

ADDRESS: 135 S 18TH ST

Proposal: Install and replace signage

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: Rittenhouse Realty Assoc

Applicant: Stephan Potts, Stanev Potts Architects

History: 1913; McIlvaine & Roberts, architects

Individual Designation: None

District Designation: Rittenhouse Fidler Historic District, Contributing, 2/8/1995

Staff Contact: Megan Cross Schmitt, megan.schmitt@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to replace existing signage at the ground floor and install new signage at the third story.

The Architectural Committee and Historical Commission reviewed an application for branding-related improvements in the fall of 2018. At that time, signage proposed for the rooftop and for the third story at the S. 18th and Walnut Street facades was denied.

The current application proposes to limit the new signage to the Walnut Street side at the third story. Black painted steel letters with LED backlighting would be installed through the mortar joints.

The ground floor signage proposed for replacement would maintain the size and appearance of the existing signage; only the letters would be changed.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval, pursuant to Standard 9.

**MEETING OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE
OF THE PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

**TUESDAY, 21 AUGUST 2018
1515 ARCH STREET, ROOM 18-029
NAN GUTTERMAN, ACTING CHAIR**

PRESENT

Nan Gutterman, FAIA, Acting Chair
Rudy D'Alessandro
Justin Detwiler
Suzanne Pentz
Amy Stein, AIA, LEED AP

Randal Baron, Historic Preservation Planner III
Kim Chantry, Historic Preservation Planner II
Laura DiPasquale, Historic Preservation Planner II
Meredith Keller, Historic Preservation Planner II
Megan Schmitt, Historic Preservation Planner I

ALSO PRESENT

Patrick Grossi, Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia
Stuart Rosenberg, SHRA
Claudia de Leon
Michael Cole, MC Architectural LLC
Venise Whitaker
Elizabeth Nestor, NorthStar
Kyle Kernozek, BLT Architects
Julie Morningstar, BLT Architects
Nate Sunderhaus, BLT Architects
Kevin Rasmussen, Rasmussen/Su
Adam Montalbano, Moto Designshop
Richard Conway Meyer, RCMA
Chris Burns
Ryan Lohbauer, Stanev Potts Architects
Maribeth Rentschler, Stanev Potts Architects
Robert Parsky, Parsky Architects
Ian Toner, Toner Architects
Bart Bajda, Toner Architects
Ray Rola

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Gutterman called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Mses. Pentz, and Stein and Messrs. D'Alessandro and Detwiler joined her.

changes are made to the existing site walls, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standards 9 and 10.

ADDRESS: 135 S 18TH ST

Proposal: Modify entrance; install marquee, signage, lighting

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: 135 S 18th Street Associates, LP

Applicant: Ryan Lohbauer, Stanev Potts Architects

History: 1913; McIlvaine & Roberts, architects

Individual Designation: None

District Designation: Rittenhouse Fidler Residential Historic District, Contributing, 2/8/1995

Staff Contact: Megan Cross Schmitt, megan.schmitt@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to install a new canopy and lighting and replace windows and doors at the main entrance of the building, located on 18th Street. An existing banner sign that was installed without permission from the Historical Commission will be removed and light fixtures will be installed on both sides of the entrance. The proposed double-hung wood windows and the new entrance doors with sidelights are very similar if not identical to a 2008 Historical Commission approval that was never executed. The proposed dark metal-clad canopy will tie back with angled rods near the top of the two-story entrance way at the jamb. The details of the connection points are to be determined upon further inspection in the field and in coordination with the staff.

Two signs are proposed at the corner of the third story of the building, with one to be mounted on the Walnut Street façade and the other to be mounted on the 18th Street façade. These painted metal signs with cut out letters will be back-lit with LED lighting, and will be attached through existing mortar joints. A third sign is proposed at the same corner but on the roof, facing west. The sign will be mounted on to a steel support and will be set back from the existing parapet. The applicant has provided two options for lighting, the first being internally illuminated and the second being uplit from a light source that would attach to the steel support, not the contributing structure.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval of the canopy and signage, provided that the doors and windows at the entrance are restored, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standards 6 and 9.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Schmitt presented the application to the Architectural Committee. Architects Ryan Lohbauer and Maribeth Rentschler represented the application.

Ms. Gutterman asked if the applicants had an image of the proposed light fixtures, and Mr. Lohbauer asked which location she was referencing. Ms. Gutterman clarified she was asking about the light fixtures at the entrance. Mr. Lohbauer explained that there are two existing light fixtures embedded in the ground that are currently not functional, and the proposal is to make them functional again. Ms. Gutterman sought clarification that nothing was proposed to be mounted on the building itself, and Mr. Lohbauer confirmed that the fixtures were only in the ground. Ms. Gutterman asked if the historic light fixtures seen in one of the images in the application were coming back. Mr. Lohbauer replied that they were not.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE, 21 AUGUST 2018

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

PHILADELPHIA'S PRINCIPAL PUBLIC STEWARD OF HISTORIC RESOURCES

Ms. Gutterman asked if the applicant could address the need for so much signage including the marquee, as well as the signs at the corner and roof. She said that the building was a residence, not a hotel that needed to be branded so that people could see it. Mr. Lohbauer corrected Ms. Gutterman, explaining that the building is now used as a hotel. When the property was acquired by the current owner in 2007, it was transformed into a long-stay hotel. He said just recently in 2016, they were able to do life-safety upgrades to the interior that allowed the property to become an R1 standard hotel. Mr. Lohbauer remarked that this property was one of the flagship properties for the AKA brand, hence the need for much more visible signage. Ms. Gutterman responded that, in that case, there was a problem with the signage facing west, because traffic comes from the east. She rhetorically asked who would be able to see a roof top sign from either the corner of Walnut Street or 18th Street. Mr. Lohbauer responded that they had taken a look at the visibility of the rooftop sign, and it was intended for the heavy pedestrian traffic to the west. He said that the sign would be visible from the ground, and that it was not just about the automobile traffic and the direction of that traffic, but it was about the foot traffic in and around Rittenhouse Square and the Walnut Street corridor. Ms. Gutterman responded that she did not believe that pedestrians would see a sign at the roof, but perhaps the marquee sign would be visible. Others observed that the Committee should employ preservation standards as its review criteria, not other measures. Ms. Gutterman said that she thought that there was too much signage and that the applicant would need to choose either corner signs or a marquee. Ms. Gutterman added that she was not sure about the roof sign because she did not know who would be able to see it, and told the applicant that they needed to figure out how and where they were going to brand the building.

