

INTRODUCED: April 12, 2021

AN ORDINANCE No. 2021-097

To authorize the special use of the property known as 1500 North Lombardy Street for the purpose of four wall signs, upon certain terms and conditions.

Patron – Mayor Stoney (By Request)

Approved as to form and legality
by the City Attorney

PUBLIC HEARING: MAY 10 2021 AT 6 P.M.

WHEREAS, the owner of the property known as 1500 North Lombardy Street, which is situated in an I Institutional District, desires to use such property for the purpose of four wall signs, which use, among other things, is not currently allowed by sections 30-511(2), concerning permitted sign area, and 30-930.6(a), concerning certificates of appropriateness, of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with section 17.11 of the Charter of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended, it has been made to appear that, if granted subject to the terms and conditions set forth in this ordinance, the special use granted by this ordinance will not be detrimental to the safety, health, morals and general welfare of the community involved, will not

AYES: _____ NOES: _____ ABSTAIN: _____

ADOPTED: _____ REJECTED: _____ STRICKEN: _____

tend to create congestion in streets, roads, alleys and other public ways and places in the area involved, will not create hazards from fire, panic or other dangers, will not tend to overcrowding of land and cause an undue concentration of population, will not adversely affect or interfere with public or private schools, parks, playgrounds, water supplies, sewage disposal, transportation or other public requirements, conveniences and improvements, and will not interfere with adequate light and air; and

WHEREAS, (i) the City Planning Commission has conducted a public hearing to investigate the circumstances and conditions upon which the Council is empowered to authorize such use, (ii) the City Planning Commission has reported to the Council the results of such public hearing and investigation and its recommendations with respect thereto, and (iii) the Council has conducted a public hearing on this ordinance at which the person in interest and all other persons have had an opportunity to be heard;

NOW, THEREFORE,

THE CITY OF RICHMOND HEREBY ORDAINS:

§ 1. **Finding.** Pursuant to section 30-1050.1 of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended, the Council hereby finds that the special use set forth in and subject to the terms and conditions of this ordinance will not (i) be detrimental to the safety, health, morals and general welfare of the community involved, (ii) tend to create congestion in streets, roads, alleys and other public ways and places in the area involved, (iii) create hazards from fire, panic or other dangers, (iv) tend to overcrowding of land and cause an undue concentration of population, (v) adversely affect or interfere with public or private schools, parks, playgrounds, water supplies, sewage disposal, transportation or other public requirements, conveniences and improvements, or (vi) interfere with adequate light and air.

§ 2. **Grant of Special Use Permit.**

(a) Subject to the terms and conditions set forth in this ordinance, the property known as 1500 North Lombardy Street and identified as Tax Parcel N000-0740/001 in the 2021 records of the City Assessor, being more particularly shown on a survey entitled “Property Parcel Exhibit of Virginia Union University, Located in Henrico County, Virginia,” prepared by MSA, P.C., and dated May 14, 2002, a copy of which is attached to and made a part of this ordinance, hereinafter referred to as “the Property,” is hereby permitted to be used for the purpose of four wall signs, hereinafter referred to as “the Special Use,” substantially as shown on the plans entitled “Facelit Flush Mounted Channel Letters & Face & Channel Letters,” prepared by Talley Sign Company, dated November 2, 2018, and last revised December 21, 2019, hereinafter referred to as “the Plans,” copies of which are attached to and made a part of this ordinance.

(b) The adoption of this ordinance shall constitute the issuance of a special use permit for the Property. The special use permit shall inure to the benefit of the owner or owners of the fee simple title to the Property as of the date on which this ordinance is adopted and their successors in fee simple title, all of which are hereinafter referred to as “the Owner.” The conditions contained in this ordinance shall be binding on the Owner.

§ 3. **Special Terms and Conditions.** This special use permit is conditioned on the following special terms and conditions:

(a) The Special Use of the Property shall be as four wall signs, substantially as shown on the Plans.

(b) The dimensions and materials of the Special Use shall be substantially as shown on the Plans.

§ 4. **Supplemental Terms and Conditions.** This special use permit is conditioned on the following supplemental terms and conditions:

(a) All required final grading and drainage plans, together with all easements made necessary by such plans, must be approved by the Director of Public Utilities prior to the issuance of the building permit.

(b) Storm or surface water shall not be allowed to accumulate on the land. The Owner, at its sole cost and expense, shall provide and maintain at all times adequate facilities for the drainage of storm or surface water from the Property so as not to adversely affect or damage any other property or public streets and the use thereof.

(c) Facilities for the collection of refuse shall be provided in accordance with the requirements of the Director of Public Works. Such facilities shall be located or screened so as not to be visible from adjacent properties and public streets.

(d) Any encroachments existing, proposed on the Plans or contemplated in the future shall require separate authorization and shall be subject to the applicable provisions of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended, and all future amendments to such laws.

