



LOWELL PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD MEETING

Regular Meeting

Tuesday, January 3rd, 2023, 6:00 P.M.

- 1. CALL TO ORDER**
- 2. DETERMINATION OF QUORUM**
- 3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
- 4. CHANGES TO AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA**
- 5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM December 6th, 2022, MEETING**
- 6. OLD BUSINESS**
 - A. None**
- 7. NEW BUSINESS**
 - A. Consideration of Master Sign Plan Application - 3211 Aberdeen Blvd
(previously 3301 Lineberger Rd) - 306406**
- 8. ADJOURNMENT**



To: Lowell Planning Board
From: Joe Gates, Planning Director
Date: Friday, December 30, 2022
RE: AGENDA ITEM 7A: Consideration of Master Sign Plan Application - 3211 Aberdeen Blvd (previously 3301 Lineberger Rd) - 306406

PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD STAFF REPORT
FILE # MSP22-01
MEETING DATE: January 3RD, 2023

| | |
|----------------------|------------------------------------|
| OWNER | NP GASTONIA INDUSTRIAL 2 LLC |
| APPLICANT | Dana Stowe / Sign Connection, Inc. |
| REQUEST | Consideration of Master Sign Plan |
| LOCATION | 3211 Aberdeen Blvd / Parcel 306406 |
| PROPERTY SIZE | 104.72 acres |
| ZONING | Industrial |

Background and Site Description

The subject property consists of one (1) total tax parcel with an industrial warehouse/distribution center and parking areas located on the site. The building is approximately 1.5 million square feet and has visibility from Interstate 85.

Section 17.10-2 (B) *Master Sign Plan, Application*, states that “*Commercial, institutional, industrial, or mixed-use developments containing three (3) or more acres in area*” are eligible to apply for a master sign plan. This property is 104.72 acres, thus meeting this requirement.

The applicant has submitted a complete application, site plan and other supporting documentation to support their request to increase their proposed walls signs above the current maximum wall sign area of 32 square feet.

Proposed Request

- Increase permitted wall sign area for this building from 32 sqft to 96.4 sqft

Code References

Per **Article 17 - Sign Regulations, Section 17.10 Master Sign Plan**, the Lowell Development Ordinance allows applicants to submit applications for signs of different sizes, types, locations, placement, and height from those otherwise enumerated in **Article 17 - Sign Regulations**.

The Planning Board is charged with reviewing the application per the procedure outlined in **Section 17.10-4 Review Procedure.**

In reviewing the proposed master sign plan, the Planning Board and City Council shall take the following matters into consideration.

- (1.) The extent to which the proposed master sign plan deviates from the sign allowances otherwise applicable in this Article.**
- (2.) The rationale provided by the applicant for the deviations.**
- (3.) The extent to which the master sign plan promotes City goals associated with community character, wayfinding, pedestrian-orientation, and business identification.**
- (4.) The degree to which the master sign plan creatively and effectively addresses the issues and constraints unique to the site with regard to signage.**

The Planning Board shall provide a recommendation to the City Council whether to **deny** or **approve** the proposed master sign plan **in part** or **in total** and **shall further recommend conditions regarding approval where deemed warranted.**

The following pages contain the application and other related documentation related to this request.

MINUTES

Lowell Planning and Zoning Board
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, December 6, 2022, 6:00 P.M.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Scott Wilson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Planning Board members present: Troy Roberts Sr., David Jennings, Heather Seay and Norris Lamb. Staff members present: Joe Gates, Planning Director, and Cheryl Ramsey, City Clerk. Members of the public were also in attendance.

II. DETERMINATION OF QUORUM – all members were present.

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE led by Scott Wilson

IV. CHANGES TO AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA – Board Member Lamb made a motion to approve the agenda with no changes, seconded by Board Member Jennings. The vote was unanimously in favor.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE NOVEMBER 1, 2022, MEETING.

Motion was made by Board Member Jennings. to approve the previous minutes, seconded by Board Member Seay. The vote was unanimously in favor.

VI. OLD BUSINESS -

A. None

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Consideration of Lowell Development Ordinance Text Amendment to Section 13.6-1 Streets and Associated Infrastructure Design-Street Trees and Sidewalks. Presented by Joe Gates. The NorthPoint Development is applying for a proposed text amendment noted in Article 13.6-1 Streets and Associated Infrastructure design. He stated NorthPoint requests the update to accommodate industrial sized traffic. They are proposing added exemptions to add an industrial area which will not require the planting of trees on both sides of the streets. Staff agreed with and approved the amendment to add language to the LDO to bring before the Board. Mr. Gates read the proposed amendment (see agenda packet). NorthPoint representatives did not have anything to add to the presentation.

Board Member Lamb asked Mr. Gates to show the location in question. Chairman Wilson asked once you get in the residential areas, it will look like a residential area

correct? Mr. Gates said yes. Mr. Gates said that this is for a proposed area. Normally, if you aren't developing a residential area it would default to a general commercial zone. He explained that NorthPoint has asked to design wider lanes to accommodate larger trucks in area and they will be helping with stormwater relief designs and larger sidewalk areas.

Chairman Wilson asked if it will be bicycle friendly. Mr. Gates said there is no dedicated bike lane but they are proposing 6 foot wide sidewalks that would help. Board Member Seay asked if this is for all future industrial areas. Mr. Gates said yes once approved, if you are doing an industrial development and creating a new street/infrastructure like NorthPoint is, then this new set of standards would apply.

Board Member Jennings asked what kind of timeframe for the completion of streets can be expected. Toby Wiles of NorthPoint said late fall depending on when they get started but looking at a 7-8 month timeframe. Board Member Lamb asked how does the proposed change line up with other councils, Gastonia for example? Mr. Wiles said Lowell's standards are higher.

With no other questions, Board Member Lamb made a motion to make the change the amendment 13.6-1 as recommended, seconded by Board Member Roberts. The vote was unanimously in favor.

Mr. Gates stated that he will prepare a memo for City Council review in January 2023.

B. ADJOURN

Motion was made to adjourn by Board Member Jennings, seconded by Board Member Seay. The vote was unanimously in favor by the group. It adjourned at 6:21 pm.

AFFIRM:

Chair, Scott Wilson

Cheryl Ramsey, City Clerk



MASTER SIGN PLAN APPLICATION

TO: THE CITY OF LOWELL
101 W. First Street
Lowell, NC 28098

APPLICATION #: MSP22-01
DATE FILED: 12/14/2022
FEE PAID: \$400, PAID

The undersigned does (do) hereby respectfully make application and request to the City of Lowell to allow creativity in order to address site issues and constraints as outlined in regards to Article 17 of the Lowell Development Ordinance pertaining to sign regulations and requirements on the below listed property and in such ways as proposed.

1) The real property sought to be amended is owned in fee simple by:

NP Gastonia Industrial 2 LLC
as evidenced in Deed Book 5307 Page 1689 of the Gaston County Register of Deeds Office. There are no restrictions or covenants of record appearing in the chain of title which would prohibit the property from being subject to this request.

2) The address of the real property sought to be amended is: 3211 Aberdeen Blvd. and/or further legal description by metes and bounds of said realty is attached to this application.

3) The following are all adjoining property owners who own land adjacent to all sides, front and rear, which shall include properties across the street from the property sought to be amended. The names and addresses listed below shall be determined by the most recent tax listing as recorded in the Gaston County Tax Office. (Use additional pages if necessary.)

