

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT

Project #/Name	ARB-2024-46: Ivy Proper Comprehensive Sign Plan; B2024-01700 Ivy Proper Monument Sign
Review Type	Comprehensive Sign Plan and Certificate of Appropriateness for a Monument Sign
Parcel Identification	058A2-00-00-02000
Location	4290 Ivy Road directly across from the intersection of Ivy Road and Ivy Depot Road (Fig. 1)
Zoned	Commercial (C1) / Entrance Corridor (EC)
Owner/Applicant	Ivy Proper LLC / Design Develop LLC (Kevin Schafer)
Magisterial District	Samuel Miller
Proposal	To establish a Comprehensive Sign Plan (CSP) for a multi-tenant building (Fig. 2) and install a monument sign.
Context	The signage in the immediate context of this site is a mixture of non-illuminated and illuminated, wall and freestanding, and non-conforming and ARB-approved signs.
Visibility	The east, south, and west sides of the building are clearly visible from the EC (Ivy Road). The monument sign located near the south corner of the building will also be readily visible.
ARB Meeting Date	June 3, 2024
Staff Contact	Khris Taggart

PROJECT HISTORY

In 2021 a Certificate of Appropriateness was issued for this development. A Comprehensive Sign Plan was not included in that review. The construction of the building has been completed and the approved landscaping is in place.



Figure 1: Pictometry image showing property along the Entrance Corridor.

ARB COMPREHENSIVE SIGN REVIEW PROPOSED CRITERIA
PROJECT #/NAME: ARB2024-46 / 4290 Ivy Road (Ivy Proper) CSP
TAX MAP/PARCEL#: 058A2-00-00-02000

SIGN TYPE	Monument Signs	Façade Signs (Street Side)	Façade Signs (Parking Lot Side)	Window Signs
SIGN LOCATION	As noted on plan. Minimum 5' setback from property line. Maximum of 1 per street frontage.	As noted on front elevation. Horizontally centered with corresponding windows. Vertically centered between top of window and bottom of roof.	As noted on back elevation. Horizontally centered with corresponding canopy. Vertically centered along edge of overhang.	As noted on front and back elevations. Horizontally and vertically centered with window or door panel.
SIZE LIMITATIONS	Maximum sign area of 32 square feet. Tenant panel maximum size limitation of 5'-3" x 10". Tenant letter height max 8". Signs must be in proportion with other signs and the overall building.	Panel height max 2'-0". Panel cannot extend horizontally past 15'-0". Signs must be in proportion with other signs and the overall building.	Panel height max 2'-0". Panel cannot extend horizontally past 14'-0". Signs must be in proportion with other signs and the overall building.	All signs on each window cannot exceed 25 percent of the total area of the window or door, per Sec. 14.15.11. Signs must be in proportion with other signs and the overall building.
LETTER COLOR	White	Black	Black	White
TRIM CAP/RETURN COLOR	N/A	Trim cap color to match return color. Return color is black.	Trim cap color to match return color. Return color is black.	N/A
BACKGROUND/PANEL/BODY COLOR	Black aluminum, wood, concrete	Black panel with letter cut outs	Black panel with letter cut outs	N/A
MOUNTING DETAILS	Signage to be direct set onto metal tenant panel.	Panel mounted to exterior wall using 1" mounting standoffs.	Panel mounted to exterior wall using 1" mounting standoffs.	N/A
GRAPHICS	Colors and illumination are subject to review.	Colors and illumination are subject to review.	Colors and illumination are subject to review.	Colors are subject to review
ILLUMINATION DETAILS	Backlit / Halo illumination	Backlit / Halo illumination	Backlit / Halo illumination	N/A
LETTER TYPE/FONT	Logo or lettering in white aluminum or white acrylic. Font and logo subject to Owner review.	Logo or lettering in black. Font and logo subject to Owner review.	Logo or lettering in black. Font and logo subject to Owner review.	Logo or lettering in White. Font and logo subject to Owner review.
MATERIALS	Wood, aluminum, concrete	Aluminum	Aluminum	Vinyl

Figure 2: 4290 Ivy Road Proposed Comprehensive Sign Plan Criteria



Figure 2: 4290 Ivy Road Proposed Sign Locations (east and south elevations as viewed from Ivy Road).

