

D/DRC Case

600 Gervais Street

West Gervais Historic Commercial District

TMS: 08912-08-04

DESIGN/DEVELOPMENT REVIEW COMMISSION
DESIGN REVIEW DISTRICT
HISTORIC AGENDA
EVALUATION SHEET
Case #5

ADDRESS: 600 Gervais Street

APPLICANT: Lewis Holland, Altair Signs and Light, Inc., agent

TAX MAP REFERENCE: TMS# R08912-08-04

USE OF PROPERTY: Commercial

REVIEW DISTRICT: W. Gervais Street Historic Commercial District/City Center

NATURE OF REQUEST: Request Certificate of Design Approval for exterior changes

FINDINGS/COMMENTS:

This is a more recent building (late 1990s per Richland County records) into which a new restaurant, Twin Peaks, is moving. Because it is a newer building, exterior changes were handled at staff level; however, a request to use either green neon lighting or green-colored plastic-encased LED lights as decorative accent lighting running the length of the building was not one staff considered met the guidelines. The applicants chose to appeal the staff decision with an application to the D/DRC.

Prior to the current owners taking over the building, it apparently had had neon tubing installed as accent lighting in a similar way to what is being proposed now. Staff found no records of approvals or permits for this lighting.

The ambiance of the historic district is dependent upon both the buildings and their context. City Center guidelines reviews both of these and specifically addresses appropriate lighting both within the public right-of-way as well as when it is placed on structures. While not every potential proposal can be specifically addressed in the guidelines, the intent of the guidelines is clear in the way it consistently handles various topics.

City Center Guidelines

Section 5.7.1, Grillework/Metalwork and Other Details:

There are a number of details, often thought of as mundane that may be incorporated into building design to add a degree of visual richness and interest while meeting functional needs. Such details include the following items:

- Light fixtures, wall mounted or hung with decorative metal brackets.
- Metal grillework, at vent openings or as decorative features at windows, doorways or gates.
- Decorative scuppers, catches and down-spouts, preferably of copper.
- Balconies, rails, finials, corbels, plaques, etc.

- Flag or banner pole brackets.
- Fire sprinkler stand pipe enclosures and hose bib covers, preferably of brass.
- Security devices.

These requirements clearly reference the historic nature of the area and attempt to address details such as light fixtures even on new buildings, in such a way as to reinforce the character of the district. The first item on the list implies that new light fixtures will take a traditional approach “while meeting functional needs.” The addition of decorative lighting along a cornice line does not appear to meet the intent of this guideline as it does not reference a functional need.

It may be noted that open-faced neon is allowed for signage in the district but with conditions: “Whenever indirect lighting fixtures are used (fluorescent or incandescent), care should be taken to properly shield the light source to prevent glare from spilling over into residential areas and any public right-of-way. Signs should be lighted only to the minimum level required for nighttime readability.” Indeed, Section 6.2.4 which addresses signage illumination starts with asking if illumination is needed at all, with indirect lighting being the most highly recommended as it “is more appropriate for historic districts and produces a more intimate ambiance on the street.”

A narrow line of accent lighting along the top of the building would not produce a more intimate ambiance on the street and thus would not reinforce the character of the district. The design of the building is such that the cornice is inconsistent and changes with the various projections and bays of the somewhat complex exterior walls. This exterior is relatively inconsistent with the simple massing of the historic buildings in the district and the addition of a brightly lit accent following the undulations of the roofline will only serve to highlight this inconsistency.

Approval for neon accent lighting on this building means that it could also be used on any other building in the district which is certainly not appropriate for the area’s turn-of-the-century warehouse and office buildings. If this kind of accent lighting is desired, it would be more appropriate on the interior of the building rather than the exterior. Please also note that the proposed bright green LED plastic tubing or neon which is proposed would be highly visible during the day as well as night.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends denial of the application for the use of neon accent lighting on the Twin Peaks building, based upon intent of the City Center Guidelines, with emphasis on Section 5.7.1 and Section 6.2.4.