(e) In all other respects, the use of the Property shall be in accordance with the applicable underlying zoning regulations.

§ 5. **General Terms and Conditions.** This special use permit is conditioned on the following general terms and conditions:

(a) No permit implementing this special use permit shall be approved until satisfactory evidence has been presented to the Zoning Administrator that any delinquent real estate taxes applicable to the Property have been paid.

(b) The Owner shall be bound by, shall observe and shall comply with all other laws, ordinances, rules and regulations applicable to the Property, except as otherwise expressly provided in this ordinance.

(c) Words and phrases used in this ordinance shall be interpreted to have the meanings ascribed to them by section 30-1220 of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended, unless the context clearly indicates that a different meaning is intended.

(d) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, this special use permit is being approved due, in part, to the mitigating effects of each and every condition attached hereto; consequently, if any portion of this ordinance is determined to be invalid for any reason by a final, non-appealable order of any Virginia or federal court of competent jurisdiction, the invalidity shall cause the entire ordinance to be void and of no further effect from the effective date of such order.

(e) The privileges granted by this ordinance may be revoked pursuant to the provisions of sections 30-1050.7 through 30-1050.11 of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended, and all future amendments to such laws. Failure to comply with the terms and conditions of this ordinance shall constitute a violation of section 30-1080 of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended, and all future amendments to such law, or any other applicable laws or regulations.

(f) When the privileges granted by this ordinance terminate and the special use permit granted hereby becomes null and void, whether as a result of the Owner relinquishing this special use permit in a writing addressed to the Director of Planning and Development Review or otherwise, use of the Property shall be governed thereafter by the zoning regulations prescribed for the district in which the Property is then situated.

§ 6. **Implementation.** The Zoning Administrator is authorized to issue a certificate of zoning compliance for the Special Use subject to the terms and conditions set forth in this ordinance. An application for the certificate of zoning compliance shall be made within 730 calendar days following the date on which this ordinance becomes effective. If the application for the certificate of zoning compliance is not made within the time period stated in the previous sentence, this ordinance and the special use permit granted hereby shall terminate and become null and void.

§ 7. **Effective Date.** This ordinance shall be in force and effect upon adoption.

City of Richmond

900 East Broad Street
2nd Floor of City Hall
Richmond, VA 23219
www.rva.gov

Item Request

File Number: PRE.2021.518

O & R Request

DATE: March 12, 2021

EDITION: 1

TO: The Honorable Members of City Council

THROUGH: The Honorable Levar M. Stoney, Mayor (Patron: Mayor, by Request)
(This in no way reflects a recommendation on behalf of the Mayor)



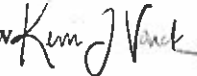
THROUGH: J.E. Lincoln Saunders, Acting Chief Administrative Officer



THROUGH: Sharon L. Ebert, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer for Economic
Development and Planning



FROM: Kevin J. Vonck, Acting Director, Dept. of Planning and Development Review



RE: To authorize the special use of the property known as 1500 North Lombardy for the purpose
of four wall signs, upon certain terms and conditions.

ORD. OR RES. No. ____

PURPOSE: To authorize the special use of the property known as 1500 North Lombardy for the purpose
of four wall signs, upon certain terms and conditions.

REASON: The applicant is requesting a special use permit to allow for the continued use of four
illuminated wall signs that are attached on the sides of the bell tower connected to the Belgian Building on
the Virginia Union University campus. The existing signage exceeds the sign area permitted in the
I- Institutional District. Additionally, the existing signs are located within the Belgian Building City Old
and Historic District. The Commission of Architectural Review (CAR) denied the request for a Certificate of
Appropriateness for the signage because it does not meet the City's historic preservation guidelines. A
special use permit is therefore required.

RECOMMENDATION: In accordance with the requirements of the City Charter and the Zoning
Ordinance, the City Planning Commission will review this request and make a recommendation to City
Council. This item will be scheduled for consideration by the Commission at its May 3, 2021, meeting.

BACKGROUND: The subject property consists of a 27.21 acre parcel of developed land that contains numerous academic and residential university buildings. The property is located in the Virginia Union neighborhood and is generally situated between North Lombardy Street and Brook Road to the east, West Graham Road to the north, additional Virginia Union University land and residential parcels to the west and I-95/I-64 to the south.

The subject property is part of the Virginia Union University Campus, which is located in the I- Institutional Zoning District. The four signs are presently erected on a 165-foot tower that is part of the Belgian Building and is designated as the Belgian Building City Old & Historic District. The Zoning Ordinance permits a sign area of up to 32 square feet for signs visible from any street frontage, and where two or more main buildings are located on a lot (which is the case here), each building may be permitted to have a wall sign not exceeding 12 square feet in area.