NAME ADDRESS

Please refer to attached page

4) A map or drawing identifying the real property requesting the Master Sign Plan and all attached properties with their designated zoning districts shown shall be attached to this application.

5) Master Sign Plan proposal illustrating the proposed signs, their proposed location, and their proposed purpose, along with a statement as to why the existing sign code cannot or should not be followed in the subject case.

- 6) An analysis showing how the proposed signage plan differs from what could be provided under the existing sign regulations set forth in Article 17 of the Lowell Development Ordinance.
- 7) Other similar information determined by the *Planning, Zoning & Subdivision Administrator* to be necessary for understanding the purpose and intent of the proposed Master Sign Plan application.

- a. see attached
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____

- 8) The applicant understands that a letter stating the date, time and place for the Public Hearing for the Master Sign Plan request of said property shall be mailed to each of the parties listed in Section 3 above at least ten (10) days prior to the Public Hearing.
- 9) If the applicant is not the legal owner of the property seeking approval of the Master Sign Plan, the legal owner(s) names and addresses shall be listed below. Owner(s) shall be determined by the most recent tax listing as recorded in the Gaston County Tax Office. (Use additional pages if necessary.)(Please attach Notarized Public Hearing Consent Form provided by the City of Lowell)

| NAME | ADDRESS |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <u>NP Gastonia Industrial 2 LLC</u> | <u>4825 NW 41st St, Ste 500, Riverside, MO</u> |
| _____ | _____ 64150 |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

Applicant(s) Name: Dana Stowe / Sign Connection, Inc.
 Address: 1660 Pacolet Ct. Gastonia, NC 28052
 Telephone: 704-868-4500

Applicant(s) Signature: Dana Stowe

City of Lowell
 101 W. First Street
 Lowell, NC 28098

Telephone: 704-824-3518



City of Lowell-Development Services Department

101 W. First Street Lowell, NC 28098

Phone: 704-824-3518 Web: lowellnc.com

Public Hearing Consent Form

To: City of Lowell Board of Adjustment / Planning Board / City Council

From: NP Gastonia Industrial 2, LLC

Subject: Master Sign Plan

consent for variance / conditional use / appeal / subdivision variance / watershed variance / rezoning

Date: 12/15/22

I, Matt Mannin, agent for NP Gastonia Industrial 2, being the property owner of parcel(s) 306406, give consent to Sign Connection, Inc. to act on my behalf in applying for the **PUBLIC HEARING REQUEST** under consideration.

Matthew Mannin 12/15/22
Signature (owner) Date

~~North Carolina~~ OHIO
~~Gaston County~~ Hamilton

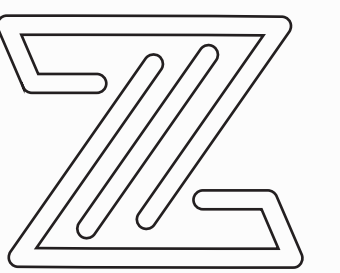
I, Laura Funke, a Notary Public for the said County and State, do hereby certify that Matthew Mannin personally appeared before me this day and acknowledged the due execution of the foregoing instrument.

Witness my hand and official seal, this 15th of December, 2022

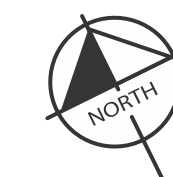
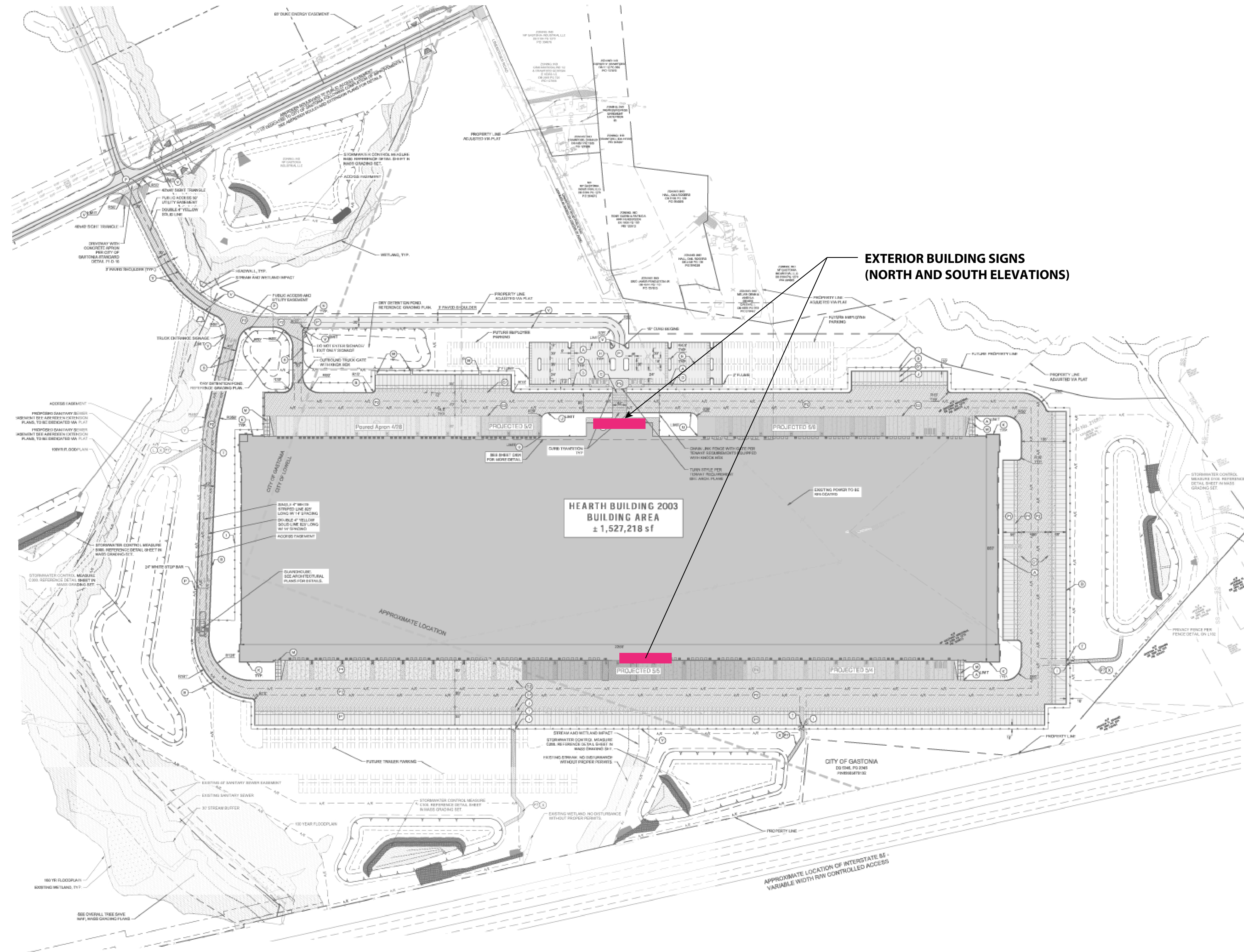
Laura A Funke
Notary Signature

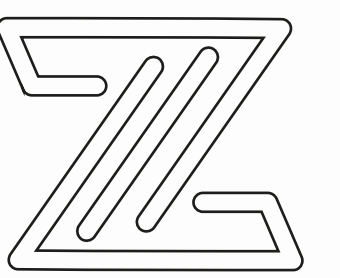
My commission expires: 10-3-2026





Project Number 2022-xxxx
 Project Name Newell-Gastonia
 Sign Type Site Wayfinding Signage
 Address xxx Street
 Gastonia, NC





