

**CITY OF SAINT PAUL  
HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT**

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FILE NAME: 2455 University Avenue West  
DATE OF APPLICATION: August 20, 2015  
APPLICANT: Paul Johnson, Signarama  
OWNER: Riegel Family LLP  
DATE OF REVIEW: September 10, 2015  
HPC SITE/DISTRICT: University-Raymond Commercial Heritage Preservation District  
CATEGORY: Contributing  
CLASSIFICATION: Sign Permit  
STAFF INVESTIGATION AND REPORT: Bill Dermody  
DATE: September 2, 2015

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**A. SITE DESCRIPTION:**

The Conditioned Air Equipment Co. Building was constructed in 1939 as a one-story commercial building with a light reddish-brown tapestry brick and an Ortonville granite base. piers with bands of projecting brickwork separate the façade into four storefronts, each with a recessed entry. The wall is terminated by a rolled Oneata dolomite cornice, continuous in height and materials but not in profile with the adjacent building. The building is locally significant as a well-conserved example of the one-story commercial and industrial buildings erected along University Avenue in the late 1930s, the last period of industrial expansion on the avenue.

**B. PROPOSED CHANGES:**

The application proposes a new 24' x 4' aluminum sign to replace an existing 16' x 4' aluminum sign on the building's University Avenue façade, with the extra 8' in width appended to the west side of the existing sign location above the storefronts. The proposed sign has three 8' x 4' contiguous metal panels, with only one tenant name and logo across its entirety. No illumination is proposed. Lettering consists of flat, digital print affixed to the metal surface. The window graphics are not part of this proposal, and will require separate application, review, and approval.

**C. BACKGROUND:**

The site received HPC approval for a plywood wall sign in 2010 (File # 10-046). In 2013 (File # 13-225529), the site received HPC staff approval for an aluminum wall sign (still there currently) of the same size in the same location as the previous plywood sign, which had deteriorated. The 2013 approval required the sign to be centered above the storefront bay.

**D. GUIDELINE CITATIONS:**

**University-Raymond Commercial Historic District**

**Sec. 74.06.3. - Design review guidelines, purpose and intent.**

(a) The following guidelines for design review serve as the basis for the heritage preservation commission's permit review decisions in the University-Raymond Commercial Historic District. The guidelines define the most important elements of the historic district's unique physical appearance and are intended to state the best means of preserving and enhancing these elements in rehabilitation or new construction. When applying the guidelines, the commission, in clearly defined cases of economic hardship, will also consider deprivation of the owner's reasonable use of property.

(b) The commission shall conduct its design review for all projects in the district according to

the secretary of the interior's "Standards for Rehabilitation" (1995). These standards shall be applied to all district projects in a reasonable manner and take into consideration their economic and technical feasibility. The ten (10) standards are:

1. *A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.*
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.*
3. *Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.*
4. *Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.*
5. *Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.*
6. *Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.*
7. *Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.*
8. *Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.*
9. *New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.*
10. *New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.*

#### **Sec. 74.06.3(d) Signs and Accessories**

*Existing historic signs that reflect the development of the district should be preserved. These signs may be in the form of painted signs on buildings, surface mounted or projecting signs. New signs should be compatible with the character of the District and blend with the character of the structures on or near which they are placed. New signs should not conceal architectural detail, clutter the building's image, or distract from the unity of the facade but, rather, should complement the overall design.*

##### **A. Materials:**

*Sign materials should complement the materials of the related building and/or the adjacent buildings. Surface design elements should not detract from or conflict with the related structure's age and design in terms of graphics, lettering, and related patterns or pictures. Materials used should be the same as those used for signs during the period of the building's construction, such as wood, wrought iron, steel, and metal grill work. Newer materials such as extruded aluminum and plastics may not be appropriate.*

##### **B. Types:**

*The sign type should enhance the building's design and materials. There are a number of types of signs which may be used: (1) single-faced; (2) projecting, double-faced; (3) three-dimensional; (4) painted wall signs; and (5) temporary signs.*