Richmond 300 recommends a future land use of “Institutional” for the property, with primary uses recommended being institutional, cultural, government and open space. The property is also within the proximity of the VUU/Chamberlayne Neighborhood Node. The plan envisions the node becoming more pedestrian-oriented with streetscaping, pedestrian lighting and signage being added to North Lombardy Street and surrounding streets. The portion of N Lombardy Street that abuts the property is designated as a “major mixed-use street” on the Street Typologies Map in Richmond 300.

Objective 3.1 of Richmond 300 is to “preserve culturally, historically, and architecturally significant buildings, sites, structures, neighborhoods, cemeteries, and landscapes that contribute to Richmond’s authenticity.” Strategy k. under Objective 4.1 of Richmond 300 calls on the City to “promote an attractive environment by minimizing visual clutter and confusion caused by a proliferation of signage, ensuring that public and private signage is appropriately scaled to the pedestrian environment” in order to create and preserve high-quality, distinctive, and well-designed neighborhoods and nodes.

Additional institutional uses that are part of the Virginia Union University campus are located to the east and northwest of the subject property. A Richmond Police Department Training Facility exists to the north of the subject property. Single-family and multi-family uses exist to the west and Interstate 95/64 exists to the south of the subject property.

FISCAL IMPACT / COST: The Department of Planning and Development Review does not anticipate any impact to the City’s budget for this or future fiscal years.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS: Staff time for processing the request; preparation of draft ordinance; and publishing, mailing and posting of public notices.

BUDGET AMENDMENT NECESSARY: No.

REVENUE TO CITY: \$300 application fee

DESIRED EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon adoption

REQUESTED INTRODUCTION DATE: April 12, 2021

CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING DATE: May 10, 2021

REQUESTED AGENDA: Regular

RECOMMENDED COUNCIL COMMITTEE: None

CONSIDERATION BY OTHER GOVERNMENTAL ENTITIES: City Planning Commission
May 3, 2021

AFFECTED AGENCIES: Office of Chief Administrative Officer
Law Department (for review of draft ordinance)

RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING ORD. OR RES.: None

REQUIRED CHANGES TO WORK PROGRAM(S): None

ATTACHMENTS: Draft Ordinance, Application Form, Applicant's Report, Plans, Survey, Map

STAFF: Richard Saunders, Senior Planner, Land Use Administration (Room 511) 646-4856



Application for **SPECIAL USE PERMIT**

Department of Planning and Development Review
Land Use Administration Division
900 E. Broad Street, Room 511
Richmond, Virginia 23219
(804) 646-6304
<http://www.richmondgov.com/>

Application is hereby submitted for: (check one)

- special use permit, new**
- special use permit, plan amendment**
- special use permit, text only amendment**

Project Name/Location

Property Address: VUU Belgian Building, 1500 N. Lombardy Street, Richmond, VA 23220 Date: 12/29/2020
Tax Map #: _____ Fee: \$1,800
Total area of affected site in acres: 0.007

(See **page 6** for fee schedule, please make check payable to the "City of Richmond")

Zoning

Current Zoning: I-district

Existing Use: Educational

Proposed Use

(Please include a detailed description of the proposed use in the required applicant's report)
Retain Illuminable "VUU" signage at lower level of the Belgian Pavilion VarnTower as a Symbol of Positive Change and a Beacon of Light
Existing Use: Belgian Pavilion Tower as a symbol of human understanding & goodwill, and negation of racial prejudice, hatred & violence

Is this property subject to any previous land use cases?

Yes No If Yes, please list the Ordinance Number: _____

Applicant/Contact Person: David E. Gordon

Company: Virginia Union University
Mailing Address: 1500 N. Lombardy Street
City: Richmond State: VA Zip Code: 23220
Telephone: (804) 638-0185 Fax: (804) 342-3944
Email: degordon@vuu.edu

Property Owner: Virginia Union University

If Business Entity, name and title of authorized signee: David E. Gordon, Assistant Vice President of Capital Projects

(The person or persons executing or attesting the execution of this Application on behalf of the Company certifies that he or she has or have been duly authorized and empowered to so execute or attest.)

Mailing Address: 1500 N. Lombardy Street
City: Richmond State: VA Zip Code: 23220
Telephone: (804) 638-0185 Fax: (804) 342-3944
Email: degordon@vuu.edu

Property Owner Signature: *David E. Gordon*

The names, addresses, telephone numbers and signatures of all owners of the property are required. Please attach additional sheets as needed. If a legal representative signs for a property owner, please attach an executed power of attorney. **Faxed or photocopied signatures will not be accepted.**

NOTE: Please attach the required plans, checklist, and a check for the application fee (see Filing Procedures for special use permits)

Applicant's Report:

This request is for Special Use Permit for Virginia Union University to retain the illuminable "VUU" signage that has been affixed at the belfry louver level on all four sides of the Belgian Pavilion Vann Tower on the campus of Virginia Union University. The Special Use Permit is necessary due to the signage exceeding current zoning limitations.

