the historic building. Materials characteristic of the building's period and style, used in contemporary designs, can form effective new signs.

6) New signs should be attached to the building carefully, both to prevent damage to historic fabric, and to ensure the safety of pedestrians. Fittings should penetrate mortar joints rather than brick, for example, and signloads should be properly calculated and distributed.

**COMMENTS:**

According to research provided by the applicant, the sign at 424 S. Gay Street for "Downtown Grill & Brewery Sign" projects 8'-0". The applicant notes that other signs on S. Gay St that project further are those of "Aveda" and the "Flower Pot."

**STAFF FINDINGS:**

1) The 1935 Art Deco structure is a contributing building within the Gay Street Commercial National Register District and is an individual H-1 overlay landmark. The design guidelines for the building are those established by the National Park Service as based on the Secretary of Interiors Standards.

2) The immediate context to be considered for precedent comprises the blocks that are visible from in front of the building looking north and south along S. Gay Street.

3) The National Park Service recommendations state that "Historic sign practices were not always "sympathetic" to buildings. . . Repeating some historic practices; therefore, would definitely not be recommended." The goal of the current sign ordinance is to achieve a reduction in sign clutter over that of the past.

4) Historically, as well as currently, both vertically and horizontally oriented signs were present on buildings on S. Gay Street as indicated by early photos. Historically, signs were allowed to be larger than currently permitted.

5) The historic district design guidelines for signage in Market Square and the Downtown Design District design guidelines for historic buildings recommend that hanging signs be limited to 9 square feet. Since the Miller building is 6 stories tall, which is substantially taller than Market Square buildings, the scale of the building's facade can accommodate a sign larger than the typically recommended 9 square feet.

6) The precedent set by approvals by the Downtown Design Review Board (DDRB) over the last 6 years has created a context along S. Gay Street in which signs between 18 and 27 square feet have been approved. The exceptions to this square footage are noted in the restoration/recreation of the historic signs on the former S& W Cafeteria building (now "Aveda") and the Tennessee Theater sign which were allowed to be are larger, and project further than current signs.

7) The square footage of the proposed sign at ~24 square feet, its placement, and its mounting at 12 feet above the sidewalk are appropriate given the height of the building and the precedent that has been set for other signs in the immediate context.

8) A photo postcard provided by the applicant appearing to date to the 1930s or 1940s depicts a projecting sign of



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unknown dimensions on the earlier 1905 Miller building, which is adjacent to the 1935 Art Deco addition which is the subject building.

9) The National Park Service recommendations state that "Signs should work with the building, rather than against it. New signs should respect the size, scale and design of the historic building. Often features or details of the building will suggest a motif for new signs."

In this case, the applicant's business logo is established as horizontally oriented graphic design. However, since this building features a vertically oriented Art Deco design with design elements reaching upwards 6 stories, a sign of this size and projection would better compliment and work with the architecture of the building as a vertical sign.

10) Most of the horizontally projecting signs shown in the historic photos provided in this application are not monolithic boxed signs, but are more square in shape, are flatter in thickness, and are hanging from horizontal metal rods. The sign is proposed to be 12" to 14" in thickness and is not proposed to hang from a rod.

11) The vertical portion of the "Babalu" sign at 412 S. Gay Street was approved by the Downtown Design Review Board (DDRB) with the horizontal bottom of the sign being 5' wide x 1' high (5 sq. ft.) and the vertical top of the sign being 11' high x 2' wide (22 sq.ft.) for a total of 27 sq. ft. The sign was approved to project a total of 5'-0" for the majority of its mass which is vertical, but projects 6'-6" from the building at its furthest point. The "Phoenix" sign at 418 S. Gay Street is vertical and was approved by DDRB to project 4 feet. The Farragut Hotel sign at 402 S. Gay Street is an approved vertical sign that will project 4 feet. The signs at 424, 428, and 430 S. Gay Street are all vertical signs that are from 18 to 24 sf in area and the projections are all less than 8 feet.

