

Certificate of Appropriateness
BAR #HST24-0050
201 West Water Street, Tax Parcel 280012000
Downtown ADC District
Owner/Applicant: Dan FitzHenry
Project: Signs for Grit Coffee

The CoA for the above referenced project was approved by the City of Charlottesville Board of Architectural Review on January 22, 2025. The following action was taken:

Having considered the standards set forth within the City Code, including the ADC District Design Guidelines, I move to find the proposed signage at 201 West Water Street satisfies the BAR's criteria and is compatible with this property and other properties in this ADC District, and that the BAR approves the request as submitted.

Motion: Ms. Lewis **Second:** Mr. Bailey **Vote:** 6-0

[Mr. Schwarz did not participate in the discussion nor vote on the proposed project.]

For specifics of the discussion, the meeting video is on-line at:

<https://boxcast.tv/channel/vabajtzezuuv3iclkx1a?b=smalwch0nzfeo4!9idjm>

Per the provisions of City Code, this CoA is valid for 18 months from the date of BAR approval; upon written request and for reasonable cause, the director of NDS or the BAR may extend that period by one year; and this CoA does not, in and of itself, authorize any work or activity that requires a building permit or compliance with other provisions of the City Code.

If you have any questions, please contact me or Jeff Werner (wernerjb@charlottesville.gov).

Sincerely,
Kate



Kate Richardson
Historic Preservation & Design Planner II
Neighborhood Development Services
City of Charlottesville
434.970.3515 | richardsonka@charlottesville.gov

**City of Charlottesville
Board of Architectural Review
Staff Report
January 22, 2025**



Certificate of Appropriateness

BAR #HST-24-0050

201 West Water Street; TMP 280012000

Downtown ADC District

Owner: Black Bear Properties, LLC

Applicant: Dan FitzHenry

Project: Signs for Grit Coffee



Background

Year Built: 1950

District: Downtown ADC District

Status: Contributing

Style: Mid-20th century commercial vernacular

There is no historical survey for 201 West Water Street. As early as 1886, the site was occupied by a two-story brick dwelling. Records indicate the current building was constructed as an auto service station. See Appendix.

Prior BAR Reviews

See appendix. No prior reviews germane to this request.

Application

- Submittal: Grit Coffee Roasting Co, Signage Concept, 201 West Water Street, dated 10-31-2024, six sheets.

Request CoA for installation of new signage:

- Sign A: Two applied window signs. Vinyl decals on interior of storefront glass. (Per sign regs, Div. 4.11.9.I.)
- Sign B: One canopy sign suspended below front canopy. (Per sign regs, Div. 4.11.9.E.)
- Sign C: One wall sign. Vinyl letters applied to painted masonry exterior wall. (Per sign regs, Div. 4.11.9.H.)
- Sign D: One projecting sign installed perpendicular to exterior wall. (Per sign regs, Div. 4.11.9.G.)

Discussion and Recommendation

With the December 2023 adoption of the new Development Code there were some modifications to the sign ordinance (*sign regs*), with some corresponding interpretation necessary when applying the ADC District Design Guidelines for signage, which were adopted in 2012.

Currently, and with the prior ordinance, the design reviews of sign permits are administrative; however, as is the case here, when a request does not explicitly comply with the design guidelines the matter is referred to the BAR for a formal review.

- Sign A, window: two signs; 3.9 sq. ft. each; letter height approx. 7".
 - Sign regs: two signs allowed; max area 10 sq. ft. each.
 - Guidelines: allowed; max letter height of 6".
- Sign B, canopy: one sign; 3 sq. ft. one side.
 - Sign regs: one sign allowed; max area 10 sq. ft. one side.
 - Guidelines: max area 10 sq. ft. one side.
- Sign C, wall: one sign; 31.9 sq. ft.; height 75.5"; letter height approx. 11".
 - Sign regs: one sign allowed; max area 50 sq. ft.
 - Guidelines: Allowed; max sign height 18"; letter height max 12"
- Sign D, hanging: one sign; 3.4 sq. ft. one side.
 - Sign regs: Two signs; max area 10 sq. ft. one side.
 - Guidelines: Allowed; max area 10 sq. ft. one side.
- All signs: five signs; total area 46.2 sq. ft.*
 - Sign regs: five permanent signs; max area 50 sq. ft.
 - Guidelines: two permanent signs; max area 50 sq. ft.