**C. Location and Method of Attachment:**

*There should be no sign above the cornice line or uppermost portion of a facade wall. Signs should not disfigure or conceal architectural details. Painted signs may be permissible on glass windows and doors. The facade should not be damaged in sign application, except for mere attachment. The method of attachment should respect the structure's architectural integrity and should become an extension of the architecture. Projecting signs should have a space separating them from the building. (Protection of architecture in method of attachment shall be regarded as a basis for granting variance of the normal zoning code prohibition against guy wire supports for projecting signs.)*

**E. FINDINGS:**

1. The property is classified as "contributing" to the University-Raymond Commercial Heritage Preservation District and is certified eligible as a contributing building for the National Register of Historic Places.
2. On February 23, 2005, the University Raymond Commercial Heritage Preservation District was established under Council File No. 05-52 § 1 and Chapter 73 of the Legislative Code states the Heritage Preservation Commission shall protect the architectural character of heritage preservation sites through review and approval or denial of applications for city permits for exterior work within designated heritage preservation sites §73.04.(4). The period of significance for the University-Raymond Commercial Historic District is 1891 to 1941.
3. The aluminum sign material does not *complement the materials* of the brick building, but it is the same as the existing sign's material. The existing sign has raised letters and a frame around the sign for relief. Therefore, the proposed material complements the brick building's materials to an equal extent as existing, and does not contribute to cluttering the façade, provided that the new sign's size is limited to the existing size of 4' x 16'. It would better complement the building if the emphasis were taken off the metal panels through use of raised individual letters and a raised frame.
4. The proposed sign is appropriately not *above the cornice line or uppermost portion of a facade wall* and does not *disfigure or conceal architectural details*. The sign should be centered between the vertical brick columns so as not to detract from them. The method of attachment, screws into the mortar joints, limits damage to the façade and *respect(s) the structure's architectural integrity*.
5. The proposed wall sign attaches to mortar joints, rather than to brick, so as to *not destroy historic materials... that characterize (the) property*. The method of attachment allows the sign to be removed in the future so that *the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired*.
6. Illumination is not proposed.
7. The proposal will not have an adverse impact on the site's Program for Preservation if the conditions are met (Leg. Code §73.06 (e)).

**F. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

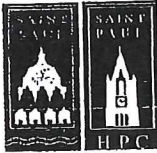
Based on the findings, staff recommends approval of the permit application provided the following conditions are met:

1. The lettering and logo shall be raised a minimum of 1/2", such as with push-through acrylic letters and logo, and there shall be a frame border with a profile around the sign's perimeter.
2. All final materials and details shall be submitted to HPC staff for final review and approval.

3. Any revisions to the approved plans must be reviewed and approved by staff and/or the HPC.
4. The HPC stamped approved construction drawings shall remain on site for the duration of the signage installation.
5. The sign shall be a maximum size of 4' x 16' and it shall be centered over the store front bay.

**G. ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Application materials
2. Street view photo



Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission  
Department of Planning and Economic Development  
25 Fourth Street West, Suite 1400  
Saint Paul, MN 55102  
Phone: (651) 266-9078



## HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION DESIGN REVIEW APPLICATION

This application must be completed in addition to the appropriate city permit application if the affected property is an individually designated landmark or located within an historic district. For applications that must be reviewed by the Heritage Preservation Commission refer to the HPC Meeting schedule for meeting dates and deadlines.

### 1. CATEGORY

Please check the category that best describes the proposed work

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Repair/Rehabilitation | <input type="checkbox"/> Sign/Awning          | <input type="checkbox"/> New Construction/Addition/  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Moving                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Fence/Retaining Wall | Alteration   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Demolition                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____          | <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Application Review Only |

### 2. PROJECT ADDRESS

Street and number: 2455 University Avenue Zip Code: 55114

### 3. APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name of contact person: Paul Johnson

Company: Signarama

Street and number: 2400 Prior Avenue South

City: Roseville State: MN Zip Code: 55113

Phone number: (651) 649-0675 e-mail: paul@sarsigns.com

### 4. PROPERTY OWNER(S) INFORMATION (If different from applicant)

Name: Jennings Experiential High School

Street and number: 2455 University Avenue W

City: St. Paul State: MN Zip Code: 55114

Phone number: (651) 649-5403 e-mail: bill@jenningsclc.org

**5. PROJECT ARCHITECT (If applicable)**

Contact person: \_\_\_\_\_

Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Street and number: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**6. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Completely describe ALL exterior changes being proposed for the property. Include changes to architectural details such as windows, doors, siding, railings, steps, trim, roof, foundation or porches. Attach specifications for doors, windows, lighting and other features, if applicable, including color and material samples.