12) In conclusion, staff believes the overall square footage of 24 sq ft, aluminum material, and placement of the sign are appropriate for the building and the immediate context. However, there is no current or historical precedent in the immediate context for a horizontally-oriented sign of this shape and mass projecting from the building 8 feet over the sidewalk. A vertically-oriented sign of this square footage at a 6'-6" projection would compliment the Art Deco architecture of the building. A horizontally-oriented sign of the proposed dimensions and thickness would not compliment the overall building's vertically-oriented architecture, but would not necessarily be inappropriate for the immediate pedestrian streetscape if its projection from the building is in keeping with more current precedent. An appropriate projection would be limited to 6'-6", which is equal to that approved by DDRB for the vertical sign at 412 S. Gay Street (Babalu).

► **STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the sign projection be limited to 5'-0".

**APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS  
KNOXVILLE/KNOX COUNTY HISTORIC ZONING COMMISSION**

Please print all information:

**1. NAME OF APPLICANT:** Scott Schimmel

Address: 933 Luttrell St

Telephone: 865.256.2469 E-mail address: scott@shopinbliss.com

Relationship to Owner: leasee

**2. NAME OF OWNER:** KUB (representative: Joe Petre)

Address: 445 S Gay St

Telephone: 865.599.1696 E-mail address: jpetre@conversionprop.com

**3. LOCATION OF PROPERTY:**

Address: 445 S Gay St Tax ID/Lot/Parcel No: \_\_\_\_\_

**4. LEVEL OF WORK** (circle Level)

- Level I** Routine repair, replacement of non-original materials in-kind; removal of artificial siding or late additions; installation of gutters, storm windows/doors, screen doors, satellite dishes, or signage; demolition of a noncontributing structure; renewal of COA
- Level II** Major replacement of materials or architectural elements; construction of addition or outbuilding
- Level III** Construction of a new primary building; subdivision of individually designated property
- Level IV** Demolition or relocation of a contributing structure

**5. DESCRIPTION OF WORK:** (See Part 2 of this application for additional information that is required for submittal with the application. (A copy of all information which is submitted with an application must be retained by the Knoxville/Knox County Historic Zoning Commission.)