* canopy and hanging signs count only one side

The design guidelines recommend a maximum of two signs for a business in a commercial area and the “number of signs used should be limited to encourage compatibility with the building and discourage visual clutter.” This CoA request is for five.

This location is unique in that it is a corner location, the building does not present a traditional storefront, and the entrance is setback from the sidewalk, beneath a large canopy. The proposed signage is well-designed, the colors are muted, and the signs will not be illuminated. The maximum signage area is within the recommended 50 sq ft. The height of the wall sign (C) exceeds what is recommended (75.5" vs 18"); however, it's location and design appear appropriate for this unique location. The window signs do not obscure the windows; the colors and letters are subdued, not visually overwhelming.

Staff recommends approval of signs A, C, and D (four signs). Staff does not support sign B. The location appears out of place and the sign seems unnecessary.

Suggested Motions

Approval: Having considered the standards set forth within the City Code, including the ADC District Design Guidelines, I move to find the proposed signage at 201 West Water Street satisfies the BAR's criteria and is compatible with this property and other properties in this ADC District, and that the BAR approves the request [as submitted].

Or, [as submitted with the following conditions...]

Denial: Having considered the standards set forth within the City Code, including the ADC District Design Guidelines, I move to find the proposed signage at 201 West Water Street does not satisfy the BAR's criteria and is not compatible with this property and other properties in this ADC District, and that for the following reasons the BAR denies the request: [...]

Criteria, Standards and Guidelines

Note re: BAR authority: Per Code, the BAR is charged only with the authority to approve or deny a design review CoA, following an evaluation applying the criteria under Code Sec. 34-5.2.7. *Major Historic Review*. The BAR does not evaluate a proposed use. Additionally, per Code Sec. 34-5.2.7.E.2., the issuance of a CoA “cannot, in and of itself, authorize any construction, reconstruction, alteration, repair, demolition, or other improvements or activities requiring a building permit. Where a building permit is required, no activity authorized by a [CoA] is lawful unless conducted in accordance with the required building permit and all applicable building code requirements.” Additionally, when reviewing signage, BAR approval does not supersede or waive any provisions of the sign ordinance, Chap. 34, Div. 4.11.

Review Criteria Generally

Per Chapter 34, Div. 5.2.7. C.2:

- a. In considering a particular application the BAR will approve the application unless it finds:
 - i. That the proposal does not meet specific standards set forth within this Section or applicable provisions of the City's design guidelines; and
 - ii. The proposal is incompatible with the historic, cultural or architectural character of the district in which the property is located or the IPP that is the subject of the application.
- b. The BAR will approve, approve with conditions, or deny applications for Certificates of Appropriateness in accordance with the provisions of this Section.
- c. The BAR, or City Council on appeal, may require conditions of approval as are necessary or desirable to ensure that any new construction or addition is compatible with the scale and character of the Architecture Design Control District, Individually Protected Property, or Historic Conservation District. Prior to attaching conditions to an approval, due consideration will be given to the cost of compliance with the proposed conditions as well as the goals of the Comprehensive Plan. Conditions may require a reduction in height or massing, consistent with the City's design guidelines and subject to the following limitations: [not germane].

