



Design Review Board Case # 20-0003
Blocks 4&5 – Carlyle Crossing Coordinated Sign Plan

Application	General Data	
Project Name: Carlyle Crossing Coordinated Sign Plan Special Use Permit Location: Blocks 4 & 5 – Eisenhower East 2410 and 2460 Mill Road Applicant: HTC 4/5 Project Owner LLC	DRB Date:	February 25, 2021
	Site Area:	5.07 acres
	Zone:	CDD #2
	Proposed Use:	Residential, Retail, Parking
	Gross Floor Area:	1,021,711 sf
Purpose of Application: DRB review and approval of a Coordinated Sign Plan for the Carlyle Crossing mixed-use project. The plan proposes a program of design guidelines, principles, and regulations for signage to include street- and upper-level retail signage, residential identity signage, and other site signage.		

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DRB ACTION FOR FEBRUARY 25, 2021 WORK SESSION - SUMMARY:

The DRB voted unanimously to recommend approval of the Applicant's Coordinated Sign SUP as submitted, by a vote of 4-0 with one abstention (Lynch not present). The project was previously presented to the DRB for initial design review in December 2020 and returned in February for final review and approval. Councilwoman Pepper spoke first and comment on the desire to see a much larger signs for the major grocery tenant – possibly on the roof, like marquis from the foregoing era. The Applicant did not disagree but expressed reservation over making these signs any larger. Staff also clarified that when Council approved the original DSUP, which approved the signage architectural, it was considered already be quite large. Thus, justifying additional changes to the proposed volumetrics, design and dimensions of the grocery tenant's signage would be difficult. Staff also noted that signage above the parapet creates legal challenges, as these are currently prohibited. Pepper also asked if there is additional Wegman's signage on site, which the Applicant confirm.

Steve Carlin (Applicant Team) and Duncan Blair (Applicant's Attorney) indicated that larger signage could also become a nuisance for people living in the neighborhood and that there is a need to move forward the project as proposed.

Board Member Roger Lewis asked if signage at the skyline level could be more architecturally integrated into the roof of the building – which Staff noted is also prohibited under the Zoning Code. He also noted that it would also be a distraction for motorists. He went on to recognize the merits of the existing proposal and that it should be approved as-is. Following Staff and the Board's discussion of the Councilwoman's comments, the Applicant requested these considerations be tabled for a later and undetermined date, in the interest of time.

Board Member Lee Quill spoke to share his support for the plan and agreed with the Applicant that as submitted but also asked if studying the changes requested by his fellow board member is possible. Staff reiterated the need to keep conceptual requests within the constraints of the existing Zoning Ordinance.

Tom Canfield made a motion to approve the project as proposed, which was seconded by Roger Lewis. The motion passed with a vote of 4-0, with Lynch absent. Canfield then made a second motion to study the feasibility of additional Wegman's signage to provide greater visibility from the beltway, in consultation with Staff and the Grocery Tenant. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Pepper and passed with a vote of 4-0, with Lynch absent.

DRB Approval Process

The Carlyle/Eisenhower East Design Review Board (DRB) is charged with reviewing applications within CDDs #2 (Eisenhower Avenue Metro), #11 (South Carlyle), and #1 (Duke Street) for development in those areas which requires a Special Use Permit (SUP). The applicant

is requesting DRB approval of a Coordinated Sign Plan SUP (CSP-SUP) currently scheduled for public hearings by Planning Commission and City Council in April 2021.

The applicant for the Carlyle Crossing project, in consultation with staff, elected to submit an application for a Coordinated Sign Plan SUP separately from the DSUP. This allowed the applicant and staff time to focus on the complex construction phasing and scheduling of the site plan and structures, and to allow time to devise a sign plan for a project of a scale which has no precedent in the city. Two key elements of the sign plan that were included in the project's DSUP application, and approved by the DRB and City Council are the large-scale blade signs on Stovall that are intended to house the primary grocery sign and retail sign in proximity to the parking entrance.

Carlyle Crossing Project Background

The Carlyle Crossing project, then known as Hoffman Blocks 4 & 5, was recommended for approval by the DRB in January 2018. Various aspects of the project were presented to the Board at five (5) other meetings throughout 2017. The DSUP application (DSUP#2017-0023) for the project was approved by the Planning Commission and City Council in March 2018.

