

APPLICATION NUMBER

5389/4356

A REQUEST FOR

**SIGN VARIANCE TO AMEND A PREVIOUSLY
APPROVED SIGN VARIANCE TO ALLOW 507 SQUARE
FEET OF SIGNAGE FOR ONE TENANT ON A MULTI-
TENANT SITE; A MAXIMUM OF 64 SQUARE FEET PER
TENANT IS ALLOWED IN A HISTORIC DISTRICT**

LOCATED AT

301 GOVERNMENT STREET

(Block bounded by Government Street, Jackson Street, Church Street, and Claiborne
Street)

APPLICANT/AGENT

WRICO SIGNS, INC.

OWNER

LAFAYETTE PLAZA, LLC

BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT

NOVEMBER 2006

The applicant is requesting a Sign Variance to amend a previously approved Sign Variance to allow 507 square feet of signage for one tenant on a multi-tenant site; a maximum of 64 square feet per tenant is allowed in a historic district.

The subject site is within the Church Street Historic District and the Zoning Ordinance limits signage to 64 square feet per tenant in historic districts. In 1992, the subject tenant-to-be (Holiday Inn) requested a variance to allow 277.5 square feet of signage and was granted approval to allow 254 square feet of signage for the hotel. Holiday Inn now desires to increase the overall square footage to 507 square feet, and increase the number of signs from four to five. The applicant (Wrico Signs, Inc.) states that this property occupies a fairly large site in the downtown area and that the ordinance that limits the size and number of signs allowed seems to be aimed at businesses in the area that are considerably smaller. It is stated that this is one of the tallest buildings in the immediate area and it has multiple points of entry and that the height and entry points warrant adequate signage. It is further stated that the hotel is different from neighboring properties in its lot street frontage and square footage.

The proposed signage would increase the two cornice area signs at the top of the tower from 92 square feet each to 178.25 square feet each; one lower wall sign would remain 35 square feet, while another one would increase from 35 square feet to 82.25 square feet. A fifth, additional sign is proposed for the Government Street facade at 33.25 square feet. In September 2006, the Architectural Review Board reviewed an application by Lafayette Plaza Hotel (soon to be Holiday Inn) for 530 square feet of signage but denied the application and deferred the issue to the Board of Adjustment. The ARB had no objections to the proposed 530 (now proposed to be 507) square feet of total signage due to the fact that the site covers an entire city block.

The proposed signage would far exceed that of any other existing hotel in the Church Street East Historic District and would almost exactly double that previously approved by variance for this site. The next closest signage total is the Radisson Admiral Semmes which, by variance, is allowed a total of 300 square feet, 200 square feet of which is allowed to be split between two wall signs. In the Board's approval of the 1992 sign variance for Holiday Inn, the uniqueness of the property due to its size was taken into consideration and that there could feasibly be more signage for multiple tenants. The Board, therefore, allowed 254 square feet instead of the requested 277.5 square feet and made such approval subject to the Architectural Review Board's approval of a maximum of 10 square feet for each additional tenant. Since that variance approval the building has not expanded in footprint or height, and there have been no contributing factors to warrant an increase above the previously approved signage square footage.

The Zoning Ordinance states that no variance shall be granted where economics are the basis for the application. Furthermore, the applicant must present sufficient evidence to

find that the variance will not be contrary to the public interest, and that special conditions exist such that a literal enforcement of the Ordinance will result in an unnecessary hardship. The Ordinance also states that a variance should not be approved unless the spirit and intent of the Ordinance is observed and substantial justice done to the applicant and the surrounding neighborhood.

Variances are not intended to be granted frequently. The applicant must clearly show the Board that the request is due to very unusual characteristics of the property and that it satisfies the variance standards. What constitutes unnecessary hardship and substantial justice is a matter to be determined from the facts and circumstances of each application.