Ms. Gutterman stated that she presumed that everyone wanted the marquee in order to have some sort of protection to stand under in foul weather, and Mr. Lohbauer agreed that the marquee was a functional component for the loading area outside of the main entry. He went on to explain that there were many similarities between this building and the former Franklin Hotel at 9th and Chestnut Streets in terms of signage. Mr. Lohbauer said that the former Franklin Hotel building had both corner and marquee signage, as well as a roof sign that was added after the original construction was complete. He remarked that they were serving different audiences in terms of wayfinding. Mr. Lohbauer stated that rooftop signage had surprising visibility from other areas in the city, sometimes being visible from farther away. He went on to say that corner signage was definitely more targeted towards people homing in on the hotel as they got closer to it. Mr. Lohbauer said that, because the building under consideration started its life out as a residential building, the signage was part of giving it a local identity, something that was really known to people as the AKA Hotel. Ms. Gutterman responded that they already also had the bar that had signage that said AKA so she was not sure what the additional corner signs would do that the other branding did not already do. She referred to a photograph in the packet, stating that there was already signage that said AKA all over the bar at the corner. Mr. Lohbauer responded that that signage was associated with a tenant, they were looking for a more long term solution, and although he did not think that there were any immediate plans for the current tenant to change, but, if there ever was, they would want the proposed signage. Ms. Gutterman said, that in her mind, that was in the future, and she was not sure what adding two small objects was getting them. She said that she understood the marquee but she was somewhat at a loss about the corner signs. Ms. Rentschler explained that the signs proposed for the corner were illuminated whereas the one on the building was not, to which Ms. Gutterman responded that that meant they would drill a hole through the stone. Mr. Lohbauer said that they were going

to locate the attachment points for the sign at grout points to avoid any damage. Ms. Gutterman asked how they were going to get electricity to the sign, because that would have to come through the stone wall. Mr. Lohbauer replied that they would work to minimize any holes or modifications to the stone.

Ms. Gutterman asked if there were other comments from the other Architectural Committee members. Mr. D'Alessandro stated that he was against the corner signs and the rooftop sign, asking if every building that wanted to be seen now had to have a rooftop sign. He said once rooftop signs are placed on some structures, they will start to be placed on every structure. Mr. D'Alessandro remarked that it would start a precedent, with people wanting to see the tops of buildings from 20 miles away, and adding that this building needed more respect.

Ms. Pentz agreed that there was too much signage, and that she would like to see it scaled back somehow.

Ms. Stein stated that she thought the marquee was fine, and that the extra signage on the marquee was fine because they were removing the banner sign at the entrance as part of the project. She added that the staff would need to make sure that the stone was replaced properly when this work occurred. Ms. Stein said that she supposed since the building was on 18th Street, she would not be opposed to one sign on the corner of Walnut Street, however she was opposed to the rooftop sign.

Mr. Detwiler stated that he was opposed to the rooftop sign as well, saying he did not think it was in keeping with Rittenhouse Square. He said that the canopy seemed fine to him, though he was wondering about the connections where it hits the windows because the steel connectors seemed wider than the trim of the window. Mr. Lohbauer replied that he believed that that was a detail that could be worked out with the staff, and Mr. Detwiler agreed. Mr. Detwiler said that, in terms of the corner signage, he was less bothered by it if it was non-electrified, adding that there was enough light at that corner, even at night time, that it would still be seen.

Mr. Lohbauer asked if they could add a quick, intellectual counterpoint about the historical context, saying that hotels definitely have a need for a greater presence and that this was one of the few buildings on Rittenhouse Square that was functioning as a hotel. Ms. Gutterman disagreed, remarking that the Rittenhouse Hotel was still a hotel, and that there was a long-term stay hotel at 19th and Locust Streets.

Mr. Lohbauer commented that most of the buildings on Rittenhouse Square are apartment buildings, so this situation is unique and distinct from some of the other conditions on Rittenhouse Square. He explained that there is a long history of having signage and especially rooftop signage when it came to hotels. Mr. Lohbauer added that the Divine Lorraine was another great example of a building that was originally constructed as multi-family, and when it underwent a hotel conversion, there was an additional need for branding and wayfinding. He stated that in a historic context, rooftop signs definitely had their place.

Ms. Gutterman opened the floor to public comment, of which there was none.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend approval of the canopy and its signage; denial of the rooftop signage; and denial of the corner signage, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standards 6 and 9.

ADDRESS: 2115 SPRUCE ST

Proposal: Demolish garage; construct 4-story building

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: Phillip, LLC

Applicant: Ryan Lohbauer, Stanev Potts Architects

History: 1890

Individual Designation: None

District Designation: Rittenhouse Fitter Residential Historic District, Contributing, 2/8/1995

Staff Contact: Laura DiPasquale, laura.dipasquale@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to demolish a non-historic garage and to construct a four-story building on the rear of the parcel along Manning Street. The proposed building would feature a recessed first floor with a cantilevered brick façade above, and irregular fenestration. The fourth floor would feature a slightly angled façade clad in horizontal metal panels.

The staff notes that the use of a recessed first floor, sliding doors, irregular fenestration, a faux mansard roof without a cornice, and metal panels is incompatible with the historic district and the historic property in massing, materials, and architectural features.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Denial, pursuant to Standard 9.

DISCUSSION: Ms. DiPasquale presented the application to the Architectural Committee. Architects Ryan Lohbauer and Maribeth Rentschler represented the application.