In the summer of 2019, the Applicant made height and footprint modifications to the West Tower of the project, necessitated by a program change from condominium to multifamily rental. The DRB reviewed and approved these changes in June 2019, which were subsequently approved by Planning Commission and City Council in July 2019 (DSUP#2019-0018). As a condition of DSUP approval, the DRB was authorized to approve the final architecture of the West Tower building, and did so on July 18, 2019. The buildings are well under construction, with completion and occupancy expected in late 2021-2022.

A Coordinated Sign Plan SUP was approved in 1997 for the overall Hoffman site, at which time Blocks 4 & 5 were used for parking. The Hoffman Coordinated Sign Plan provided a signage plan primarily serving the movie theatre and the retail spaces on Block 6B. It incorporated wall signs and hanging signs, a coordinated street sign system, and freestanding signs (both pole and ground mounted). The freestanding signs were planned in nine (9) locations to identify major tenants and give direction to tenants and parking. Due to the age of the previous Hoffman Coordinated Sign Plan and the changed nature of several developments, the majority of new developments are pursuing or will pursue separate Coordinated Sign Plans, including Carlyle Crossing.

Zoning & Master Plan Designation

Section 9-103(C) of the Zoning Ordinance permits a Coordinated Sign Plan with Special Use Permit approval for sites within specific zones or over a minimum size. The applicant must develop a Coordinated Sign Plan for consideration by City Council which establishes the time, manner, and placement of signs and establishes the design parameters for all proposed signs. City Council may then approve the Coordinated Sign Plan if the proposal, "provides the same or greater benefits to the public as the sign regulations otherwise applicable."

Carlyle Crossing is zoned CDD#2 and is located within the boundaries of the Eisenhower East Small Area Plan. With regard to signage, conditions of CDD#2 are general in nature, calling for

“variety and creativity of design,” but also directing that signage and storefront design should highlight the identity of individual business tenants, and that signage should be coordinated with the building design and include integration with any proposed awnings, canopies, etc.

CDD #2 Signage Conditions

- #161 - Design business and identification signs to relate in material, color and scale to the building on which the sign is displayed to the satisfaction of the Director of P&Z.
 - a. The business and identification signs shall be designed of high quality materials and sign messages shall be limited to logos and names.
 - b. Installation of building mounted signage shall not damage the building and signage shall comply with all applicable codes and ordinances. (P&Z)
- #162 - Internally illuminated box signs are prohibited. Explore the use of exterior illumination. (P&Z)
- #163 - A freestanding monument or identification sign shall be prohibited. (P&Z)
- #164 - Install a temporary informational sign on the site prior to the approval of the final site plan for the project. The sign shall be displayed until construction is complete or replaced with a contractor or real estate sign incorporating the required information; the sign shall notify the public of the nature of the upcoming project and shall provide a phone number for public questions regarding the project. * (P&Z)(T&ES)

Signage Conditions from DSUP#2019-0018 (Blocks 4 & 5)

Blocks 4 & 5 were approved with the following conditions relating to signage. Of the conditions, is the requirement to submit a coordinated sign plan SUP, which requires approval by City Council.

- #29- Install a temporary informational sign as required by Section 11-303(D) of the Zoning Ordinance on the site prior to the approval of the Final Site Plan for the project. The sign shall be displayed until construction is complete or replaced with a temporary sign incorporating the required information; the sign shall notify the public of the nature of the upcoming project and shall provide a phone number for public questions regarding the project. * (P&Z)(T&ES)
- #30- The Applicant shall submit a coordinated sign plan SUP at a future date. The plan shall include a color palette and shall coordinate the location, scale, number, massing, character and encroachment considerations of all proposed signage to the satisfaction of the Director of P&Z and shall be approved by City Council prior to the release of the Final Site Plan.*