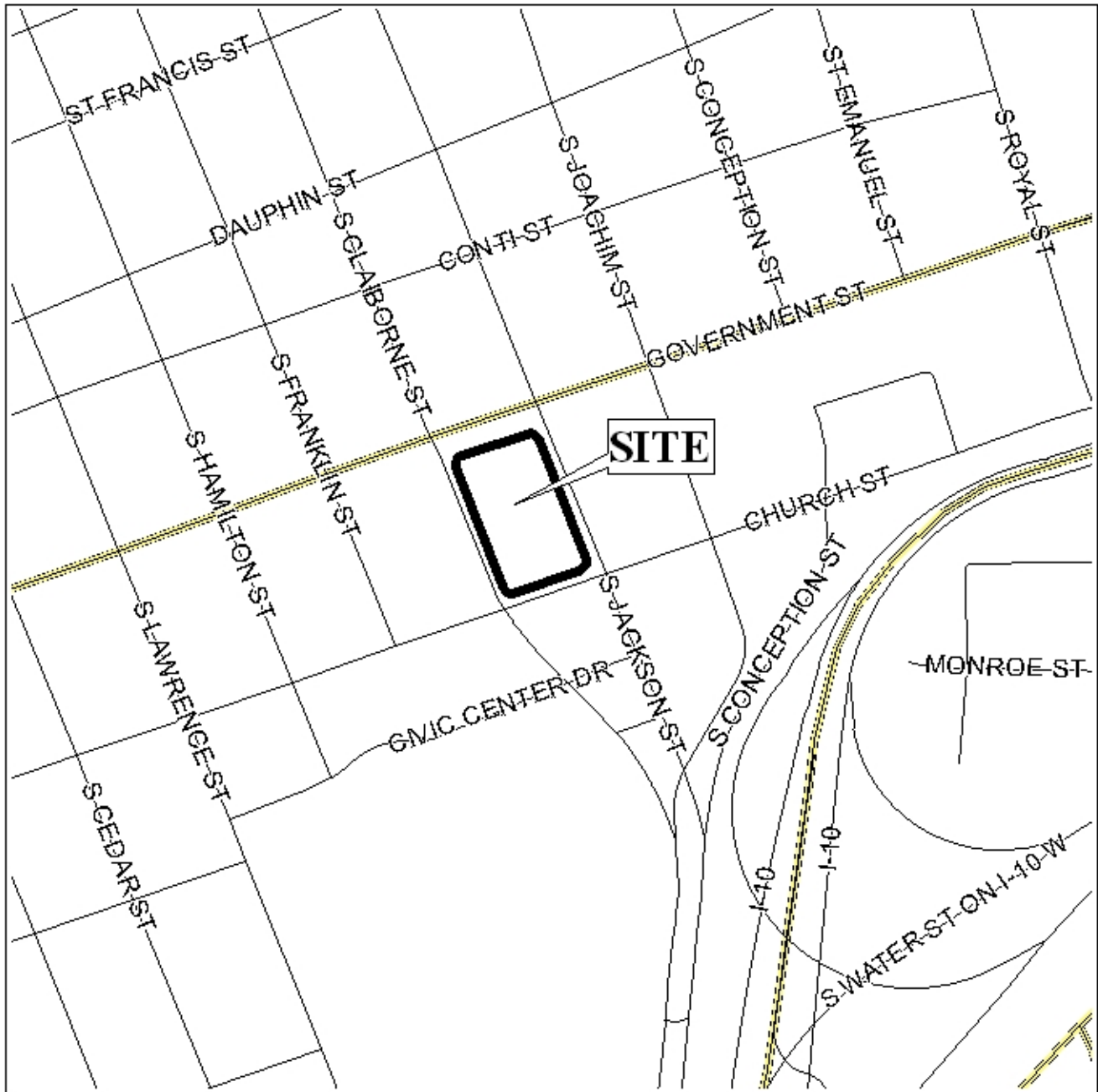
The applicant failed to illustrate that an enforcement of the previously approved sign variance for 254 square feet of total signage would result in an unnecessary hardship. It is simply the applicant's desire to allow 507 square feet of signage for one tenant on a multi-tenant site in a historic district.

RECOMMENDATION 5389/4356

Date: November 6, 2006

Based on the preceding, this application is recommended for denial.

LOCATOR MAP



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APPLICANT Wrico Signs, Inc.