ANALYSIS

REF	GUIDELINES	ISSUE	RECOMMENDATION
II GENERAL SIGN GUIDELINES			
1	Create a consistent and unified design approach along the Entrance Corridors. The <i>placement, size, illumination and colors</i> of signs can create unity along the corridor, or they can create a disjointed, visually competitive environment. Consistent and unified sign design allows the businesses located along the Corridor to have equal standing in visibility. It also provides a pattern of sign placement that makes the business locations and entrances more easily recognizable to both vehicular and pedestrian traffic.	The proposed Comprehensive Sign Plan (CSP) provides a framework for coordinated signage for the building and freestanding sign; however, some of the details provided in the plan need to be clarified.	See recommendations below.
2	Establish simplicity and reserve as preferred characteristics for sign design in these areas. This reflects the historic character of the area and enhances the aesthetic qualities of the Corridor. To this end, the overall design of a sign will be evaluated concurrently with that of the building on which it will be installed. The design of a building’s walls, window locations, parapets and other architectural features will influence the Board’s evaluation of appropriate signage. Likewise, a freestanding sign is evaluated in the context of the overall development in which it will be placed. Because each site is composed of a variety of elements that work together to create a unique character and appearance, ARB review of each sign proposal is guided by these sign guidelines within the context of the specific site for which the proposal is made.	The signage in the immediate context of this site is a mixture of non-illuminated and illuminated, wall and freestanding, and non-conforming and ARB-approved signs. The proposed CSP shows sign designs that are streamlined panels which is consistent with the characteristics of the existing signage present along the corridor.	
3	Encourage creative design. The County encourages imaginative and innovative signs consistent with the purposes expressed above and in conformance with the regulations of the Albemarle County Code.	The signs proposed on the north side (labeled back in the CSP) face the parking lot and will not be visible from the EC and therefore do not require ARB review. The proposed window signs are not subject to ARB review but must meet County Code size requirements.	
8.a	Monument signs are preferred to pole-mounted signs. Pole signs may be considered if existing site conditions rule out the ability to use a monument sign, and only when the pole is in proportion to the sign cabinet or panel.	A monument sign is proposed. The proposed materials (black and white aluminum and wood) for the monument sign are either materials used in the building design or complementary to the materials used in the design.	None.
8.b	Materials used in both the sign and support structures should be complementary. They should also support the aesthetics of the building/complex being served by the sign. It is preferred that the base material match one of the primary building materials <i>unless</i> the sign design represents itself as a freestanding element complementing the building.		
8.c	The structure of a monument sign shall not overwhelm the sign. The structure and the sign that it supports must be in proportion to each other.	The monument’s base is minimal and does not overwhelm the sign.	None.

8.d	Use ground cover, shrubs and/or trees to integrate freestanding signs into the overall site landscape.	No landscaping is shown around the base of the monument sign; however, there is an existing large tree west (not shown in the perspective on sheet CSP.2) of the proposed sign location. The minimal base of the sign will not allow for shrubs; however, low ground cover could help to better integrate the sign into the overall landscape. Providing landscaping at the base of the sign would also be consistent with other freestanding signs in the surrounding context.	None.
	Use plants from the Albemarle County Recommended Plants List.		
8.e.i	<i>External illumination (or no illumination) is preferred for freestanding signs.</i>	The tenant panels are proposed to be internally illuminated but the “Ivy Proper” panel at the top of the sign will not be illuminated.	None.
8.e.ii	Ground-mounted lighting should be shielded by landscaping so that it is not visible from any adjacent property or right-of-way.		
8.e.iv	Cabinet signs shall have a non-illuminated background, or an opaque (zero light transmission) background. Cabinet signs shall be constructed such that no light spills outward from the top, bottom, sides or back.	The tenant panel portion of the freestanding sign functions like a cabinet sign, although the sign detail does not show the illumination.	Revise the CSP to include a detail showing where the illumination is located within the freestanding sign.
8.e.iii	Channel letters (although not likely appropriate for freestanding signs) with translucent faces shall be constructed such that no light spills outward from the top, bottom, sides or back. If back-lit (halo-lit), the faces and returns of channel letters shall be opaque.	Channel letters are not proposed with this CSP.	None.
4, 9, 10	<i>WALL SIGNS, WALL SIGNS FOR MULTIPLE BUSINESS CENTERS</i>		
4a	Placement: The design of a building’s walls, window locations, parapets and other architectural features shall influence the Board’s evaluation of appropriate signage. Wall signs can help establish rhythm, scale and proportion across the façade of a building.	A complete sign package has been submitted for review. The proposal allows black aluminum panels with routed letters to be attached to the board and batten walls. Panel signs predominate in the immediate area; the aluminum panels are more consistent with the context than channel letters would be. On the EC facing (labeled front in the drawings) elevation, the sign area is shown above the window and wood panel grouping on the end bays and centered above the window grouping in the center bay. The locations shown on the south elevation (Fig. 2) do not conflict with any architectural detailing. However, the location within the center bay looks uncoordinated with the architectural detail present within the bay. Revising the sign location in the center bay to be centered within the bay would provide for a more unified appearance. The proposed CSP allows 24” high panels, leaving 15” of clear space above and below the sign area between the windows and the roof line of the building on the end bays and between the	Revise the sign location on the center bay of the south elevation so it is centered within the bay.
9a	Wall signs shall be integrated with the architecture of the building and the placement of such signs should not obscure architectural features or details, including but not limited to cornices, windows, columns, pilasters and paneling.		
9d	The size of a wall sign shall be coordinated with the size of the architectural element on which it is placed. The sign should not overcrowd the architectural element, the wall, or the sign area. Buildings and building elements should not be used as a billboard. For example, an appropriate height for channel letters in a 30" high sign band is 18". This allows 6" of unoccupied space above and below the letters. Generally, 4" of clear space above, below, and to the sides of a channel letter sign is considered a minimum, with larger clearances required for larger sign bands. The ARB will consider the degree of visibility, the distance from the Entrance Corridor, and the architectural design of the building and the sign area in its determination of appropriate sizes and placement.		
10a	A complete sign package shall be provided as part of the submittal materials for the review of any new multiple business center. The proposal should		