The VUU logo (17'-0" x 17'-7 3/4") is made from aluminum framing, acrylic faces, and internally illuminated with white LED lighting connected to 120V 60W power supply. The logo signs are mounted to 4"x4" steel tubing that is mounted through the louvers to the existing steel "I" beams of the belfry framing. The mounting of the signage does not impact the cladding of the historic Vann Tower nor destroy the stability or functioning of the louvers or tower structure.

Rising from a historic environment of legal segregation and emancipation of slaves as an opportunity for education and advancement of people of color, Virginia Union University was founded in 1865 and is honored to be one of the first ten Historically Black Colleges and Universities founded in the nation. The Belgian Pavilion on the historic campus of Virginia Union University is a four-part complex constructed for the 1939 New York World's Fair to showcase technology and innovation. Due to Nazi invasion in Belgium, instead of having the building return to a University in Belgium, the Belgium government offered the building to any US college or university. After competing with 27 other universities, VUU was awarded the recipient of the Belgian Pavilion in 1941 and the University worked with the community to raise \$500,000 to relocate the building from New York to VUU. The Pavilion currently provides multiuse educational space, classrooms, performing arts center, visual arts center, and gymnasium facilities for the campus.

The Tower portion of the Belgian Pavilion was named after Robert Lee Vann, an alumnus of Virginia Union University who went on to be a newspaper publisher and editor who established the Pittsburgh Courier, to be one of five black attorneys in Pittsburgh in 1910, and to serve as Special Assistant to U.S. Attorney General Homer Cummings under President Franklin D. Roosevelt. According to the Pittsburgh Courier (1941), the Robert L. Vann Memorial Tower was "the largest memorial ever built for a Negro in America." The base section of the Vann Tower contains Belgian Congo relief sculptures with scenes of the Congo history, struggle, and rise to independence. Oscar Adams, an African-American, reporting on the cornerstone laying for the Belgian Pavilion noted that "the beautiful Belgian Pavilion...was the gift of a colonial empire to a Negro university, the gift of a Catholic country to a Baptist school, the symbol of human understanding and goodwill and the negation of racial prejudice of hatred and of violence."

Powered by this notable history and intensified by multiple layers of symbolic progressive change, the Belgian Pavilion Vann Tower is the premiere location to adorn at its top the illuminate "VUU" logo as a symbol of change and beacon of light.

- The size of the sign is deemed appropriate for its elevated position above the ground and for its purpose of being a beacon for a bright, limitless future and recognition of the rich African-American history of the campus, community, City, and State. Special Use Permit from City Zoning has been granted in the past for ground-level VUU signs at Virginia Union University and is being sought for this elevated level of recognition.
- As a flat wall sign, it is deemed not to obscure the unique historic architecture of the entire Belgian Building nor significantly impact the architectural detail of the louvers atop the tower. The limited mass of the sign letters on the belfry section of the tower leaves the majority of the louvers visible and intact, and the distinct louver pattern fully detectable.
- Internal illumination of the sign most effectively transmits the intensity of the historic positioning of the University during the times of darkness and is consistent with other internally illuminated signs currently installed on campus with Special Use Permit approval.

