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Planning Director
Kari Svanstrom
Associate Planner
Alan Montes
Senior Administrative Assistant
Rebecca Mansour

City of Sebastopol Design Review Board Staff Report

Meeting Date: August 19, 2020
Agenda Item: 7A
To: Design Review Board
From: Alan Montes, Associate Planner
Subject: Sign Permit and Sign Exception
Recommendation: Denial of Sign Exception and Conditional Approval of Sign Permit
Applicant/Owner: Fastsigns/Exchange Bank
File Number: 2020-048
Address: 840 Gravenstein Hwy North
CEQA Status: Categorical Exemption: Section 15311: Class 11
General Plan: Commercial Office (CO)
Zoning: General Commercial (CG)

Introduction:

The application under consideration is a sign permit and sign exception for three internally illuminated signs for Exchange Bank, to be located at 840 Gravenstein Hwy North. The project is required to be reviewed by the Design Review Board (Board) as the signs are illuminated and the applicant is requesting an exception for a third sign facing the parking lot.

Project Description:

The project is requesting a sign review for three internally illuminated, individual channel letter signs to be located on the East, West and South elevations. All three signs will include Exchange Bank's Logo "EB" and read "Exchange Bank". The sign on the east elevation is the largest sign, measuring 96" by 28", for a total sign area of 18.67 sq. ft. The signs proposed on the West and South elevations both measure 82" by 24", for a total sign area of 13.67 sq. ft. each. The total sign area proposed is 46.01 sq. ft. The application is also requesting a sign exception in order to allow a third sign, located on the west elevation (facing parking lot).

Zoning Ordinance Consistency:

1. §17.120.050(A)(3) - General sign standards and regulations. *The width of a building frontage on a public street or right-of-way, excluding alleys or service ways, shall be used to calculate the allowable sign area. (See Table 17.120-1.).*

The subject building has only one tenant and a building frontage exceeding 125 sq. ft. (facing the right-of-way). This allows for a maximum sign area of 175 sq. ft. The applicant has proposed a total of 46.01 sq. ft. of signage, which is consistent with this regulation.

2. §17.120.050(C)(2) - Lighting of Signs. *External illumination is preferred over internal illumination in all zoning districts. Internally illuminated signs must be reviewed and approved by the Design Review Board, and are generally not allowed within the CD*

Central Core District, within any residential district, or in proximity to an existing residential use.

The application has proposed individual channel letters with internal illumination. The internal illumination will be achieved through LED lights that will shine through an acrylic face. To the West there is an unincorporated Rural Residential zoning district that is currently being used as single-family residence. Staff would recommend against approving the internal illumination, given that it is generally discouraged throughout the City and explicitly when adjacent to an existing residential use. Staff had advised the applicant of this requirement prior to formal submittal and encouraged the applicant to investigate external illumination (including halo illumination).

3. §17.120.060(C)(2) - Permitted Signs. *A maximum of two window, awning, wall, or fascia business identification signs are permitted for each ground floor use or tenant.*

The application has proposed three signs for the building, which exceeds this standard by one sign. Due to this inconsistency the Applicant has requested a sign exception, discussed below.

4. §17.120.020(B) – Permits, fees, and exceptions. *The purpose of the exceptions section is to allow flexibility to the sign regulations while still fulfilling the purpose of the regulations. Creative design is encouraged by the provisions of this chapter, therefore an exception from these regulations may be approved consistent with the following findings:*

- a. *The exception will allow a unique sign of exceptional design or style that will enhance the area or building, or that will be a visible landmark; or*
- b. *The exception will allow a sign that is more consistent with the architecture and development of the site, or site context, or is appropriate given the nature of the business; or*
- c. *The granting of the exception will not constitute the granting of a special privilege inconsistent with the sign limitations upon other properties in the same vicinity and district.*

It is important to note that the findings “a” through “c” end in “or”, which means that the Board needs to determine at least one of the required findings is met for the exception to be approved; the sign does not need to meet all three criteria.