	address how compatibility among signs will be achieved, and how new signs will be coordinated with the architecture of the building(s); the first approved sign installed in a multiple business center will establish the standard for all future signs for that center. The future review of proposals for new signs in existing multiple business centers will take into consideration the character and appearance of the existing building(s) and with existing sign(s).	windows and the bottom of the eave. The maximum panel height allows appropriate spacing above and below the panels.	
10b	b. Multiple business centers shall use a single sign type for all wall signs.		
10d	Signs must be placed on the building in a manner that establishes a unified appearance.		
9b	Channel lettering (mounted on a raceway or individual letters) is preferred to cabinet signs because cabinet signs tend to appear less integrated with the building. Channel letters overlay the wall material and allow the structure of the building to “read through” with less interruption. This results in a more coordinated overall appearance.		
4d	Lettering and Typeface: Lettering should be in proportion to the sign and the building for visual clarity and overall balance. Proportion of lettering includes font (size) and typeface (style). The use of three typefaces or fewer is more appropriate for signs in the Entrance Corridor. Additional typefaces may be approved only if they contribute to a balanced, legible, unified sign design.	The sign proposal does not specify a limit on the number of typefaces. However, the consistency in color and alignment can allow for greater variety in typefaces.	None.
4e	Color: Colors must be harmonious with each other. Colors must not clash with other elements on the site, both when viewed in daylight and at night, whether the signs are externally or internally lit. Overly intense color, such as but not limited to dayglo or fluorescent colors, are prohibited. The use of three colors or fewer is more appropriate for signs in the Entrance Corridor. Black and white are counted as colors. Additional colors may be approved if they contribute to a balanced and unified sign design. For raceway-mounted channel letters, raceways shall match the wall color.	The text color would be the existing board and batten siding that would show through where the black panels are routed. This provides for balance and unified sign design. However, the sign criteria note that the letter color would be black. This will need to be updated to reflect the proposed sign design. The CSP notes trim cap and return colors, but it is unclear where this would apply as trim cap and returns are associated with channel letters, which are not proposed in this CSP.	Revise the sign criteria to note that the letter color will be the board and batten behind the panels. Revise the CSP to clarify where the trim cap and return colors would apply.
10c	c. Compatibility among signs must be maintained through color or font and typeface selection.		
9c	For raceway-mounted channel letters, the raceway shall match the wall color.		

