

Department of Permitting & Inspections

Zoning Division
645 Pine Street
Burlington, VT 05401
Telephone:(802) 865-7188
(802) 865-7195 (FAX)
(802) 865-7142 (TTY)

*William Ward, Director
Scott Gustin, AICP, CFM, Principal Planner
Mary O'Neil, AICP, Principal Planner
Ryan Morrison, Associate Planner
Layne Darfler, Planning Technician
Alison Davis, Zoning Clerk
Ted Miles, Zoning Specialist
Charlene Orton, Permitting & Inspections Administrator*



TO: Development Review Board
FROM: Ryan Morrison
DATE: July 21, 2020
RE: 20-0931MP; 266 & 270 Pine St

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Note: These are staff comments only; decisions on projects are made by the Development Review Board, which may approve, deny, table or modify any project. THE APPLICANT OR REPRESENTATIVE MUST ATTEND THE MEETING.

Zone: ELM Ward: 5S

Owner/Representative: Pine Properties LLC / Steve Conant

Request: Master sign plan

Applicable Regulations:

Article 6 (Development Criteria & Guidelines), Article 7 (Signs)

Background Information:

The applicant is seeking approval for a master sign plan for use at the Soda Plant (266-270 Pine Street). There are multiple tenants in this complex that will be subject to this plan. These include: Brandthropology, Brio, Conant Metal & Lighting, Groove & Grain, Rackk & Ruin, S.P.A.C.E., Soda Plant (building brand), 30 Odd, Tom Girl, and five to-be-determined second floor tenants.

Some of the signs in the Master Sign Plan have already been permitted separately, and some are proposed for future installation. The existing and proposed sign types include wall, window, blade, and freestanding.

Each future sign identified within this Master Sign Plan may be exempt from obtaining individual sign permits if their location, type, lighting and other requirements are not altered from this plan. Any alterations (size, location, type, lighting, etc.) from the signs identified within this plan will trigger the requirement for a separate sign permit.

Sign plans offer flexibility but are required to be compatible with the site and buildings and character of the surrounding area pursuant to the provisions of Article 6. While individual signs in the plan may vary from the standards in Article 7, Part 2: *District Regulations*, as to the type and placement of signs on a structure or lot, no individual sign may exceed the size limitations.

Except for such variations approved by the Development Review Board by acceptance of a master sign plan pursuant to this Article, all other standards regarding signs shall remain in effect.

Recommendation: Master Sign Plan approval as per, and subject to, the following findings and conditions:

I. Findings

Article 7: Signs

Several signs subject to this Master Plan have already been approved and installed per prior sign permits. These include the illuminated freestanding sign fronting along Pine Street, several wall and window signs, and a blade sign for 30 Odd. Proposed new signage will include wall, blade and window signs.

The majority of the signs included are wall signs. Signage area allotted to wall signs is '2 sf per linear foot of street frontage, or elevation where no street frontage is available, associated with a first floor tenant.' and '10 sf for a second floor tenant with only a ground floor entryway.' The application doesn't break down the street frontage and elevations (per non-street frontage availability) per first floor tenant. Rather, they include the linear street frontage of each façade running north to south. For both 266 & 270 Pine Street combined, linear street frontage totals 240 ft, which equates to 480 sf of wall sign area. Overall, 318 sf of wall sign area is proposed, and for those wall signs located on a non-street facing façade, those also meet the allotted size-to-elevation ratio.

Blade signs are limited to 1 per ground floor tenant, with specific dimensions outlined. Two blade signs are included as part of this plan, one is existing (30 Odd) and one proposed for Brandthropology. While the Brandthropology blade sign complies with the height and location requirements of Art. 7, it exceeds the 3 ft maximum width, and will have to be reduced in the width.

The freestanding sign included in this plan was permitted in March, 2020 and complies with the standards of Art. 7.

Additional clarity is needed for the window sign sizes in relation to the percentages allowed. Specifically, the total signage area cannot exceed 30% of the total window area of all windows with signs per façade. And more specifically, for any signs located between 4 and 7 ft above the adjacent sidewalk or finished grade, said sign cannot exceed 20% of the window area. The applicant has provided sign percentage information, but does not specify whether or not the signage is located within the 4 to 7 ft height area. This information will need to be submitted, and any proposed window sign that exceeds these size limits will need to be reduced in order to comply. **(Affirmative finding as conditioned)**

Sec. 7.3.4 Flexibility from Existing Standards

(a) The Master Sign Plan must establish standards of consistency applicable to all Signs to be provided on the subject property with regard to:

- *Colors;*
- *Letter/graphics style;*
- *Location and Sign Type;*
- *Materials;*
- *Methods of illumination; and/or*
- *Maximum dimensions and proportion.*

- (b) *A Master Sign Plan shall be consistent with the intent and purpose of the form or zoning district within which the site is located and the intent of this Article, and be compatible with the site and character of the surrounding area.*
- (c) *All of the Signs in a Master Sign Plan shall be designed and organized in a manner consistent and complementary with the overall architecture of the Building, and employ complimentary materials, colors, design, and scale of letters while still providing diversity and differentiation among individual tenants,*
- (d) *Individual Signs in an approved Master Sign Plan may vary from the locational standards of Part 2 of this Article pertaining to each Sign Type, and be granted Alternative Compliance per Sec. 7.1.11. However, no individual Sign may exceed the maximum area limitations for the specified Sign Type, or conflict with the limitations and prohibitions of Sec. 7.1.4 .*
- (e) *Except for such variations approved by the DRB by acceptance of a Master Sign Plan pursuant to this Article, all other requirements, permits, and restrictions regarding Signs shall remain in effect.*

The proposed master sign plan varies from the standard sign regulations in terms of sign placement. Specifically, there are three wall signs that appear to slightly exceed the height maximum – the Groove & Grain wall sign, the Rack & Ruin wall sign, and the top ‘2nd Floor Tenants’ sign. The height requirement limits wall signs to locate no higher than the floor level of the second story. Interestingly, these signs are lower than another wall sign that happens be on single story façade, thus being able to locate higher. Article 6 is addressed below. **(Affirmative finding)**

Article 6: Development Review Standards

Part 1, Land Division Design Standards

Not applicable.

Part 2, Site Plan Design Standards

Sec. 6.2.2, Review Standards

Not applicable.

Part 3, Architectural Design Standards

Sec. 6.3.2, Review Standards

(g) Make advertising features complimentary to the site

The proposed master sign plan depicts signage typically associated with commercial uses. With the exception of one blade sign, and possibly a few windows signs, all signs proposed and existing comply with the size limitations. The signs are fairly small and unobtrusive. They provide the necessary information and nothing else. No new illumination is proposed. **(Affirmative finding)**

II. Conditions of Approval

1. The individual signs included in this Master Sign Plan are subject to separate zoning permits only if they differ from what is included in this Master Sign Plan and/or where they may be exempt due to location within a public right-of-way.
2. The Brandthropology blade sign exceeds the maximum width allowance of 3 ft and shall be revised to achieve compliance, subject to staff review and approval.

3. All window signs within the 4' to 7' height area above adjacent sidewalks or finished grade shall be limited to 20% of the window area within that height area. Verification shall be provided, subject to staff review and approval.