



Planning Department

TOWN OF ACTON
472 Main Street
Acton, Massachusetts 01720
Telephone (978) 264-9636
Fax (978) 264-9630
planning@acton-ma.gov

MEMORANDUM

To: Planning Board **Date:** December 9, 2005
From: Roland Bartl, AICP, Town Planner *R.B.*
Subject: Sign Special Permit Application – 136-8 Main Street; The New Exchange Place

Attached is a special permit application for a freestanding business center sign (lists multiple tenants) in a location not otherwise allowed (Bylaw, section 7.13.1.3). The sign is proposed in South Acton Village where freestanding signs are not allowed except where no building is within 30 feet of the street sideline. Here, the building sits about 11 feet off the sideline. The proposed sign (5 ft. high, 3 ft. wide, and 12 sq. ft. display area) would fit within the by-right maximum dimensions as state in Bylaw, section 7.8.6.3.

Where a building is in reasonable proximity to the street a projecting sign could be hung from the building. However, the by right size limit for a projecting sign in village districts is 6 sq. ft. (Bylaw section 7.7.5) to ensure that the sign hanging on the building is not oversized in proportion to the building. By special permit, the size could be doubled for larger buildings.

In any case, the Bylaw does not allow projecting business center signs with tenant listings. Even if it were allowed, the 12 sq. ft. size might be too large to hang from the building and still look in good proportion. The sign lists 7 businesses in three buildings on the lot; some businesses are in the rear and would have no other means of advertising themselves. The proposed sign also names the business location. The sign letters are a modest 3-4 inches high (some even smaller) - certainly not out of scale for a village setting. Therefore, I come out generally in support of the application.

You will see concerns in departmental comments that the sign might impede sight distance to Central Street when exiting the adjacent driveway. I do not necessarily share this concern because the sign must be located 5 feet back from the street sideline (bylaw, section 7.8.2). Together with the 5 ft. sidewalk, there would be ten feet to clear the sign. The propose sign is 3 feet wide. With the sign placed directly against the building the clearance would be almost 13 feet. The application is not sufficiently precise in pinpointing the proposed location. I have asked the applicant to put up a prop so that we might better evaluate the sight distance. This has not happened to date.

The bylaw requires that the sign, if approved, must be placed within a 100 sq. ft. landscaped area (section 7.8.3). There is no information on this. Also, please see other departmental comments that the Board may wish to discuss with the applicant at the hearing. If the choice is to continue the hearing, I would recommend that the applicant clarify the outstanding questions and place a prop with the proposed dimensions in the proposed location so that we can view the sight distance. The next available hearing date is January 10.

Acton Police Department
Incident Report

November 10, 2005

Thursday 12:39

Single Incident

INCIDENT LOCAL # PRIORITY ACC REP	ACTIVITY ADDRESS (JURISDICTION) DISPOSITION	OFFICER(S)	RECEIVED DISPATCHED ARRIVED CLEARED	DISPATCHER SUPERVISOR NATURE INCIDENT TYPE
I0517924 9 No No	OTHER 138 MAIN ST Cross: @133 1 CENTRAL ST @139 ACTON, MA, 01720 (01) OTHER	COWAN	11/10/2005, 10:57 11/10/2005, 10:58 11/10/2005, 10:58 11/10/2005, 10:58	BOYD LAWTON SIGN IN FRONT POLICE INFO CT: BOYD

COPY

Reported as: POLICE INFO Found as: POLICE INFO
Domestic Abuse: No

Dispatcher Remarks:

13RC REPORTS DANSTUFF AT THE ABOVE ADDRESS WILL BE APPLYING FOR A SIGN IN FRONT OF THE BUILDING. SEE SAFETY OFFICER REPORT.

