

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT

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| Project #/Name        | SIGN-2026-16 and -24: 2405 Ivy Road Comprehensive Sign Plan                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Review Type           | Comprehensive Sign Review                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Parcel Identification | 060000000025A0                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Location              | 2405 Ivy Road (Figure 1)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Zoned                 | Commercial (C1)/Entrance Corridor (EC)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Owner/Applicant       | JPA Tower Investors, LLC/Ed Brown (Frontrunner Signs)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Magisterial District  | Samuel Miller                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Proposal              | To establish a comprehensive sign plan for the building at 2405 Ivy Road.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Context               | 2405 Ivy Road is part of a small group of commercial buildings (including 2415, 2411 and 2409) just west of the Rt. 250/Canterbury Rd. intersection. The Bellair neighborhood is to the south. The Birdwood golf course is to the southwest. The Kenridge, Farmington, Ednam, and White Gables historic properties are to the west. |
| Visibility            | The south, east and west sides of the building are clearly visible from the Ivy Road Entrance Corridor.                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| ARB Meeting Date      | June 8, 2026                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Staff Contact         | Margaret Maliszewski                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

PROJECT HISTORY

The ARB approved a Comprehensive Sign Plan for the neighboring building to the west (2415 Ivy Road) in 2020 (ARB-2020-00019) and an amendment to that plan in 2024 (ARB-2024-00058). Recently, building permit applications have been submitted for renovations to accommodate new businesses in this building.

