



City of New Bedford Department of City Planning

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MAYOR
JON MITCHELL
PLANNING DIRECTOR
JENNIFER CARLONI

PLANNING BOARD

STAFF REPORT

REPORT DATE
MAY 4, 2022

MEETING DATE
May 11, 2022

Case #22-22: Site Plan Review for a
New Ground Sign
179 William Street
Map: 52 Lot: 197
Owner: William & 8th, LLC
118 E Clinton Street, New
Bedford, MA 02740
Applicant: Sign Design, Inc.
170 Liberty Street,
Brockton, MA 02301
Zoning District: Mixed-use Business
(MUB) within the
Downtown Business
Overlay District (DBOD)
Site Area: 6,477± square feet
Overview: Request for a new ground
sign.

Professional offices and existing sign at 179 William Street.
Looking northeast from across William Street and Eighth Street.



Existing Conditions

The project site is a historic building that currently houses professional offices in the Downtown Business Overlay District. The front of the property consists of a retaining wall along William Street with asphalt surfacing from the edge of the wall to the building foundation. An existing ground sign is mounted on a steel pole at the front of the building facing east-west.

The site has 50± feet of frontage on William Street.

The abutting properties to the north, south, and east are historic buildings that house professional offices and private residences. A bank drive-thru abuts to the west across Eighth Street.

The surrounding neighborhood consists of a mix of small businesses, municipal buildings, restaurants, galleries, professional office units and housing.

Related Permitting

The applicant received a variance for sign area and distance from the property line from the Zoning Board of Appeals (Case #4473) on January 20, 2022.

Decision Criteria

The applicant is requesting a Site Plan Review for a New Ground Sign. The ordinance provides the Board the following criteria for reaching a decision.

Site Plan Review Criteria

In considering Site Plan Approval for the proposed project, the Board must find that the plan meets the objectives identified in Section 5470 of the City's Zoning Ordinance (c.9) including:

- **Adequate access to each structure for fire and service equipment**
- **Adequate provision for utilities and stormwater drainage**
- **Site alteration shall be designed after considering the qualities of the specific location, proposed land use, the design of building form, grading, egress points and other aspects of the development so as to:**
 - Minimize cut/fill volumes, removal of 6" caliper trees and larger, removal of stone walls, displacement of wetland vegetation, extent of stormwater flow increase from the site, soil erosion and the threat of air/water pollution;
 - Maximize pedestrian/vehicular safety to/from the site
 - Minimize the obstruction of scenic views from publicly accessible locations
 - Minimize visual intrusion by controlling layout/visibility of parking, storage and outdoor service areas viewed from public ways and residential areas
 - Minimize glare from vehicle headlights and lighting fixtures
 - Minimize unreasonable departure from the character, materials and scale of buildings in the vicinity
 - Minimize contamination of groundwater from on-site wastewater disposal systems or operations on the premises involving the use, storage, handling or containment of solid/liquid wastes and hazardous substances
 - Ensure compliance with the Zoning Ordinance
 - Minimize damage to existing adjacent public ways
 - Promote orderly and reasonable internal circulation within the site so as to protect public safety

Proposed Conditions

The applicant proposes to replace the existing ground sign with similar but slightly larger sign than allowed in the Ordinance. Additional site improvements include the replacing asphalt in front of the building with grass landscaping.

Staff Review

The table below outlines the proposed site changes and highlights items for discussion and the Board's consideration.

Landscaping & Site Features	• Grass is proposed to replace the existing asphalt in front of the building on William Street. • Staff has concerns regarding the maintenance of grass in this area and feels that perennial plantings such as ferns or hosta may be more appropriate low-maintenance options. • Additionally, the area has a significant slope towards the sidewalk, and plans do not call for any landscape edging or erosion controls to contain soil. • The Board may wish to discuss staff concerns about the proposed landscaping with the applicant and condition low-maintenance species and erosion controls be installed.
Master Plan	• The proposal is consistent with the Master Plan in keeping with the character of the Downtown Business Overlay District.

Interdepartmental Review Comments

As required under City ordinance, the case submittal documents were distributed to City Clerk, City Solicitor, Health Department, Inspectional Services, Engineering, Public Infrastructure, Conservation Commission, Fire Department and School Department.

At the time of writing this report, no departmental memos have been received.

Site Photos



Materials for Consideration

The sign plan submission is shown as “POST & PANEL SIGN (Non-lit)” dated 10/12/21, and prepared by Sign Design of Brockton, MA The plan set consists of the following sheets:

- Sheet 1 Post & Panel Sign (Non-Lit)

Recommended Conditions



Site Plan Approval. Having reviewed the submitted materials, planning staff offers the following recommendations for conditions to the Planning Board should it act favorably on the requested site plan approval for the project:

That the following **specific conditions** be applied to this decision:

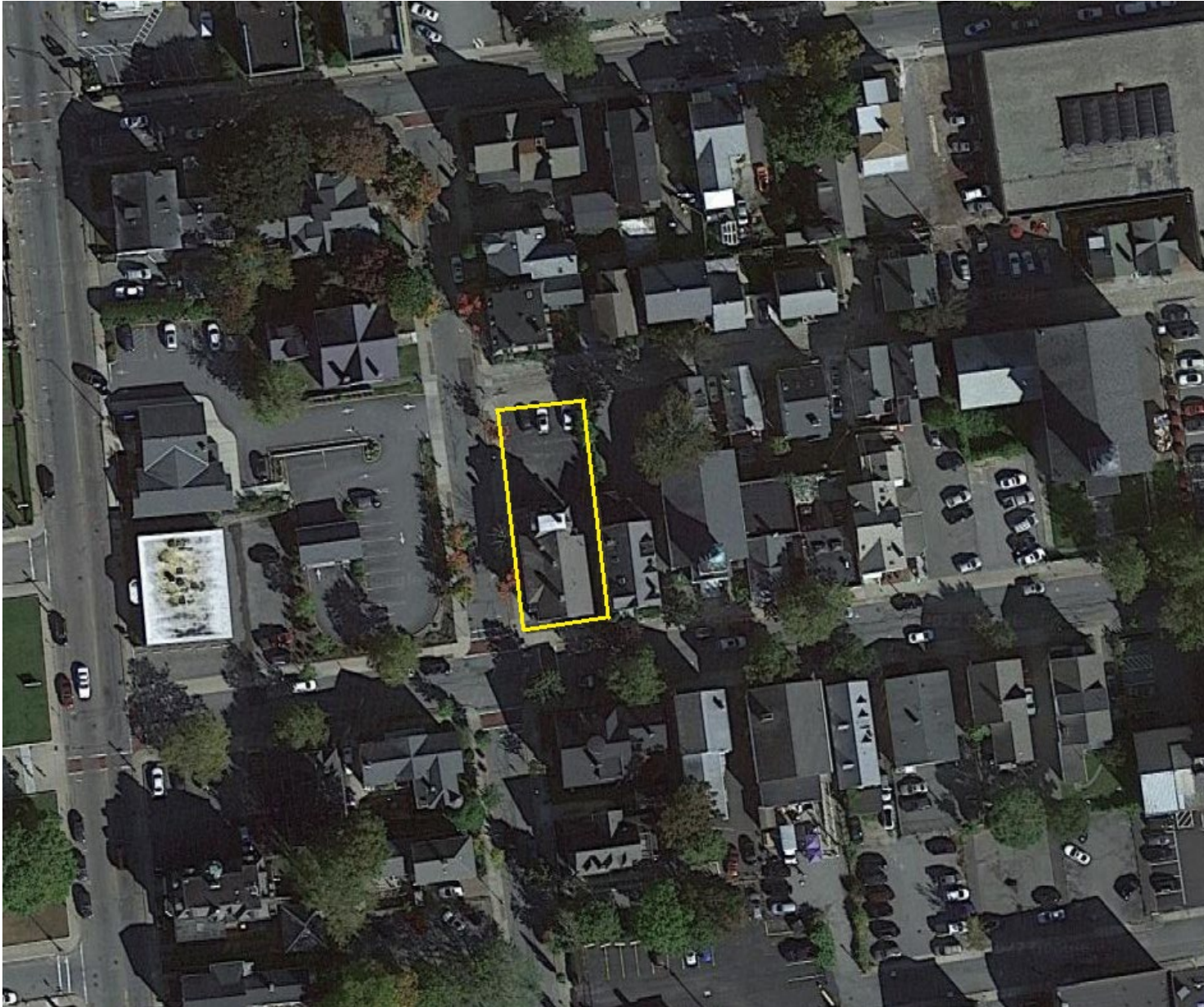
1. The applicant shall adhere to the conditions of the variance granted by the Zoning Board of Appeals on January 20, 2022.
2. The applicant shall submit revised landscaping plans and erosion control measures to the Department of City Planning prior to the issuance of a building permit.

That the following **general conditions** also be applied to both decisions:

3. The project shall be completed according to the plans, notes, reports, and specifications submitted for consideration and final approval by the Planning Board.
4. Plant materials shall be maintained in a healthful condition. Dead limbs, refuse and debris shall be promptly removed. Ground cover materials shall be maintained so as to control weed growth. Dead plantings shall be replaced with new live plantings at the earliest appropriate season.
5. The project shall be undertaken in a manner consistent with any departmental memos received in relation to plan and placed on file for Planning Board consideration. The conditions of such memos shall be considered to be part of these conditions.
6. The applicant shall submit final plan revisions to the Department of City Planning in the following formats: one (1) -11" x 17" Plan Set and one (1) CD or USB with Plan Set in PDF format and shall ensure that these same plans are properly submitted to the Department of Inspectional Services.
7. The applicant shall ensure that a copy of the Notice of Decision, bearing the certification of the New Bedford City Clerk signifying no appeal has been made against the project's approval, be provided for the Department of City Planning case file folder.
8. That the applicant shall ensure a copy of the Notice of Decision bearing the certification of the city of New Bedford City Clerk, signifying no appeal has been made against the project's approval, be recorded at the Registry of Deeds.
9. The applicant shall ensure that a copy recorded decision be provided for the Department of City Planning case file folder.
10. The applicant shall present any proposed modification from the approved plans for consideration to the Director of City Planning for determination as to whether the modified plan must return before this Board for further review.
11. The rights authorized by the granted approval must be exercised by issuance of a Building Permit by the Department of Inspectional Services and acted upon within one year from the date the decision was granted, or they will lapse.
12. The developer and site contractor must schedule a pre-construction meeting with the Department of Public Infrastructure prior to the start of construction.

Materials Provided by the Applicant are available at: <https://www.newbedford-ma.gov/planning/planning-board-agenda-info-2022/>

Staff Report prepared by: Rachel Mulroy Staff Planner
Reviewed by: Michael McCarthy, Assistant City Planner



179 William Street Map: 52 Lot: 197

NOTE: Property line is approximate; for discussion purposes, only. Aerial image is oriented north.