3 composite aluminum panels to make sign 4' x 24' overall. This will replace existing sign on building. Panels to be affixed to building with decorative black fasteners.

*Attach additional sheets if necessary*

**7. ATTACHMENTS**

Refer to the *Design Review Process sheet* for required information or attachments.

**\*\*INCOMPLETE APPLICATIONS WILL BE RETURNED\*\***

**ARE THE NECESSARY ATTACHMENTS AND INFORMATION INCLUDED?**

☐ YES

Will any federal money be used in this project?  
Are you applying for the Investment Tax Credits?

YES	_____	NO	<u>XX</u>
YES	_____	NO	<u>XX</u>



I, the undersigned, understand that the Design Review Application is limited to the aforementioned work to the affected property. I further understand that any additional exterior work to be done under my ownership must be submitted by application to the St. Paul Heritage Preservation Commission. Any unauthorized work will be required to be removed.

Signature of applicant: Pat [Signature] Date: 7/30/2015

Signature of owner: Bill Zimmerman Date: 7/30/2015

**FOR HPC OFFICE USE ONLY**

Date received: 8-20-15 FILE NO. \_\_\_\_\_

District: UR /Individual Site: \_\_\_\_\_

Contributing/Non-contributing/Pivotal/Supportive/:

Type of work: Minor/Moderate/Major

\_\_\_\_ Requires staff review

Supporting data: YES NO  
Complete application: YES NO

The following condition(s) must be met in order for application to conform to preservation program:

It has been determined that the work to be performed pursuant to the application does not adversely affect the program for preservation and architectural control of the heritage preservation district or site (Ch.73.06).

