

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

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FILE NAME: 250 Sixth Street East- Finch, Van Slyck and McConville Dry Goods Company Building (The Cosmopolitan)  
DATE OF APPLICATION: April 6, 2016  
APPLICANT: Griffin Jameson, Kaas Wilson Architects  
OWNER: Oly-IDA Cosmopolitan LLC  
DATE OF REVIEW: May 12, 2016  
HPC SITE/DISTRICT: Lowertown Historic District  
CATEGORY: Pivotal  
CLASSIFICATION: Sign Permit  
STAFF INVESTIGATION AND REPORT: Bill Dermody  
DATE: May 5, 2016

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**A. SITE DESCRIPTION:**

The Finch, Van Slyck and McConville Dry Goods Company building at 366 Wacouta (also known as the Cosmopolitan at 250 6<sup>th</sup> Street East) is an 8-story Neoclassical warehouse building built of buff-colored brick and limestone trim and constructed in 1911. It was designed by Chicago architect James F. Denson and built by the George Grant Construction Company. The annex addition to the building's northeast end was designed by Clarence H. Johnston Jr. and was constructed in 1923. The building is on the east side of Mears Park and is categorized as Pivotal to the Lowertown District. In 1989 the building was converted to a 275-unit apartment building.

**B. PROPOSED CHANGES:**

The applicant proposes to install a vertically oriented, 46'-6" high wall sign on the western portion of the building's northwest elevation between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> floors. The sign copy reads "The Cosmopolitan" which identifies the current building name. It entails individual gold-colored aluminum channel letters upon a black cabinet background. Illumination is internal LED halo. Electricity is provided via external conduit running to the roof on the exterior. There is currently a projecting sign above the first floor near the building's northwest corner that is proposed to be removed upon installation of the requested wall sign. There is also a pair of neon cabinet signs upon each side of the projecting covered entry along 6<sup>th</sup> Street, as well as an unlit leasing sign near the building's southwest corner, that will remain.

**C. BACKGROUND:**

The applicant met with HPC and DSI zoning staff on February 17 to discuss various sign options and receive preliminary staff feedback regarding the sign being too large and the placement shown being too high up on the building – not pedestrian oriented. In 2008, the HPC granted approval to replace many of the building's wood and steel windows with aluminum windows, as well as to replace an entry in-kind with a wood system. Historically, the building had a large sign across the façade facing Mears Park (see photo attachments).

**D. GUIDELINE CITATIONS:**

**Lowertown Historic District Guidelines (Sec. 74-112)**

**III. Signs and accessories.**

*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. Signs should not conceal architectural detail, clutter or detract from the intended facade; but rather complement the overall design of the building*

and the period in which it was built.

**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 identification symbol (logo), 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. New billboards are not permitted in the Lowertown District.

**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 of pedestrian scale 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).

**D. Lighting.** Location of exterior lights should be appropriate to the structure. Signs should generally be lit from on the site. There should be no flashing, blinking, moving, or varying intensity lighting. Subdued lighting is preferred. Backlit fluorescent or exposed neon are generally inappropriate.

**E. Grills, exhaust fans, etc.** Grills, exhaust outlets for air conditioners, bath and kitchen exhaust fans should be incorporated into filler panels and kept out of principal facades, if possible. They may be painted the same color as the filler panel.

**The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation relating to new construction:**

**9.** New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize a property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

**10.** New additions and adjacent or related new construction will 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.

**E. FINDINGS:**

1. On March 22, 1984, the Historic Lowertown Heritage Preservation District was established under Ordinance No. 17120, § 2. 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).
2. **Classification of the building.** The building is classified as Pivotal to the architectural character and integrity of the Historic Lowertown Heritage Preservation District.
3. **Materials & Type.** The proposed aluminum material was not a sign material commonly

used during *the period of the building's construction*. The guidelines also state "Newer materials such as extruded aluminum and plastics may not be appropriate." However, if the aluminum will have a painted finish, a finish commonly used during the period of the building's construction, the aluminum material may be acceptable. Historically, some warehouse buildings had large building identification signs. However, this sign proposal is not *compatible with the character of the District* and does not *complement the overall design of the building and the period in which it was built* because its scale and materials do not enhance the building's design and materials.