- a. Design and develop a sign plan for wayfinding and directional signage. The plan shall be included as part of the Final Site Plan and shall coordinate the location, scale, massing and character of all proposed signage to the satisfaction of the Director of T&ES. Installation of building mounted signage shall not damage the building and signage shall comply with all applicable codes and ordinances * (T&ES)
 - b. The building signs shall be designed to relate in material, color and scale to the building and the tenant bay on which the sign is displayed to the satisfaction of the Director of P&Z.
 - c. The building signs shall be designed of high-quality materials.
 - d. Installation of building mounted signage shall not damage the building and signage shall comply with all applicable codes and ordinances. (P&Z)
 - e. Internally illuminated box signs are prohibited. Explore the use of exterior illumination. (P&Z)
- #31- Provide signage at the entrances to the parking garage with retail parking that is consistent with the City's Wayfinding standards for identifying parking garages. *(T&ES)

Eisenhower East Small Area Plan, Eisenhower East Design Guidelines

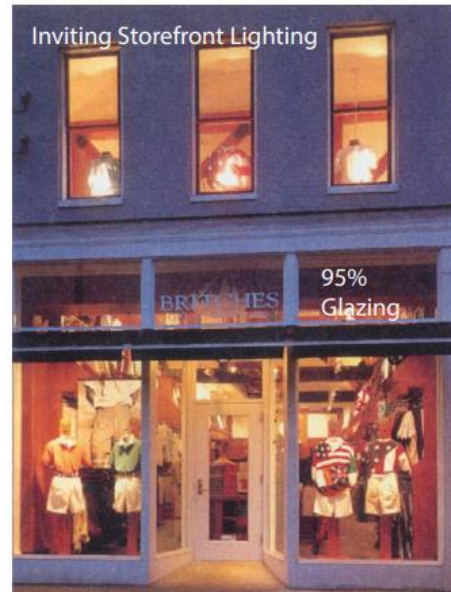
The proposed project is located within the Eisenhower East Small Area Plan. The Plan calls for a variety of retail uses that meet the needs of residents, employees, and visitors. It also calls for signage to be utilized within a placemaking context and to be free and visible. The Eisenhower East Design Guidelines provide more specific direction on signage, as depicted in the graphic. They encourage awnings, canopies and covered walkways, along with minimum floor to ceiling heights.

The Eisenhower East Design Guidelines reiterate general principles for retail expression and add a few specific guidelines pertaining to retail itself:

- Diverse and individualized storefronts with varied materials, signage, lighting, and awnings
- Retail tenant signs shall be designed of high-quality materials as an integral part of the building and related in materials, color and scale to the remainder of the building
- Parapet and wall signs shall be limited to the first-floor level
- Box signs are prohibited
- Storefront window signage is allowed up to 20% of the glass surface area
- No permanent free-standing signs, with the exception of traffic and directional signage, shall be allowed.

RETAIL

- Pronounced entryways, with canopies where appropriate
- Awnings/covered walkways
- Protruding/recessed bays
- Outdoor seating for restaurants/cafes
- Street furniture
 - Benches
 - Planters/flower boxes
- Individualized storefronts/signage
- 15' minimum floor-to-ceiling height
- 75-95% glazing on retail storefronts
- * 20-40- retail bay spacing



Restaurant and retail developments in Eisenhower, such as Block 6A ([DSUP#2017-0015](#), [SUP#1997-0163](#), *et al.*) have received approval for greater signage ratios – 1.5:1 instead of the required 1:1. Historically, development approvals have also regulated ground floor transparency and for signage to relate in material, color and scale to the building, to the discretion of the Director of Planning and Zoning. The Coordinated Sign Plan for the Potomac Yard Virginia Tech Innovation Campus (SUP #2020-00043) was recently approved by City Council with ratios of 1.5:1. The request was supported by Staff and Council as the plan called for high quality materials and was found to be similar to other compatible developments in region.

Applicant Proposal

The Applicant is requesting approval of a Coordinated Sign Plan SUP for 9,868 square feet of signage for Blocks 4 & 5/ Carlyle Crossing. Carlyle Crossing is a mixed-use development currently under construction that will have more than 1,000,000 gross square feet of programmed floor area. An additional SUP is also required, as the proposal includes more than one (1) sign above 35-feet.

