

**HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION**  
**PERMITS IN NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICTS**  
**JULY 28, 2014**  
**NRD-2014-0073**  
**515 Congress Avenue**  
**Congress Avenue and Sixth Street**

## **PROPOSAL**

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Signage for P. Terry's restaurant.

## **PROJECT SPECIFICATIONS**

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The applicant proposes two signs:

1. A blade sign that is 10 square feet comprised of a metal three-dimensional cabinet with exposed red neon letters. The blade sign will be mounted to the building with existing hardware.
2. A wall sign above the front door that is 20 square feet, with a combination of seafoam green halo lighting and exposed red neon letters. The sign will require new mounting hardware.

## **STANDARDS FOR REVIEW**

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### **A. FLUSH-MOUNTED SIGNS**

A flush-mounted wall sign is one that is mounted flat to the wall.

#### **LOCATION**

- Locate a flush-mounted wall sign just above the display window. Do not locate a flush-mounted wall sign above second-floor windows.
- When feasible, place a wall sign such that it aligns with others in the block.
- When planning a wall sign, determine if decorative moldings exist that could define a "sign panel." If so, locate flush-mounted signs such that they fit within panels formed by moldings or transom panels on the façade. In no case should a sign obscure significant façade features.

#### **SIZE**

- In general, the maximum wall sign area on a building should not exceed 7% of the overall façade area; in some cases, however, the Commission may consider approving a maximum of 10%, if overall compatibility with the District is demonstrated.
- The maximum height of an individual flush-mounted sign shall be 2 feet.

#### **NUMBER OF SIGNS**

- Only one flush-mounted sign shall be allowed for each distinct façade module.

### **B. PROJECTING SIGNS**

#### **LOCATION**

- A projecting sign should be located near the business entrance, just above the door or to the side of it, near eye level. The bottom of the projecting sign, however, shall be a minimum of 9 feet above the sidewalk.

#### **SIZE**

- The maximum size of an individual projecting sign (one face) shall be 6 square feet. It may not extend from the building façade for a greater distance than 6 feet

or a distance equal to 2/3 the width of the abutting sidewalk, whichever distance is less.

#### NUMBER OF SIGNS

- In general, only one projecting sign per building façade is allowed. However, where the Commission determines that the result would be compatible with the District, one projecting sign shall be allowed for each distinct facade module of a building.

## II. SIGN MATERIALS

- Use materials that are compatible with the materials of the building façade.
- Painted wood and metal are appropriate materials for signs. Do not use unfinished materials, including unpainted wood.
- Use plastic only in limited amounts. Plastic may not be the predominant materials on any sign.
- Do not use highly reflective materials.

## IV. SIGN LIGHTING

- Use an external, shielded lamp to direct light at the sign.

#### DO NOT USE:

1. Internal illumination
2. Fluorescent lights
3. Sodium vapor lights.

#### NEON

- Exposed neon lighting is strongly discouraged, but may be permitted where the Commission determines it is appropriate to the context of the building and does not impede interpretation of the historic character of the building. Neon may be used to highlight reverse-channel lettering on a sign to create a “halo” effect.
- Applications for signs with exposed neon lighting must show through photographic documentation that the building had a sign with exposed neon in the historic period.

## STAFF RECOMMENDATION

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Approve the size of the signs, but recommend that the applicant develop a different type of lighting for each sign. On its face, this application should be denied as it requests signs that are too large and have exposed neon lighting, both of which are not allowed under the City’s historic district sign guidelines. On the other hand, this application is for the Bank of America Building, a high-rise which is not contributing to either the Congress Avenue or the Sixth Street historic districts. The Commission has allowed greater leeway in signage on high-rise buildings within the historic districts, but that leeway has generally been confined to the size of the proposed signs, as the design guidelines imply that signage should be relative to the size of the façade, and the facades of historic buildings on Congress Avenue and Sixth Street are much smaller than the facades of the modern high-rises in the districts. The Commission has rarely made an exception for exposed neon, and staff is genuinely concerned about the precedent that this will set for other signage within the districts. While staff is sympathetic to the applicant’s request to maintain its signature signage, another type of lighting would be more appropriate for the historic districts.

**APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF A SIGN IN NATIONAL REGISTER DISTRICTS  
OR AT A CITY HISTORIC LANDMARK**

City of Austin Historic Preservation Office

(A separate form is required for each proposed sign on the building or site)

ADDRESS of Proposed Sign: 515 Congress Ave #130 Date of Application: 7-16-14

APPLICANT:

Name: P. Terry's  
Address: 515 Congress Ave #130  
Austin TX 78701

Phone: (512) 413-1919

Fax: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: Patrick@Pterrys.com

SIGN TYPE:

☒ Flush mounted ☒ Projecting (Blade) ☐ Window ☐ Awning ☐ Directory ☐ Free-standing

SIZE OF SIGN: Height: \_\_\_\_\_ Width: \_\_\_\_\_ Depth: \_\_\_\_\_ Total sign area: \_\_\_\_\_ sq. ft.

MATERIALS AND FINISH OF SIGN: Aluminum, painted w/ neon

SIGN COLORS: White, green, red, black

SIGN LIGHTING TYPE: neon SIGN INSTALLATION METHOD: bolts to facade

SIGN CONTENT (Include name of establishment, size of letters, size of logo):

'P. Terry's' in 12" tall letters w/ exposed clear red neon @ 8'2" OAH  
'P. Terry's Burger stand' in 18" tall letters w/ exposed clear red neon & sea  
crest reverse illumination. Burger stand in 5" tall letters internally illuminated

TURN THIS FORM IN TO CITY HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE, ONE TEXAS CENTER, 505 BARTON SPRINGS ROAD AT LEAST 14 DAYS PRIOR TO HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION MEETING WITH ALL OF THE FOLLOWING:

1. One color depiction of the sign itself on 8½" x 11" paper showing the design, colors, lighting, materials, and ALL dimensions of the sign (height, width and depth), as well as mounting detail (unless using existing mounting apparatus).
2. One dimensioned drawing on 8½" x 11" paper showing the exact placement of the sign on the building. For projecting and awning signs, show the distance from the bottom of the sign to the sidewalk. For awning, window, and flush-mounted signs, show the dimensions of the façade, window, or awning, as appropriate. For free-standing signs, include a dimensioned site layout showing the proposed placement of the sign on the site and its relationship to other buildings and landscape features.
3. Color photographs showing the location of the proposed sign.
4. Paint chip or surface finish sample for all proposed sign surfaces.

ONLY COMPLETED APPLICATIONS WITH ALL REQUIRED EXHIBITS CAN BE ACCEPTED AND REVIEWED.

Signature of Property Owner/Agent (Required)

Signature of Applicant (Required)

CITY USE ONLY:

Case No. \_\_\_\_\_

HLC Date: \_\_\_\_\_