Project Number | 2021-0853
 Project Name | Newell-Forge
 Sign Type | Exterior Signage
 Address | 3001 Lineberge Rd
 Gastonia, NC 28054

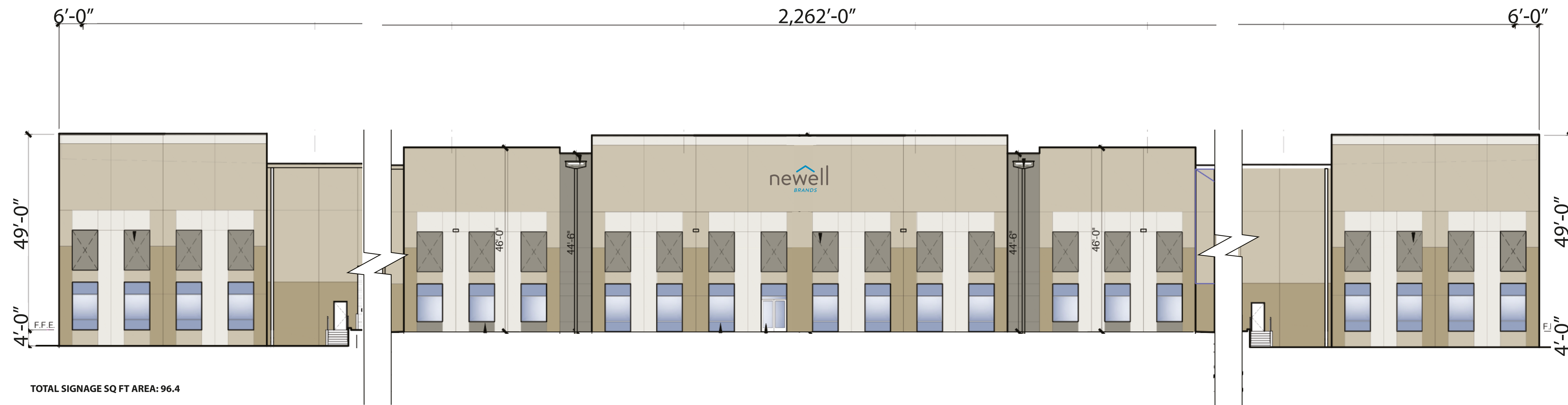
Maximum sign area

Wall. Wall signs on any wall face shall not cumulatively exceed 10 percent of the wall area or 100 square feet, whichever is less.

Projecting/Suspended: Up to 10 square feet.

Sign Location - NORTH WALL

| Wall Size | Sign Size | Sign Sqft | % of wall |
|------------|------------------|-----------|-----------|
| 104' x 49' | 6'-8" x 14'-5.5" | 96.4 | 1.89% |

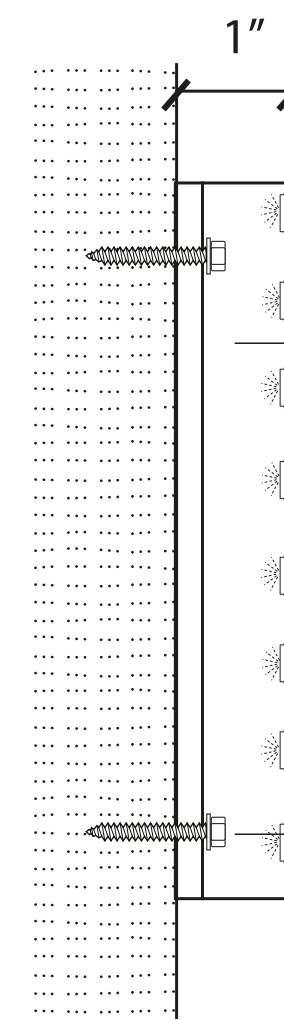


NEWELL - North Elevation - Illuminated Signage
 ELEVATION | SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"



TOTAL SQ FT AREA: 96.4

NEWELL - North Elevation - QTY1ea
 ELEVATION | SCALE: 1/2" = 1'-0"



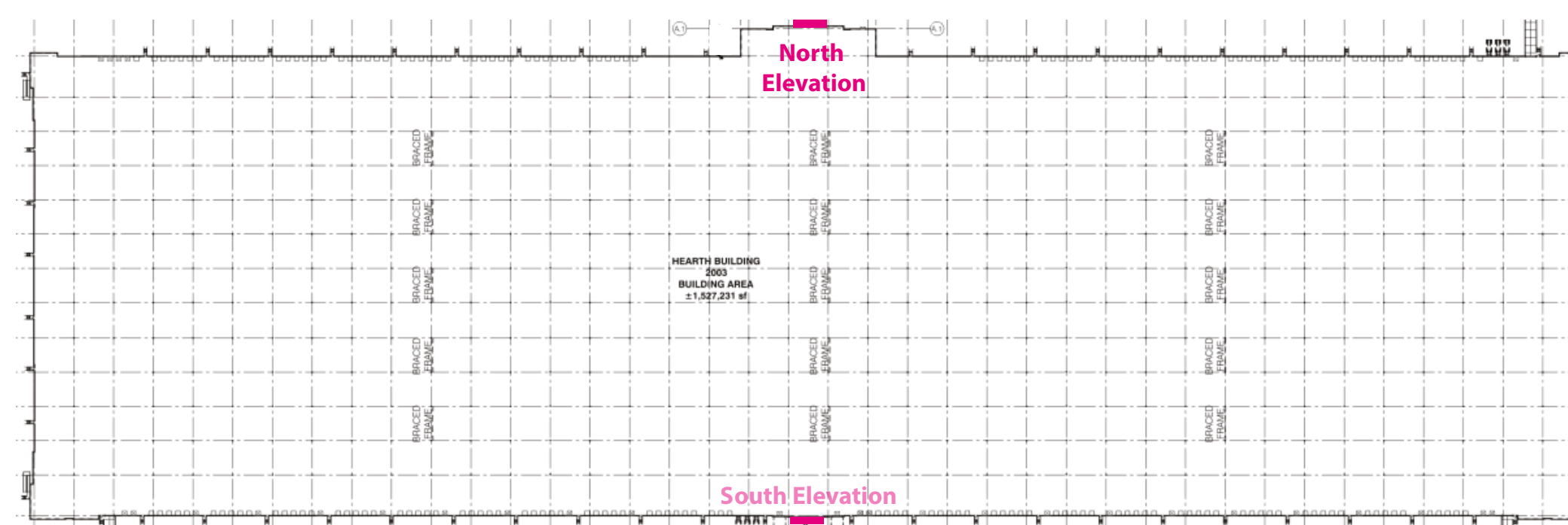
1" deep fabricated alum lettering
 painted finish, faces & returns
 Interior Illum edge-lit
 (PT-1) Pantone 7689C
 (PT-2) Pantone 405C
 #8-32 concealed stud mount
 stainless steel



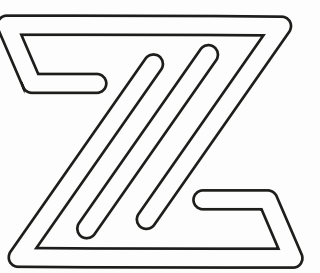
DETAIL-SECTION- (NOT-TO-SCALE)