View of building, pre-renovation



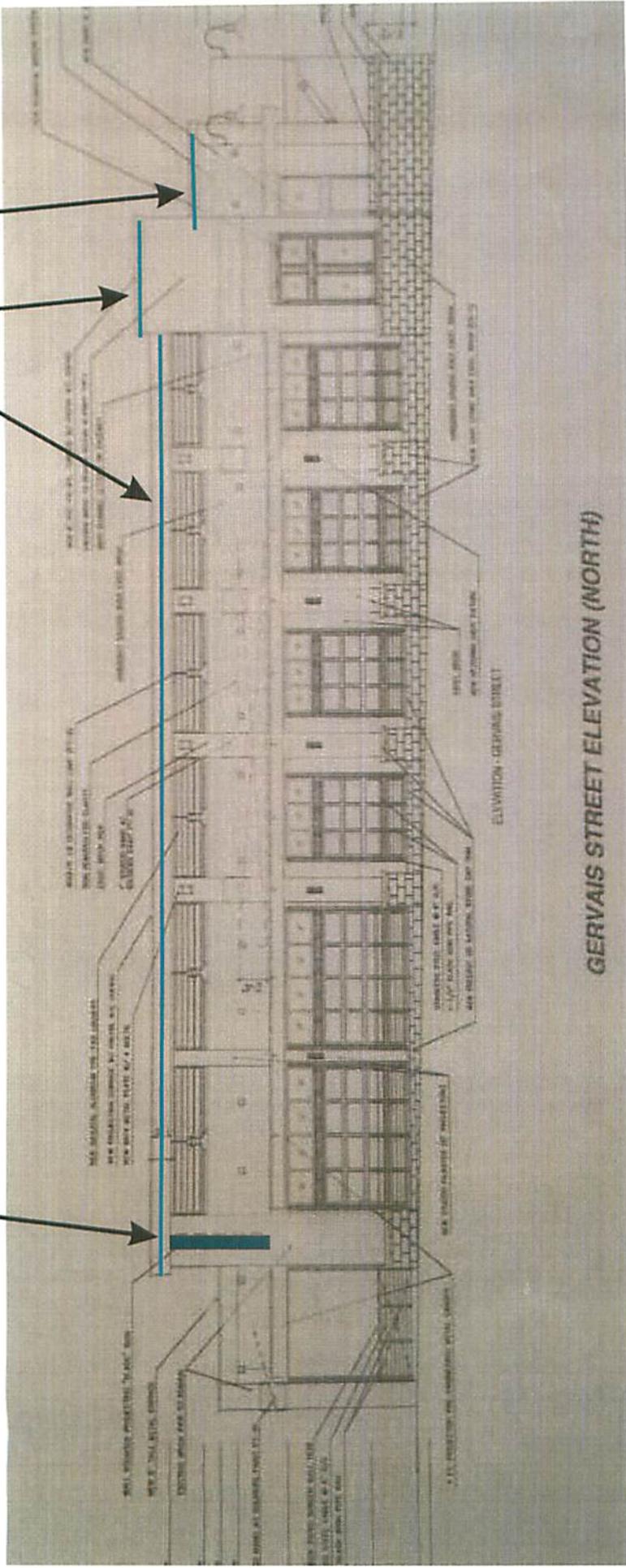
View of building's north side prior to exterior renovations



View of the building from the west, post renovations

SIGN D

GREEN LED BOARDER LIGHT



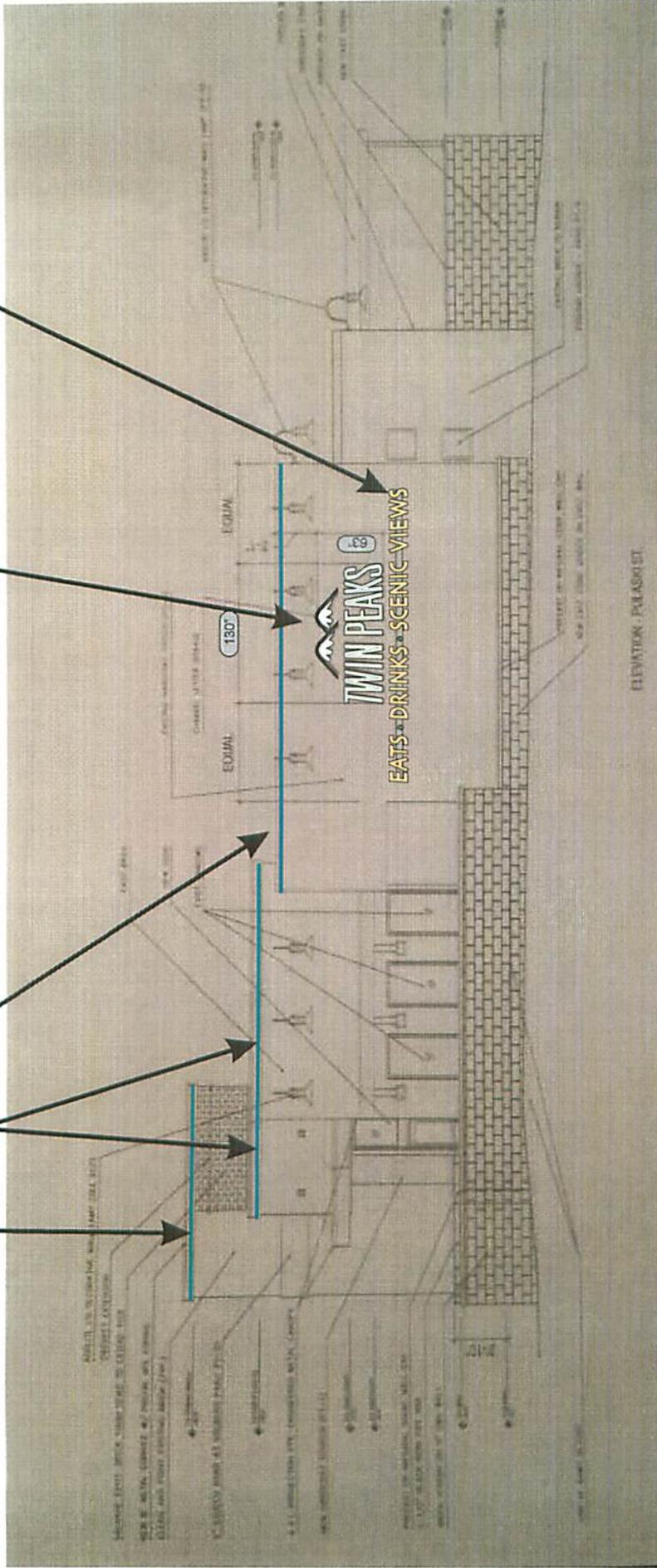
6802 Buford Hwy, NE
Doraville, Ga. 30340
770-889-1212