The architects distributed revised drawings to the Architectural Committee. Mr. Lohbauer noted that they appreciated the staff's comments on the original design and tried to respond to those in the revisions. Ms. Rentschler explained that they are trying to be sensitive to the historic context and that the comments helped them in that regard. Mr. Lohbauer explained that they understand that the recessed first floor did not have a context in the neighborhood, so they removed that element and replaced it with a flush base with a watertable. He noted that there is an alleyway that accesses the central court, which they originally proposed to also cantilever, and have revised so it is also flush. He noted that they would like to retain the mansard roof, but have revised the proposal to feature a slate or imitation slate material. He noted that there is now a slightly-protruding metal band acting as a cornice to delineate the mansard. The asymmetry of the window fenestration is more muted. Ms. Rentschler explained that the bays are intended to be more reminiscent of the historic bays present along the block, but to be differentiated from them. She noted that the building will be set back nine feet from Manning Street, which is technically an alley, and that views of the proposed construction will be limited. Mr. Lohbauer explained that they are not proposing any alterations to the original historic structure, which is not visible from the rear. Ms. Gutterman asked what is proposed for the nine-foot setback area. Mr. Lohbauer responded that the property is multi-family, but the proposed construction would be a single family unit, and the setback area would be used as its front yard. Ms. Gutterman asked whether there would be a wall or parking. Mr. Lohbauer responded that

**THE MINUTES OF THE 673RD STATED MEETING OF THE
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

**FRIDAY, 14 SEPTEMBER 2018
ROOM 18-029, 1515 ARCH STREET
BOB THOMAS, CHAIR**

PRESENT

Robert Thomas, AIA, Chair
Emily Cooperman, Ph.D.
Kelly Edwards, MUP
Michael Fink, Department of Licenses & Inspections
Steven Hartner, Department of Public Property
John Mattioni, Esq.
Dan McCoubrey, AIA, LEED AP BD+C
R. David Schaaf, Philadelphia City Planning Commission
H. Ahada Stanford, Ph.D., Commerce Department
Kimberly Washington, Esq.

Jonathan E. Farnham, Executive Director
Randal Baron, Historic Preservation Planner III
Kim Chantry, Historic Preservation Planner II
Laura DiPasquale, Historic Preservation Planner II
Meredith Keller, Historic Preservation Planner II
Allyson Mehley, Historic Preservation Planner I
Megan Schmitt, Historic Preservation Planner I

ALSO PRESENT

Richard Conway Meyer, RCMA
Leah Reisman, Princeton University
Patrick Grossi, Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia
Amanda Grady, Philadelphia's Magic Gardens
Lou Filippoe, Graboyes
Emily Smith, Philadelphia's Magic Gardens
Kate McGlinchey, Old City District
Julia Zagar
Isaiah Zagar
Maribeth Rentschler, Stanev Potts Architects
Kanard Burris, CCP
Abdulwaned Shah, CCP
Judith Stein
Ryan Lohbauer, Stanev Potts Architects
Olivia Edlund, Philadelphia's Magic Gardens
Allison Boyle, Philadelphia's Magic Gardens
Anthony C. Molden, Painted Bride Arts Center
Ursula Rucker, Painted Bride Arts Center
Helen A. Heas
Mike Beck, Painted Bride Arts Center
Yaara Ben-Dor, Painted Bride Arts Center

ADDRESS: 135 S 18TH ST

Proposal: Modify entrance; install marquee, signage, lighting

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: 135 S 18th Street Associates, LP

Applicant: Ryan Lohbauer, Stanev Potts Architects

History: 1913; McIlvaine & Roberts, architects

Individual Designation: None

District Designation: Rittenhouse Fidler Residential Historic District, Contributing, 2/8/1995

Staff Contact: Megan Cross Schmitt, megan.schmitt@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend approval of the canopy and its signage; denial of the rooftop signage; and denial of the corner signage, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standards 6 and 9.

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to install a new canopy or marquee and lighting and replace windows and doors at the main entrance of the building, located on 18th Street. An existing banner sign that was installed without permission from the Historical Commission will be removed and light fixtures will be installed on both sides of the entrance. The proposed double-hung wood windows and the new entrance doors with sidelights are very similar if not identical to a 2008 Historical Commission approval that was never executed. The proposed dark metal-clad canopy or marquee will tie back with angled rods near the top of the two-story entrance way at the jamb. The details of the connection points are to be determined upon further inspection in the field and in coordination with the staff.

Two signs are proposed at the corner of the third story of the building, with one to be mounted on the Walnut Street façade and the other to be mounted on the 18th Street façade. These painted metal signs with cut out letters will be back-lit with LED lighting, and will be attached through existing mortar joints. A third sign is proposed at the same corner but on the roof, facing west. The sign will be mounted on to a steel support and will be set back from the existing parapet. The applicant has provided two options for lighting, the first being internally illuminated and the second being uplit from a light source that would attach to the steel support, not the contributing structure.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Schmitt presented the application to the Historical Commission. Architects Ryan Lohbauer and Stephen Potts represented the application.

Mr. Potts explained that the building was acquired by Korman Communities in 2006, and at the time, it was an apartment building that had fallen into quite a state of disrepair, owing to deferred maintenance. He said that the owners made a major investment into the property, on the interior but also on the façade, including cleaning, new Historic Commission-approved wood double-hung windows and the replacement of bronze detailing at the retail level. Mr. Potts stated that this was the first round of big investments into the building, which operated as an extended-stay apartment building until 2016. He explained that in 2016, the owners went through another round of investments to improve life safety throughout the building, including installing sprinklers, which allowed them to use it as a hotel. Mr. Potts stated that the fact that the building was used as a hotel remained unknown to most. He recalled that one of the interesting things that came up at the Architectural Committee meeting was that a member of the Committee claimed that it was not a hotel. Mr. Potts said that it was exactly the problem his client faced, explaining that the public did not really identify this building with any particular brand, and that the three components of the current proposal were addressing this issue in three different ways. He said that one problem was people having a hard time finding the

entrance, which was located further up 18th Street, so the canopy or marquee would really help create a sense of destination so people would know where to go. Mr. Potts remarked that, with the AKA name at the side of the canopy, it would help people on foot find the entrance.

Mr. Potts said that the signage at the second and third floors was a black metal sign placed a few inches off of the building that would light up from the back side so it would light up the stone through the cut out letters with a subtle glow. He explained that the idea was for people coming along in a taxi cab approaching the building from 18th Street or if a pedestrian was walking through Rittenhouse Square, the signage would allow people to identify the hotel and understand where they were going.