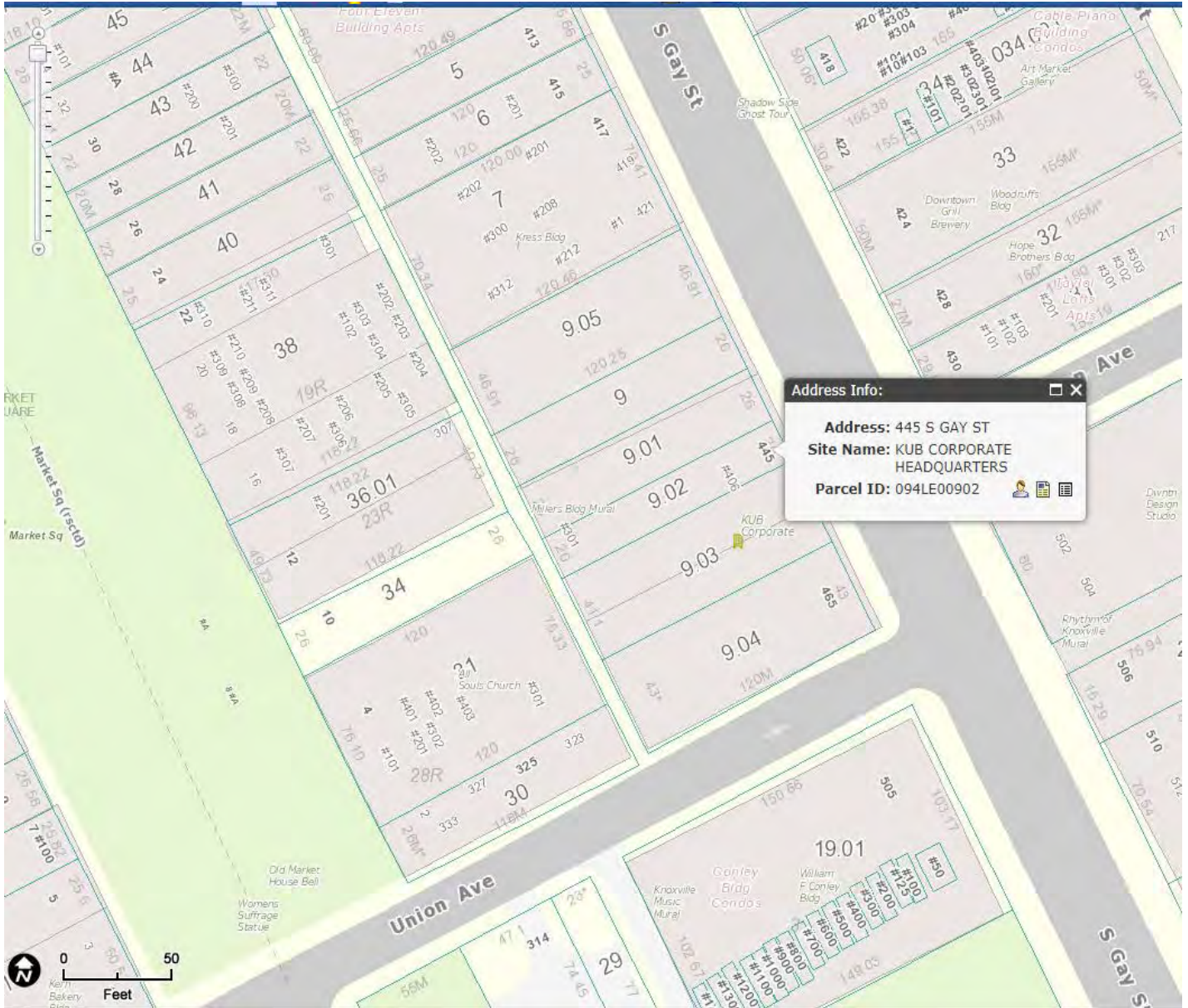
install new blade sign

design and specs attached 8' x 2' 9" \*option

**6. SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT:** Scott Schimmel Date: 10/12/17

Return application to: MPC, Knoxville/Knox County Historic Zoning Commission, Suite 403, City/County Building, 400 Main Street, Knoxville, Tennessee 37902 or **Fax:** 865-215-2068. **Incomplete applications will not be accepted.**

<b>FOR STAFF USE ONLY</b>			
Date Received _____	Approved _____	Disapproved _____	Approved As Modified _____
Date Acted On _____			



445 S. Gay Street –KUB Corporate Headquarters in former  
Miller’s Department Store 1935 Building  
SW corner at Union Avenue

# Bliss Blade Sign - Gay St. - 8' Option

SCALE: 1/2" = 1'



SCALE: 1/4" = 1'

12'-0"

8'-0"

**SIGNCO** inc.  
PLASTIC. NEON. ELECTRONIC

This drawing is the property of SIGNCO, Inc. & to be used for contractual purposes between the customer & SIGNCO, Inc. only. Unauthorized use of this information will result in claims up to 1/3 value of the job represented on this drawing.  
**VALUE OF THIS DRAWING: \$500.00**

<p><b>SIGN &amp; FAX BACK SO THAT WE MAY APPROVE YOUR ORDER.</b></p> <p>FAX: 865.947.2089 info@signco-inc.com</p>		<p><input type="checkbox"/> APPROVED</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> APPROVED W/CHANGES</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> REVISE &amp; RESUBMIT</p>	
<p>FILE LOCATION: Baker/B/Bliss</p>	<p>SALES REPRESENTATIVE: Baker Jones</p>	<p>DATE: 09-28-2017</p>	<p>APPROVAL SIGNATURE</p>
<p>LOCATION: Gay St. - Knoxville, TN</p>	<p>FILE: Bliss Blade Gay St. 2</p>	<p>DRAWN BY: Tiffany Poling</p>	<p>SCALE: see above</p>

# Bliss Blade Sign - Gay St. - 7' Option

SCALE: 1/2" = 1'



SCALE: 1/4" = 1'

12'-0"

7'-0"

**SIGNCO** inc.  
PLASTIC. NEON. ELECTRONIC

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<p>FILE LOCATION: Baker/B/Bliss</p>	<p>SALES REPRESENTATIVE: Baker Jones</p>	<p>DATE: 09-28-2017</p>	<p>SCALE: see above</p>
<p>LOCATION: Gay St. - Knoxville, TN</p>	<p>FILE: Bliss Blade Gay St. 2</p>	<p><b>APPROVAL SIGNATURE</b></p> <p>DRAWN BY: Tiffany Poling</p>	