\_\_\_\_\_  
HPC staff approval

Date \_\_\_\_\_

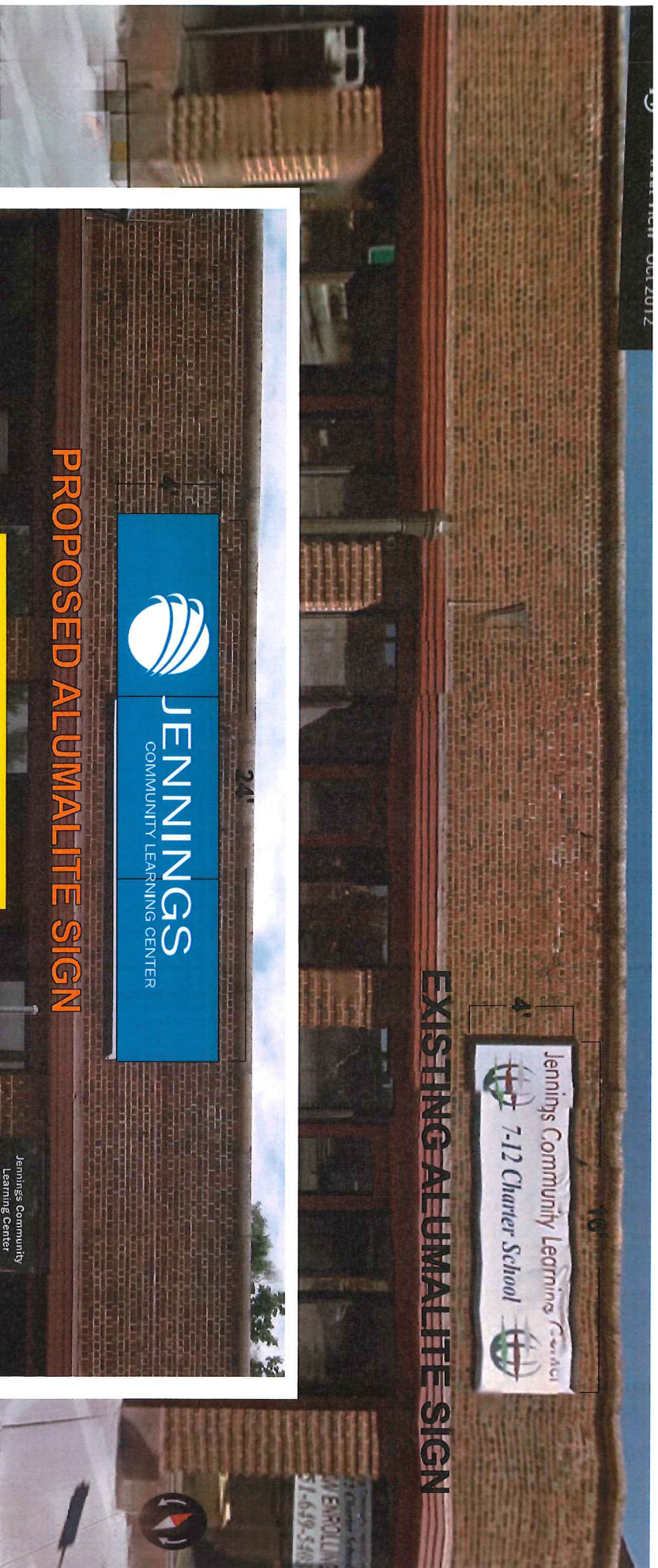
☒ Requires Commission review

Submitted:

- ☐ 3 Sets of Plans
- ☐ 15 Sets of Plans reduced to 8 1/2" by 11" or 11" by 17"
- ☐ Photographs
- ☐ City Permit Application
- ☐ Complete HPC Design Review application

