Staff Report

Downtown Design Review

File Number: 11-A-26-DT

Meeting: 11/18/2026

Applicant: Aaron Thompson Lilou LLC

Owner: Ron Sherrill

Project: GARMO

Property Information

Location: 418 S. Gay St. **Parcel ID:** 95 I A 035

Zoning: DK-H (Downtown Knoxville, Historic Subdistrict)

Description: Phoenix Building (circa 1900)

Six-story, flat-roof commercial building with a recessed storefront entry supported by a centrally-located cast-iron column, engaged columns and pilasters on upper levels, and a decorative beltcourse and cornice.

Staff Recommendation

1) Meeting all applicable requirements of Article 13 (Signs) of the City of Knoxville Zoning Code, with the exception of allowing the blue neon lights as proposed.

Description of Work

Level I - Board Review

Sign

Installation of a double-sided neon projecting sign measuring 1’-9.5” wide by 8'-0" tall (14.3 sq ft), with a 18'-8" clear height above the sidewalk. Both sides feature the business name "GARMO" in light blue neon bulbs, mounted on a 1-ft-deep metal sign cabinet painted blue, with light blue neon bulbs installed around the periphery of the sign face. The sign will be installed along the second engaged column from the left (north), using two metal support poles painted black, with one attached to the signboard and the other at the base of the engaged column.

Installation of window signs (approximately 4.5" and 3.4" tall) on the four transom windows at the left (north) corner of storefront.

Comments

The Phoenix Building is a contributing resource to the Gay Street Commercial National Register Historic District, so the historic resources section of the design guidelines applies.

PROJECTING SIGN: The proposed 14.3-sf projecting sign exceeds the recommended maximum sign area of 9 sq ft; however, there are other large projecting signs in this area, including Mast General Store, Babalu, Downtown Grill & Brewery, and Maple Hall. The proposed sign will be installed over 18’ above the sidewalk, and it is “proportional to the building where it will be installed.”

Internal illuminations are discouraged on Gay Street, and the exposed neon bulbs are consistent with other signs in the area. The zoning ordinance prohibits signs with red, green, yellow, amber, or blue lights (Article 13.2.C). However the Design Review Board can approve these colors when deemed appropriate. Staff recommends approval of the blue neon, given the pedestrian-oriented urban context of Gay Street and the lack of safety concerns by City Engineering.

One of the two structural supports will be installed at the former sign's mast arm location, minimizing alterations to the column base. The other support will be installed on the signboard, which no longer retains its historic condition.

WINDOW SIGN: Window signs are generally exempt from permit requirements. The proposed window signs are well within the maximum 30% coverage recommended by the guidelines.

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.



DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

11-A-26-DT

APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

418 S. Gay St.

Level 1: Sign

Original Print Date: 10/29/2026 Revised:

Knoxville/Knox County Planning · Design Review Board

Petitioner: Aaron Thompson Lilou LLC

N

0 160

Feet

Size: 96" x 21.5"	Material: Steel, Aluminum, Neon	Quantity: 1	Comments: Double Sided	Work Order #: 67545TA
⬡ Digital print ⬡ Vinyl ● Other	file location: 2026\B\Brother Wolf\67545TA Exterior Signage			

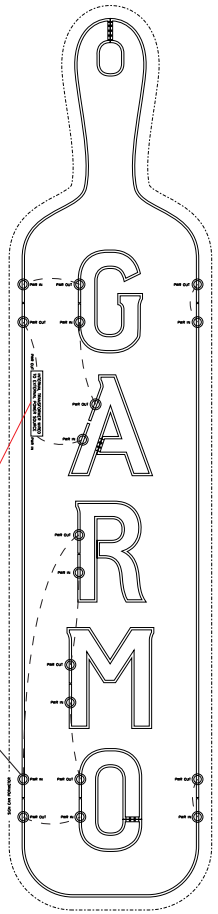
ILLUMINATED

BLACK

PMS 286 C

BLUE NEON

PMS 544 C



NEON BULBS WILL REQUIRE:
2qty FRANCE 15030 P5G-2UE
15000V 30mA TRANSFORMERS
(1 FOR EACH FACE).