Mr. Potts said that the sign at the top of the building was intended to address the issue of identifying the building for the public. He said that he had to describe the building as the one that was located across from the Anthropologie or as the one that used to be the Kiehl's, but nobody thought of this as the AKA building, and that was at the heart of what the sign at the roof was about. Mr. Potts commented that it was intended almost to re-christen the building as the AKA building, which was a key part for the client to build brand recognition for the hotel. He said that each of the three elements addressed different concerns but all related to the question of finding the building and naming the building.

Mr. Thomas opened the floor for comment, asking if the Historical Commission members wanted to first discuss the canopy or marquee and then the signage. Mr. McCoubrey responded that the Architectural Committee thought that the canopy was certainly an appropriate addition, providing some sort of identity at the entrance, but that they really questioned the need for the additional signage. He said that the large, roof-mounted sign, although beautiful, would be highly visible from Rittenhouse Square, which was a largely residential environment. Mr. McCoubrey explained that the Architectural Committee thought that in a more commercial district of the city, a sign like this could be more understandable, but in this case, given the proximity and high visibility from Rittenhouse Square, the rooftop sign was not appropriate. He further commented that the Architectural Committee believed that the two signs mounted at the third level were not necessary because the canopy addition would provide a significant identity for the building.

Mr. Potts asked if he could follow up with a comment about the signage at the corner. He remarked that one of the things that was discussed at the Architectural Committee which he believed was an appropriate question to raise, was why were the proposed AKA logos at the corner needed when they already existed in the windows for the bar that was also run by the hotel. Mr. Potts explained that the signage that was within the bronze windows of the bar was in the same location as the signage for the Tumi and Lagos Jewelry stores, and that there was every possibility that the space might change over time and they could end up renting out the space to different tenants. Part of the idea was to install more permanent signage since what was there now could change over time. He said that, when this building was not a hotel, it was a different conversation, but as a hotel it needed the name somewhere on the building. Mr. Potts reminded the members of the Historical Commission of the tremendous examples of the Divine Lorraine and the Benjamin Franklin Hotel, both of which had large signs at the top of them.

Mr. Thomas responded that the Divine Lorraine is on Broad Street, which is a boulevard and an area that was the automobile district; one can really see the sign. He said that, with this case, even if they were to approve it, the traffic coming along Walnut Street would not see the proposed sign, and the only traffic going eastbound were pedestrians, and they would certainly

see the canopy. Mr. Thomas added that, with all of the trees, the upper floors of the subject property could not be seen, and since Rittenhouse Square was so heavily wooded, it did not have the openness that Broad Street had. Mr. Thomas told the applicants that he thought what they did with the canopy and the way it stuck out was something that people would see from 18th Street. He added that the iconic nature of the building, a corner building diagonally across from Rittenhouse Square, also helped. Mr. Thomas asked if the Bellevue Hotel had a sign on top, and Mr. Lohbauer responded by asking whether it had ever had a sign on top. Mr. Thomas said that he did not think it ever did, but that it was simply a corner building, not buried in the middle of the block, which was the benefit of the building under review also had.

Mr. Lohbauer stated that he thought the Benjamin Franklin Hotel was a good example because Chestnut Street was more similar to the urban conditions that they were dealing with at this building, explaining that both are linear streets with a lot of pedestrian traffic. He said that the tall, roof-mounted sign was visible from certain vistas. Mr. Lohbauer explained that when they studied their proposed sign, it really did get some visibility down the corridors of Walnut Street, especially from the west. However, as one got closer to the building, that visibility really dropped off. He commented that, as Mr. Thomas had said, the visibility from Rittenhouse Square was really obscured by the trees, so though the rooftop sign was really only an identifier from certain view corridors, it was still very effective. Mr. Thomas responded that they were not evaluating the effectiveness of the sign, but rather they were looking at its appropriateness in the context of the historic district as well as the historic building. He further commented that, while Walnut Street is a commercial street, as one arrives at Rittenhouse Square, even at other hotels, there is no large commercial signage. Mr. Thomas said that it is more of a park environment, which is why he believes some people do not think the proposal met the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, adding that, if they approved this rooftop sign, what would prohibit the Historical Commission from approving others, and then suddenly there would be a very different experience in the area. He added that Rittenhouse Square is historically certified, and so the Historical Commission has to be very careful with it.

Mr. Lohbauer responded that an alternate argument could be that the usage of the building in the historical context with the Divine Lorraine as an example of a multi-family building that underwent a conversion in 1900. He said that it was unclear when the rooftop sign was installed on the building, but that it could have been as late as the 1940s. Mr. Lohbauer suggested that perhaps the reason there are not many hotel signs in Rittenhouse Square is because there are not many hotels in the area, and that the Rittenhouse Hotel is a modern building with significant signage lower down on the building. He said that in this case, he feels that there is an historical argument and precedent, because this sign is something a previous developer would have done in the past.

Mr. Thomas responded that he was thinking about other hotels located on squares, mentioning the Logan, which was the Four Seasons, which seemed to do fine without a rooftop sign. He further explained that, although the Historical Commission is concerned about the hotel's economic success, part of what brought that is the fact that it is in a historic district and that it is located on one of the five squares, and that the Historical Commission is preserving these elements of these historic things which ultimately benefits everyone.

Mr. Potts commented that visibility from Rittenhouse Square is not really what the sign is designed for because it would be obscured behind trees. He said that the sign is really something meant to be seen from a distance. Mr. Potts said it is more about long views and identifying the building. He stated that he could imagine shifting the sign back on the roof

because it is really about visibility from afar, so maybe the way to address how the sign impacts Rittenhouse Square itself is to push it back. Mr. Thomas told Mr. Potts that there are buildings taller than his that would obstruct views of the sign from a distance, to which Mr. Potts replied that his point was that, from down on the ground, the sign would not be very visible and that the sign was really about being seen from a distance. Mr. Thomas responded that the sign would still be completely blocked by the taller buildings in the 1900 block of Walnut Street, and if they looked at the new buildings under construction, they would all block views of the sign.