# Bliss Blade Sign - Gay St. - 5' Option

SCALE: 1/2" = 1'



**SIGNCO** inc.

PLASTIC NEON ELECTRONIC

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**SIGN & FAX BACK SO THAT WE MAY APPROVE YOUR ORDER.**

FAX: 865.947.2089 info@signco-inc.com

APPROVED  
 APPROVED W/CHANGES  
 REVISE & RESUBMIT

**APPROVAL SIGNATURE**

FILE LOCATION: Baker/B/Bliss

SALES REPRESENTATIVE: Baker Jones

DATE: 10-27-2017

DRAWN BY: Tiffany Poling

SCALE: see drawing

LOCATION: Gay St. - Knoxville, TN

Bliss Blade Gay St.





# Bliss Blade Sign - Gay St. - 8' Option

SCALE: 1/2" = 1'

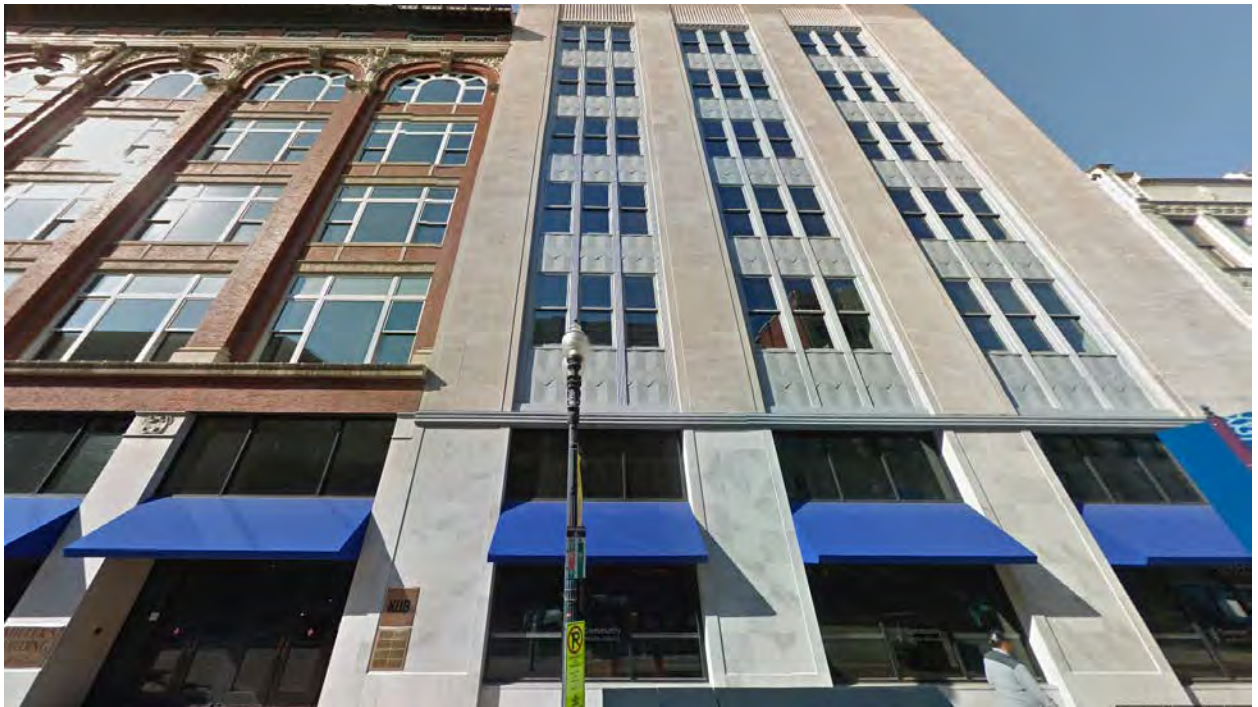


<p><b>SIGN &amp; FAX BACK SO THAT WE MAY APPROVE YOUR ORDER.</b>          FAX: 865.947.2089 info@signco-inc.com</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> APPROVED	<input type="checkbox"/> APPROVED W/CHANGES	<input type="checkbox"/> REVISE & RESUBMIT	<b>APPROVAL SIGNATURE</b>
	SALES REPRESENTATIVE: Baker Jones	DATE: 10-27-2017	DRAWN BY: Tiffany Poling	SCALE: see drawing
FILE LOCATION: Baker/B/Bliss	LOCATION: Bliss Blade Gay St.			