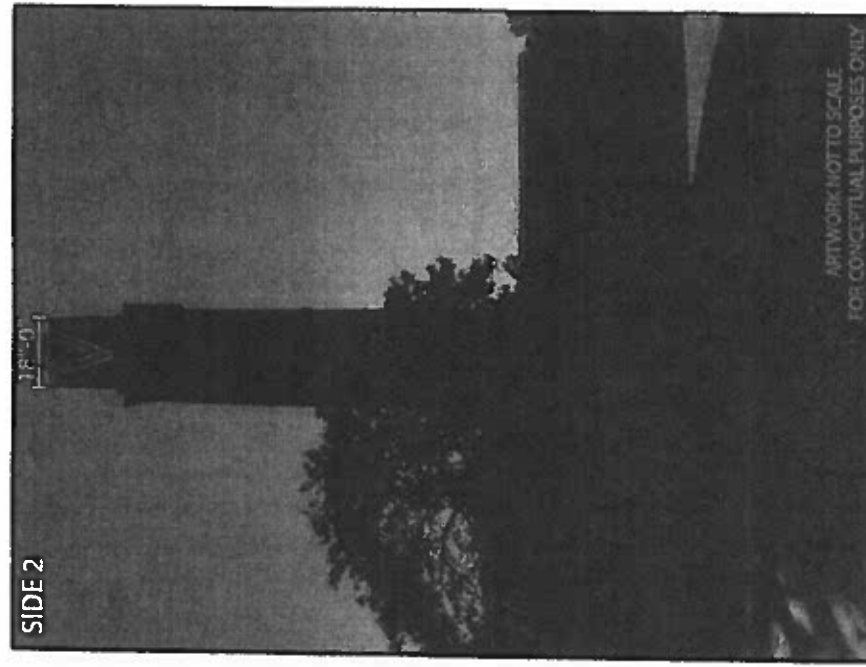
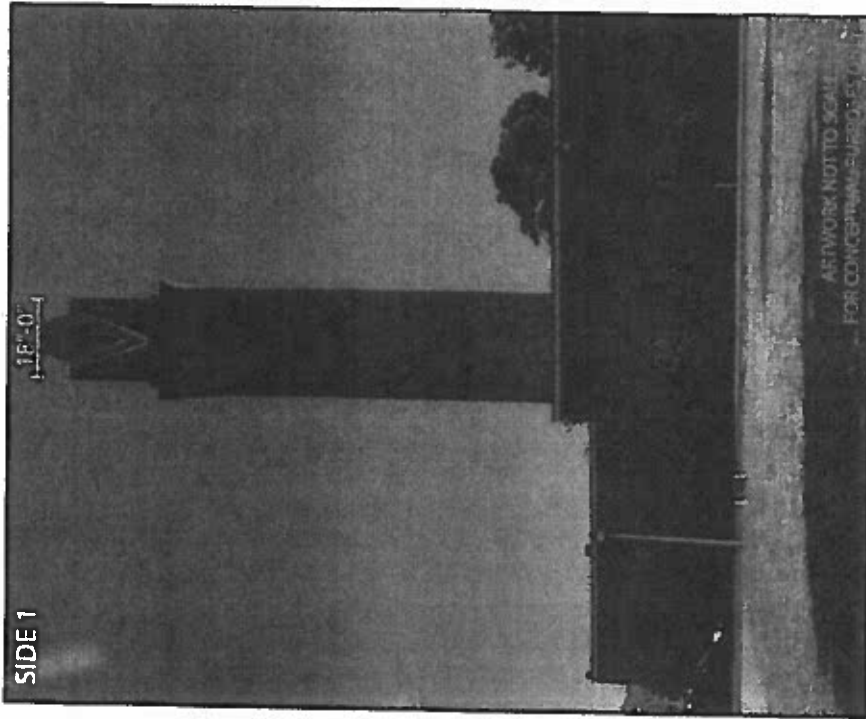
Virginia Union University is a landmark in Richmond City and a proud historic campus. The historic value of Virginia Union University to our community, City, State, and Nation justifies the prominence gleaned by the signage and its significance must not be undervalued or disallowed. VUU has been a significant part of Virginia's history for 155 years, from providing education to newly emancipated slaves who were previously denied that right, to presently continuing to provide affordable, quality education for those seeking a college degree. This project for the VUU logo to remain affixed to the Belgian Vann Tower has critical impact to VUU and to people of color feeling a sense of disillusionment and lack of acceptance. The VUU signage on the tower will provide a lasting bright-shining symbol of justice, hope, and equality. All points of the signage are potentially positive and the signage will **not**:

1. be detrimental to safety, health, morals and general welfare of the community;
2. tend to create congestion in streets, roads, alley and other public ways;
3. create hazards from fire, panic or other dangers;
4. tend to cause overcrowding of land and an undue concentration of population;
5. adversely affect or interfere with public or private schools, parks, playgrounds, water supplies, sewage disposal, transportation or other public requirements, conveniences and improvements; or
6. interfere with adequate light and air.

Support of this Application for Special Use Permit will provide clear, dramatic, long-lasting benefits to the Campus, Community, and City of Richmond.

SIGNAGE LAYOUT FOR ELEVATION 1 & 2
 MAIN SIGNAGE TO BE MOUNTED AT TOP OF TOWER AS SHOWN

300.16 SQ. FT. EACH



TALLEY
SIGN COMPANY
 ARCHITECTURAL & COMMERCIAL
 1000 Chesapeake Ave. P.O. Box 37066 Richmond, Va. 23181
 Phone 804-645-8223 Fax 804-643-1721