REPORTER DELNIGRO, KIM
(Female) BLANK STREET NAME
M0504867

License: None

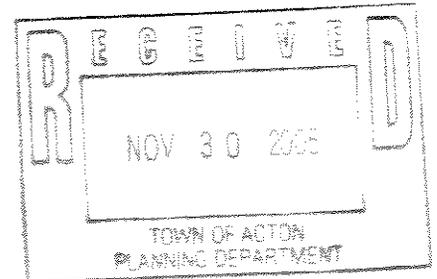
Phone: None Recorded DOB: None Recorded
Commnt: PLANNING DEPT. SIGN REQUEST

Narrative(s):

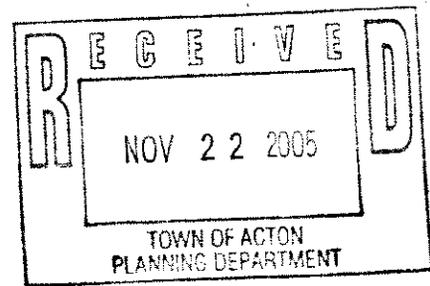
Narr. 1: DET. ROBERT COWAN Division: None Status: Open [I0517924]
Title: SIGN REQUEST Entered: DET. ROBERT COWAN
Reviewed: No officer

THIS REPORT IS IN REGARDS TO A FREESTANDING SIGN REQUEST FOR 138 MAIN ST. THE NEW EXCHANGE PLACE. BASED ON THE SIGNS DIMENSIONS, AND THE FACT THAT THERE IS LITTLE SPACE AVAILABLE THE FOLLOWING IS MY RECOMMENDATION. VISIBILITY FOR THE MOTORIST ON MAIN ST., CENTRAL ST., AND THE DRIVEWAY ADJACENT TO THE BUILDING COULD BE AFFECTED BY THE SIGN. THE LOCATION OF THE BUILDING, AND THE MINIMAL EXISTING FRONTAGE IS POOR AT BEST. THE SIGN COULD CREATE FURTHER VISIBILITY ISSUES. I BELIEVE THAT THE CURRENT APPLICATION FOR THE SIGN SHOULD BE DENIED.

DETECTIVE ROBERT L. COWAN JR.



TOWN OF ACTON
472 Main Street
Acton, Massachusetts, 01720
Telephone (978) 264-9628
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Engineering Department

INTERDEPARTMENTAL COMMUNICATION

To: Planning Department

Date: November 22, 2005

From: Engineering Department

Subject: Sign Special Permit- Concord Connection, LLC – 136-138 Main Street

We have the following comments regarding the above mentioned permit application dated October 28, 2005.

1. Sign Rendering

- A. The applicant should include a description and/or a typical cross section of the proposed support footing for the sign.
- B. The applicant should label the distances between the proposed sign and the front property line, the existing building and the back edge of the paved sidewalk on the plans. These distances should be provided to illustrate how the sign will relate to the existing site features.

2. Sign Location Plan

- A. The applicant should label the landscaped areas on the plan to clearly show that the sign will not be located within the pavement.

3. General Discussion

- A. Based on a site inspection and the information provided with this permit, we believe that the proposed sign would obstruct the sight distance on Central Street for a driver exiting the site.

To: Kim DeNigro,
Acton Planning Department

From: Historic District Commission

Re: Sign Special Permit Application, 136-38 Main Street

Date: November 14, 2005

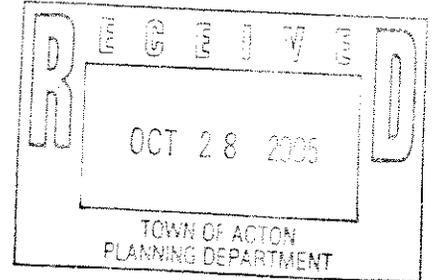
Please accept these comments from the Historic District Commission (HDC) regarding the proposed freestanding sign at 136-38 Main Street. This property is just outside the South Acton Historic District (SAHD), but the proposed sign would be visible from various points in the SAHD. Accordingly, while the property and sign are not within our purview, we welcome this opportunity to comment on the design.