Hearing Date set for: 9-10-15

City Permit # \_\_\_\_\_



**EXISTING ALUMALITE SIGN**

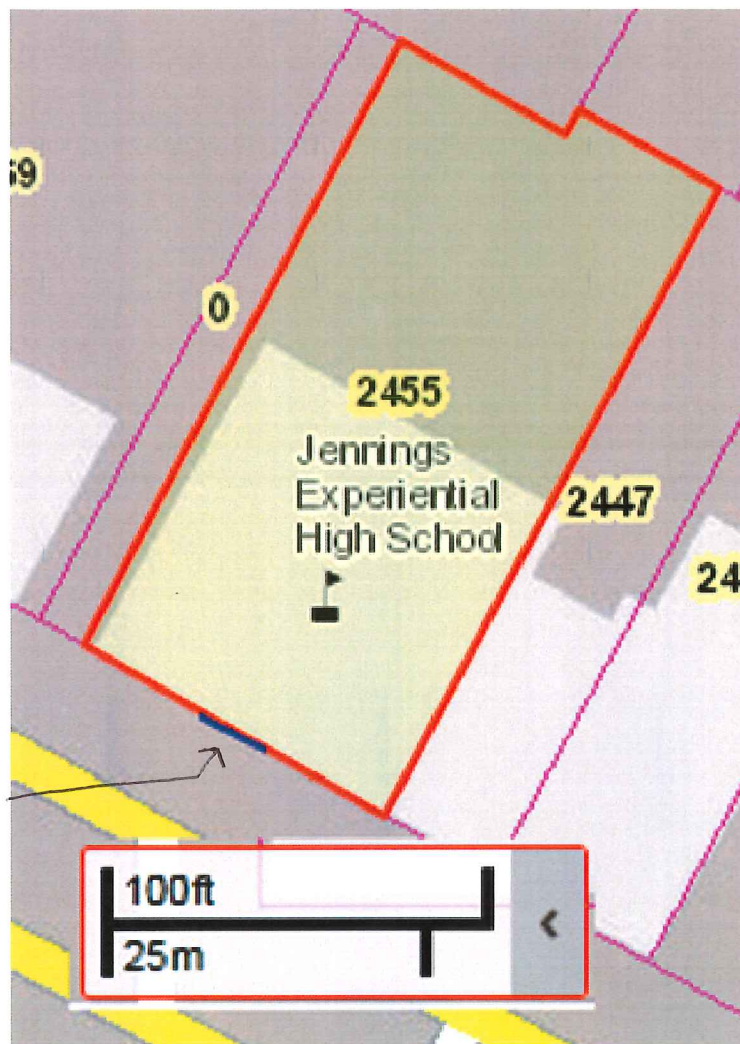


**PROPOSED ALUMALITE SIGN**

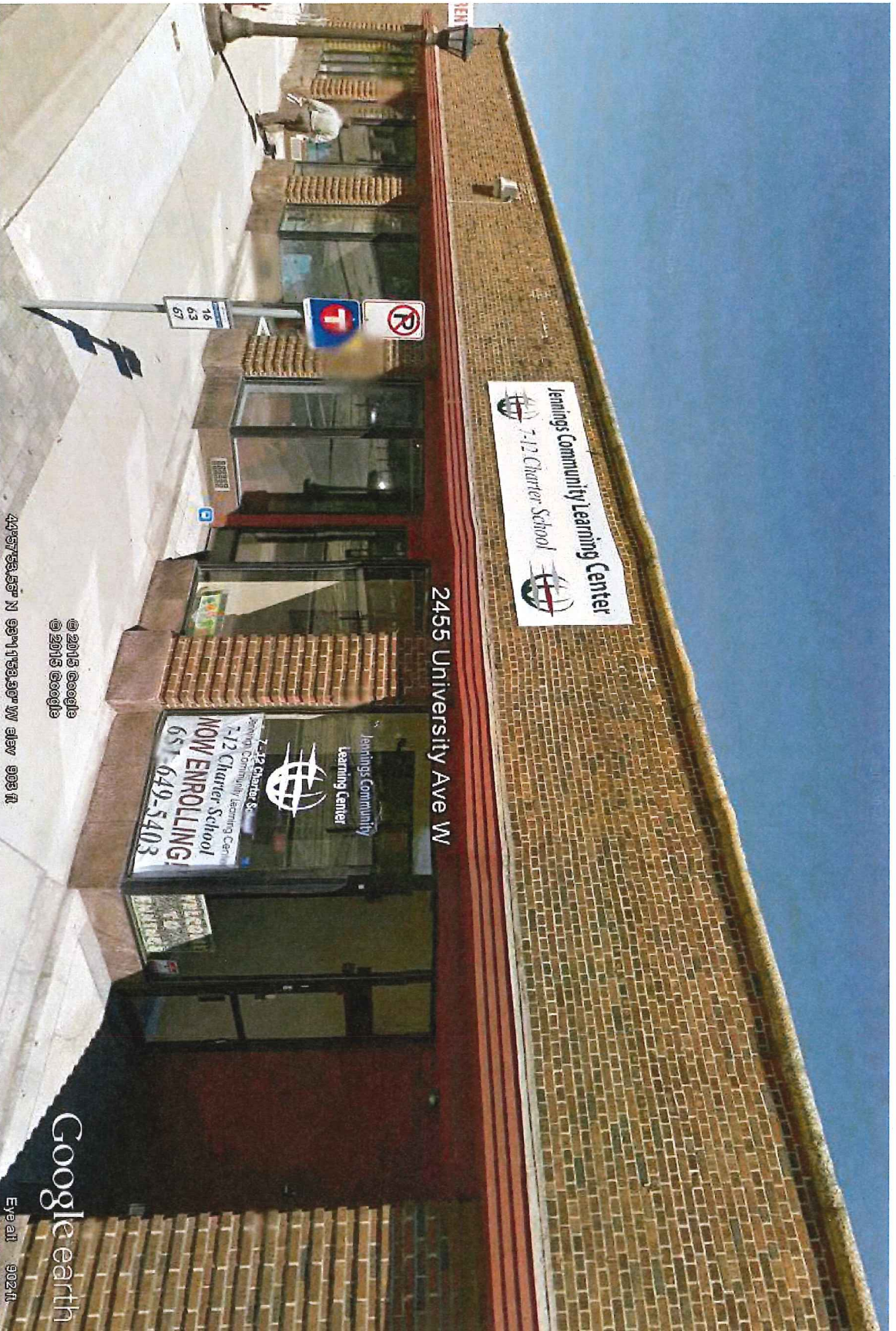
4MIL Alumalite composite sign panels decorated with laminated outdoor digital print. Affixed with anchors into mortar joints. sign is comprised of 3 4'x8' panels

**Notable Features: Simplify design and make it more attractive.**





4'x24' Sign panel  
non-illuminated.



Existing wall sign