Staff Analysis & Recommendations

The Applicant worked with City Staff on the location of signage so that it relates to the module and pattern of the building façade systems. The requested signage is placed between architectural elements and in proportion to the various levels of the buildings according to the projected distance from viewers. There are four types or groupings of signage that are considered for this project: Ground-Level Signage for the primary retail base; Level 3 Signage for the above-grade retail tenants; Skyline Signage for the residential towers, and; Large-Scale Blade Signage for the grocer and primary retail garage entry.

The Large-Scale Blade Signage, as mentioned above, has already been reviewed by the DRB as to location, scale, and design of the architectural features that will contain the signage. Based on the previous approval, no further approvals are necessary at this time.

The square feet, maximum dimensions, and ratio(s) to linear feet of frontage are proposed as maximums within a system of design guidelines. In application, signs may be smaller or up to these proposed sizes. Any signs that exceed these proposed maximums would require an amendment to the Coordinated Sign Plan with DRB, Planning Commission, and City Council approval.

<u>Signage Above 35'</u>			
Elevation	Level-3 Retail	Skyline	Projecting
Eastern	372 Square feet	N/A	N/A
Western	2,215 Square feet	N/A	1,070 Square feet
Northern	N/A	514 Square feet	N/A
Southern	1,680 Square feet	511 Square feet	N/A
Plaza East	210 Square feet	N/A	N/A
Plaza West	212 Square feet	N/A	N/A

i. Ground Level Signage

The Applicant is requesting a ratio of 1.5 square feet per to 1 linear square feet of frontage, instead of the standard sign ordinance ratio of 1:1. Given the size and scale of the development, Staff find that the signage proposed at these location to be generally acceptable. Blade signage is proposed at the pedestrian scale and is also found to be appropriately located and sized. Staff find the levels and volume of signage appropriate for the unique demands of the site as a retail (shopping) focused, mixed-use, transit-oriented hub.

ii. Level-3 Retail and Projecting Signage

The Applicant is proposing approximately 6,800 square feet of signage above 35-feet, primarily at the third retail level, at a requested ratio of 2:1. This figure is inclusive of the blade signs on Stovall Street (1,070 square feet). Per recent consideration with the Planning Commission and City Council for the North Potomac Yard development, this ratio appears to be acceptable given the scale of the development. Carlyle Crossing is a unique in that it is a retail focused high-rise development. The retail “experience” is concentrated in a symmetrical courtyard located at the northern terminus of Swamp Fox Road and radiates throughout multiple levels of the entire site. Given the pedestrian and retail focus, bold and architecturally responsive signage is necessary in order to create a unique sense of place and serve as wayfinding. Staff researched other relevant examples, including the Potomac Yards CSP SUP#2020-0043, which also supported increased signage ratios due to scale, programmatic focus and elevated architecture. Staff encourages the Applicant to continue refining how the signage integrates with the building architecture to further the creation of an unique place in the City. As with the Potomac Yard SUP, there is an expectation for high-

quality materials and design.



Figure Above: Proposed brand-lettering applied to architectural encroachment at Carlyle Crossing

iii. Skyline Signage.

The Applicant is requesting approval of four skyline signs at a ratio of 2:1. They are proposed along the southern and northern elevations and are reserved for either the residential name/brands associated with the development.

With this submission, the Applicant has refined the design and placement of the skyline signage, which, aside from the grocer, are a signature branding element for the block's redevelopment. A fourth skyline sign has been added to the Western tower and architectural studies demonstrating the proposed composition were also included. The Applicant has also provided further detail that clarifies the place of this element within the architecture of the building. Previously, Staff expressed concern regarding the requested volumetrics and dimension. However, the Applicant has provided more direction on the specific lettering and "programming" within the requested volumes – which Staff now generally recognize as acceptable.

Staff find that the pin-mounted signage included with in the submission scales more elegantly with the building and its architectural elements. The unique branded image above the lettering also relates to the signage for same at the pedestrian entrance of building. As such, these images and letters help create both a unique sense of place that ties the building to the greater development, while simultaneously marketing the site from both near and afar. The design solutions proposed on the buildings are appropriate, however Staff do not believe the design precedent provided in the sign guidelines and shown immediately below would be appropriate for inclusion. The

background does not fit with the architectural aesthetic that was otherwise been developed for the building .



iv.