4f	Trademarks, corporate logos and graphics: The ARB may require that the color and scale of standard templates for trademarks, service marks, corporate logos and graphics be modified. When used, trademarks, service marks, corporate logos and/or graphics should be incorporated as an integral part of the overall sign.	The proposed sign criteria note that the colors and illumination of graphics would be subject to review. One of the signs included in the illustrations shows a graphic that is balanced in size and proportion to the text; however, no specific details on graphics have been provided. Graphics that are fully integrated with the text and that are balanced in size and proportion without overwhelming the text would be appropriate. Limiting the CSP so that only routed graphics are allowed on the EC facing elevation would maintain a unified and coordinated sign design for current and future tenants. As the back elevation is not visible from the EC, standard trademark graphic/logos could be used on this elevation.	Revise the criteria for wall signs to indicate that graphics must be fully incorporated as an integral part of the overall sign, and graphics must be balanced in size and proportion without overwhelming the text. Revise the CSP to limit the south (front) elevation to routed graphics/logos.
5, 9e, 10e	<i>Lighting, Lighting for Wall Signs, Lighting for Multiple Business Centers</i>		
5	Lighting: The purpose of ARB review is to ensure that new development in the Entrance Corridors is compatible with the historic architecture of the County and to promote orderly and attractive development. There is no historical precedent for internally illuminated signs. However, the ARB recognizes the need to identify businesses to help the traveling public find their destination and exit the highway safely.	The sign proposal limits illumination to a single type (backlit/halo) for the panels. However, the side elevation detail shows the panels with a 1” offset from the wall, which does not appear to be large enough to accommodate illumination.	Revise the CSP to clarify how backlighting will be accommodated.
5a	When illumination is required, the preferred solution is to externally illuminate the sign – in other words, to shine a light on the sign. External illumination is preferred because it allows consistency with the daytime image of the sign. External lighting appears to the viewer as reflected light and allows the focus of the sign to be the original overall shape, color and complete design of the sign. Internal lighting produces a fragmented, rather than unified, sign image at night compared to external lighting and may project light that is distracting to the viewer. Similarly, exposed light sources that form the body of a sign (such as, but not limited to, exposed or bare neon) are not appropriate for the Entrance Corridors. They can produce glare and, generally, do not achieve the subtle character and compatibility that is the goal for the Entrance Corridors.		
5b	Since external illumination does not fit every case, individual channel letters – a type of internally illuminated sign that has less visual clutter impact on the Entrance Corridors – may also be approved. Channel letters are generally the preferred type of internally illuminated wall sign because they project the total sign and are identifiable with the daytime image of the sign. When channel letters cannot be adequately accommodated, internally illuminated cabinet signs may be considered. If cabinet signs are utilized, the backgrounds of such signs must be made opaque (zero light transmission).		

5c	External illumination is also preferred for approved graphics/logos; internal illumination may be considered for approval on a case-by-case basis. The Board will evaluate the specific design for size (adjusted in proportion to the accompanying lettering), balance, complexity, and distance from and relationship to the Entrance Corridor. These factors will determine the extent of internal illumination that can be approved.		
5d	These solutions are intended to reduce glare, visual clutter and distraction along the streetscape, to provide for coordinated appearances along the Entrance Corridors, to increase visual continuity, to achieve a balance of business identification with order and continuity, and to limit negative impacts along the County's Entrance Corridors.		
5e	External Illumination: Lighting should be shielded and not create glare. All external light sources shall be white.		
	Lighting should be aimed so as not to project illumination beyond the sign.		
5f	Internal Illumination: Any internal illumination is considered to contribute to visual clutter and will be limited.	There is no blinking illumination proposed.	None.
5g	All Illumination shall be non-blinking.		
5h	Exposed Light Sources: An exposed light source that forms the body of a sign, such as but not limited to signs formed of exposed neon, as opposed to a light shining on a sign, shall not be used in the Entrance Corridors.	There are no exposed light sources proposed.	None.
9e, 10e	<i>i.</i> External illumination is preferred for wall signs / signs in multiple business centers.	Lighting (backlit) is proposed; however, it is unclear how the panels will be illuminated.	See lighting recommendation above.
	<i>ii.</i> External illumination: Lighting directed toward a sign should be designed and shielded so that it illuminates the face of the sign and does not shine beyond the edge of the sign.		
	<i>iii.</i> Internal illumination: Channel letters with translucent faces shall be constructed such that no light spills outward from the top, bottom, sides or back. Faces and returns of channel letters shall be opaque when back-lit (halo-lit).		
	<i>iv.</i> Cabinet signs shall have a non-illuminated background, or an opaque (zero light transmission) background. Cabinet signs shall be constructed such that no light spills outward from the top, bottom, sides or back. If outlines of letters are proposed, the width of the outline must be in proportion to the width of the letter. An outline width of 1/8" has been found to be an appropriate dimension for signs in the Entrance Corridors.		

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends the following as the primary points of discussion:

1. Sign locations/alignment.
2. Sign illumination.
3. Sign graphics.

Regarding the Comprehensive Sign Plan:

Staff recommends approval with the following revisions to the Comprehensive Sign Plan criteria:

1. Revise the CSP to include a detail showing where the illumination is located within the freestanding sign.
2. Revise the sign location on the center bay of the south elevation so it is centered within the bay.
3. Revise the sign criteria to note that the letter color will be the board and batten behind the panels.
4. Revise the CSP to clarify where the trim cap and return colors would apply.
5. Revise the criteria for wall signs to indicate that graphics must be fully incorporated as an integral part of the overall sign, and graphics must be balanced in size and proportion without overwhelming the text.
6. Revise the CSP to limit the south (front) elevation to routed graphics/logos.
7. Revise the CSP to clarify how backlighting will be accommodated.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Attach. 1: [ARB2024-46: Ivy Proper Comprehensive Sign Plan](#)