Standards for Review and Decision

Chapter 34, Div. 5.2.7. D.1:

- a. Review of the proposed construction, reconstruction, alteration or restoration of a building or structure is limited to exterior architectural features, including signs, and the following features and factors:
 - i. Whether the material, texture, color, height, scale, mass, and placement of the proposed addition, modification or construction are visually and architecturally compatible with the site and the applicable District;
 - ii. The harmony of the proposed change in terms of overall proportion and the size and placement of entrances, windows, awnings, exterior stairs, and signs;
 - iii. The Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation set forth within the Code of Federal Regulations (36 C.F.R. §67.7(b)), as may be relevant;
 - iv. The effect of the proposed change on the adjacent building or structures;

- v. The impact of the proposed change on other protected features on the property, such as gardens, landscaping, fences, walls, and walks;
- vi. Whether the proposed method of construction, renovation, or restoration could have an adverse impact on the structure or site, or adjacent buildings or structures;
- vii. When reviewing any proposed sign as part of an application under consideration, the standards set forth within Div. 4.11. Signs will be applied; and
- viii. Any applicable provisions of the City's design guidelines.

Chapter 34, Div. 4.11.5. General Sign Requirements

F. ADC Districts, HC Districts, Entrance Corridors, and IPPs

- 1) The character of all signs must be harmonious with the character of the structure on which they are to be placed. Among other things, consideration will be given to the following:
 - a. Location of signs on the structure in relation to the surrounding buildings;
 - b. Use of compatible colors;
 - c. Use of appropriate materials;
 - d. Size and style of lettering and graphics; and
 - e. Type of lighting.
- 2) Notwithstanding any contrary provisions of this Division, the restoration or reconstruction of an original sign associated with an IPP is permitted, provided the establishment identified in the sign is still in operation at that location.

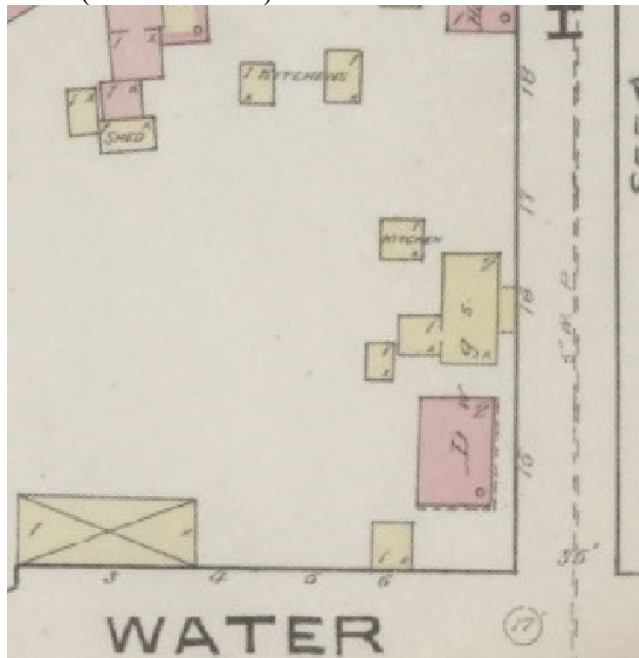
Links to ADC District Design Guidelines (also attached)

[Chapter 5 Signs, Awnings, Vending, and Cafes](#)

Appendix

Sanborn Maps

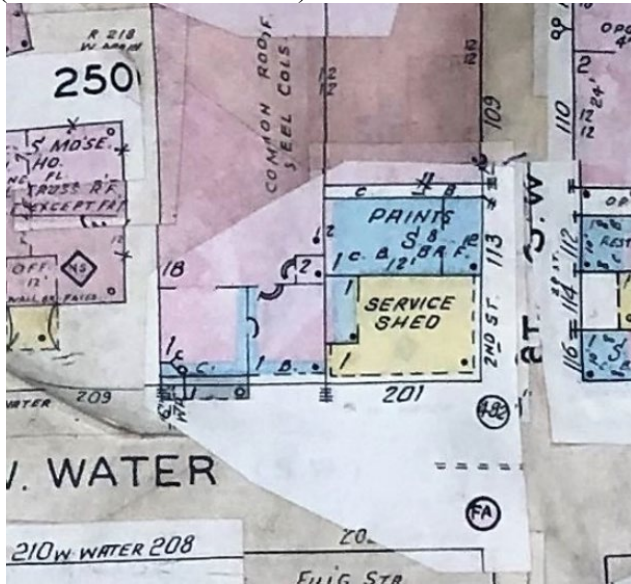
1886 (15 Hill Street)