The applicant has submitted the following Finding:

The lot on the corner of Gravenstein Hwy N. and Tocchini St. provides for typical visibility of the ExchangeBank brand on both streets, identifying the Bank to traffic generally and alerting clients of the location. The orientation of the building provides parking - and the branch entrance off the parking lot (West Elevation), screening parking largely from view from Gravenstein - decision intentionally to improve the aesthetics from the Highway. As a result, we are requesting and require a third sign - viewable only from the parking lot to mark the entrance to the branch for our clients, keeping the sign consistent with the two other signs on the building for overall consistency. given the limited visibility focused on Bank customers, a variance/exception to the 2-sign requirement is hereby requested.

Staff's analysis of these findings will be discussed in the analysis section below.

Environmental Review:

The project is categorically exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act, pursuant to Section 15311, Class 11, in that it involves the installation of an on-premise sign.

Public Comment:

The Planning Department has not received any comments on the application from the public as of writing this report.

City Departmental Comment:

The following City departments reviewed the application: Building and Safety, Fire, and City Manager. The only Department comment that was received was from the City Manager's office stating that any work done within the sidewalk will require an encroachment permit.

Required Findings:

Sign Exception Findings:

- a) *The exception will allow a unique sign of exceptional design or style that will enhance the area or building, or that will be a visible landmark; or*
- b) *The exception will allow a sign that is more consistent with the architecture and development of the site, or site context, or is appropriate given the nature of the business; or*
- c) *The granting of the exception will not constitute the granting of a special privilege inconsistent with the sign limitations upon other properties in the same vicinity and district.*

Sign Review Findings:

- 1) *The design of the proposal would be compatible with the neighborhood and with the general visual character of Sebastopol;*
- 2) *The design provides appropriate transitions and relationships to adjacent properties and the public right-of-way;*
- 3) *It would not impair the desirability of investment or occupation in the neighborhood;*
- 4) *The design is internally consistent and harmonious;*
- 5) *The design is in conformity with any guidelines and standards adopted pursuant to this chapter.*

Analysis:

As stated in the Zoning Ordinance Consistency section of this report the signage is consistent with the sq. ft. limitation but is applying for a type of illumination that is discouraged. Additionally, the application requires a sign exception as the application exceeds the allowed number of signs.

Illumination:

Staff has concerns regarding the proposed internal illumination for the signs. The Sign Ordinance is rather explicit in that internal illumination is discouraged and that external illumination is preferred. Staff also has concerns with having internally illuminated signage facing a residential neighborhood, as the light source would be directed towards the residences. overall, staff would discourage the use of internal illumination in general and explicitly for the signage facing the residential district. Staff has contacted the applicant regarding preferred alternatives and the applicant had stated "halo or externally lit such as goose beach or up lit" would be acceptable alternatives should the preferred option, internal illumination, not be

approved. Staff would recommend the halo illumination, with reverse pan letters as it would fit with the modern design of the building.

Sign Exception:

As discussed in the Zoning Ordinance Consistency section, in order to grant an exception at least one of the following findings needs to be met. Staff does not believe that this proposal meets the findings and has provided the findings below in italics, as well as brief analysis below each finding.

- a. *The exception will allow a unique sign of exceptional design or style that will enhance the area or building, or that will be a visible landmark; or*

Staff does not believe that the signage can meet this finding in that the signs are of a standard design and do not visually enhance the building more than any other sign of this type (individual channel letters) or will be an identifiable landmark.

- b. *The exception will allow a sign that is more consistent with the architecture and development of the site, or site context, or is appropriate given the nature of the business; or*

Staff does not believe that the addition of a third sign adds to the architecture or development of the site. As the building is designed for a single tenant, having a third sign in the parking lot in order to mark the entrance for clients is creating unnecessary redundancy, given that that is the only public entrance. If this signage is critical the applicant can allocate one of the two signs to this location.