**SIGNCO inc.**  
 PLASTIC, NEON, ELECTRONIC

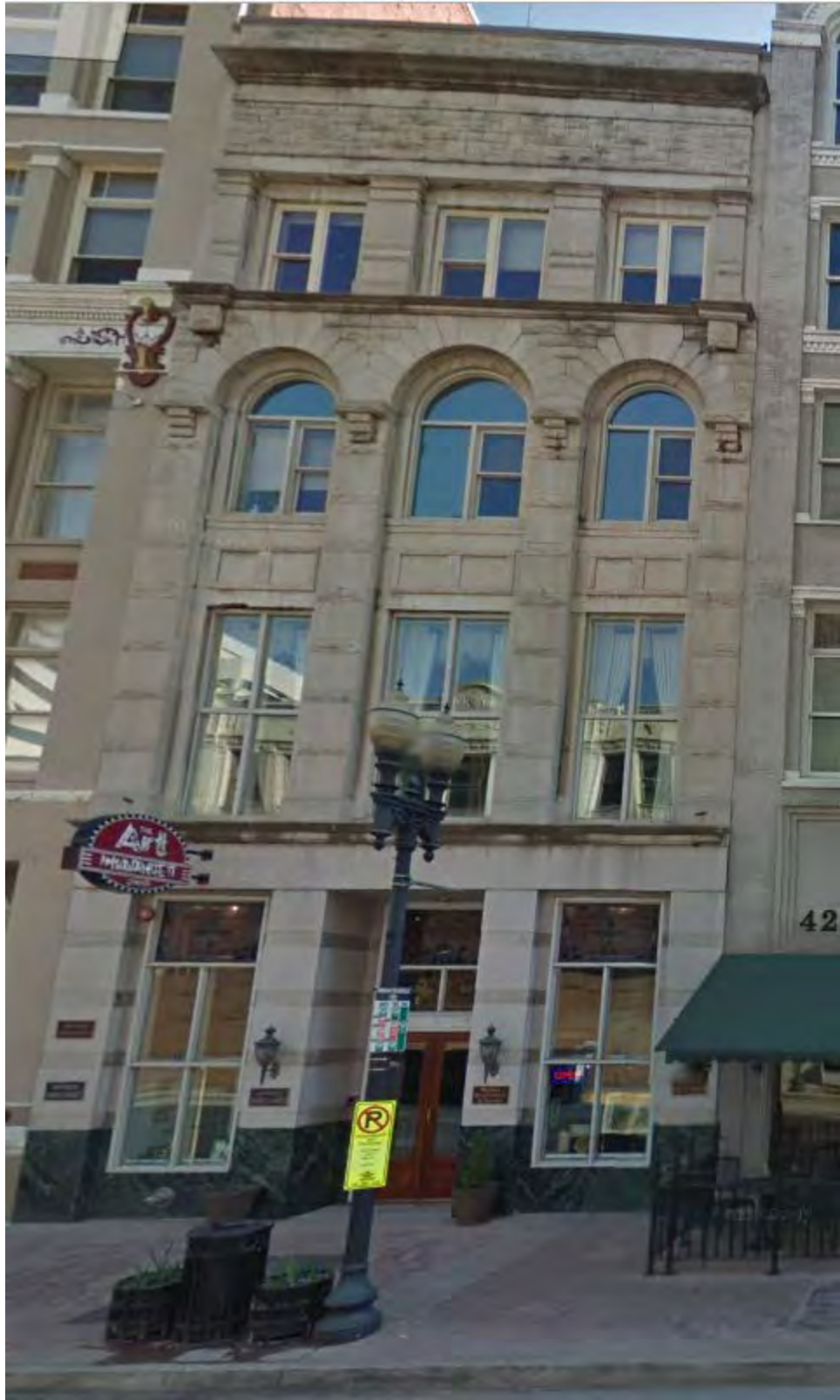