1920 (113 2nd Street SW)



c1965 (201 West Water Street)



City Directory (through 1960): Listing for 201 West Water Street

- 1950: Vacant
- 1951 - 1956: Sears Roebuck and Co. as station
- 1957: Wilkerson Shell service station
- 1958-1960: Brathwaite. Inc Paint and Wallpaper

grit coffee
ROASTING CO.

10.31.2024

.

201 W WATER STREET
SIGNAGE CONCEPT



SIGN A
DIE CUT GOLD
VINYL LOGOS (2)

SIGN B
23" PROJECTING
METAL BLADE
SIGN, 2 SIDED

SIGN C
DIE-CUT BRICK
WALL VINYL

SIGN D
31" PROJECTING
METAL BLADE
SIGN, 2 SIDED

SIGN A

DIE CUT GOLD
VINYL LOGOS (2)

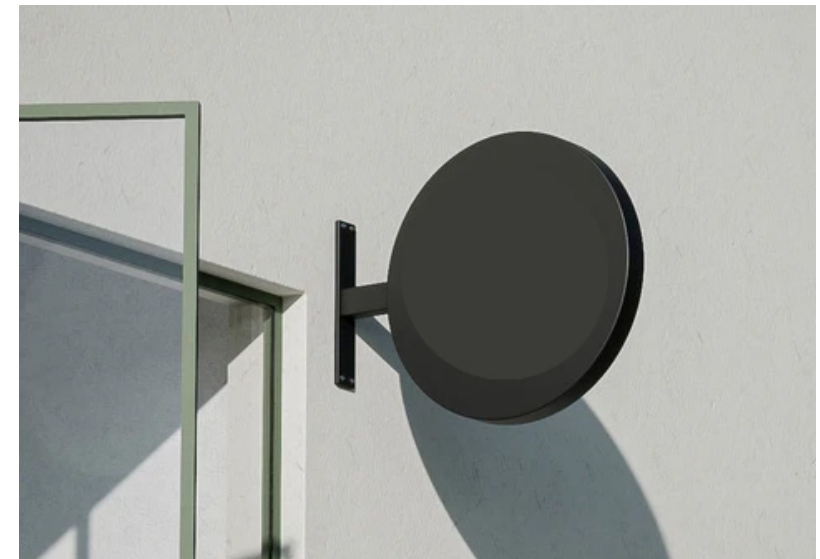
- Applied first surface



SIGN B

23" PROJECTING
METAL BLADE
SIGN, 2 SIDED

- Mounted to underside of roof at least 8' above sidewalk
- Powdercoated aluminum with white die-cut vinyl logo
- 2" thick



SIGN C

DIE-CUT BRICK
WALL VINYL

- Made for brick applications
- 70" x 65.7"

GRIT
COFFEE
ROASTING
CO.



SIGN D

23” PROJECTING
METAL BLADE
SIGN, 2 SIDED

- Mounted to brick at least 8’ above sidewalk
- Powdercoated aluminum with white die-cut vinyl logo
- 2” thick



CHARLOTTESVILLE

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN CONTROL DISTRICTS

DESIGN GUIDELINES

Approved by City Council, September 17, 2012



V

SIGNS, AWNINGS, VENDING & CAFES

- A. SIGNS.....5
- B. TEMPORARY
SIGNS.....8
- C. AWNINGS,
MARQUEES,
& CANOPIES.....9
- D. VENDING
STRUCTURES.....11
- E. OUTDOOR
CAFES.....12
- F. TENTS FOR
WEEKEND EVENTS
(UP TO 5 DAYS).....13
- G. TENT CANOPIES
FOR EXTENDED USE
(MORE THAN 5 DAYS)..14