FILE NAME	SALESMAN	LEWIS HOLLAND
JOB NAME	PHONE	DATE
CONTACT	FAX	SCALE
LOCATION	EMAIL	DRAWN BY

GREEN LED BOARDER LIGHT

SIGN B

SIGN C

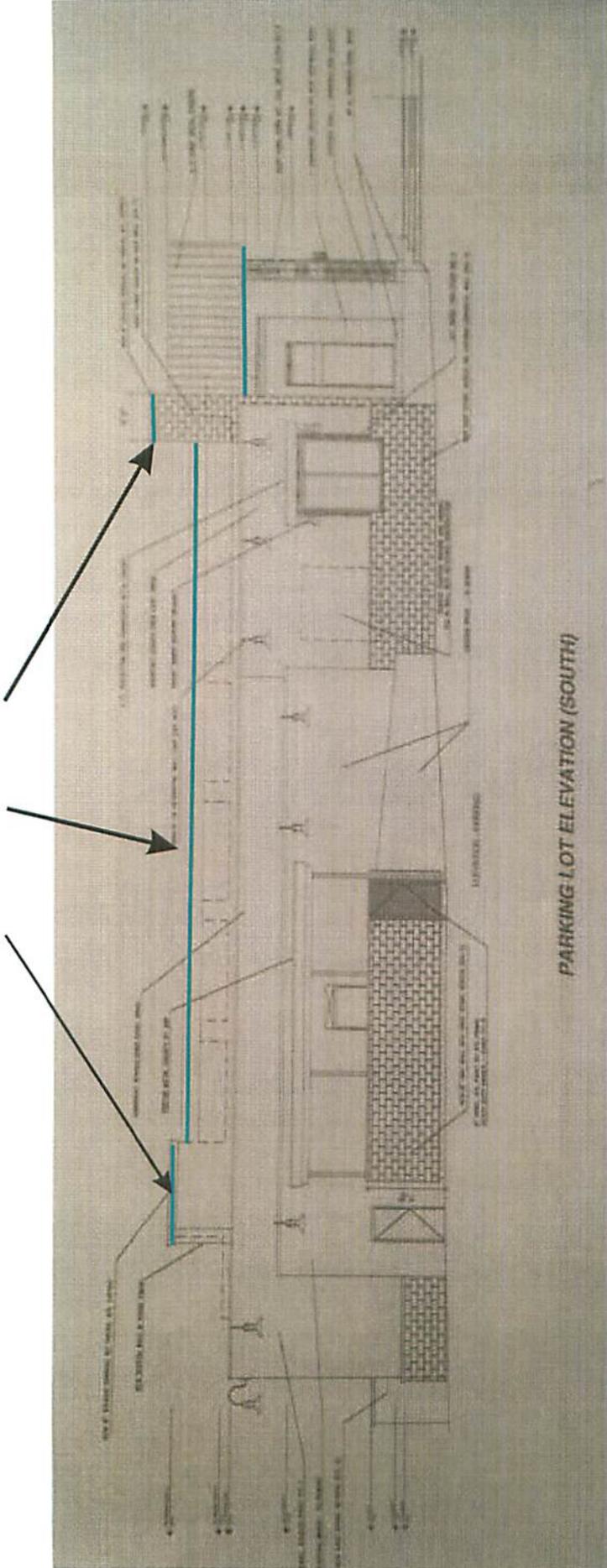


FILE NAME	SKESMAN	LEWIS HOLLAND
JOB NAME	PHONE	DATE
CONTACT	FAX	SCALE