- c. *The granting of the exception will not constitute the granting of a special privilege inconsistent with the sign limitations upon other properties in the same vicinity and district.*

Staff believes that granting of this exception would be a granting of special privilege as the City has not permitted a third wall sign for any of the other buildings in this vicinity. Additionally, as this is a single tenant building with a single entrance this has potential to create a precedent.

Staff does not believe that the sign exception is appropriate and recommends denial of the sign exception. However, staff does recommend a condition approval of the sign permit with the following unique conditions of approval: 1) This approval permits the 18.67 sq. ft. sign facing Gravenstein Hwy N. and the 13.67 sq. ft. sign facing Tocchini St. This approval does not permit the 13.67 sq. ft. sign facing the parking lot (west); and 2) The signs shall be a reverse pan channel letter sign (the face of the sign will not let light shine through the sign) with 2700K illumination.

Recommendation:

If it is the consensus of the Board staff recommends conditionally approving the sign permit and denial of the sign exception. Staff recommends: 1) Requiring reverse pan individual channel letters with halo illumination limited to 2700K warm white lights; and 2) Allowing for the proposed signs facing Gravenstein Hwy N. and Tocchini St.

Alternatively, the Board may find that further revisions are necessary, and a continuance is appropriate; or that the project as proposed is appropriate. Should the Board recommend a

continuance or denial, staff recommends that the Board provide specific direction for redesign to the applicant.

Exhibits:

- A. Recommended Findings of Approval
- B. Recommended Conditions of Approval

Attachments:

- 1) Application Documents

RECOMMENDED FINDINGS OF DENIAL
Sign Exception
840 Gravenstein Hwy North
File #2020-048

Recommended Findings of Denial for Sign Exception:

1. That the proposal is inconsistent with the Sebastopol Municipal Code (SMC) §17.120.020(B)(3)(a), in that the signage is of a standard design and is not unique, of exceptional design or style that will enhance the area or building, or be a visible landmark.
2. That the proposal is inconsistent with the SMC §17.120.020(B)(3)(b), in that: 1) The proposed signage is not an integral element of the architecture; 2) the proposed sign exception is not more consistent with the site development as this is a single tenant building with a single public entrance; and 3) a bank use is not a type of business that needs additional signage.
3. That the proposal is inconsistent with the SMC §17.120.020(B)(3)(c), in that granting the exception would be granting a special privilege inconsistent with the sign limitation imposed upon other properties in the limitation, as there are no sign approvals that permit three signs in the vicinity.

RECOMMENDED FINDINGS OF APPROVAL
Sign Permit
840 Gravenstein Hwy North
File #2020-048

Recommended Findings of Approval for Sign Permit:

1. That the project is categorically exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act, pursuant to Section 15311, Class 11, in that it involves the installation of one on-premises signage.
2. That the design as conditioned is compatible with the neighborhood and the general visual character of Sebastopol in that the signs are consistent in design, color, size, and number of signs to other wall signs found throughout Sebastopol.
3. That the design of the signs provides appropriate transitions and relationships to adjacent properties and the public right of way in that the sign will be mounted directly on the building façade and will not inhibit pedestrian or vehicular traffic on adjacent walkway or roadways.
4. That the project as conditioned will not impair the desirability of investment or occupation in the neighborhood in that it involves the installation of two high quality wall signs that is consistent with the City's Sign Ordinance, in that it involves the installation of two wall signs.
5. That the design is internally consistent and harmonious in that the wall mounted signs will have consistent and harmonious style, color and theme to other surrounding businesses.
6. That the design is in conformity with any guidelines and standards adopted pursuant to this chapter, in that; 1) the project as conditioned complies with the allowed number of signs; 2) the signs are consistent with the maximum signage area.; and 3) the illumination has been reviewed by the Design Review Board and has been appropriately conditioned in order to be compatible with the vicinity in which the project is located.

RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL
Sign Permit
840 Gravenstein Hwy North
File #2020-048

Recommended Conditions of Approval:

1. Approval is granted for the Sign Permit described in the application and project plans dated July 6, 2020, except as modified by these conditions of approval.
2. This approval permits the 18.67 sq. ft. sign facing Gravenstein Hwy N. and the 13.67 sq. ft. sign facing Tocchini St. This approval does not permit the 13.67 sq. ft. sign facing the parking lot (west).
3. The signs shall be a reverse pan channel letter sign (the face of the sign will not let light shine through the sign) with 2700K illumination.
4. An Encroachment Permit may be required prior to installation of the sign. Please contact the Engineering Department prior to installation if work will be performed, or materials placed, in the public right-of-way. The phone number for the Engineering Department is (707) 823-2151.
5. A Building Permit is required for the installation of most signs. Please contact the Building Department for Building Permit application information at (707) 823-8597.
6. The Planning Director shall interpret applicable requirements in the event of any redundancy or conflict in conditions of approval.
7. This approval is valid for a period of three (3) years during which time the rights granted must be exercised. However, the applicant may request one (1) one-year extension of this Use Permit from the Planning Director, pursuant to Zoning Ordinance §17.400.100.
8. The City of Sebastopol and its agents, officers and employees shall be defended, indemnified, and held harmless from any claim, action or proceedings against the City, or its agents, officers and employees to attach, set aside, void, or annul the approval of this application or the environmental determination which accompanies it, or which otherwise arises out of or in connection with the City's action on this application, including but not limited to, damages, costs, expenses, attorney's fees, or expert witness fees.



City of Sebastopol

Planning Department
7120 Bodega Avenue
Sebastopol, CA 95472
(707) 823-6167 (Phone) or (707) 823-1135 (Fax)
www.ci.sebastopol.ca.us

SIGN APPLICATION FORM

PROJECT INFORMATION:

ADDRESS:	840 Gravenstein Hwy N
PARCEL #:	APN 060-270-077
PARCEL AREA:	

FOR CITY USE ONLY

PLANNING FILE #:	2020 1048
DATE FILED:	07 09 20
TOTAL FEES PAID: \$	485 ⁰⁰
RECEIVED BY:	
DATE APPLICATION DEEMED COMPLETE:	

APPLICANT OR AGENT:

Name: CWIC proud enterprises inc dba FASTSIGNS

Email Address: 53@fastsigns.com

Mailing Address: 3768 Santa Rosa Ave

City/State/Zip: Santa Rosa CA 95407

Phone: 707 571 8911

Fax: N/A

Business License #: (contractor) 1016921 IN PROCESS

Signature:

Date: 6-29-2020

OWNER OF PROPERTY

IF OTHER THAN APPLICANT:

Name: EXCHANGE BANK - Facilities
% sue maddigan, VP

Email Address: sue.maddigan@exchangebank.com

Mailing Address: 444 Aviation Blvd

City/State/Zip: Santa Rosa CA 95403

Phone: 707 524 3252

Fax: _____

Business License #: _____

Signature: ON FILE

I certify that this application is being made with my consent.

Date: 6-29-2020

OTHER PERSONS TO BE NOTIFIED: (Include Agents, Architects, Engineers, etc.).

Name: _____

Email Address: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Name: _____

Email Address: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____



PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

DESCRIBE IN DETAIL: the proposed sign project and permit request. (Attach additional pages, if needed):

Installation of Exchange Bank logo building signs (total of three identical signs) on building exterior walls. Internally LED-illuminated logo and channel letters - each sign 13.67 ft²

Please describe existing uses (businesses, residences, etc.) and other structures on the property:

New construction (EB branch)

DEVELOPMENT DATA:

SQUARE FEET BUILDING EXISTING:	NEW CONSTRUCTION APPROX 2,500 ft ²			
BUILDING FRONTAGE (IN FEET):	68' (Tocchini St)		67' (Gravenstein Hwy N)	
# OF SIGNS CURRENTLY ON PROPERTY	NONE			
EXISTING SIGN TYPE(S):	N/A			
EXISTING SIGN LOCATION(S):	N/A			
SIGN SIZE(S):	HEIGHT: 24 LENGTH: 82	HEIGHT: 24 LENGTH: 82	HEIGHT: 24 LENGTH: 82	HEIGHT: N/A LENGTH: N/A
# OF SIGNS PROPOSED	3			
*PROPOSED SIGN TYPE(S):	internally illuminated channel letters (acrylic faces w/ vinyl overlay) aluminum returns			[WALL]
PROPOSED SIGN LOCATION(S):	EAST, WEST and SOUTH ELEVATIONS see elevation drawing .			
SIGN SIZE(S):	HEIGHT: 24 LENGTH: 82	HEIGHT: 24 LENGTH: 82	HEIGHT: 24 LENGTH: 82	HEIGHT: LENGTH:
IS ILLUMINATION PROPOSED?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO			
	NOTE: ILLUMINATED SIGNS ARE SUBJECT TO DESIGN REVIEW			

*Types of signs: FREESTANDING, WALL, PROJECTING (HANGING), WINDOW, AWNING, FASCIA, SANDWICH; TEMPORARY SIGNS (LIMITED TO 30 DAYS): BANNER.

JUSTIFICATION FOR SIGN VARIANCE

Prepared by: KEVIN JONES / FASTSIGNS

Property Address: 840 GRAVENSTEIN HWY N

APN: 060-270-077

Please give your written response for each of the findings listed below. Used added pages if necessary:

1. Explain what exceptional or extraordinary circumstances or conditions apply for this sign variance as referred to in the application, which circumstances or conditions do not apply generally to other signs in the same zoning district.

The lot on the corner of Gravenstein Hwy N and Toochini St provides for typical visibility of the ExchBank brand on both streets, identifying the Bank to traffic generally and alerting clients of location. The orientation of the building provides parking - and the branch entrance off the parking lot (WEST ELEVATION), screening parking largely from view from Gravenstein - a decision intentionally to improve the aesthetics from the highway. As a result, we are requesting

2. Explain why granting this application is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right of the applicant.

and require a third sign - viewable only from the parking lot to mark the entrance to the branch for our client, keeping the sign consistent with the two other signs on the building for overall consistency. Given the limited visibility focused on Bank customers, a variance/exception to the 2 sign requirement is hereby requested.

3. Explain why granting the variance will not, in this case, affect adversely the health or safety of persons residing in the neighborhood or will not be detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to property or improvements in this neighborhood.




Exchange Bank
 Sebastopol Branch
 840 Gravenstein Hwy N
 New Construction



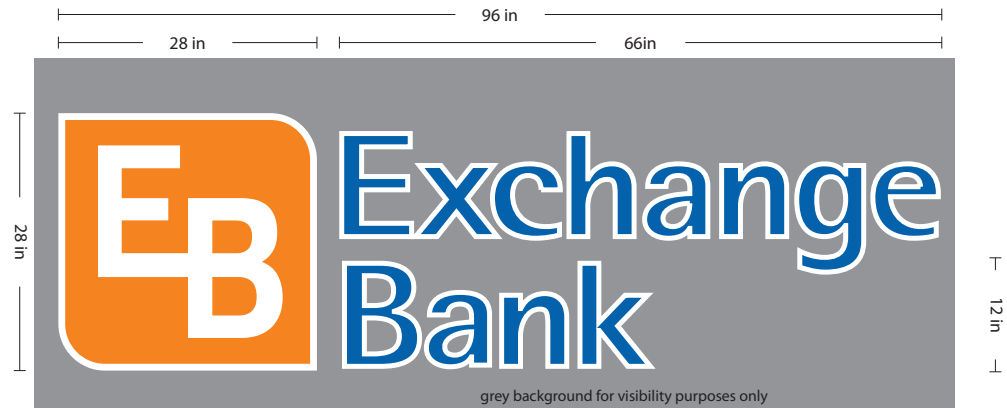
② Location Map: 840 Gravenstein Hwy N
 scale: NTS