V

SIGNS, AWNINGS, VENDING & CAFES

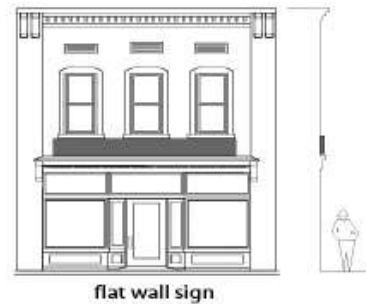
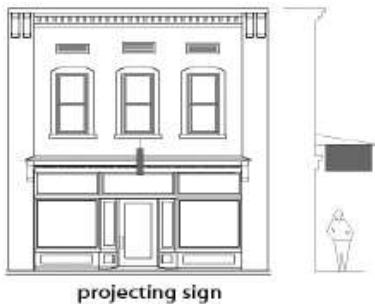
A. SIGNS

Signs are a vital part of commercial areas. A balance should be struck between the need to call attention to individual businesses and the need for a positive image of the entire district. The character of signs shall be harmonious to the character of the structure on which they are placed. Consider the relationship of surrounding buildings, compatible colors, appropriate materials, the style and size of the lettering and graphics, and the type of lighting. Signs can complement or detract from the character of a building depending on their design, placement, number, and condition. Historically significant signs on buildings should be retained if possible, even if the business is no longer in existence. See the Zoning Ordinance for specific sign regulations in each historic district. The following are recommended guidelines.



This sign painted on a masonry wall is typical of many historic signs on a warehouse building.

Types of Signs and Typical Locations



Placement

1. Place signs so that they do not obstruct architectural elements and details that define the design of the building. Respect the signs of adjacent businesses.
2. *Projecting signs* for commercial buildings are limited to one per storefront. They should be no lower than 8 feet from the sidewalk, and no more than 3 feet from the surface of the building. They should not be placed above the second story sill line. For residential buildings, small projecting signs attached to the wall at the first floor or porch column are appropriate.
3. *Window signs* should be approximately 5.5 feet above the sidewalk at the center point for good pedestrian visibility. Optional locations could include 18 inches from the top or bottom of the display window glass. Window signs are also appropriate on the glazing of doors.
4. *Flat wall signs* for commercial buildings can be located above the storefront, within the frieze of the cornice, on covered transoms, or on the pier that frames the display windows or generally on flat, unadorned surfaces of the façade or in areas clearly designed as sign locations. Flat wall signs for residential buildings can be appropriate if attached to the wall at the first floor or between porch columns.
5. *Awning and canopy signs* should be placed on the valance area only. The minimum spacing between the edge of the letter and the top and bottom of the valance should be 1.5 inches.
6. *Freestanding signs*, in general, are not an appropriate sign type in commercial areas of Downtown and the West Main Street corridor except for use in the front yard of a residence that has been converted to commercial or office use on a site where the building is set back deeply on the lot. In this case, freestanding signs should be no higher than 12 feet.

Number of permanent signs

1. The number of signs used should be limited to encourage compatibility with the building and discourage visual clutter.
2. In commercial areas, signs should be limited to two total, which can be different types.
3. A building should have only one wall sign per street frontage.
4. In addition to the existing permitted signs, each business in a building with rear entrances may have one small flat mounted sign not to exceed 6 square feet.



Flat, wall-mounted directory signs identify the multiple businesses within a building in a coordinated design.



Window signs should be concise and not obscure the storefront.



Projecting signs help direct pedestrians towards a business.



Freestanding signs are acceptable in historic districts where residences have been converted to professional use and can be adapted for use by more than one tenant.

A. SIGNS

Size

1. All the signs on a commercial building should not exceed 50 square feet.
2. Average height of letters and symbols should be no more than 12 inches on wall signs, 9 inches on awning and canopy signs, and 6 inches on window signs.
3. Projecting signs should be a maximum of 10 square feet per face.
4. Window signs should obscure no more than 20 percent of the window glass.
5. Flat wall signs should not exceed 18 inches in height and should not extend more than 6 inches from the surface of the building.