Mr. McCoubrey pointed out that, although not in their purview, there was another large condominium building with many units two properties over that would be looking out their windows at the rooftop sign. He added that the discussion of N. Broad Street and the automobile was very appropriate because the Divine Lorraine sign was a large-scale sign and with the introduction of the car and Broad Street was a major gateway to the city by vehicle. Mr. McCoubrey pointed out that Rittenhouse Square is a very different environment. Mr. Thomas stated that squares and parks are different, citing the fact that LOVE Park is surrounded entirely with large-scale streets, while there are no big streets on any side of Rittenhouse Square. He said that, although they probably should not be doing it, many people jaywalk on every street, and the reality is that the area is very walkable.

Mr. Thomas asked the applicants if they had any further comments, and Mr. Potts requested that the discussion be turned to the signage at the second floor. He reiterated that the goal is to improve the visibility and the branding of the building. Mr. Schaaf asked Mr. Potts if they would be seeking a variance for the signs at the corner, and Mr. Potts confirmed they would. Mr. Potts then said that there would be other venues besides the Historical Commission where their proposal would be reviewed and other opportunities for discussion. Mr. Thomas responded that they still had to make a decision and that they could not just punt it to the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

Mr. Thomas asked if anyone had any comments about the signage proposed for the second floor, describing them as depicted in the plans as metal with cut out, back-lit letters and bolts that would be attached at the mortar joints. He asked Mr. McCoubrey what the Architectural Committee members had said about this signage, and Mr. McCoubrey said that they had wanted to know why there were two signs rather than just one. He explained that the members did not think that this signage was necessary because the canopy or marquee would provide the necessary signage and the identification of the entrance. Mr. Potts responded that it was important to consider someone approaching the building from down 18th Street because they would not be able to see the eight inch high letters at the side of the canopy, to which Mr. McCoubrey responded that people would use their cell phones to find the hotel, not the canopy signage.

Mr. Mattioni said that he looked at the rooftop sign and saw something that could become as iconic as the PSFS sign, and that he was sure that when that sign first went up, it created a certain degree of consternation amongst some people. He said that he looked at the proposed rooftop sign and could imagine people 10 or 20 years from now viewing it as an iconic part of the building. Mr. Mattioni stated that he understood they were talking about an historic building, and he had been listening to all of the comments from his fellow Commissioners, but he just viewed it as an addition to a building that seemed to fit. He further commented that he did not really know how much the signage proposed for lower down on the building would make a difference so he would defer to everyone else. However, for the rooftop sign, he believed that it would add something to the building.

ACTION: Mr. McCoubrey moved to approve the marquee, but deny the signage proposed for the rooftop and third floor, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standards 6 and 9. Ms. Cooperman seconded the motion, which passed by a vote of 8 to 2. Messrs. Fink and Mattioni dissented.

ADDRESS: 2115 SPRUCE ST

Proposal: Demolish garage; construct 4-story building

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: Phillip, LLC

Applicant: Ryan Lohbauer, Stanev Potts Architects

History: 1890

Individual Designation: None

District Designation: Rittenhouse Fidler Residential Historic District, Contributing, 2/8/1995

Staff Contact: Laura DiPasquale, laura.dipasquale@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend approval of the revised design, with the recommendation that the side elevation is clad in red brick for the first three stories with the fourth floor clad in a slate or slate-like material, and provided the pilot house is inconspicuous from the public right-of-way, with the staff to review details.

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to demolish a non-historic garage and to construct a four-story building on the rear of the parcel along Manning Street. The proposed building would feature a recessed first floor with a cantilevered brick façade above, and irregular fenestration. The fourth floor would feature a slightly angled façade clad in horizontal metal panels.

The staff notes that the use of a recessed first floor, sliding doors, irregular fenestration, a faux mansard roof without a cornice, and metal panels is incompatible with the historic district and the historic property in massing, materials, and architectural features.

DISCUSSION: Ms. DiPasquale presented the application to the Historical Commission. Architects Ryan Lohbauer and Maribeth Rentschler represented the application.

Mr. Lohbauer noted that the Architectural Committee approved of the overall concept, but that one thing they had asked the applicants to consider was wrapping the mansard roof around the side elevation, which is described as Option A. He noted that they studied that in-house, but would like for the Commission to consider an alternative proposal, Option B, that maintains the side wall, which is adjacent to the property line. He explained that the mansard creates an asymmetrical roof line. He noted that, traditionally, where a building with a mansard roof extends property line to property line, it is typical to maintain the party walls straight up. Mr. Thomas agreed that that is correct from a historic point of view. He also questioned whether there would be issues from a building code standpoint in terms of the mansard on the side wall. Mr. Lohbauer responded that he believes there are ways that they could get an approval for the mansard, but from a historic perspective, it seems incongruous. Mr. Thomas agreed that a continuous party wall is more traditional. He also noted that this is not a heavily trafficked street.

Mr. McCoubrey asked whether the wall would be articulated as a party wall. Mr. Lohbauer responded affirmatively.

APPLICATION FOR BUILDING PERMIT

APPLICATION # _____

(Please complete all information below and print clearly)



CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
DEPARTMENT OF LICENSES AND INSPECTIONS
MUNICIPAL SERVICES BUILDING – CONCOURSE
1401 JOHN F. KENNEDY BOULEVARD
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19102

For more information visit us at www.phila.gov/li

ADDRESS OF PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION:

135 South 18th Street

APPLICANT:

Stephan Potts

COMPANY NAME

Stanev Potts Architects

PHONE # (215) 625-3590

FAX #

PROPERTY OWNER'S NAME:

RITTENHOUSE REALTY ASSOC

PHONE # (484) 351-2004

FAX #

ARCHITECT/ENGINEER IN RESPONSIBLE CHARGE

Stephan Potts

ARCHITECT/ENGINEERING FIRM:

Stanev Potts Architects

PHONE # (215) 625-3590

FAX #

CONTRACTOR:

TBD

CONTRACTING COMPANY:

PHONE #

FAX #

APPLICANT'S ADDRESS:

1103 Spruce St

Philadelphia, PA 19107

LICENSE # 186359

E-MAIL: SPotts@sparchs.com

PROPERTY OWNER'S ADDRESS:

135 South 18th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103

ARCHITECT/ENGINEERING FIRM ADDRESS:

1103 Spruce St

Philadelphia, PA 19107

LICENSE # 186359

E-MAIL: Spotts@sparchs.com

CONTRACTING COMPANY ADDRESS:

LICENSE #

E-MAIL:

USE OF BUILDING/SPACE

R-1 Residential/mixed use

ESTIMATED COST OF WORK

\$ 5,000.00

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF WORK:

PROPOSED INSTALLATION OF BUILDING SIGNAGE PER DRWGS

CHANGE OF EXG SIGNAGE IN KIND ABOVE CORNER TENANT SPACE WINDOWS PER DWGS

BUILDING IS DESIGNATED HISTORIC

TOTAL AREA UNDERGOING CONSTRUCTION: 30.00 square feet

COMPLETE THESE ITEMS IF APPLICABLE TO THIS APPLICATION:

OF NEW SPRINKLER HEADS (suppression system permits only): _____ LOCATION OF SPRINKLERS: _____

OF NEW REGISTERS/DIFFUSERS (hvac/ductwork permits only): _____ LOCATION OF STANDPIPES: _____

IS THIS APPLICATION IN RESPONSE TO A VIOLATION? ☒ NO ☐ YES VIOLATION #: _____

All provisions of the building code and other City ordinances will be complied with, whether specified herein or not. Plans approved by the Department form a part of this application. I hereby certify that the statements contained herein are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. I further certify that I am authorized by the owner to make the foregoing application, and that, before I accept my permit for which this application is made, the owner shall be made aware of all conditions of the permit. I understand that if I knowingly make any false statement herein I am subject to such penalties as may be prescribed by law or ordinance.

APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: 03 / 10 / 20

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

AKA HOTEL AND RESIDENCES | stanev potts architects

135 South 18th St
Philadelphia, PA | March 10, 2020

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Philadelphia Historical Commission
1515 Arch Street; 13th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102
215.686.7660

March 10, 2020

To the Philadelphia Historic Commission:

The following pages detail signage improvements for the AKA Rittenhouse Square Hotel located at 135 S 18th Street. The proposal introduces new hotel signage to the building on the Walnut Street Facade of the building. The overall objective of this addition is to bring a stronger presence of identity to the building and to help with way-finding.

Originally designed as an apartment building by architects McIlvain and Roberts in 1913, the building currently houses a hotel on the upper floors, with existing retail tenants on Walnut Street, a bar at the corner, and a restaurant on 18th Street at the intersection with Moravian Street. Korman Communities purchased the building in 2006, when it underwent a conversion from traditional multifamily to long-term stay. At that time, extensive exterior improvements were undertaken with PHC input to bring the street frontage condition and detail back to the original intended design, including the removal of a brass and canvas awning at the entrance on 18th street. Working closely with the PHC, windows were replaced with historically accurate wood double hung windows throughout all floors, the masonry was carefully restored, and custom bronze window frame details were painstakingly recreated; recast in bronze and patinaed to match the original metal work.

In 2016, the building was converted to a Hotel through extensive improvements of life safety systems. The building is now fully sprinklered and is an approved R1 building which has been a further investment in the quality, safety and longevity of this centenarian structure. In 2019, exterior work was completed that removed architectural interventions from past renovations that were not contextual with the building. This included removing existing cloth banners, installing historically appropriate windows above the entrance, and installing a new PHC approved canopy at the entrance and new entry doors on 18th Street. Minimal signage was added to the north and south sides of the canopy in the form of surface mounted AKA letters on each side.

NEW SIGNAGE

Since there is heavy vehicular traffic (which includes several bus routes stopping on Walnut Street at the corner, as well as delivery trucks parked in the loading zone on 18th Street) the visibility of the existing hotel signage is limited from the four corners of 18th and Walnut Street. At times, it is completely blocked from view. Hotel guests have complained that it is difficult to locate the building as one approaches from either Walnut or 18th Street.

We are proposing to change the existing aka signage in the panels above the windows of the first floor, corner bar. They are confusing; leading guests and the public to mistake the corner retail tenant for the hotel entry. We are also proposing substituting the existing pin letters on panel signage in-kind; the "aka" letters will be replaced with "abar", which is the current retail tenant in this corner location. This better aligns with the intent to match the existing signage adjacent retail tenants (Tumi and Lagos) in the same building. It also prepares them for future signage, should the tenant change.

While the recently added canopy over the entry helps identify the front door of the hotel, the building itself lacks fundamental brand identity similarly found on hotels such as the W Hotel and others. The current proposal introduces a new sign at the third story on the south facade of the building, facing Walnut Street. The proposed sign is intended to help with the identity of the building and way-finding. The finishes on the sign will match the existing blackened steel effect in place at the building entrance. The letters will be pin mounted at grout lines with low voltage wiring to backlight the letters with a soft glow. We propose to work closely with PHC Staff to ensure the connection is minimally invasive and maintains the integrity of the existing masonry detailing.

At this time, we are seeking final approval of the proposed signage outlined in this proposal, with certain specific details (noted herein) to be finalized directly with PHC staff as necessary. We hope you will agree this will be a welcome improvement to the building, one that will be in keeping with similar signage installed on hotels and other buildings from the same time period throughout Center City Philadelphia. We look forward to your feedback and collaboration on moving this forward!