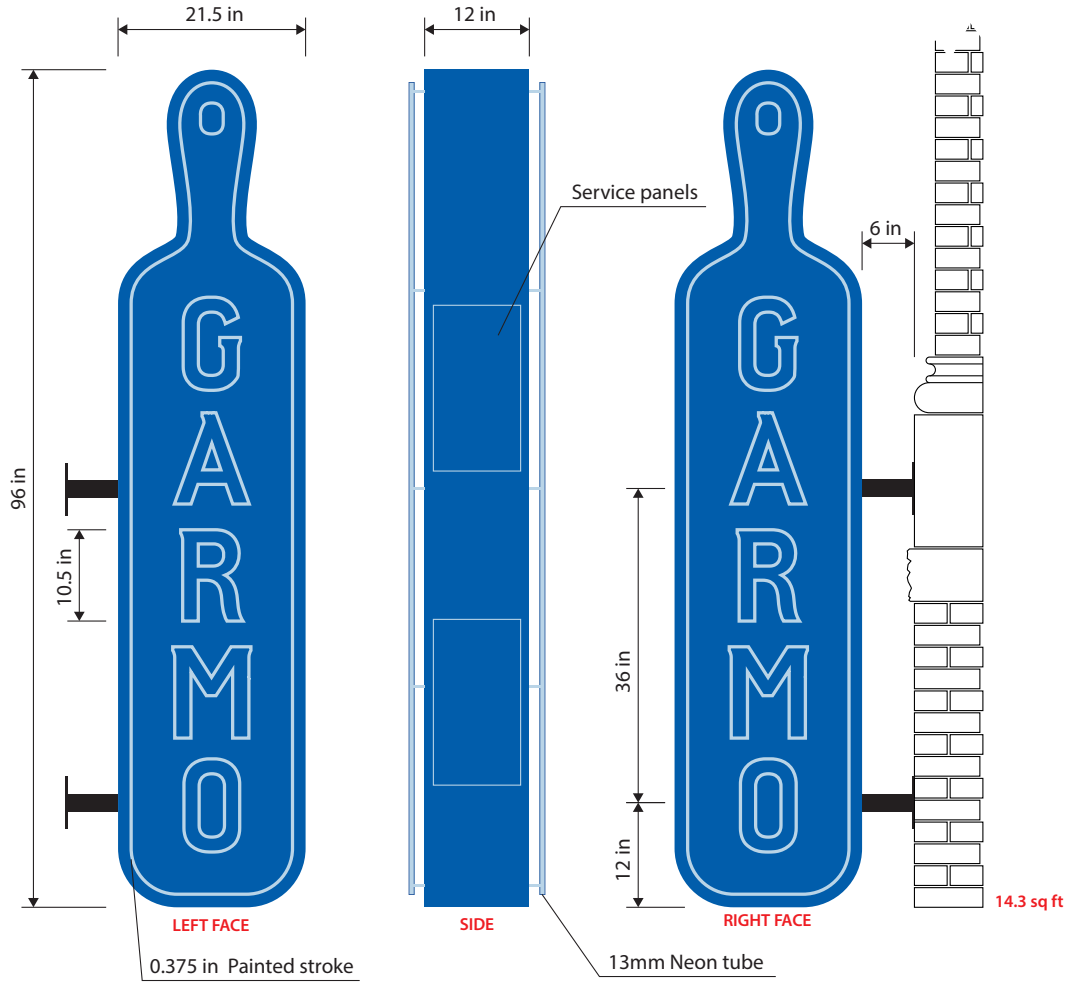
POWER TO SITE BY OTHERS

WHITE FEDERAL BUSHINGS

NEON PATTERN

UL LISTED

UL NUMBER PROVIDED ON INSPECTION.
(Connect to existing 120v-20 amp dedicated branch circuit)



1qty - 96" x 21.5" Double sided 12" deep flag mounted sign can painted to match PMS 286 C & PMS 544 C. Text and graphic elements to be light blue Neon bulbs mounted to sign face.

1qty - Installation of signage using steel supports painted black. 3/8" Hardware to be used for mounting.

Design	Sales	Sales	Design	Design	PROD.	Print/Cut	App.	App.	QC	MGMT.	Route	Route	Plastic	Plastic	Metal	Metal	Paint	Paint	Assem.	Assem.	QC	QC	Crating

*By initialing here you confirm not only that the previous step is up to ASC quality standards, but also our part is complete and up to ASC quality standards & is ready to proceed.