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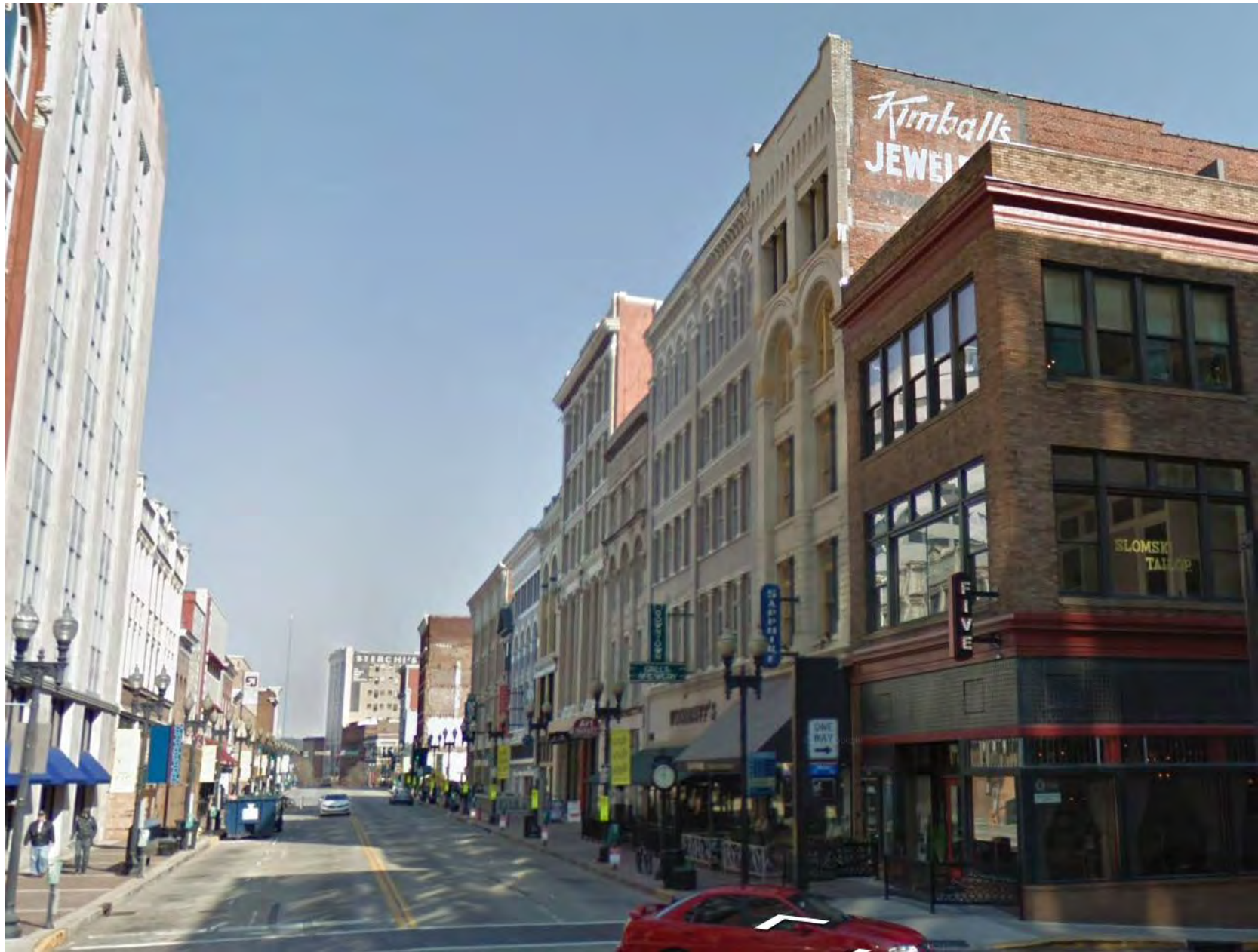
Art Market sign on S. Gay Street