Thank you,

Petra Stanev, RA, LEED AP
Stanev Potts Architects



Stephan Potts, AIA
Stanev Potts Architects





18th street and Walnut street, looking north, February 2020



18th street, looking north, February 2020



Existing 18th st entry, looking south, February 2020



Looking northeast, February 2020



Looking northeast, February 2020

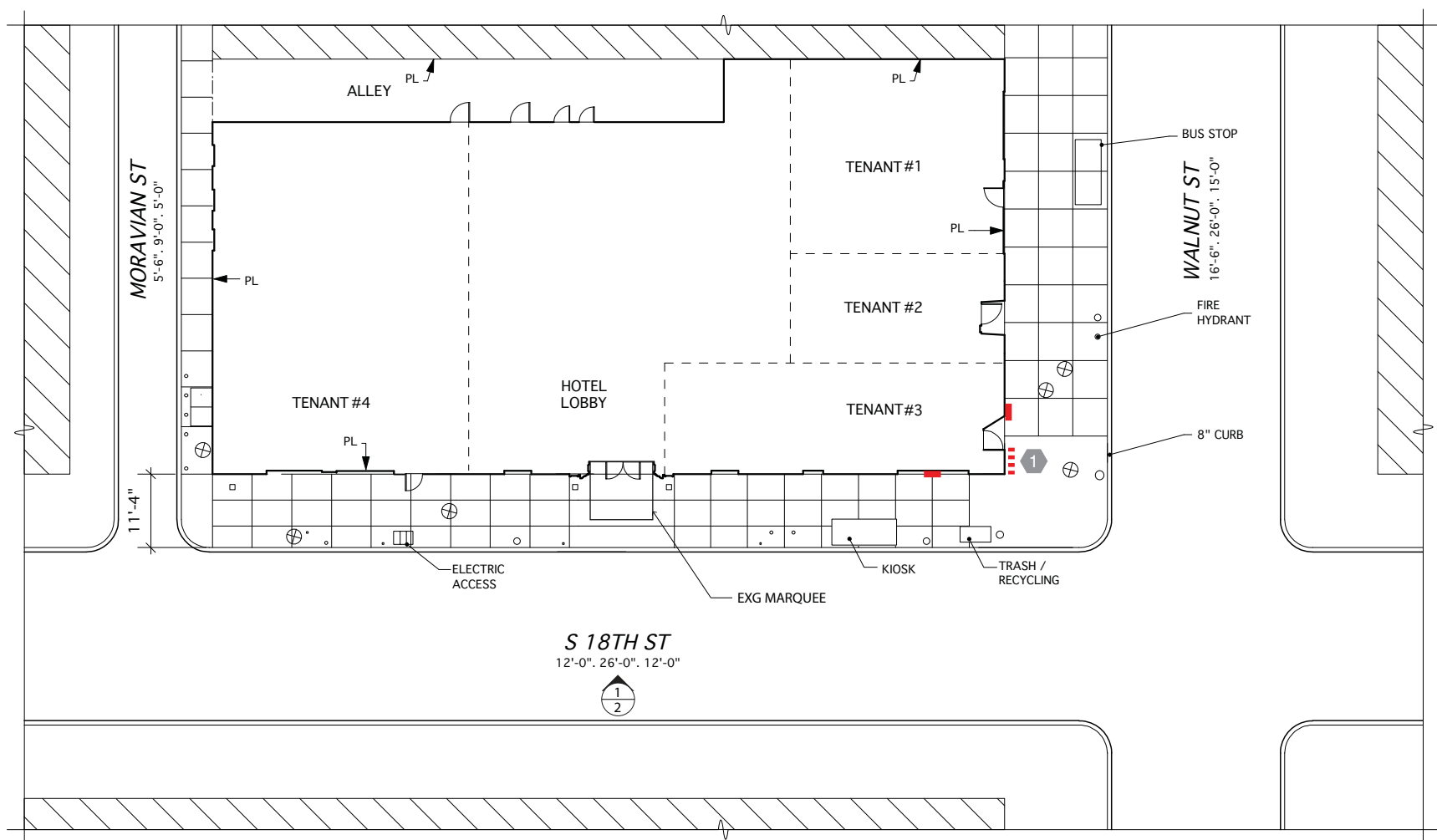
AKA BUILDING HOTEL SIGNAGE

Existing Street Conditions

AKA HOTEL RESIDENCES | **stanev potts architects**

135 South 18th St
Philadelphia, PA

Not to Scale
08 07 2018



KEY

- ⊗ EXISTING MANHOLE
- EXISTING PARKING SIGN
- EXISTING LAMP POST
- EXISTING FLUSH LIGHT
- EXISTING TRAFFIC LIGHT POLE
- PROPOSED AKA SIGNAGE AT SECOND STORY
- PROPOSED ABAR SIGNAGE TO REPLACE EXISTING SIGNAGE IN KIND

AKA BUILDING HOTEL SIGNAGE

Canopy & Building Signage - Diagram

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135 South 18th St
Philadelphia, PA

1/16"=1'-0"
08 07 2018



AKA BUILDING HOTEL SIGNAGE
Proposed Building Signage - Walnut Street Elevation

AKA HOTEL RESIDENCES | **stanev potts architects**
135 South 18th St | 1/8" = 1'-0"
Philadelphia, PA | 08 07 2018



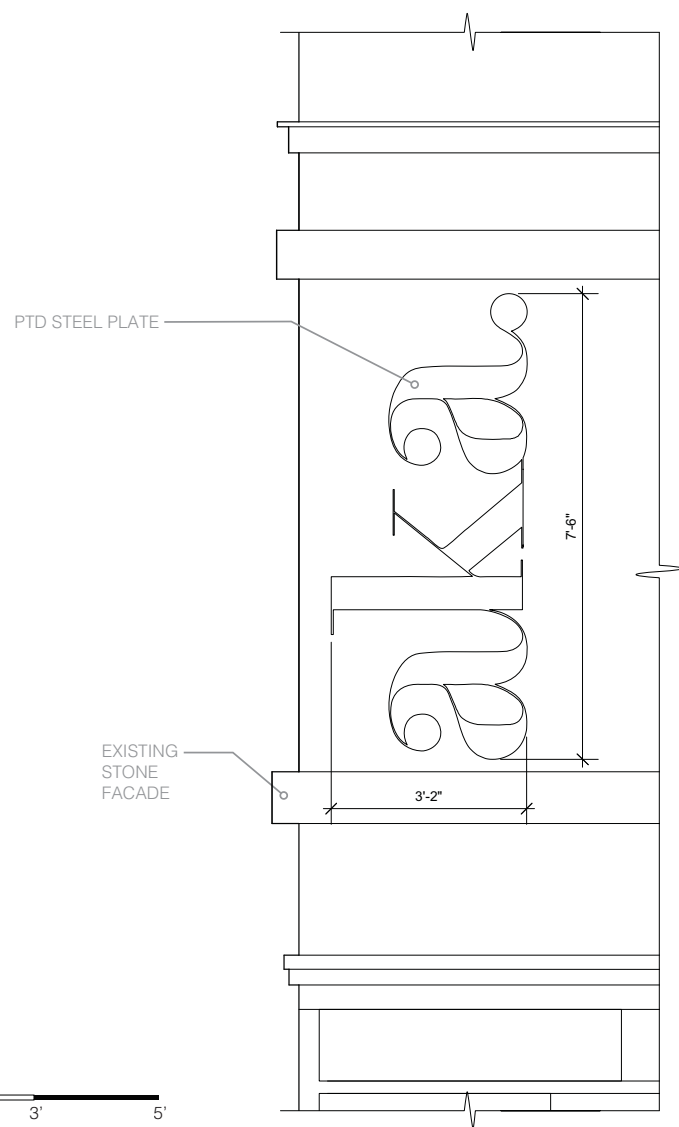
AKA BUILDING HOTEL SIGNAGE

Building Signage - South 18th Street Elevation - abar Signage (Change in Kind)