qty: n/a

ORDER NO.:	CLIENT: Exchange Bank Sebastopol	CONTACT: Name : Kevin Jones Phone : 707-8.5-6685 Email : 2063@fastsigns.com	VERSION: Version3	7.6.2020	MATERIALS: LED illuminated logo and letters with vinyl overlays Flush mount wth 1/2" spacers with remote power supply in can with switch	 FASTSIGNS More than fast. More than signs.™ 1372 N. McDowell Blvd. Petaluma, CA 94954 2063@fastsigns.com • F: 707.981.7350
DESIGNER: k.jones						
PAGE: 1 of 4						

I have checked this proof for correct spelling, formatting, punctuation and visual clarity. I approve all colors*, sizes and specifications as provided by this proof. Based on this proof, I authorize FASTSIGNS to produce this job to agreed specifications. * Colors are a representation only. Actual colors may vary slightly. Exact Pantone colors can not be guaranteed. All elements and information contained in this drawing are the property of FASTSIGNS of Santa Rosa. Any reproduction or distribution of the drawing(s) to outside persons without written permission from FASTSIGNS of Santa Rosa will be punished to the fullest extent of the law.

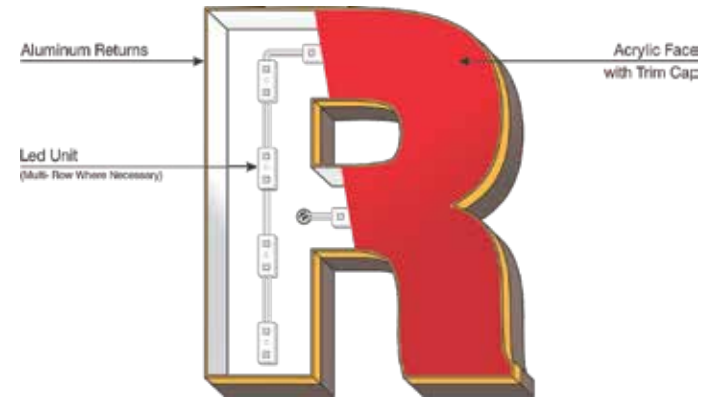
SIGN INDEX: Two (2) identical internally illuminated LED channel letter logo/text signs (west and south elevations) and one (1) slightly larger sign on the east elevation)



West and South elevations: Channel letters, illuminated individual logo/letters
Sq Ft per sign: 13.67

East elevations: Channel letters, illuminated individual logo/letters
Sq Ft per sign: 18.67

