

File Number: 5-A-25-DT

**Meeting:** 5/21/2025  
**Applicant:** Anthony Saffles Neon Service Co., Inc.  
**Owner:** Woodstone Enterprises LP & H T Hackney Co  
**Project:** 500 S. Gay Street rooftop sign

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### Property Information

**Location:** 500 S. Gay St. **Parcel ID:** 95 I G 001  
**Zoning:** DK-H (Downtown Knoxville, Historic)  
**Description:**  
Sign on rear of four-story, historic brick masonry building.

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### Description of Work

Level II Sign, Construction of a New Building/Structure

Installation of new, non-illuminated sign face on an existing 69'-1" wide by 8'-2" tall roof sign. The sign is located on the rear elevation of the building, facing State Street, and is visible from State Street and James White Parkway; it is not visible to pedestrians on Gay Street.

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### Applicable Design Guidelines

Downtown Design Guidelines

C. Historic Resources

7. Recommended Signs

7a. Locate signs above storefront windows, below second-story windows on the sign board, or on the storefront windows themselves (30% is maximum coverage), or off the front of the building as a projecting sign (maximum size: 9 square feet).

7b. Create signs that are proportional to the building where they are located.

7c. Do not light signs internally.

7d. Allow painted signs on building walls in the warehouse area along Jackson Avenue, and in some other locations along Gay Street.

7e. Preserve signs that are historic elements of buildings.

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### Comments

500 S. Gay Street is a contributing resource to the Gay Street Commercial Historic District. New rooftop signs are prohibited by the City sign code and are not listed as recommended sign types in the Historic Resources section of the design guidelines. The sign has been deemed an abandoned non-conforming sign, which may be re-faced within a certain time window. The proposed sign is approximately 565 sq. ft, featuring a flat acrylic facing that will cover the entire sign area. Photos of the sign frame itself indicate a border around the flat sign area, which appears to be

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proposed to be wrapped in the new sign facing.

The design guidelines do not include guidance for signage on the rear of buildings. There are also no guidelines for rooftop signs, since they are not typically permitted. When reviewing the new Hyatt Place sign on the rear of the Farragut Building (6-F-16-DT), the review discussed how historically signs on the rear elevation of buildings were usually painted and non-illuminated. Regarding the Cook Lofts wall sign at 702 S. Gay St (4-A-15-DT), the review notes that guidelines for the Promenade District allow for rear-facing signs with specific size, location, and illumination standards, and the Promenade standards could be used to discuss the proposal if the Board determines the two locations have similar characteristics.

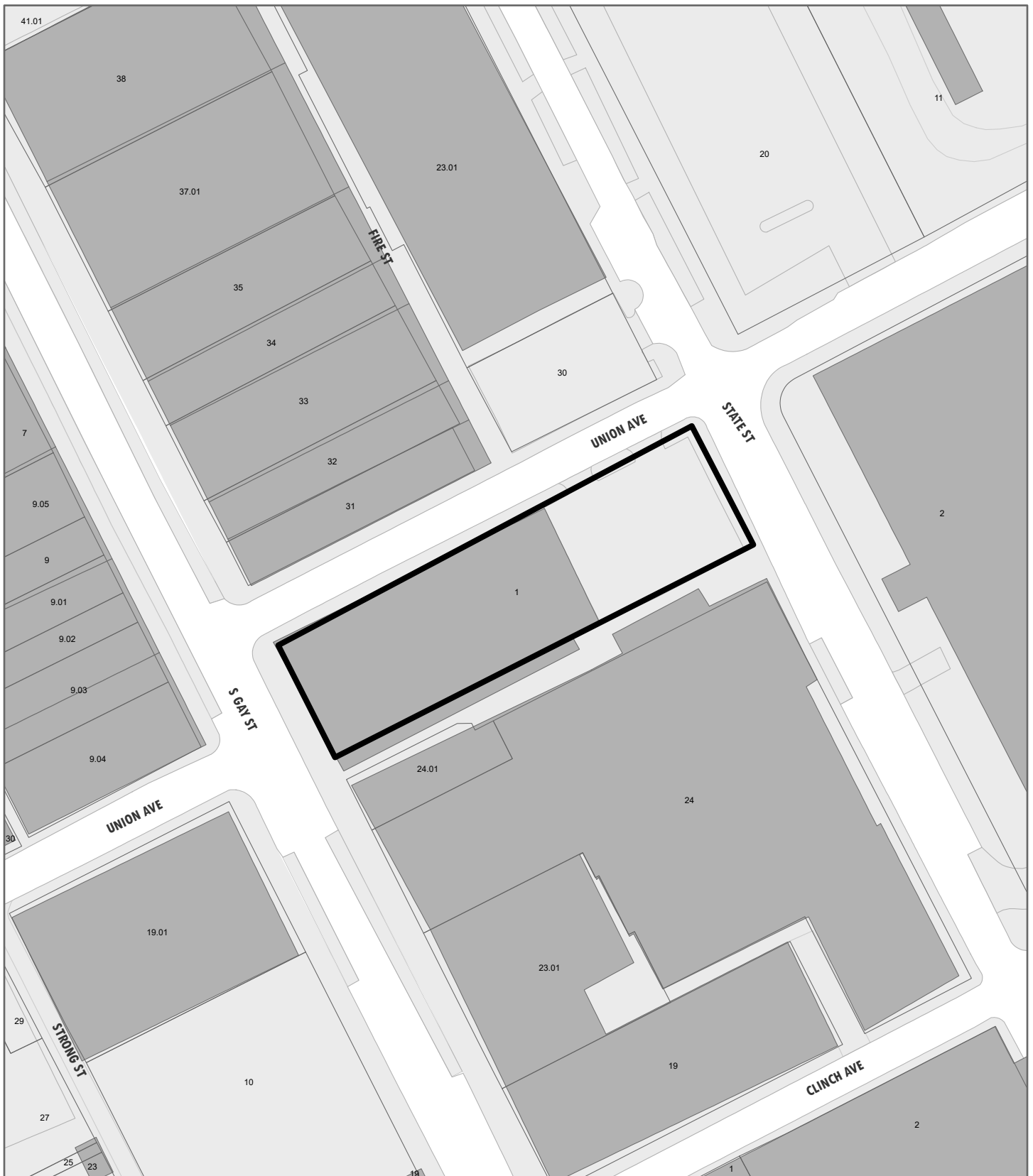
Both reviews discussed size. The Hyatt Place sign is approximately 273 square feet (4'-8" tall by 57' wide), which was then noted to be the largest of similarly-placed rear elevation/roofline signs (with Marble Alley Lofts at 270 sq. ft. and Downtown Grill and Brewery at 178 sq. ft.). The Promenade guidelines recommend that signs be no taller than 5 feet and not over 60 sq. ft. (with specific location criteria on the Promenade structure itself). The proposed new sign is 565 sq. ft. Based on the building's location (on the same block as the Farragut Building/Hyatt Place sign, and adjacent to the Promenade block), historic designation, and major visibility of the rooftop sign structure, the new sign facing to be installed should be reduced in size, not to exceed the 273 sq. ft. of the existing Hyatt Place sign, and to be contained within the existing sign border instead of wrapping the overall sign structure.