CLIENT: **YUU**
 DATE: 11/2/18
 REP: **ERIC SALMON**
 LOC: **RICHMOND, VIRGINIA**

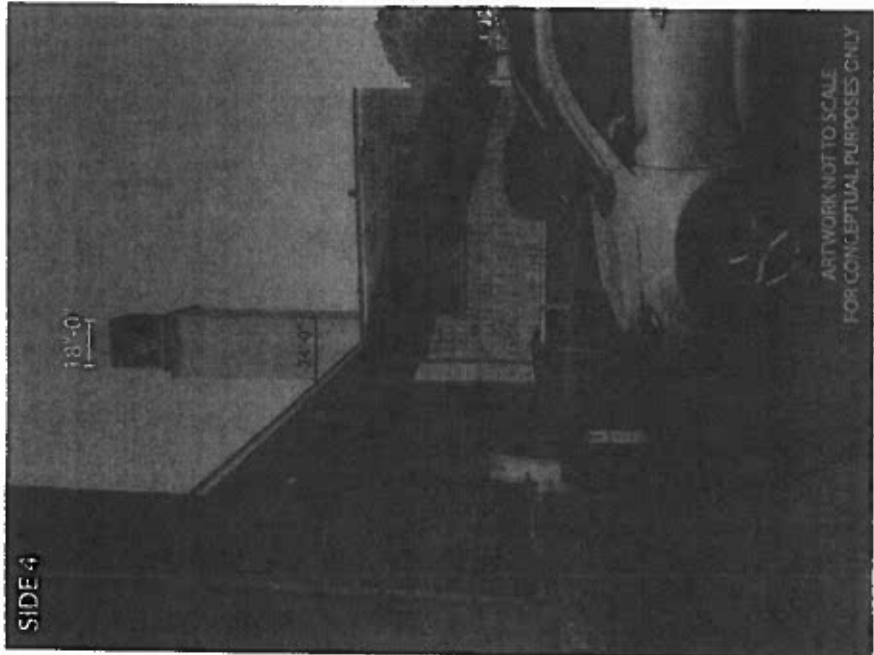
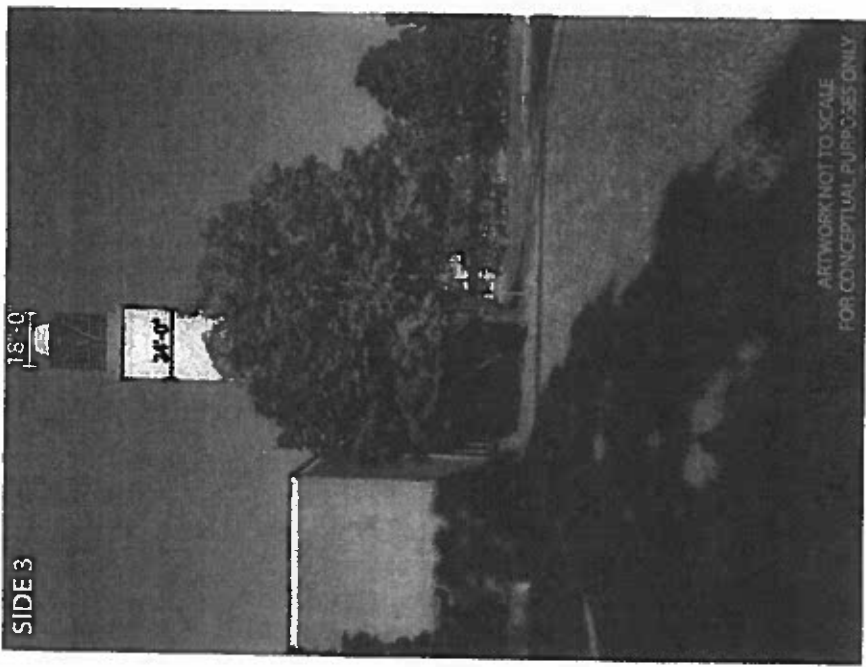
REVISION:	DATE:
1	0/21/19
2	0/26/19
3	0/27/19
4	9/16/19
5	10/8/19