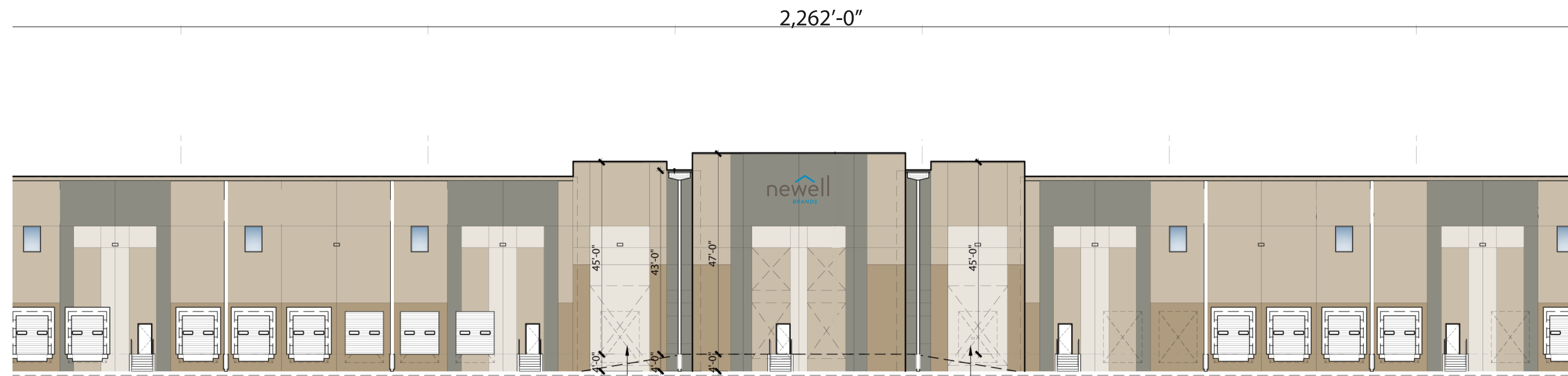
ENLARGED ELEVATION OF SIGN: NORTH ELEVATION
 SCALE: 3/32" = 1'-0"



SITE PLAN
 NOT-TO-SCALE



Project Number 2021-0853
 Project Name Newell-Forge
 Sign Type Exterior Signage
 Address 3001 Lineberge Rd
 Gastonia, NC 28054



TOTAL SIGNAGE SQ FT AREA: 96.4

NEWELL - South Elevation - Illuminated Signage
 ELEVATION | SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"

Maximum sign area

Wall. Wall signs on any wall face shall not cumulatively exceed 10 percent of the wall area or 100 square feet, whichever is less.

Projecting/Suspended: Up to 10 square feet.

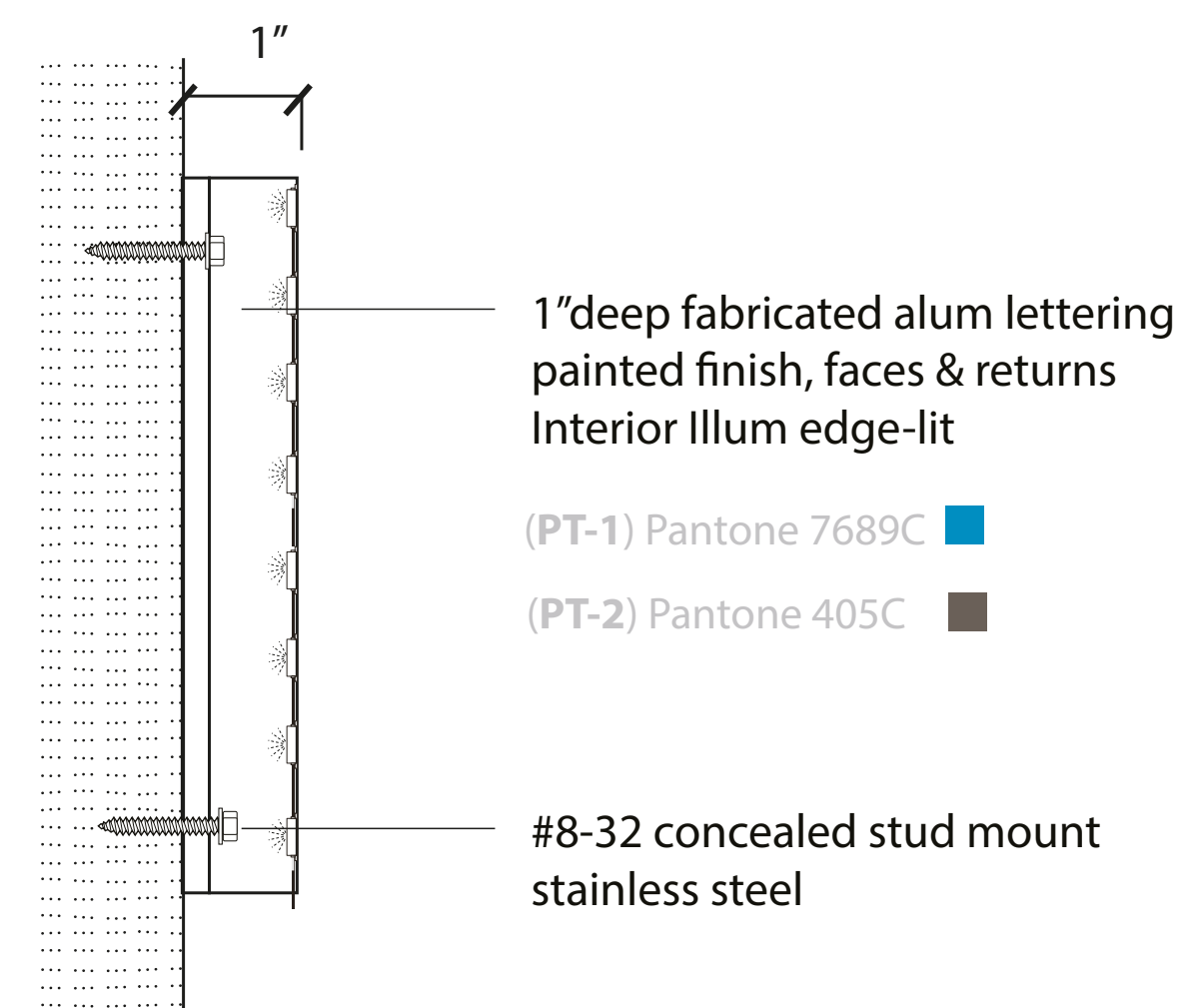
Sign Location - SOUTH WALL

| Wall Size | Sign Size | Sign Sqft | % of wall |
|-----------|------------------|-----------|-----------|
| 58' x 51' | 6'-8" x 14'-5.5" | 96.4 | 3.26% |