4. **Location and method of attachment.** The proposed signage does *not disfigure or conceal architectural details*. However, at 46'-6" tall, its scale overwhelms the building's scale, and therefore its size should be reduced. The proposed attachment only into mortar joints will avoid damage to the brick materials.
5. **Lighting.** There is no flashing or blinking light proposed. *Signs should generally be lit from on the site*. The proposed internal illumination is generally inappropriate, but some limited halo lighting has been approved for business signs.
6. The sign is to be located on a primary street-facing elevation, however, it is not of the same finish brick and detailing found on the main façade facing Mears Park, rather the north elevation has an exposed structural system.
7. The proposal will have an adverse effect on the program for the preservation and architectural control of the Historic Lowertown Heritage Preservation District (Leg. Code §73.06 (e)).

#### **F. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Based on the findings above, staff recommends denial of the sign proposal.

#### **G. ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Historic sign photos
2. Application materials





HOTEL KADRIE  
STEAM HEATED  
HOTEL CAFE  
SOFT DRINK PARLOR  
PABLO

New  
HOTEL  
New

4-1501





Park Square Wholesale District,  
Saint Paul, Minn.

FINCH, VAN SLYCK & Mc CONVILLE.

GOTZIAN S... C. GOTZIAN & CO. THE GOTZIAN

WHOLESALE ROBINSON STRAUS & CO. MILLINERY





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

### 2. PROJECT ADDRESS

Street and number: 250 East 6<sup>th</sup> Street Zip Code: 55101

### 3. APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name of contact person: Griffin Jameson

Company: Kaas Wilson Architects

Street and number: 1301 American Blvd East, Suite 100

City: Bloomington, MN 55425

Phone number: (612) 879-6000 e-mail: griffinj@kaaswilson.com

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

Name: Oly-IDA Cosmopolitan LLC

Street and number: 2801 Alaskan Way, Suite 200

City: Seattle State: WA Zip Code: 98121

Phone number: (206) 215-9726 e-mail: bpuzon@pinnaclefamily.com

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

Contact person: Griffin Jameson

Company: Kaas Wilson Architects

Street and number: 1301 American Blvd East, Suite 100

City: Bloomington, MN 55425

Phone number: (612) 879-6000 e-mail: griffinj@kaaswilson.com

**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.**

We are proposing an aluminum sign, that is approximately 4'-6"W x 46'-6"H, on the Northwest side of the Cosmopolitan Apartment building. Upon install, we will be removing the existing sign that does intrude into the public right of way by a couple feet. The lettering of the sign will be mounted on a signage board that will hide most electrical wiring and fasteners. The signage board will be fastened gently into mortar joints only, preserving the existing brick. The aluminum signage board will have attached gold lettering and will be painted black on all faces. Historically the sign would have been made of a wood material, however we are proposing an aluminum sign because of its durability. The signage will be halo lite that will adhere to the zoning ordinance that restricts light levels to not exceed 1ft candle 4ft from sign.

**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?      **YES** \_\_\_\_\_ **NO**   x    
Are you applying for the Investment Tax Credits?      **YES** \_\_\_\_\_ **NO**   x

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: 

Date: 04.06.2016

Signature of owner: 

Date: 04.06.2016

**FOR HPC OFFICE USE ONLY**

Date received: \_\_\_\_\_ FILE NO. \_\_\_\_\_  
Date complete: \_\_\_\_\_  
District: \_\_\_\_\_/Individual Site: \_\_\_\_\_  
Pivotal/Contributing/Non-contributing/New Construction/Parcel:  
Type of work: Minor/Moderate/Major