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300.16 SQ.FT. EACH

SIGNAGE LAYOUT FOR ELEVATION 3 & 4
 MAIN SIGNAGE TO BE MOUNTED AT TOP OF TOWER AS SHOWN

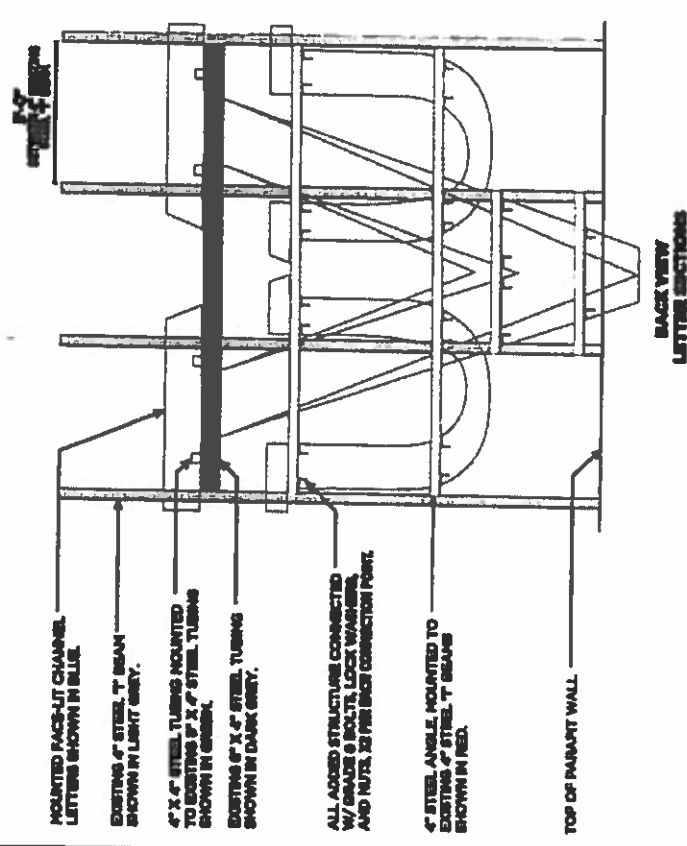


TALLEY
SIGN COMPANY
 ARCHITECTURAL & COMMERCIAL
 1500 Chambershys Ave. P.O. Box 27104 Richmond, Va. 23281
 Phone 804-649-8333 Fax 804-649-1771

CLIENT: **VUU**
 DATE: 11/2/18
 JOB#:
 REP: **ERIC SALMON**
 BY: **JG**
 LOC: **RICHMOND, VIRGINIA**

REVISION:	DATE:
1	8/21/19
2	8/26/19
3	8/27/19
4	9/16/19
5	10/8/19

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MOUNTED BACKLIT CHANNEL LETTERS SHOWN IN BLUE.

EXISTING 4" STEEL T BEAM SHOWN IN LIGHT GREY.

4" X 4" STEEL TUBING MOUNTED TO EXISTING 4" X 4" STEEL TUBING SHOWN IN GREEN.

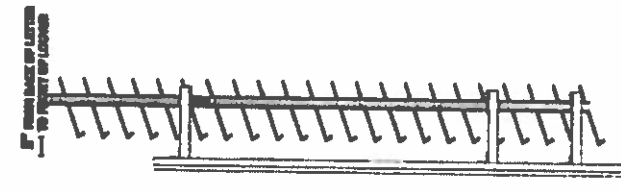
EXISTING 4" X 4" STEEL TUBING SHOWN IN DARK GREY.

ALL ADDED STRUCTURE CONNECTED W/ GRADE 8 BOLTS, LOCK WASHERS, AND NUTS. IS PER EACH CONNECTION POINT.

4" STEEL ANGLE MOUNTED TO EXISTING 4" STEEL T BEAMS SHOWN IN RED.

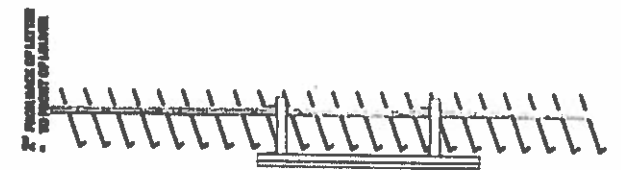
TOP OF PARAPET WALL.

BACK VIEW LETTER SECTIONS



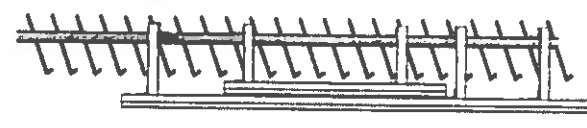
4" FROM BACK OF LETTER TO FRONT OF COLUMN