The materials provided with your memorandum indicate the sign would be of "all wood construction," which is preferable to synthetic or artificial materials from an historic standpoint. However, it is unclear whether any of the elements of the sign would be made of another material. For example, the "all wood *construction*" does not necessarily mean the lettering/numbering would be made of wood, or that wood elements would be free of synthetic covering. The HDC strongly urges that no non-wood visible elements be used in the sign, as those would detract from the historic character of the area. The display area of the sign appears to be painted, but the support posts appear to be unpainted. The HDC urges the entire sign and structure be painted, and of wood. Finally, the overall appearance of the sign is not traditional or complementary to the faux-historical style of the "New Exchange Place" building on the property, or to the genuinely historic structures in the immediate vicinity. A more ornamentally-capped and bordered look for the sign would be preferable from an historic standpoint.

Brian Bendig for the
Acton Historic District Commission



Concord Connection LLC
 136 Main Street, Acton, MA 01720
 Tel: (978) 274-5641
 Fax: (978) 635-0404
 info@newexchangeplace.com



October 28, 2005

Town Of Acton
 Attn: Town Clerk & Planning Department
 Acton, MA 01720

To Whom It May Concern:

Attached for review, please find materials for a freestanding sign license that is proposed for 138 Main Street, Acton, MA 01720. Please don't hesitate to contact me should you have any questions or concerns:

Dmitry Goykhman
 136 Main Street
 Acton, MA 01720
 (978) 274-5641
 cell 508 294 1256

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Dmitry Goykhman
 General Manager

11/8/05 HIST. COMMISSION COMMENTS:

1. sign design too contemporary - not in keeping w/hist. district - suggest pediment shape
2. sign location an obstruction for exiting vehicles cuts off view
3. canopy needs to be very dark
4. HDC SHOULD REVIEW
5. sign could hang \perp to roadway from bldg - much more attractive + in-keeping

HIST. COMMISSION

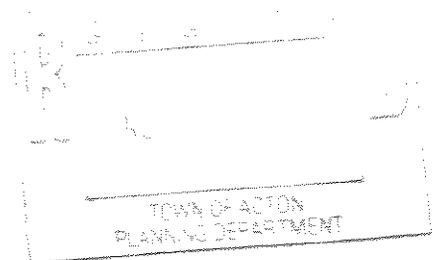
ACTON MUNICIPAL PROPERTIES DEPARTMENT

INTERDEPARTMENTAL COMMUNICATION

To: Kim DelNigro, Planning Department **Date:** 11/8/05
From: Dean A. Charter, Municipal Properties Director
Subject: Review of sign permit application for The New Exchange Place, 136-138 Main Street

I have reviewed the plans submitted, and have inspected the site for the proposed freestanding sign. My comments are as follows:

1. In the rendering the word "Assabett" in Assabett Sewing is misspelled. I believe it should be "Assabet".
2. The proposed location for the new sign will impact the landscaping, which is already minimal.
3. I believe that the sign located as proposed will present a serious visibility problem for cars coming up the driveway and entering onto Main Street. The sign will block the view of traffic on Central Street and pedestrians on the sidewalk from the vehicles on the driveway. I strongly suggest that this application be reviewed by the Police Department Safety Officer.
4. In my opinion, the application, as it is now presented, should be denied.



ACTON PLANNING DEPARTMENT
Inter-departmental Memo
978-264-9636

Date: October 28, 2005

To: Steve Barrett, Finance Director

From: Kim DelNigro 

Subject: Review of Sign Special Permit
136-138 Main Street
H-A / 21

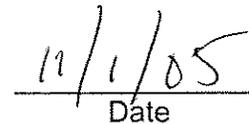
The Planning Board has received an application for approval of a Sign Special Permit and is scheduled to hold a public hearing on December 13, 2005 at 7:45PM. Please advise the Board of any delinquent taxes owed on the property at this time. If any property taxes are overdue, the Planning Board will include a condition requiring tax payment in their decision.

No property taxes due at this time.

The following property taxes are overdue at this time:



Signature



Date

Thank you for your attention to this request.