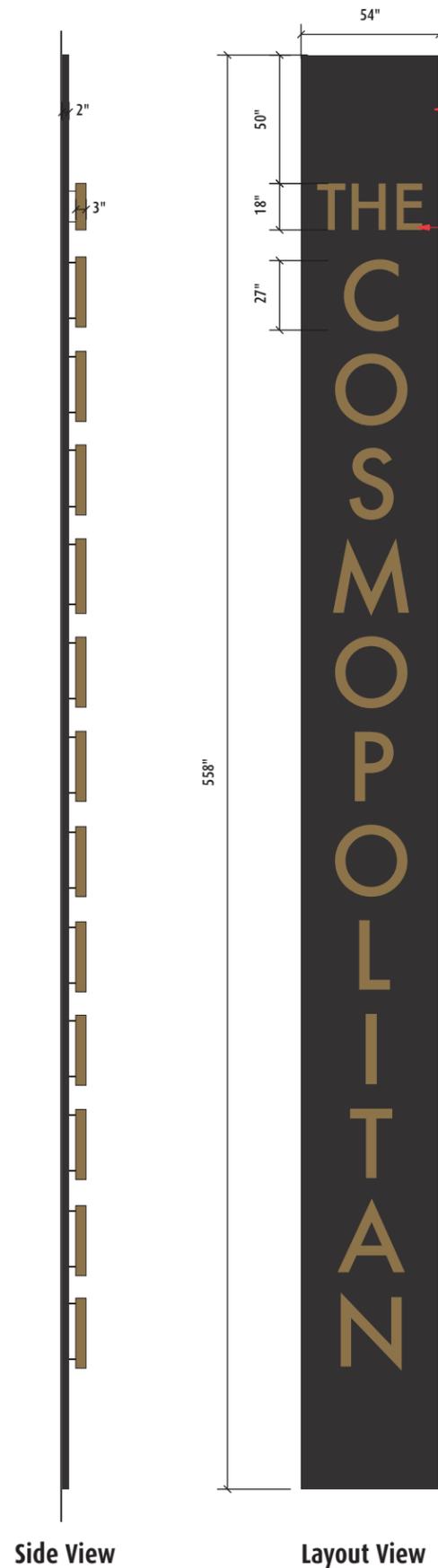
\_\_\_ Requires staff review

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  
 CD of Plans (pdf) & Photos (jpg)  
 City Permit Application  
 Complete HPC Design Review application  
  