TOTAL SQ FT AREA: 96.4

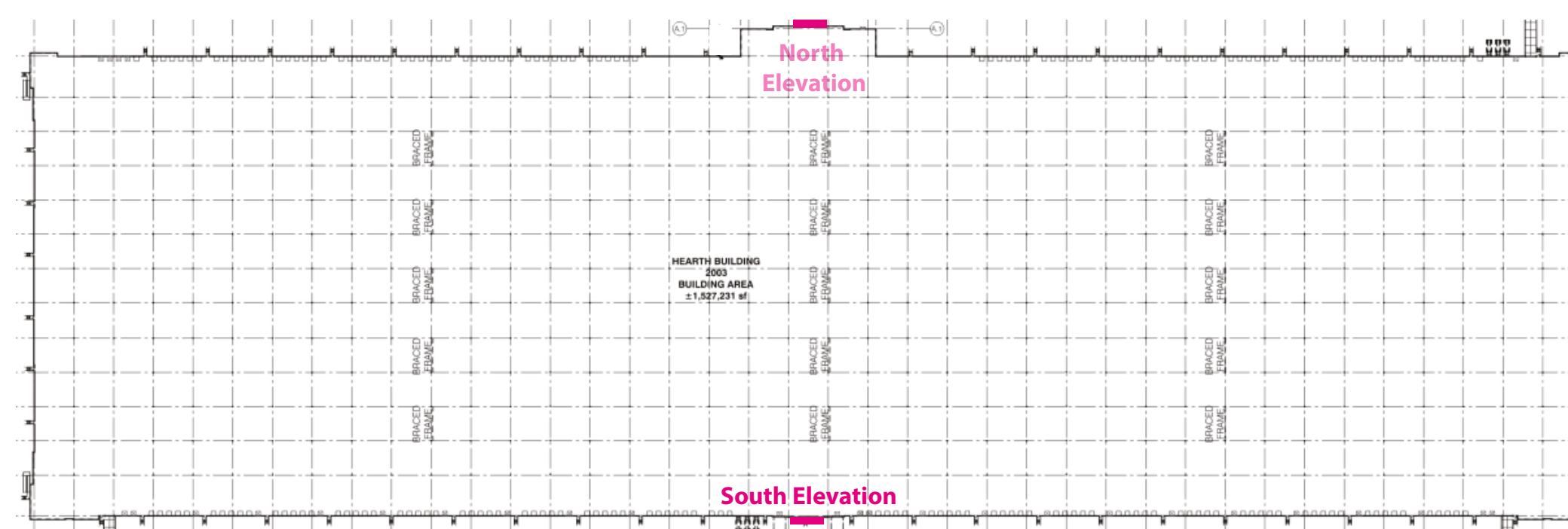
NEWELL - South Elevation - QTY1ea
 ELEVATION | SCALE: 1/2" = 1'-0"



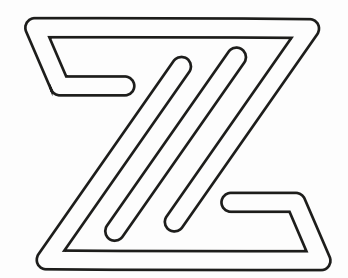
DETAIL-SECTION- (NOT-TO-SCALE)



ENLARGED ELEVATION OF SIGN: SOUTH ELEVATION
 SCALE: 3/32" = 1'-0"



SITE PLAN
 NOT-TO-SCALE



Project Number 2021-0853
Project Name Newell-Forge
Sign Type Exterior Signage
Address 3001 Lineberge Rd
 Gastonia, NC 28054

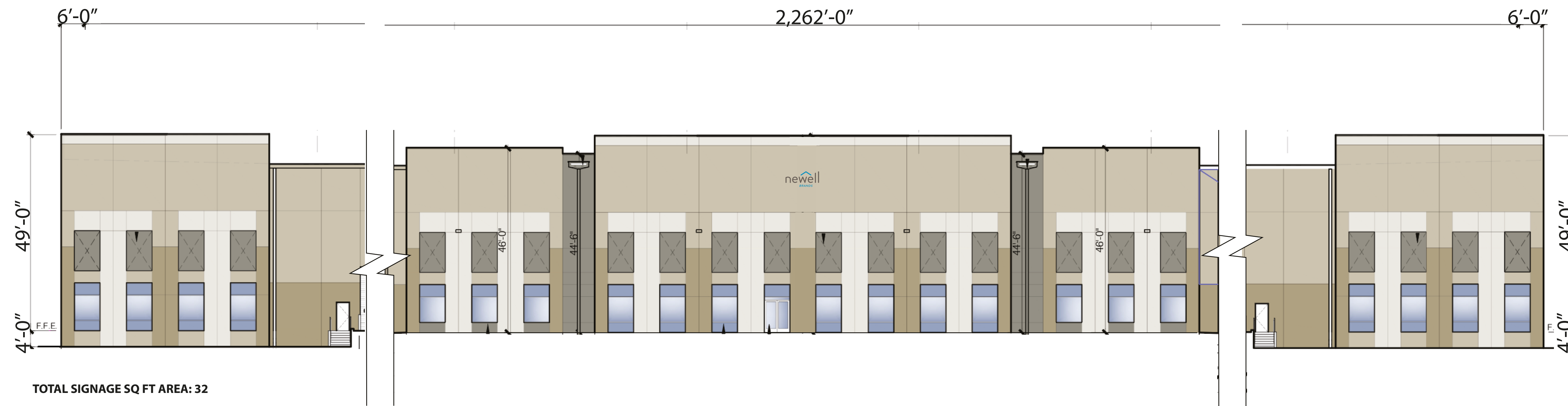
Maximum sign area

Wall. Wall signs on any wall face shall not cumulatively exceed 10 percent of the wall area or 100 square feet, whichever is less.

Projecting/Suspended: Up to 10 square feet.

Sign Location - NORTH WALL

| Wall Size | Sign Size | Sign Sqft | % of wall |
|------------|----------------|-----------|-----------|
| 104' x 49' | 3'-10" x 8'-4" | 31.9 | 0.63% |

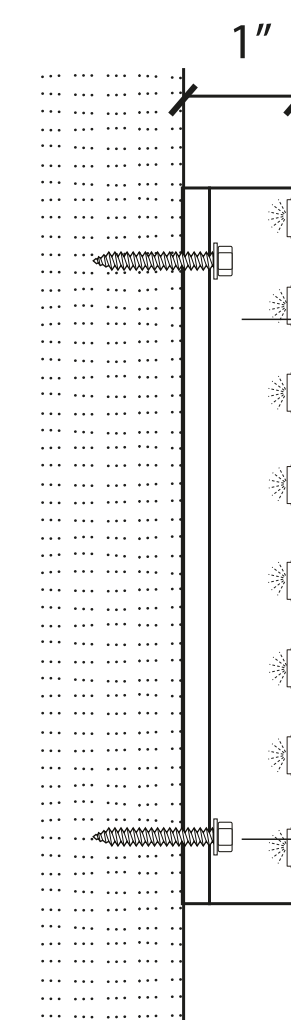


NEWELL - North Elevation - Illuminated Signage
ELEVATION | SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"



TOTAL SQ FT AREA: 32

NEWELL - North Elevation - QTY1ea
ELEVATION | SCALE: 1/2" = 1'-0"



1" deep fabricated alum lettering
painted finish, faces & returns
Interior Illum edge-lit