S. Gay Street looking north toward the Babalu, Art Market, and Downtown Brewery sign



Downtown Brewery, Sapphire, and Five signs on S. Gay Street



Five, Downtown Brewery, Sapphire signs on S. Gay Street across the street from the Miller Building





Early Miller's blade sign



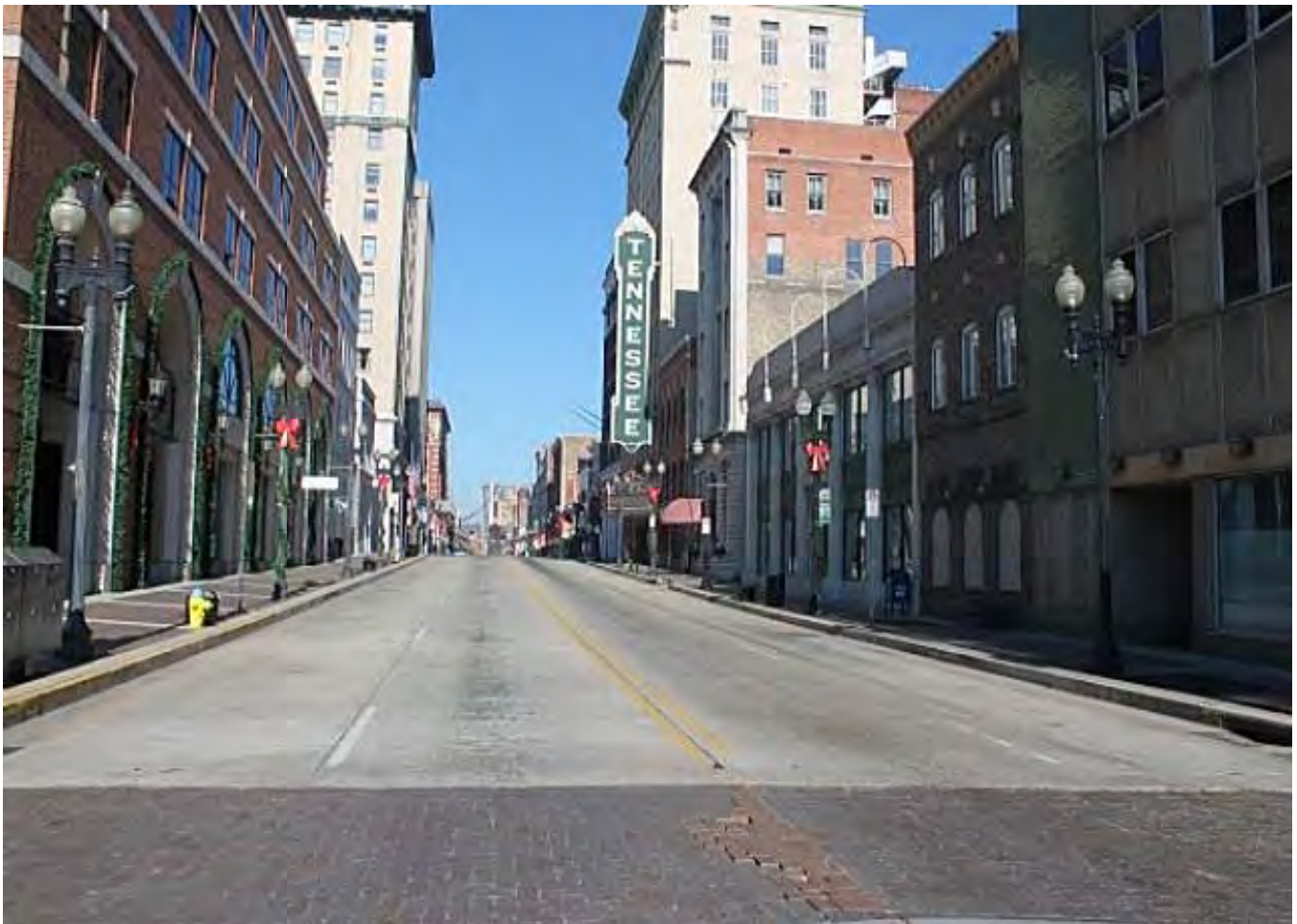
300 Block West 1930s Closer



300 Block West 1930s



**Miller Brothers Department Store building showing 1935 Art Deco addition to the north in 1950s**



Gay Street -Thanksgiving 2012



Miller Building showing projecting sign



Gay St looking north- 1948



Gay Street looking south- 1950s





Gay St -1960s



Gay St looking south c. 1948



Gay Street 1950s



Sterchi signage on Gay St. c. 1948



W.T. Grant St building - 1950s