**Hearing Date set for:** \_\_\_\_\_

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

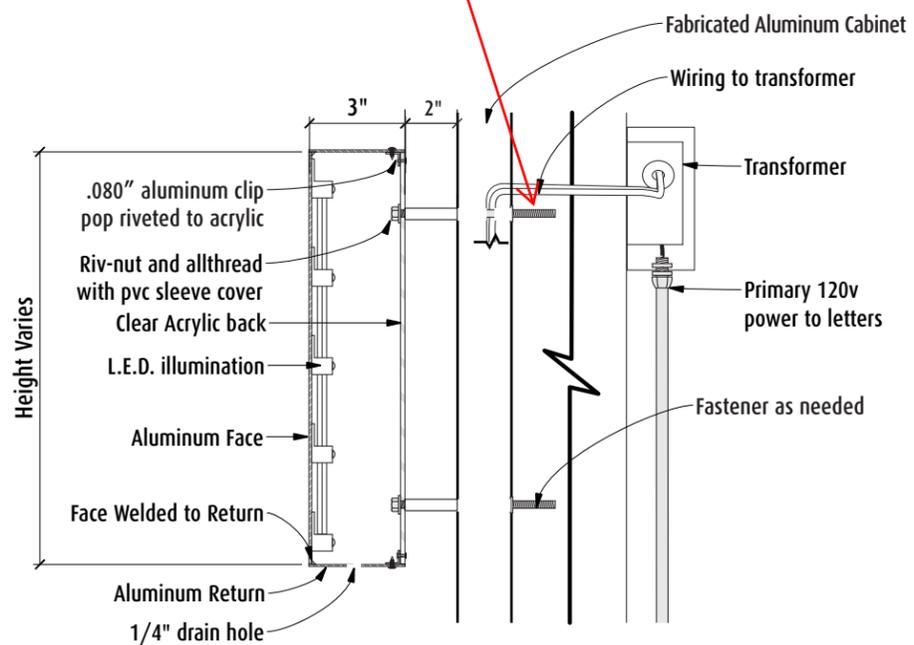


Side View      Layout View      Qty: 1

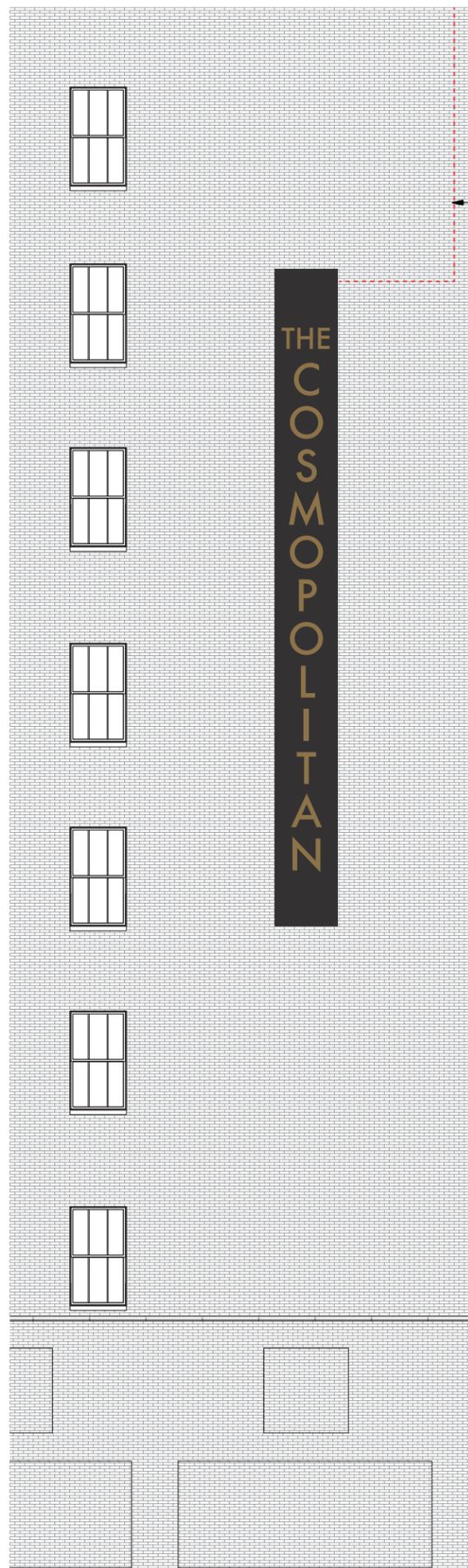
2" (d) fabricated aluminum cabinet with multiple-seamed locations;  
To be painted SC-905 Black on all visible sides/edges

3" (d) fabricated aluminum channel letters, painted MX12 Dusted Gold on faces/returns;  
To have White LED halo-lit illumination

Masonry anchors into mortar bed joints, provide 2.5" o.c. vertical separation to align to masonry coursing



Typical Halo-Lit Channel Letter Configuration



Dashed red line indicates exterior Conduit, to run from top of sign to rooftop; Conduit painted to match building (Exact color TBD)

North Elevation View (6th Street)

# Sign Type Y.1

## Primary Building ID

### Halo-Lit Channel Letters on Fabricated Cabinet

#### Specifications

ASI Series: Custom  
 Size: 558"(h) x 54"(w)  
 Typestyle: Typestyle  
 Background Color(s): SC-905 Black  
 Graphics Color(s): MX12 Dusted Gold  
 Graphics Process: Surface Paint  
 Mounting: Channel letters mechanical mount onto Cabinet & spaced off using spacers to allow for Halo illumination; Overall unit mechanically mounted flush to exterior brick facade of building, Drill/Tap with Silicone & mount into Grout lines of building only

#### Note(s):

- White LED Halo Illumination
- Returns painted to match faces

Client: The Cosmopolitan  
 Project: Exterior Building Logo  
 Location: Minneapolis, MN  
 Keyword(s): Illuminated, Cabinet, Halo

Scale:  
 3/16" = 1'(Layout), 3/32" = 1'(Elevation)  
 Date: 03.16.16  
 Drawn By: BMV  
 Sales / PM: KP / PB  
 File Name: Cosmopolitan\_Ext\_Y.1\_03.16\_#1