- (PT-1) Pantone 7689C
- (PT-2) Pantone 405C

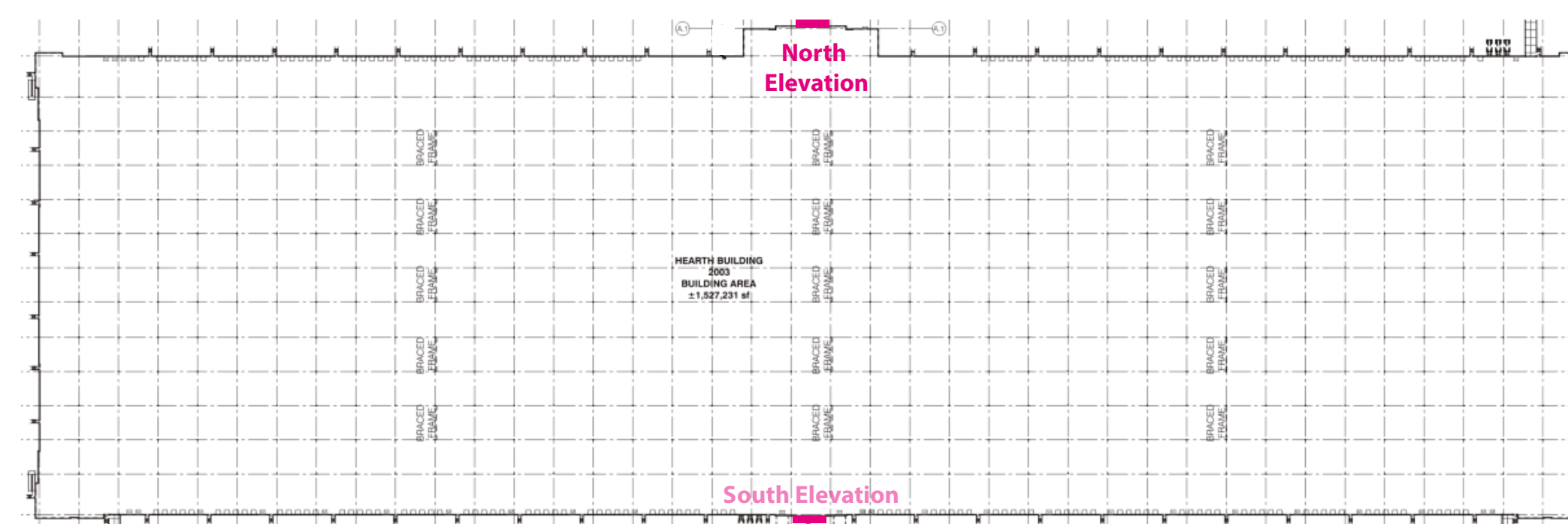
#8-32 concealed stud mount
stainless steel



DETAIL-SECTION- (NOT-TO-SCALE)



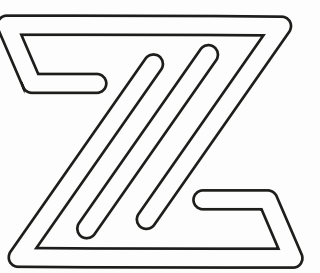
ENLARGED ELEVATION OF SIGN: NORTH ELEVATION
SCALE: 3/32" = 1'-0"



SITE PLAN
NOT-TO-SCALE

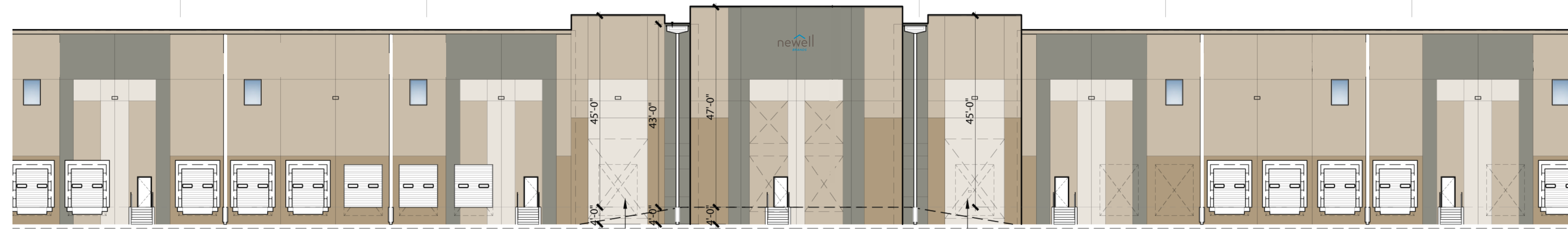


2135 W Carroll Avenue
Chicago, Illinois, 60612



Project Number 2021-0853
 Project Name Newell-Forge
 Sign Type Exterior Signage
 Address 3001 Lineberge Rd
 Gastonia, NC 28054

2,262'-0"



Maximum sign area

Wall. Wall signs on any wall face shall not cumulatively exceed 10 percent of the wall area or 100 square feet, whichever is less.

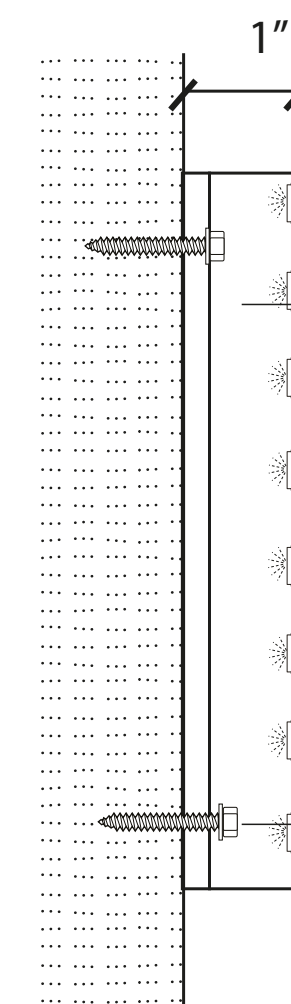
Projecting/Suspended: Up to 10 square feet.

TOTAL SIGNAGE SQ FT AREA: 32

NEWELL - South Elevation - Illuminated Signage
 ELEVATION | SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"

Sign Location - SOUTH WALL

| Wall Size | Sign Size | Sign Sqft | % of wall |
|-----------|----------------|-----------|-----------|
| 58' x 51' | 3'-10" x 8'-4" | 31.9 | 1.08% |



1" deep fabricated alum lettering
 painted finish, faces & returns
 Interior Illum edge-lit

- (PT-1) Pantone 7689C
- (PT-2) Pantone 405C

#8-32 concealed stud mount
 stainless steel



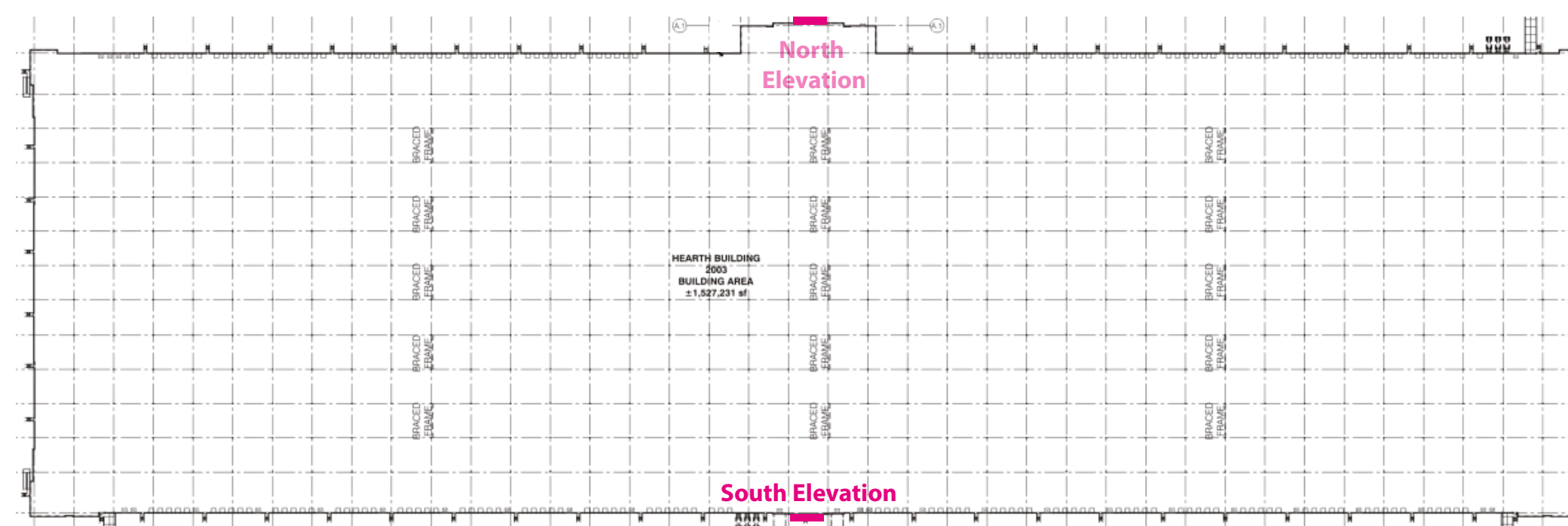
TOTAL SQ FT AREA: 32

NEWELL - South Elevation - QTY1ea
 ELEVATION | SCALE: 1/2" = 1'-0"