REQUEST Sign Variance



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BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT VICINITY MAP - EXISTING ZONING



There is a parking garage to the east of the site, offices to the west and the south, and a church to the north of the site

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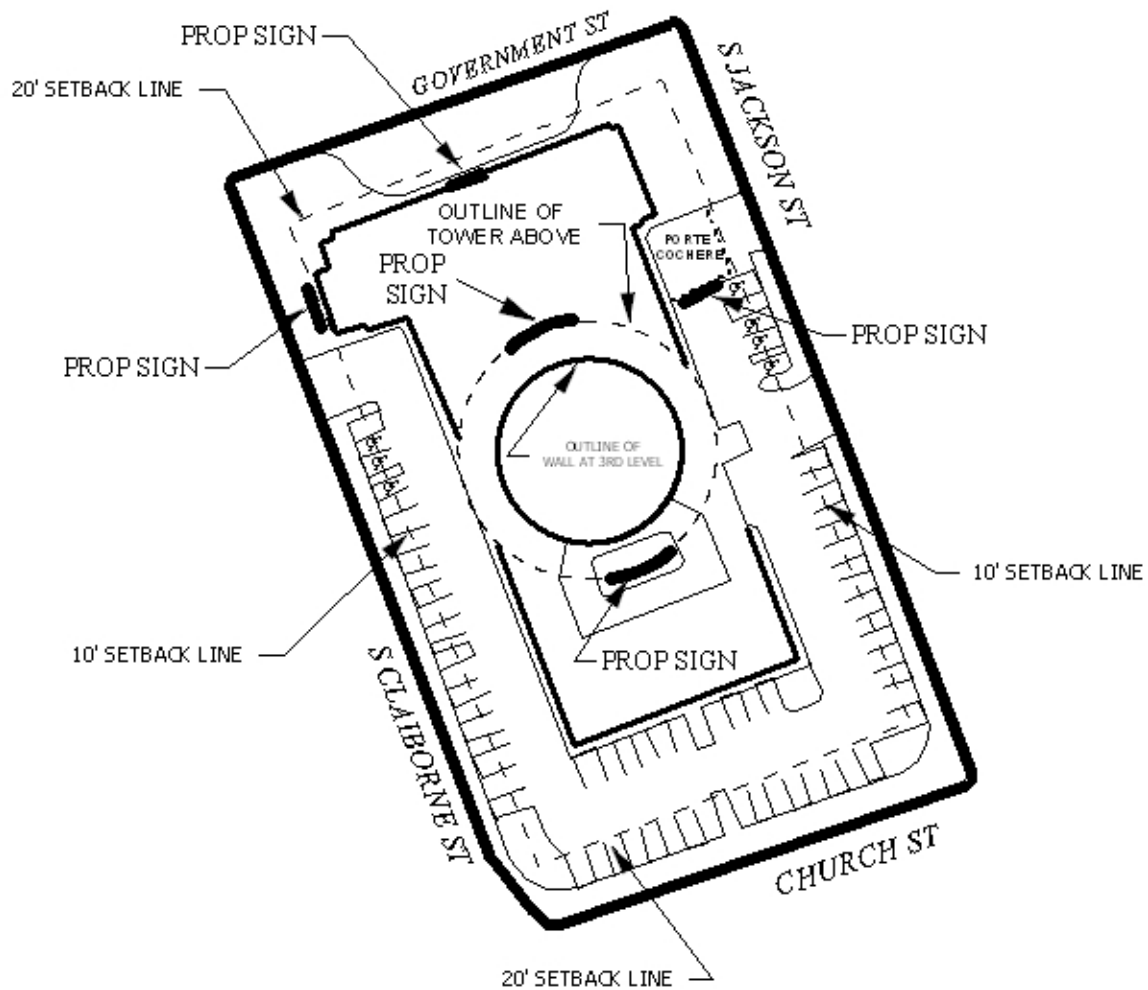
LEGEND

R-1	R-2	R-3	R-A	R-B	H-B	B-1	LB-2	B-2	B-3	B-4	B-5	I-1	I-2
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SITE PLAN