LOCATION	EMAIL	DRAWING

6802 Buford Hwy, NE
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Alctair
 sign & light

GREEN LED BOARDER LIGHT



PARKING LOT ELEVATION (SOUTH)



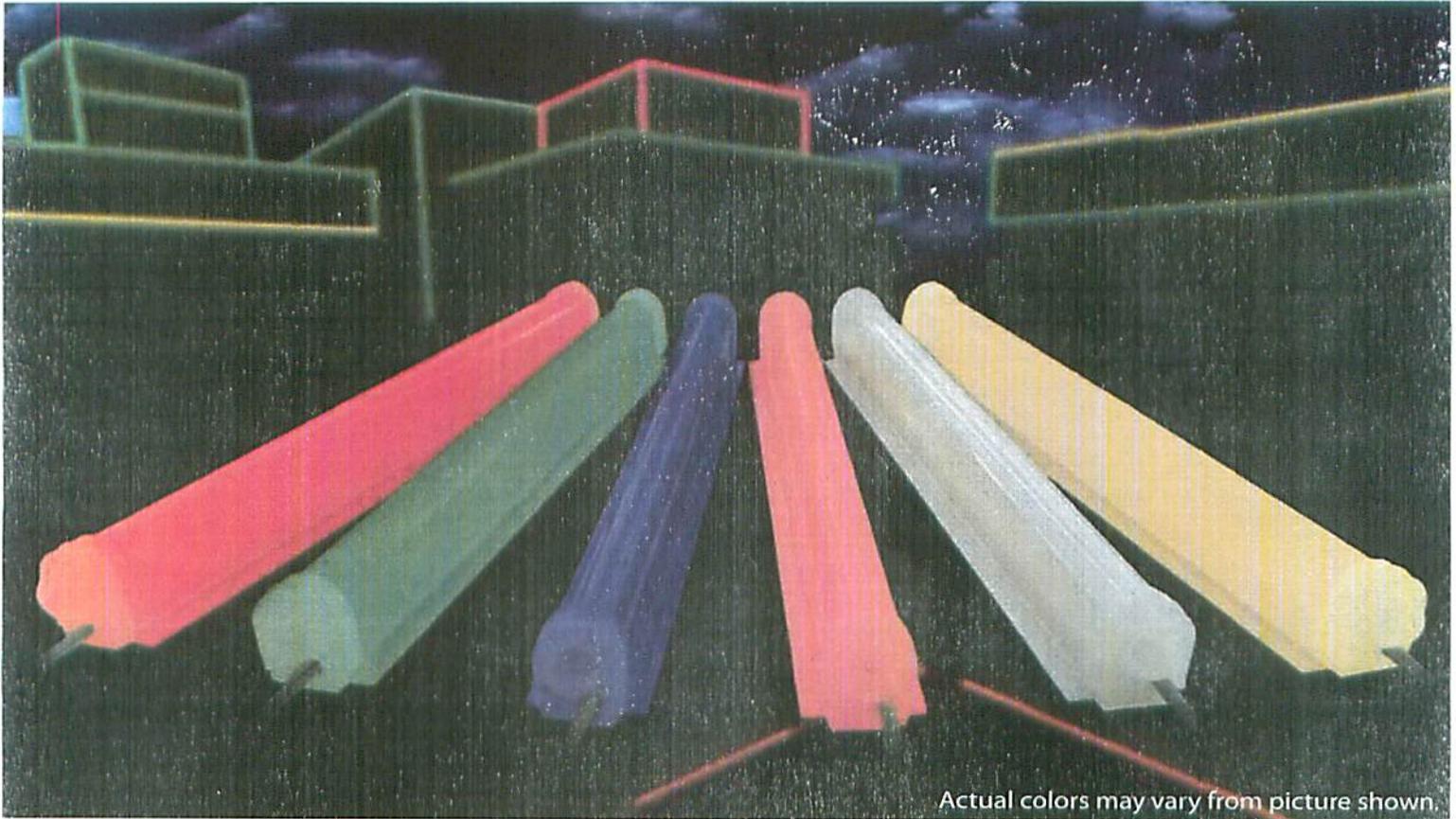
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