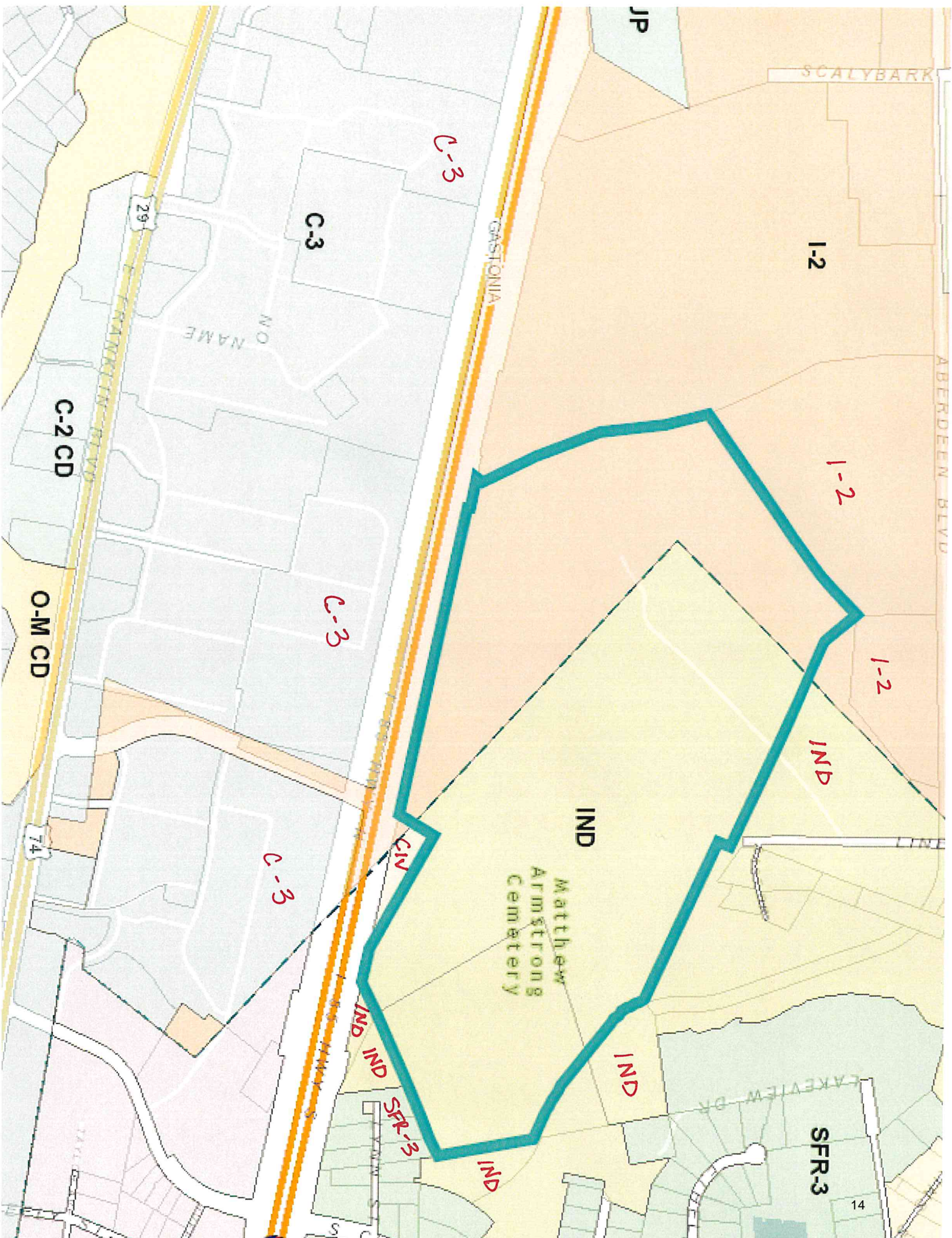
DETAIL-SECTION - (NOT-TO-SCALE)



ENLARGED ELEVATION OF SIGN: SOUTH ELEVATION
 SCALE: 3/32" = 1'-0"



SITE PLAN
 NOT-TO-SCALE



ADJOINING PROPERTY OWNERS TO 3211 ABERDEEN BLVD, GASTONIA, NC 28054




| <u>NAME</u> | <u>ADDRESS OF PARCEL / PIN / ZONE</u> |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| NP Gastonia Industrial LLC | 524 Scalybark Rd (307531) I-2 |
| NP Gastonia Industrial LLC | 3145 Aberdeen Blvd (307532) I-2 |
| NP Gastonia Industrial LLC | NO ASSIGNED ADDRESS (307543) I-2 |
| NP Gastonia Industrial LLC | 517 Lineberger Rd (307536) IND |
| NP Gastonia Industrial LLC | NO ASSIGNED ADDRESS (307541) IND |
| NP Gastonia Industrial LLC | NO ASSIGNED ADDRESS (307542) IND |
| Cathy E Howell | 312 Lynn St (128460) SFR-3 |
| Edward H Jackson | NO ASSIGNED ADDRESS (128458) SFR-3 |
| Edward H Jackson | NO ASSIGNED ADDRESS (128455) SFR-3 |
| Edward H Jackson | NO ASSIGNED ADDRESS (128454) IND |
| Edward H Jackson | NO ASSIGNED ADDRESS (128453) IND |
| City of Gastonia | 3303 Lineberger Rd (128580) CIV |
| BRE Retail Residual NC Owner LP | 2910 E Franklin Blvd (138014) C-3 |
| Wal-Mart Real Estate Business Trust | 3000 E Franklin Blvd (138015) C-3 |
| Sams Real Estate Business Trust | 3540 E Franklin Blvd (138020) C-3 |
| Jean K Faires | NO ASSIGNED ADDRESS (135110) C-3 |

17.7 Requirements for Permanent Signs Requiring an Approval of a Zoning Permit

17.7-1 Permanent sign requirements. The following tables and text provide the design and dimensional requirements for permanent *signs* that require a permit. Requirements include copy area, number, type of illumination, and letter height for both attached and freestanding *signs*. Setback and height requirements are established for freestanding *signs* and detailed design requirements are provided for monument and pole *signs*.