END VIEW OF LETTER SECTION ONLY



4" FROM BACK OF LETTER TO FRONT OF COLUMN

END VIEW OF LETTER SECTION ONLY



4" FROM BACK OF LETTER TO FRONT OF COLUMN

END VIEW COMPRESSED LETTER SECTION

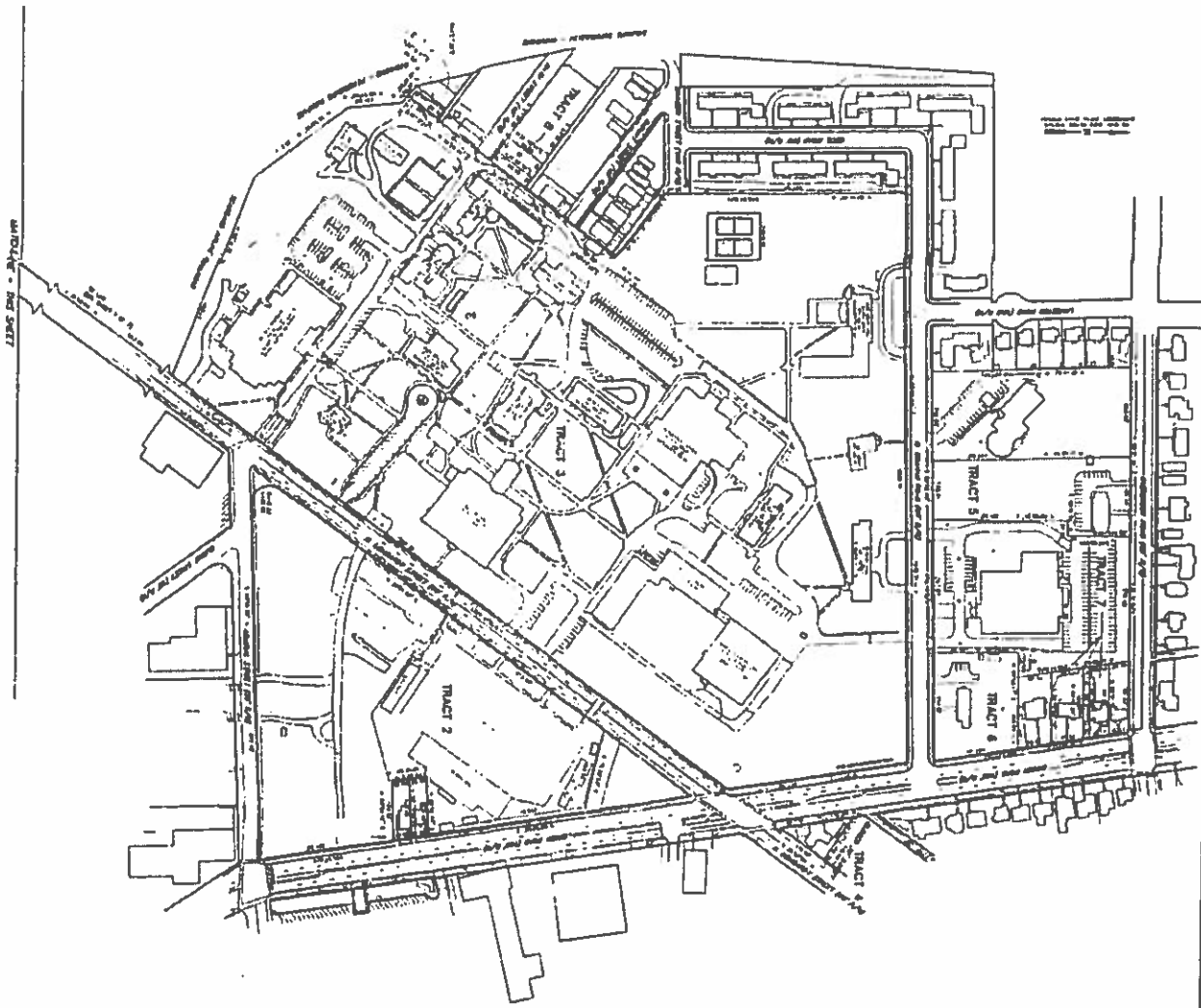
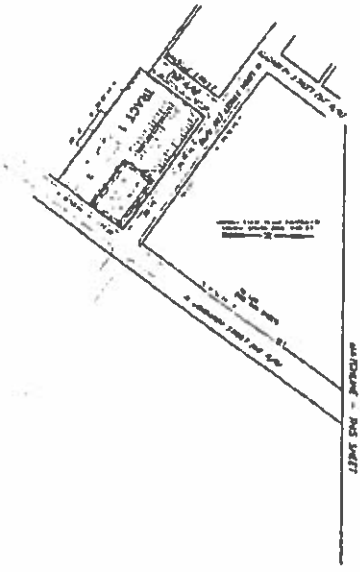
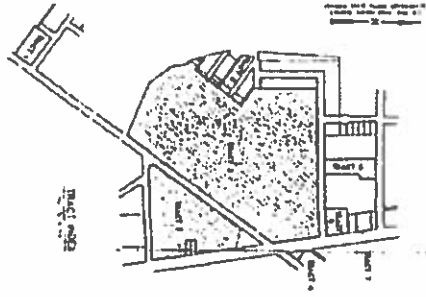
MOUNTING DETAIL

TALLEY SIGN COMPANY
 ARCHITECTURAL & COMMERCIAL
 1938 Commonwealth Ave. F.S. Box 2706 Richmond, Va. 23261
 Phone 804-699-0205 Fax 804-699-3773

CLIENT: VIRGINIA UNION UNIVERSITY
 DATE 12/21/19 JOB#: mounting detail
 REP: Eric Selmon BT: DAP
 LOC: Richmond, VA

REVISION:	1	2	3	4	5

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1" = 100' 0"



PROPERTY PARCELS SHOWN
OF
VIRGINIA UNION UNIVERSITY
LOCATED IN
HENRICO COUNTY, VIRGINIA

DATE: 05/11/00
BY: [Signature]
CHECKED: [Signature]
APPROVED: [Signature]

MSA, P.C.
10000 W. BRIDGE PL.
SUITE 100
DALLAS, TEXAS 75243
TEL: 972.412.1000
FAX: 972.412.1001
WWW.MSA-PC.COM



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