Figure Above: Skyline studies from present submission

Individual letters / logo shapes



Illumination

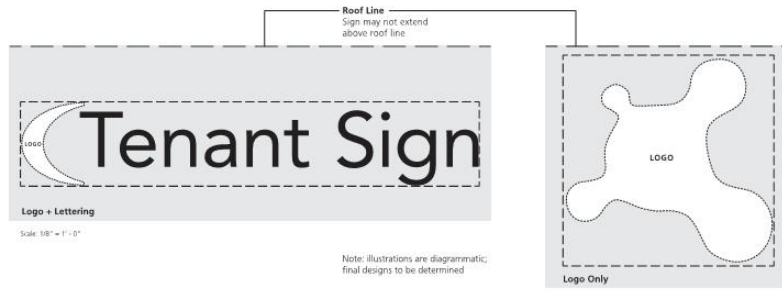


Figure Above: With the Potomac Yard CSP SUP (SUP#2020-00043), a logo was also used to reinforce the use/tenant of the space.



Figure Above: Proposed Signage and Branding Logo for Boutique Tower

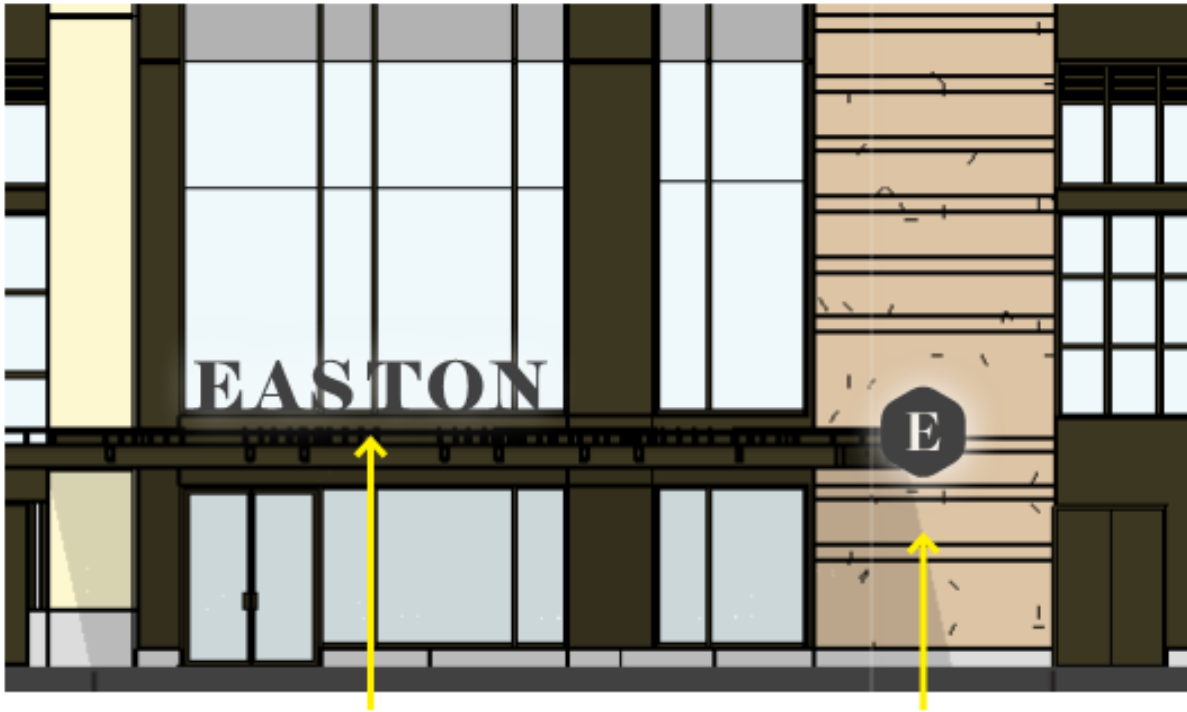
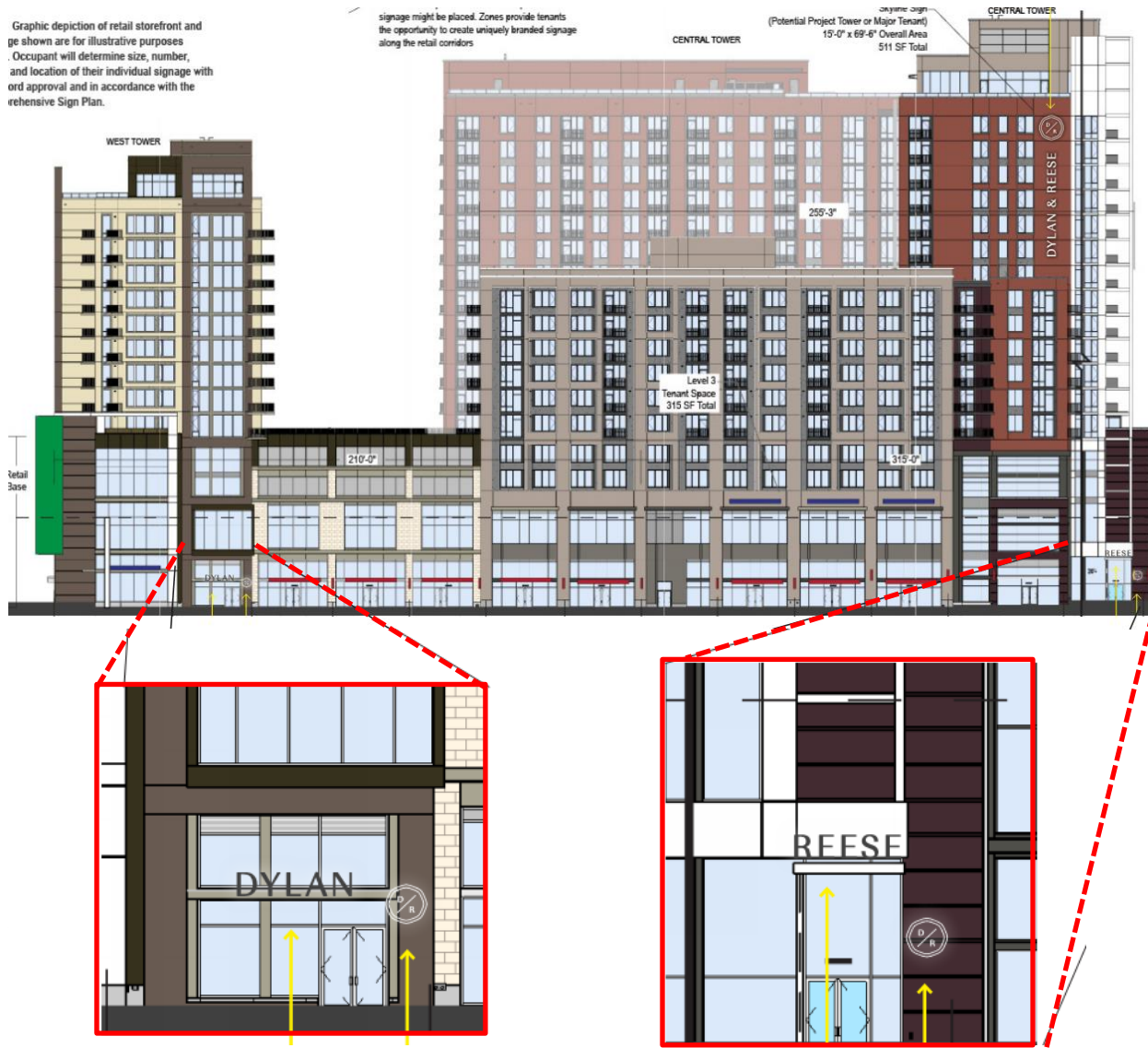


Figure Above: The Skyline signage for the boutique tower responds architecturally to the building and the ground floor entrance.



Conclusion

Staff is generally supportive of this most recent version of the Plan. There is a general consensus that the *Level-1* signage is acceptable and appropriate, given the proposed volume of retail and commercial space anticipated at the site. Staff believe that the branding for the *Skyline Signage* has also moved in a positive direction as it is both legible and elegant, given how it affixes to the building. The ratios requested at *Level-3* are also generally acceptable. Staff looks forward to further direction on the signage guidelines from the DRB.

Attachment 1: Eisenhower East Block Map

Eisenhower East / Carlyle Blocks

SITE