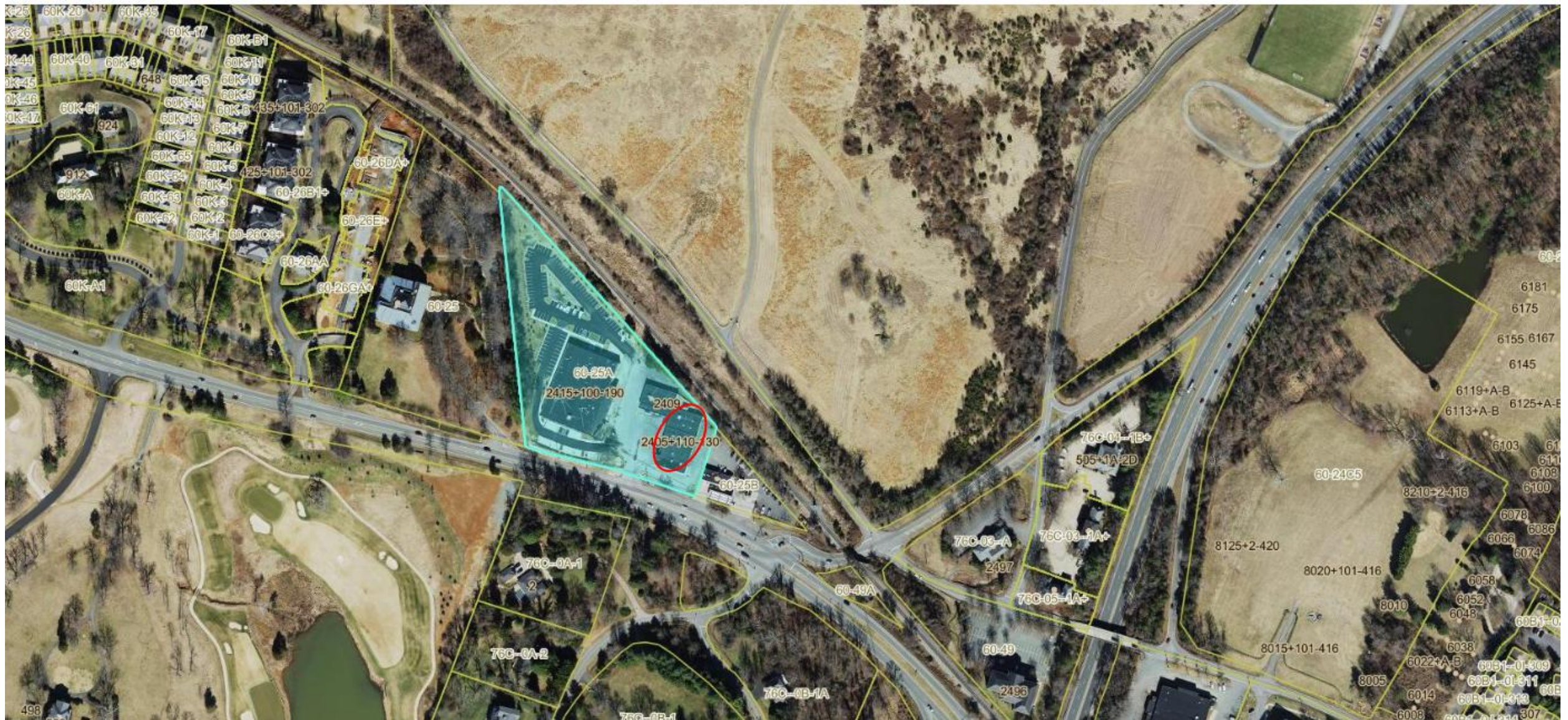


Figure 1: County GIS map highlighting subject property.



Figure 2: Google Street view showing 2405 Ivy Road at the right.

ANALYSIS

| REF | GUIDELINE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | ISSUES                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | RECOMMENDATIONS                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
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|     | <b>Purpose; Wall Signs for Multiple Business Centers</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 1   | <b>Create a consistent and unified design approach along the Entrance Corridors.</b> The <i>placement, size, illumination</i> and <i>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.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | A Comprehensive Sign Plan has been proposed. Compatibility is proposed to be achieved primarily through sign locations and letter face color. Although a preference for form letters or channel letters is stated, the proposal would allow unlimited sign types, which does not meet the guidelines. Types proposed for the sign bands include face lit channel letters, halo lit letters, flat cut letters, direct vinyl letters and painted letters. (See Figure 3 for staff’s example images of the various sign types.) An aluminum projecting sign is also proposed for the tower’s edge. The proposal does not specify if it is a panel or a cabinet.                                                                                         | Revise the proposal to ensure additional coordination.<br>Limit available sign types for sign bands to flat cut out letters with external or no illumination. A projecting sign and/or vinyl painted letters are acceptable for the tower. |
| 2   | <b>Establish simplicity and reserve as preferred characteristics</b> 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 variety of possible sign types would not ensure a consistent and unified design across the building and would not ensure simplicity and reserve as the resulting appearance. Individual cut out letters with external or no illumination and a consistent method of attachment for signs in the sign bands would provide a consistent appearance and would be compatible with signs at 2415 Ivy Rd. Channel letters are not recommended to be included in the mix of available sign types because their depth and illumination are considerably different than that of the flat cut out letters and their inclusion would result in an uncoordinated, distracting appearance. Raceways would further contribute to the uncoordinated appearance. | Revise the drawings to indicate the projecting sign type (cabinet, panel, etc.).                                                                                                                                                           |
| 3   | <b>Encourage creative design.</b> The County encourages imaginative and innovative signs consistent with the purposes expressed above and in conformance with the regulations of the Albemarle County Code.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 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).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | As an independent architectural feature, the building’s tower could accommodate a different sign type. The projecting sign at the tower edge has an appropriate appearance, as does the vinyl/painted letters for the face of the tower.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 10b | b. Multiple business centers shall use a single sign type for all wall signs.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

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|      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 2415 Ivy Rd.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                              |
| 10c  | c. Compatibility among signs must be maintained through color or font and typeface selection.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Letter face colors would be limited to white, which will provide consistency. Three different typefaces are used for the primary letters of the signs. With the recommended sign type and illumination, additional typefaces are not expected to have a negative impact.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | None.                                                                                                                        |
| 10d  | Signs must be placed on the building in a manner that establishes a unified appearance.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Sign locations are indicated within the brick wall area above the front canopy. A similar area is identified on the west side of the building above the entrance. These sign locations are expected to result in a unified appearance. The locations indicated on the tower are appropriate for that feature.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | None.                                                                                                                        |
| 4, 9 | <b>Wall Signs</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                              |
| 4a   | <b>Placement:</b> 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.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <p>The primary sign locations are within the sign band of the front main block of the building, which is appropriate. Other locations are on the west elevation centered above the entrance, and on the tower. The locations do not obstruct architectural elements. The height of the sign band is identified as 52" on the front; it is taller on the side, though the dimension is not given. Available sign areas are shown as 36" tall on the front and 48" on the side. This provides 8" of clear space above and below the sign area on the front, which meets the guidelines. The bottom of the proposed available sign area on the side elevation is located just above the windows. Additional clear space should be provided.</p> <p>Three different typefaces are used for the primary letters of the signs. With the recommended sign type and illumination, additional typefaces are not expected to have a negative impact.</p> | Revise the red dashed box on the side elevation to allow a minimum of 3 rows of brick between it and the top of the windows. |
| 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. |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                              |
| 4d   | <b>Lettering and Typeface:</b> 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.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                              |
| 4e   | <p><b>Color:</b> 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.</p> <p>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</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | White is proposed for letter faces, which will help establish a harmonious appearance. A dark color is proposed for the background of the projecting sign. Other unspecified colors are proposed to be allowed for graphics.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Identify on the drawings the anticipated color for the background of the projecting sign.                                    |