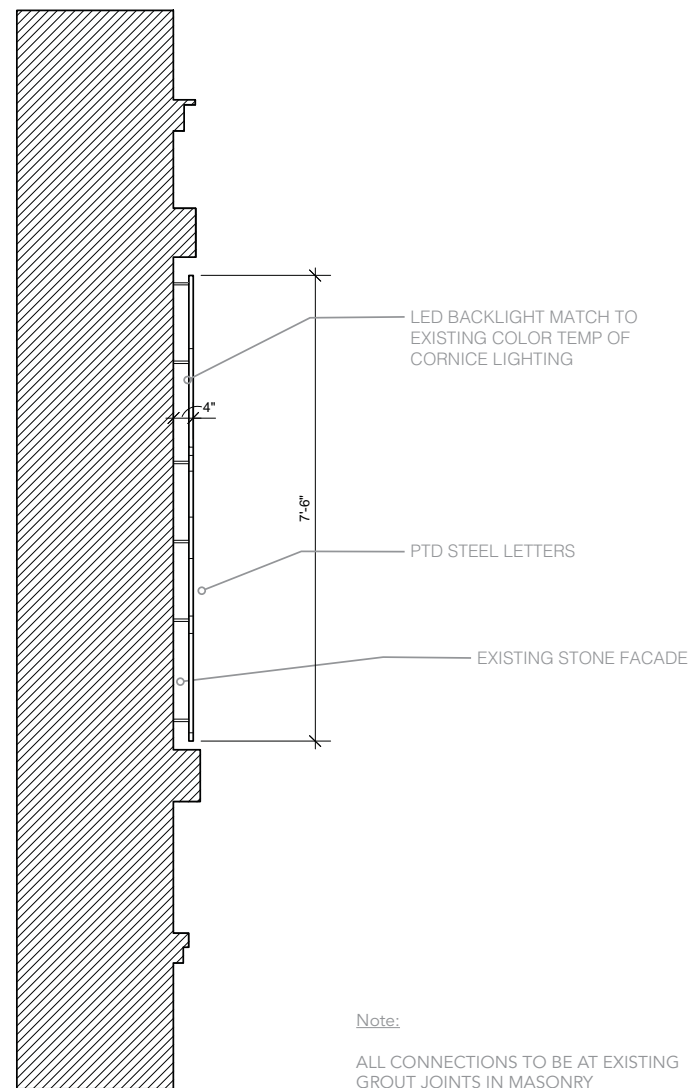
AKA HOTEL RESIDENCES | **stanev potts architects**

135 South 18th St
Philadelphia, PA

Not to Scale
08 07 2018



1. SIGNAGE ELEVATION



Note:

ALL CONNECTIONS TO BE AT EXISTING
GROUT JOINTS IN MASONRY

2. SIGNAGE SECTION

AKA BUILDING HOTEL SIGNAGE
Proposed Third Floor Sign - Elevation and Section

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135 South 18th St
Philadelphia, PA

Scale On Drawing
08 07 2018

0' 1' 3' 5'



Rittenhouse Square View



Daytime View



Close Up View

AKA BUILDING HOTEL SIGNAGE

Building Signage - Renderings

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135 South 18th St
Philadelphia, PA

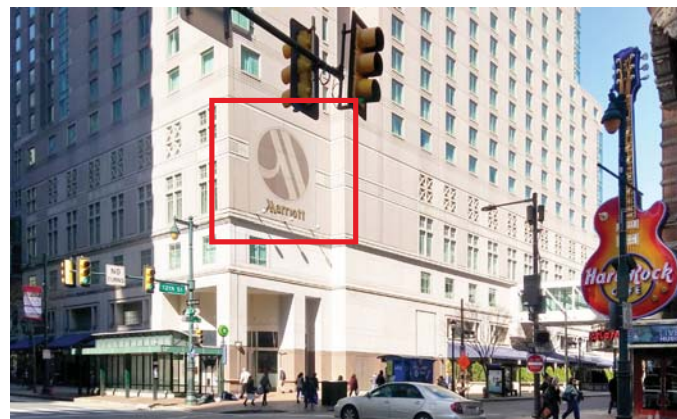
Not to Scale
08 07 2018



Sofitel Hotel - 17th and Sansom Street (Foreground)
W Hotel - 15th and Chestnut Street (Background)



Lowes Hotel - 12th and Market Street



Marriott Hotel - 12th and Market Street



Marriott Hotel - 12th and Filbert Street



The Notary Hotel - 13th and Filbert Street



W Hotel - 15th and Chestnut Street



Embassy Suites - 18th and Benjamin Franklin Parkway

AKA BUILDING HOTEL SIGNAGE

Existing Hotel Building Signage - Precedentes

AKA HOTEL RESIDENCES | **stanev potts architects**

135 South 18th St
Philadelphia, PA

Not to Scale
08 07 2018



Aldine Hotel - 19th and Chestnut Street - 1890s -1920s



Hotel - 17th and Walnut Street - Photo Date: 1928



Aldine Hotel - Photo Date: 1920s



Hotel - 1200 Block of Locust Street - Photo Date: 1960



Hotel - Between 1200 Block of Walnut Street - Photo Date: 1931



Hotel - 1200 Block of Sansom Street - Photo Date: 1959



Hotel York - 1215 Walnut Street - Photo Date: 1921

AKA BUILDING HOTEL SIGNAGE

Historic Hotel Building Signage - Precedents

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135 South 18th St
Philadelphia, PA

Not to Scale
08 07 2018