Design

1. Signs should be designed and executed by sign professionals who are skilled at lettering and surface preparation.

Shape

1. Shape of signs for commercial buildings should conform to the area where the sign is to be located.
2. Likewise, a sign can take on the shape of the product of service provided, such as a shoe for a shoe store.

Materials

1. Use traditional sign materials, such as wood, glass, gold leaf, raised metal or painted wood letters, and painted wood letters on wood, metal, or glass.
2. Newer products, such as painted MDO may also be used.
3. Do not use shiny plastic products.
4. Window signs should be painted or have decal flat letters and should not be three-dimensional.

Color

1. Use colors that complement the materials and color of the building, including accent and trim colors.
2. A maximum of three colors are recommended, although more colors can be appropriate.

Illumination

1. Generally, signs should be indirectly lit with a shielded incandescent light source.
2. Internally lit translucent signs are not permitted.

Buildings with Multiple Tenants

1. A comprehensive sign plan should be submitted for multi-tenant buildings.

2. Upper-floor tenants should be represented at each primary entrance by a flat, wall-mounted directory sign.

Other Signs

1. Banners should be temporary and wall murals should be carefully reviewed for compatibility with district character.
2. Halo-lit signs with opaque letters may be appropriate.

Neon Signs

1. Neon signs are often associated with early- to mid- twentieth century commercial design and are currently prohibited within the historic districts unless mounted inside windows.

Sign Maintenance

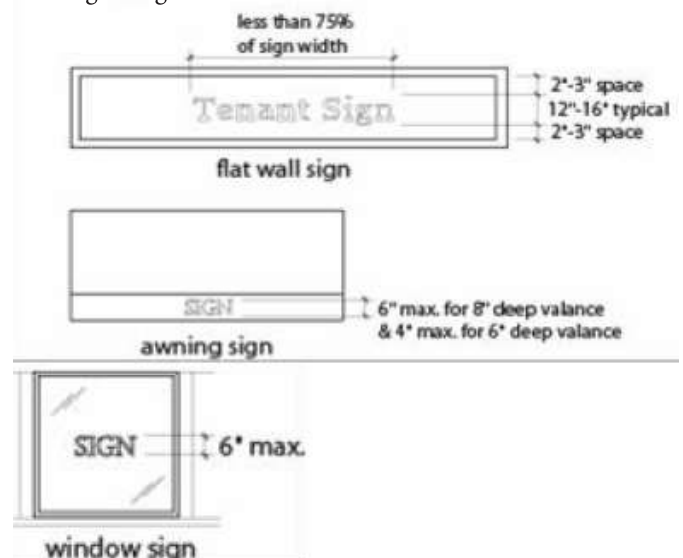
1. Signs that are not properly maintained should be removed.
2. Signs of a business no longer occupying a building or storefront should be removed unless it is historically significant.

PRESERVATION BRIEFS

#25: The Preservation of Historic Signs

Publications are available at
www2.cr.nps.gov/tps/briefs/presbhom.htm

Lettering on signs



B. TEMPORARY SIGNS

1. Sandwich board-type signs should be:
 - a. a maximum of four feet high.
 - b. a maximum of ten square feet.
 - c. constructed of metal or painted wood.
2. Wood signs should be constructed of medium density overlay (MDO) board or a similar quality material and not grained plywood.
3. All edges should be covered with molding or otherwise finished.
4. Sandwich board-type signs should have a maximum of four colors that relate to the colors of the associated building.
5. Letters should be scaled to the size of the sign.
6. No national advertising trademarks or logos should be a part of the sign other than that of the business.



This sandwich board directs customers to parking while highlighting two businesses that are located in the rear of the building.



Temporary signs provide the opportunity to give more information about a business's products.



The simple design of this sandwich board uses bright colors and bold lettering to attract attention to this business.