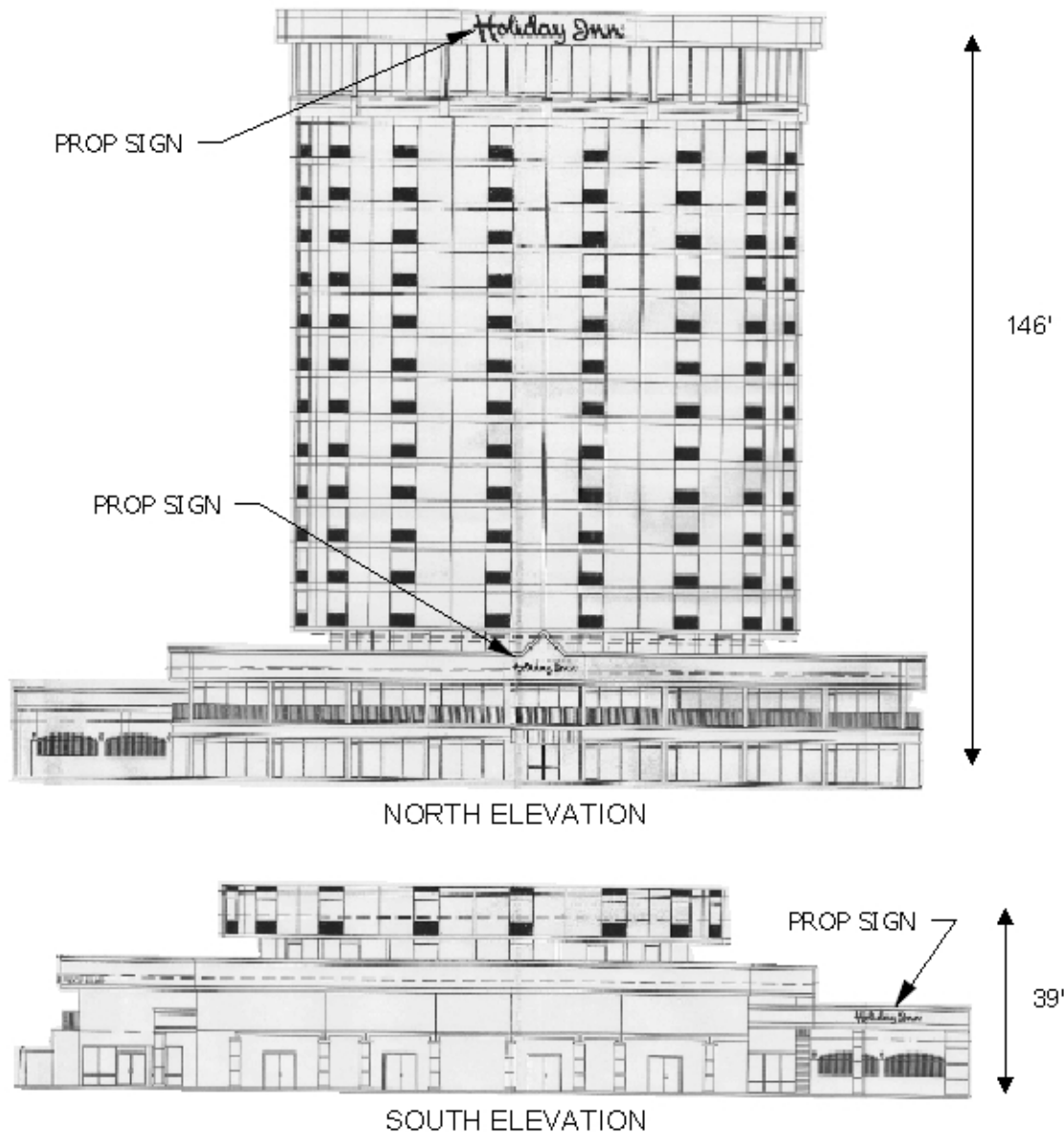
The site plan illustrates existing building , parking, setbacks, and proposed signs.

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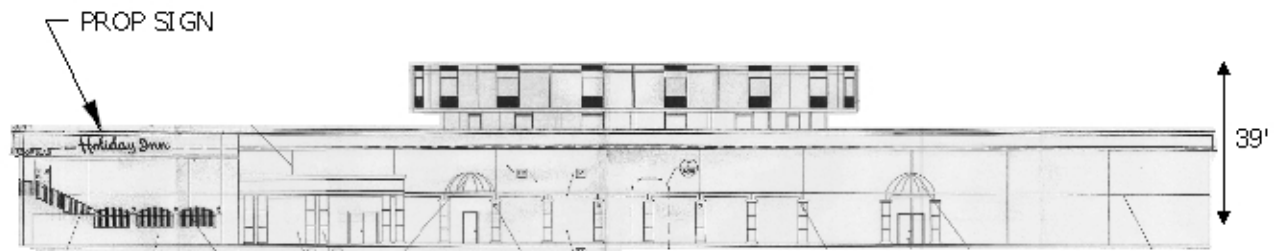
NORTH AND SOUTH ELEVATION DETAIL



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WEST ELEVATION DETAIL



WEST ELEVATION

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