While sign content is not within the purview of the DRB, an alternate design would benefit the overall block and character of downtown. The sign has existed since at least 1969 and has been blank since at least 2007. Photographs from the late 1950s, early 1970s, and the NRHP nomination in 1983 depict the sign, which featured painted text similar to painted wall signs in the area. Design guidelines recommend that "advertising signs should be effective and appropriate to historic areas without contributing to visual clutter." Incorporating the style of historic painted wall signs would greatly contribute to the historic district and building.

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## Recommendation

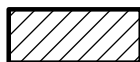
Staff recommends postponement of Certificate 5-A-25-DT, so the applicant may submit a sign proposal reduced in size for Board review.



**DESIGN  
REVIEW  
BOARD**

**5-A-25-DT**

**APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS**

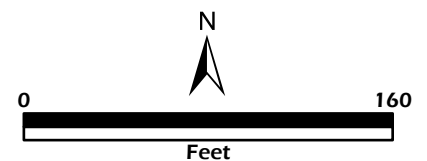


500 S. Gay St.

Level 1: Sign

Original Print Date: 5/7/2025      Revised:  
Knoxville/Knox County Planning · Design Review Board

Petitioner: Anthony Saffles Neon Service  
Co., Inc.





## DESIGN REVIEW REQUEST

- ☐ DOWNTOWN DESIGN (DK)  
☒ HISTORIC ZONING (H)  
☐ INFILL HOUSING (IH)

Anthony Saffles- Neon Service CO, inc

Applicant

4-15-25

5-A-25-DT

Date Filed

Meeting Date (if applicable)

File Number(s)

## CORRESPONDENCE

All correspondence related to this application should be directed to the approved contact listed below.

- ☐ Owner ☒ Contractor ☐ Engineer ☐ Architect/Landscape Architect

Anthony Saffles

Neon Service CO, inc

Name

Company

1007 May Ave

Knoxville

TN

37921

Address

City

State

Zip

865-546-6251

tsaffles@aol.com

Phone

Email

## CURRENT PROPERTY INFO

WOODSTONE ENTERPRISES L P % H T HACKNEY CO 500 South Gay St

Owner Name (if different from applicant)

Owner Address

Owner Phone

500 South Gay St

095IG001

Property Address

Parcel ID

DK-H

Neighborhood

Zoning

## AUTHORIZATION

Lindsay Lanois

Staff Signature

Please Print

Date

Anthony Saffles

4-15-25

Applicant Signature

Please Print

Date

REQUEST

DOWNTOWN DESIGN

Level 1:

☒ Signs    ☐ Alteration of an existing building/structure

Level 2:

☐ Addition to an existing building/structure

Level 3:

☐ Construction of new building/structure    ☐ Site design, parking, plazas, landscape

See required Downtown Design attachment for more details.