Client: Brother Wolf
Ph/Email: aaron@brotherwolf.com / JRabbitKnox@gmail.com
Title: Exterior Signage

Date: 11/5/26 **Price:** $ - job total
Designer: Nathan Lanning **Rev:** C **Page:** 1 of 3
Approved By: _____ **Date:** _____

ALLEN SIGN CO SOUTH
865 573-3524
2408 CHAPMAN HWY
FAX 579-0356

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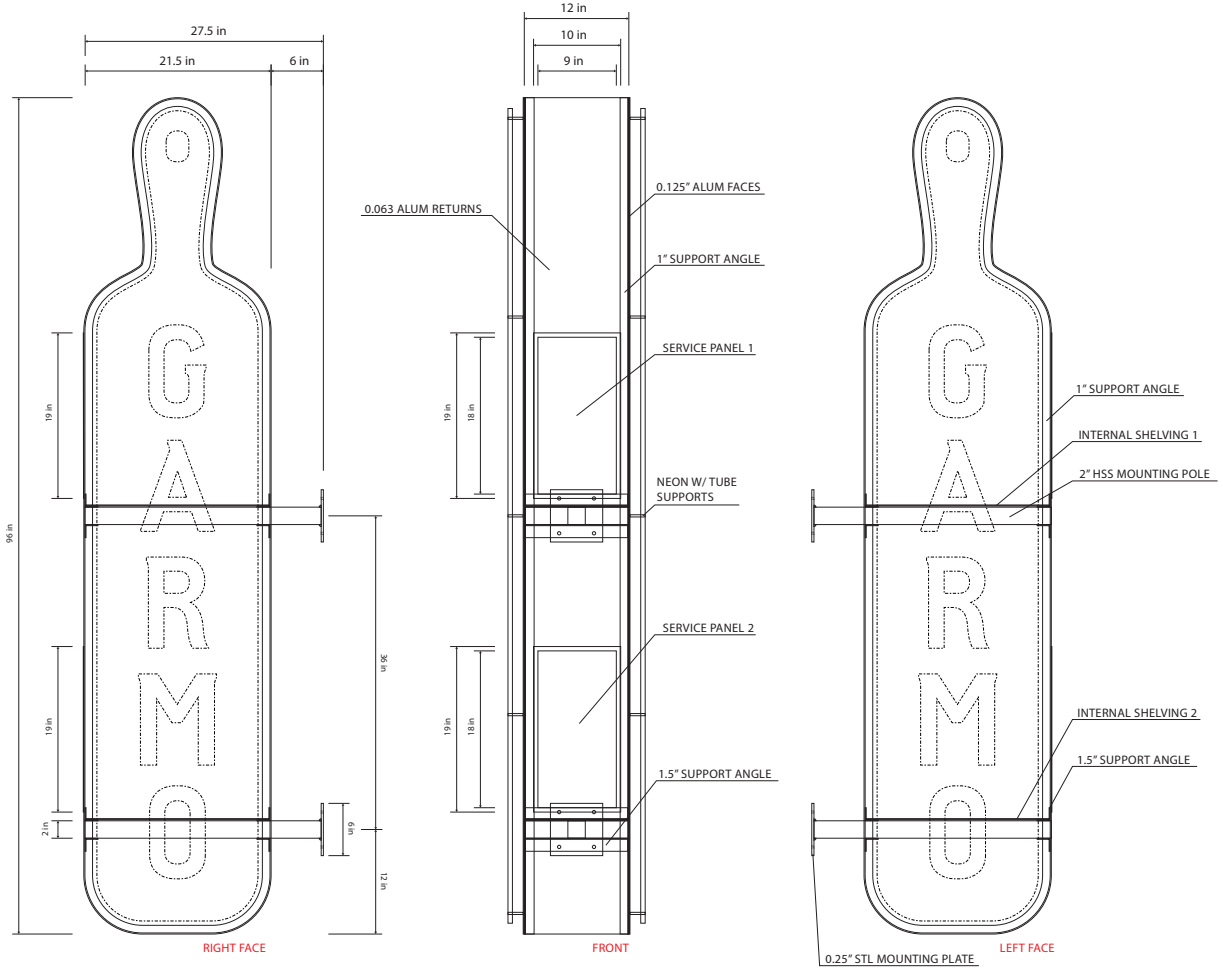
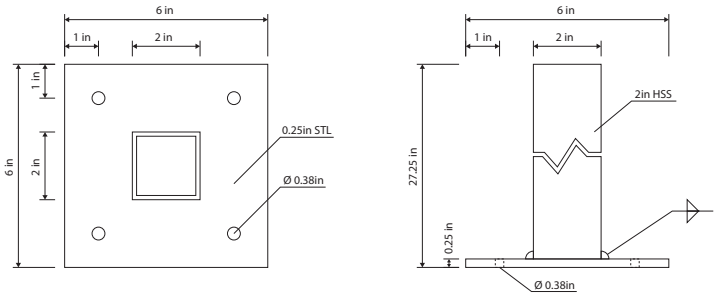
○ Digital print ○ Vinyl ● Other **file location: 2026\B\Brother Wolf\67545TA Exterior Signage**