TOTAL SQ FT: 46.01

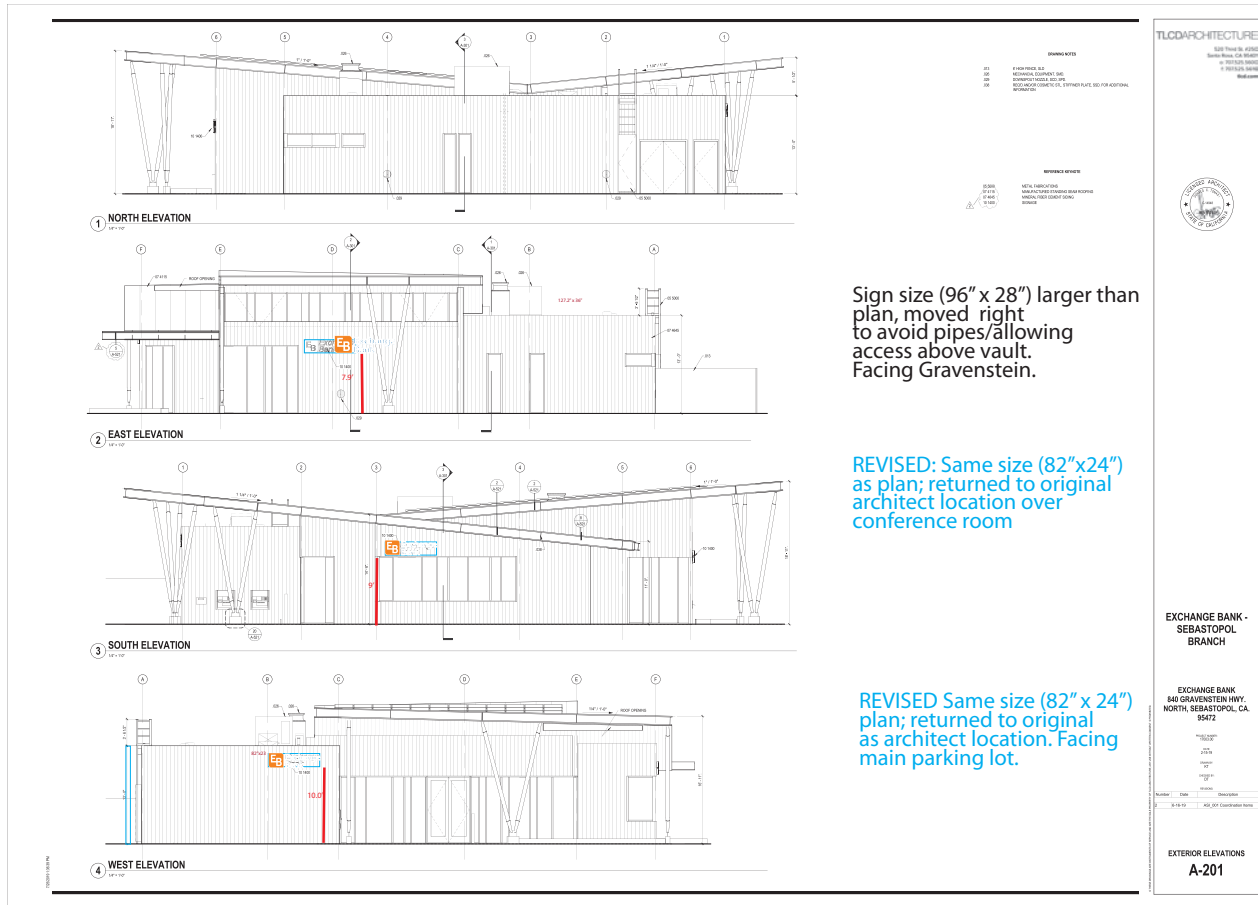


① Dimensions for illuminated signs (Q=3).
scale: NTS

qty: 3

ORDER NO.	CLIENT:	CONTACT:	VERSION:	MATERIALS:	FASTSIGNS More than fast. More than signs. 1372 N. McDowell Blvd. Petaluma, CA 94954 2063@fastsigns.com • F: 707.981.7350
DESIGNER:	Exchange Bank Sebastopol	Name : Kevin Jones Phone : 707-8.5-6685 Email : 2063@fastsigns.com	.version3	LED illuminated logo and letters with vinyl overlays Flush mount with 1/2" spacers with remote power supply in can with switch	
PAGE:		2 of 4	7.6.2020		

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1 Elevation
 scale: NTS

qty: 3

ORDER NO.	CLIENT:	CONTACT:	VERSION:	MATERIALS:	FASTSIGNS More than fast. More than signs. 1372 N. McDowell Blvd. Petaluma, CA 94954 2063@fastsigns.com • F: 707.981.7350
DESIGNER:	Exchange Bank Sebstopol	Name : Kevin Jones Phone : 707-8.5-6685 Email : 2063@fastsigns.com	Version3 7.6.2020	LED illuminated logo and letters with vinyl overlays Flush mount with 1/2" spacers with remote power supply in can with switch	
PAGE:		3 of 4			

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