- (A.) Only one general attached *sign* (blade, V-type, or flat) is allowed per street or parking frontage.
- (B.) Only one monument or pole freestanding *sign* is allowed per street frontage.
- (C.) Height of freestanding *signs* shall be measured from the elevation of the ground at the point of contact with the *sign* provided that the grade of the site is not artificially altered to increase the allowable height of the *sign*. For sloping sites, the applicable point of contact shall be the point having the highest elevation.
- (D.) One *sign* per approved *Home Occupation* within the Single Family Residential (SFR), Residential Main Street Transition (RMST), Mixed Use (MU), and Main Street (MS) districts, not to exceed four (4) square feet in area.
- (E.) The following permanent special purpose *signs* are in addition to general attached and freestanding *signs* under the limitations provided in the following tables and elsewhere in this Article.
 - (1.) Window.
 - (2.) Directional.
 - (3.) Directory.
 - (4.) Community identification.
- (F.) Clocks and Thermometers (including digital displays of time and temperature information) are allowed as either attached or freestanding components of *signs* provided they are:
 - (1.) incorporated into the general or attached signage for a non-residential property,
 - (2.) no more than two (2) per property, and
 - (3.) the area does not exceed 16 square feet. The square footage allowance constitutes an area bonus in addition to the maximum allowable area for the applicable *sign* type to which clocks and/or thermometers are attached.

Table 17.1 – Permanent Sign Standards and Criteria

| Sign Type | Sign Copy Area Allowance (sq. ft.) | Sign Illumination | Minimum Letter Size | Maximum Number | Other Requirements |
|---|---|-------------------|---------------------------------|--|--|
| Permanent Attached Signs – General | | | | | |
| Blade* (or Projecting) |  | | | | Only one <i>sign</i> (blade, V-type or flat <i>sign</i>) allowed per occupancy per street or parking frontage |
| V-type* |  | | | | |
| Flat* (or Wall) |  | 32 | Ambient External Internal | 6" One per street or parking frontage per occupancy | Internally-illuminated <i>signs</i> – <i>sign</i> face can be illuminated No attached signage above second story except in monolithic multi-story buildings fronting major thoroughfares. May encroach into adjoining street right-of-way pursuant to an encroachment agreement. See 17.5(G), also see 17.7-1(J) |

*May encroach into adjoining street right-of-way in the Main Street (MS) and Mixed Use (MU) Districts pursuant to an encroachment agreement subject to the provisions of Sections 17.5(G) and 17.7-1(I) of this Article.

(G.) Alternative design for sandwich board *signs*. As an alternative to the standard design described above, the *Planning, Zoning & Subdivision Administrator* may permit alternative sandwich board *sign* designs which exhibit a distinctive and creative flair which the owner would otherwise be unable to replicate if the standard frame design was used. Such *signs* shall not contain changeable copy and images and lettering shall be permanently attached, painted, cut or carved onto the *sign* using a muted palette of colors. Wooden *signs* are preferred, but all such *signs* shall be made of durable materials. An example of an acceptable alternative design is illustrated in the following photograph.



Example of Alternative Sandwich Board Sign

17.9 ***Signs* Located in Local Historic Districts**

Regardless of the other dimensional provisions of this Article, *signs* that are located in local historic districts shall be governed by the applicable design guidelines and review processes established for the local historic district.

17.10 **Master *Sign* Plan**

Regardless of the other provisions of this Article, the City Council may, at its sole discretion, approve a master *sign* plan for specified areas of City or for certain development projects listed in this section. The approved master *sign* plan may include *signs* of different sizes, types, locations, placement and height from those otherwise enumerated in this Article.

17.10-1 **Purpose.** The purpose behind this section is to permit creativity in *sign* design and placement to address site issues and constraints associated with topography, pedestrian-orientation, wayfinding/directional/directory and other conditions unique to the subject development or area of City.

17.10-2 Application. Master *sign* plans may be submitted for the following types of developments:

- (A.) Traditional Neighborhood Development (TNDO) projects, in accordance with the provisions of Article 8 of this Ordinance.
- (B.) Commercial, institutional, industrial, or mixed-use developments containing three or more acres in area.
- (C.) Areas of City that are governed by a corridor plan or area plan that includes *sign* guidelines.

17.10-3 Submittal process. Master *sign* plan applications may be submitted for consideration at the time of original submittal of the proposed development or separately from the original development proposal. The following information or material shall be required for a signage plan application and shall be indicated on an application form provided by the *Planning, Zoning & Subdivision Administrator*.

- (A.) Owner and contact name, address, telephone number and signature(s), as applicable.
- (B.) A master *sign* plan proposal illustrating the proposed *signs*, their proposed location, and their proposed purpose, along with a statement as to why the existing *sign* code cannot or should not be followed in the subject case.
- (C.) An analysis showing how the proposed signage plan differs from what could be provided under the existing *sign* regulations set forth in this Article.
- (D.) Other similar information determined by the *Planning, Zoning & Subdivision Administrator* to be necessary for understanding the purpose and intent of the proposed master *sign* plan application.

17.10-4 Review procedure. The *Planning, Zoning & Subdivision Administrator* shall schedule the master *sign* plan for Planning Board and City Council consideration in accordance with the notice and public hearing procedures set forth in Article 5 for zoning map amendments. In reviewing the proposed master *sign* plan, the Planning Board and City Council shall take the following matters into consideration.

- (1.) The extent to which the proposed master *sign* plan deviates from the *sign* allowances otherwise applicable in this Article.
- (2.) The rationale provided by the applicant for the deviations.
- (3.) The extent to which the master *sign* plan promotes City goals associated with community character, wayfinding, pedestrian-orientation, and business identification.
- (4.) The degree to which the master *sign* plan creatively and effectively addresses the issues and constraints unique to the site with regard to signage.

The Planning Board shall provide a recommendation to the City Council whether to deny or approve the proposed master *sign* plan in part or in total and shall further recommend conditions regarding approval where deemed warranted.

The City Council may deny or approve the proposed master *sign* plan in part or in total and may establish conditions regarding approval. In the event that the master *sign* plan is denied, the applicant must wait at least 90 days before reapplying for a new master *sign* plan *substantially similar* (as defined in Article 3) to the proposed master *sign* plan.

17.11 Suggested Design Guidelines

In addition to the mandatory standards provided in Sections 17.7 and 17.8 above, the following design guidelines for *signs* are provided in order to promote more attractive and functional design and placement of *signs*.

- (A.) Freestanding *signs*. Placement of freestanding *signs* should take into account existing trees and other site landscaping so as to maintain *sign* visibility. Landscaping around the base of freestanding *signs* is strongly encouraged to improve the overall appearance and visibility of these *sign* types as evidenced in the following example.



Landscaping Around the Base of a Monument Sign

- (B.) Display windows are intended to offer opportunities to display merchandise or services available on the premises. Careful placement of *signs* in display windows will not obscure the visibility of merchandise or services. Additionally, display windows shall not be “papered-over,” especially in pedestrian areas.
- (C.) General design guidelines. The following general guidelines are provided to guide overall *sign* design in the City:
- (1.) Use high quality, durable materials.
 - (2.) Minimize the need for *sign* lighting by placing *signs* where ambient light sources illuminate the *sign*. Where separate lighting is necessary, external illumination sources are preferred over internal illumination. All electrical conduit and junction boxes should be concealed.



Externally Illuminated Sign

(3.) Backlit, individual letter *signs* (aka, halo lighting) are encouraged where illumination is needed as illustrated below.



Backlit Individual Letters

(4.) Avoid elaborate or confusing styles of text as illustrated in the following example.



Overly-Complicated Style of Text

(5.) Attempt to use symbols rather than text; for example, this Norwegian pharmacy *sign* incorporates a symbol as well as text.



Use of Symbols

(6.) Use *sign* styles and designs that complement the architecture of the site where the *signs* are located. Lowell is a historic City so using “period” signage is strongly encouraged.



An Example of a “Period” Pole Sign in a New York City Suburb