SIGN CABINET DETAILS



MOUNTING BRACKET AND SUPPORT POLE

Design	Sales	Sales	Design	Design	PROD.	Print/Cut	App.	App.	QC	MGMT.	Route	Route	Plastic	Plastic	Metal	Metal	Paint	Paint	Assem.	Assem.	QC	QC	Crating

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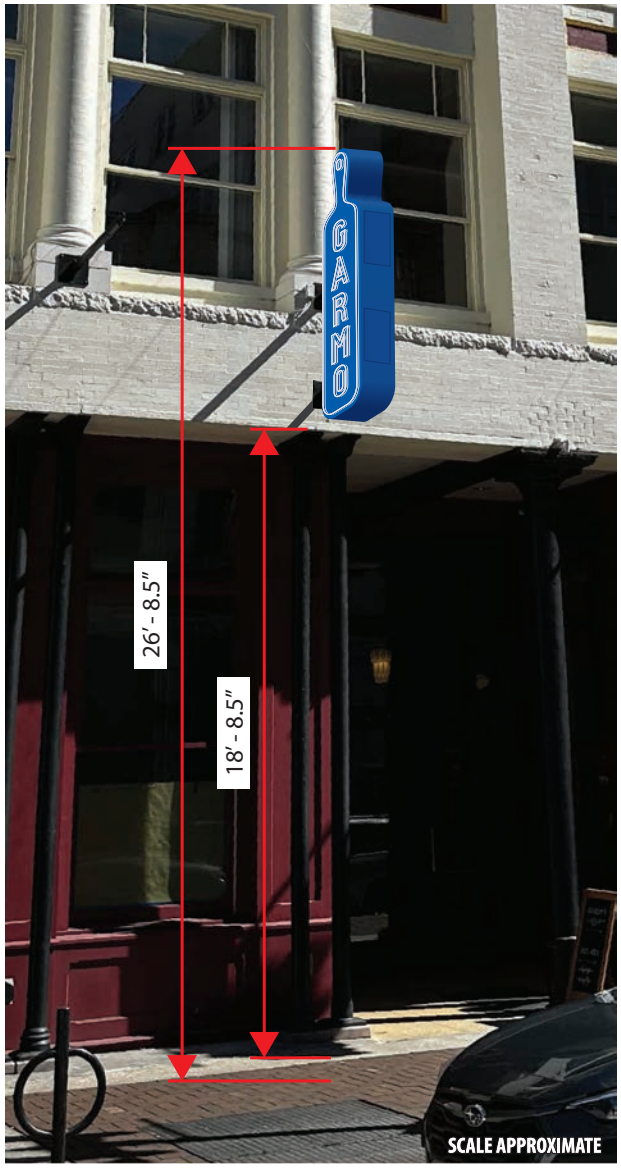
file location: 2026\B\Brother Wolf\67545TA Exterior Signage



EXISTING VIEW



PROPOSED PLACEMENT



PROPOSED NIGHT VIEW

Design	Sales	Sales	Design	Design	PROD.	Print/Cut	App.	App.	QC

MGMT.	Route	Route	Plastic	Plastic	Metal	Metal	Paint	Paint	Assem.	Assem.	QC	QC	Crating

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Mockup

front windows



side windows



Artwork and Layout

front windows





side windows