☒ Brief description of work: Reface existing structure on rear roof of building

HISTORIC ZONING

Level 1:

☒ Signs    ☐ Routine repair of siding, windows, roof, or other features, in-kind; Installation of gutters, storm windows/doors

Level 2:

☐ Major repair, removal, or replacement of architectural elements or materials    ☐ Additions and accessory structures

Level 3:

☐ Construction of a new primary building

Level 4:

☐ Relocation of a contributing structure    ☐ Demolition of a contributing structure

See required Historic Zoning attachment for more details.

☒ Brief description of work: Reface existing structure on rear roof of building

INFILL HOUSING

Level 1:

☐ Driveways, parking pads, access point, garages or similar facilities    ☐ Subdivisions

Level 2:

☐ Additions visible from the primary street    ☐ Changes to porches visible from the primary street

Level 3:

☐ New primary structure  
☐ Site built    ☐ Modular    ☐ Multi-Sectional

See required Infill Housing attachment for more details.

☐ Brief description of work:

STAFF USE ONLY

ATTACHMENTS

- ☐ Downtown Design Checklist  
☐ Historic Zoning Design Checklist  
☐ Infill Housing Design Checklist

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

☐ Property Owners / Option Holders

Level 1: \$50 • Level 2: \$100 • Level 3: \$250 • Level 4: \$500

FEE 1:

FEE 2:

FEE 3:

TOTAL:

Pd. 04/15/2025, SG





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<i>Neon Service Co.</i>		
SCALE: 1/8":1'	APPROVED BY:	DRAWN BY:
DATE: 1-15-24		R.H.
NAME: H.T. Hackney "The Market"		
DRAWING NUMBER		



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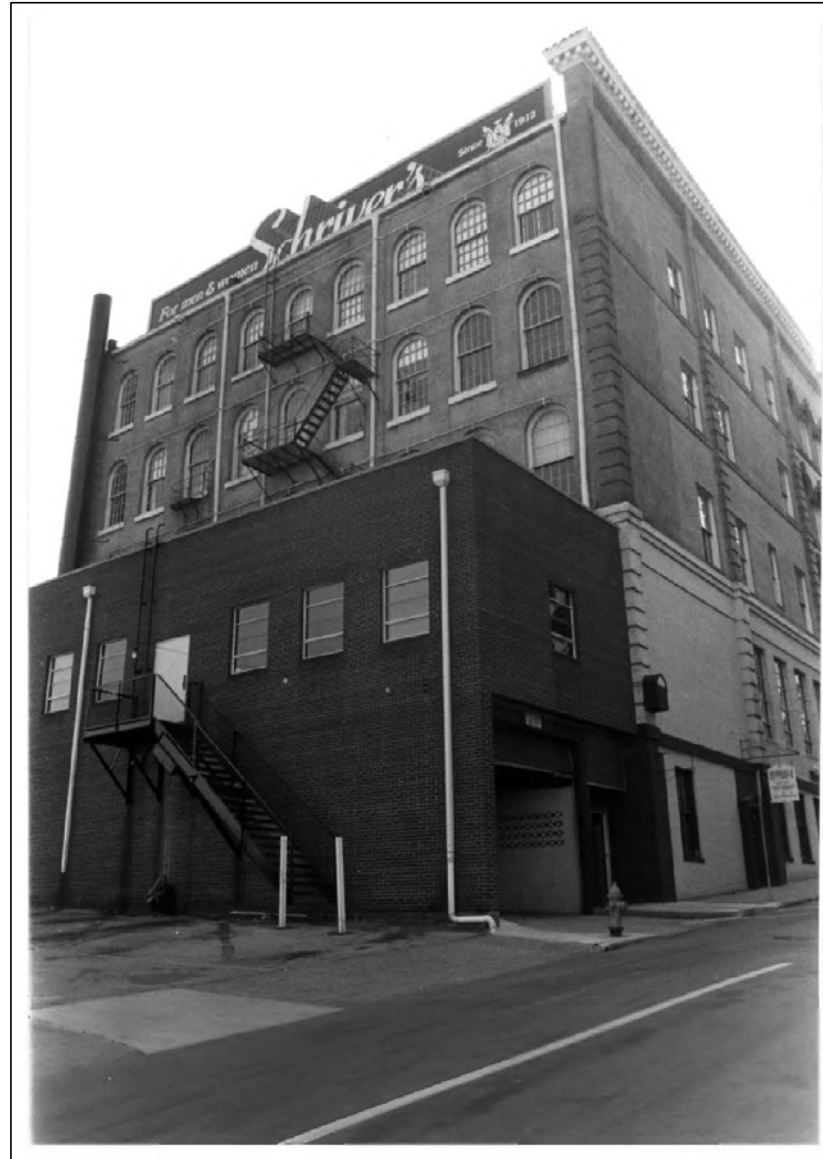




late 1950s



early 1970s



1983