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|             | balanced and unified sign design.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                   |
| 4e, 9c      | For raceway-mounted channel letters, the raceway shall match the wall color.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | The proposal includes a provision for raceway color to match wall color, but channel letters are not recommended. See 10b, above.                                                                                                                                                                                                | Eliminate channel letters and raceways as an available sign type. |
| 4f          | <b>Trademarks, corporate logos and graphics:</b> 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 proposal allows for graphics in multiple colors, with individual signs limited to 3 graphics colors, and with the stipulation that all colors have a coordinated appearance. Allowing this variety of graphics colors has worked well in other locations where the letters are limited to a single color (as is here).       | None.                                                             |
| 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.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Channel letters are one of the proposed sign types, but they are not recommended in the mix of allowable sign types. See 10b, above.                                                                                                                                                                                             | See 10b, above.                                                   |
| <b>5, 9</b> | <b><i>Lighting</i></b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                   |
| <b>5</b>    | <b>Lighting:</b> 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.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | A halogen fixture on an extended arm is proposed as an option for external illumination of the wall signs. The fixture would be pointed back towards the sign and wall. This fixture style is compatible with those on the building to the west. Finish options are available for the fixture, but they have not been specified. | Specify on the drawings the finish of the light fixture.          |
| 5a, 9e, 10e | 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. External illumination is preferred for signs in multiple business centers. | Internally illuminated channel letters are one of the proposed sign types. See 10b, above.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                   |
| 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                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                   |

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|                | 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, 9e, 10e ii | External Illumination: Lighting should be shielded and not create glare. Lighting should be aimed so as not to project illumination beyond the sign. All external light sources shall be white.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                        |       |
| 5f             | Internal Illumination: Any internal illumination is considered to contribute to visual clutter and will be limited.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                        |       |
| 5h             | <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.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                        |       |
| 10e iii        | <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).                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                        |       |
| 10e iv         | <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. |                                        |       |
| 5g             | All Illumination shall be non-blinking.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | No blinking lights are proposed.       | None. |
| 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.                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | No exposed light sources are proposed. | None. |



Various individual letter signs: Top: individual cut out letters of varying dimensions, left and right direct-mounted; middle pin-mounted.  
 Middle: painted letters (left) and vinyl letter sign (middle) with vinyl letter detail (right).  
 Bottom: internally illuminated, face lit channel letters (left), channel letters on raceway (middle), halo-lit channel letters (right).

Figure 3: Example images of various sign types.

## **SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

Staff recommend the following as the primary points of discussion:

1. The variety of sign types proposed for the sign bands.
2. Using a different sign type(s) for the building's tower.
3. The variety of proposed illumination types.

Staff recommend approval of the Comprehensive Sign Plan with the following revisions:

1. Limit available sign types for sign bands to flat cut out letters with external or no illumination. A projecting sign and/or vinyl painted letters are acceptable for the tower.
2. Revise the drawings to indicate the projecting sign type (cabinet, panel, etc.).
3. Revise the red dashed box on the side elevation to allow a minimum of 3 rows of brick between it and the top of the windows.
4. Identify on the drawings the anticipated color for the background of the projecting sign.
5. Specify on the drawings the finish of the light fixture.

## **ATTACHMENT**

Attach. 1: [SIGN202600016 & -24: 2405 Ivy Road Comprehensive Sign Plan](#)