#### DRAWING REVISIONS

Rv1: 03.24.16	Rv2: *	Rv3: *
Rv4: *	Rv5: *	Rv6: *

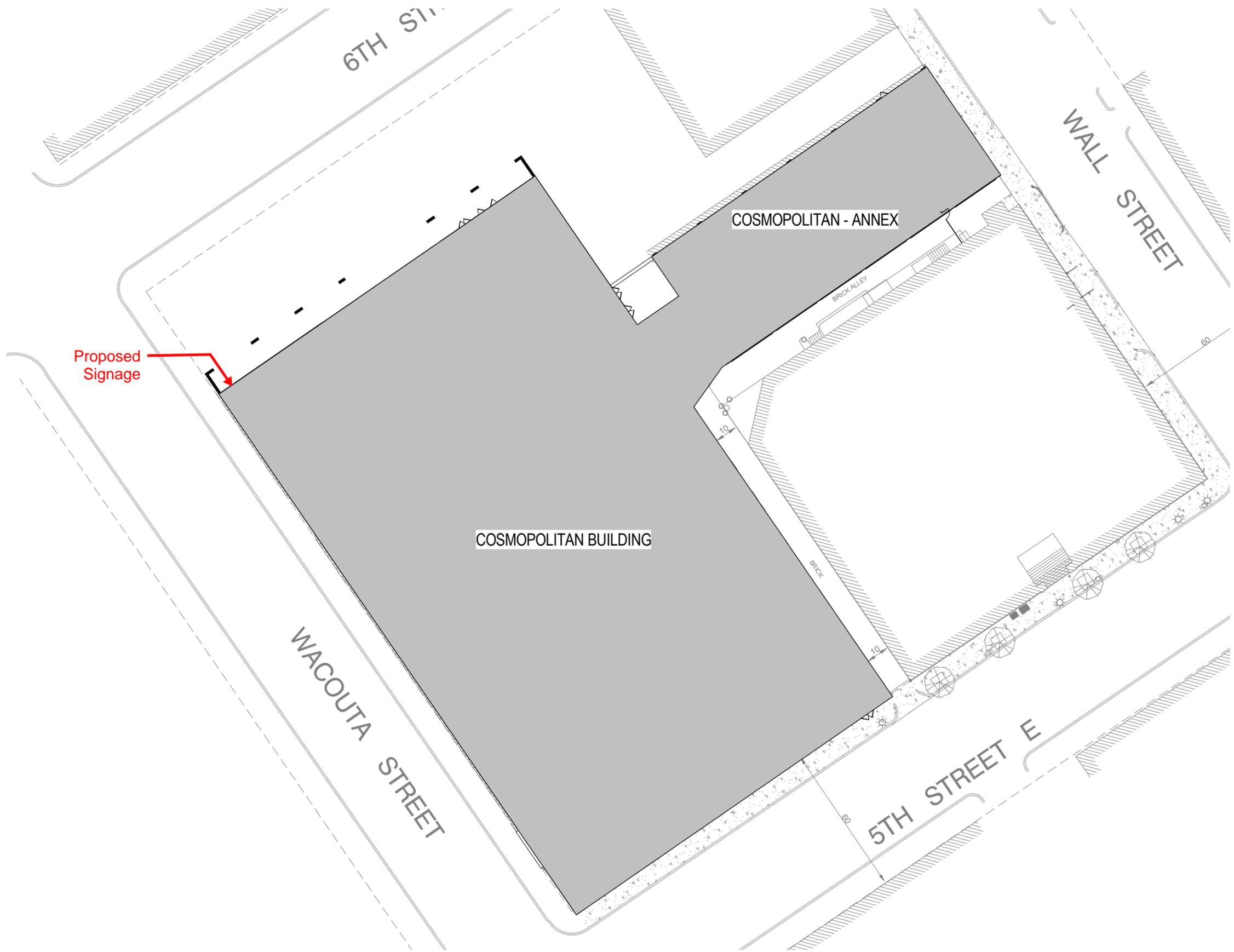
DESIGN STATUS:  APPROVED  
 Approved As Noted  
 Revise & Resubmit

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
 SIGN: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel 612.332.1223      Fax 612.332.1224



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1 North Elevation - 6th Street  
 1/16" = 1'-0"

4/6/2016 5:27:46 PM



