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10-18-03

Docket Item #7
SPECIAL USE PERMIT #2003-0083

Planning Commission Meeting
October 7, 2003

ISSUE: Consideration of a request to construct additional freestanding signs, with a setback modification.

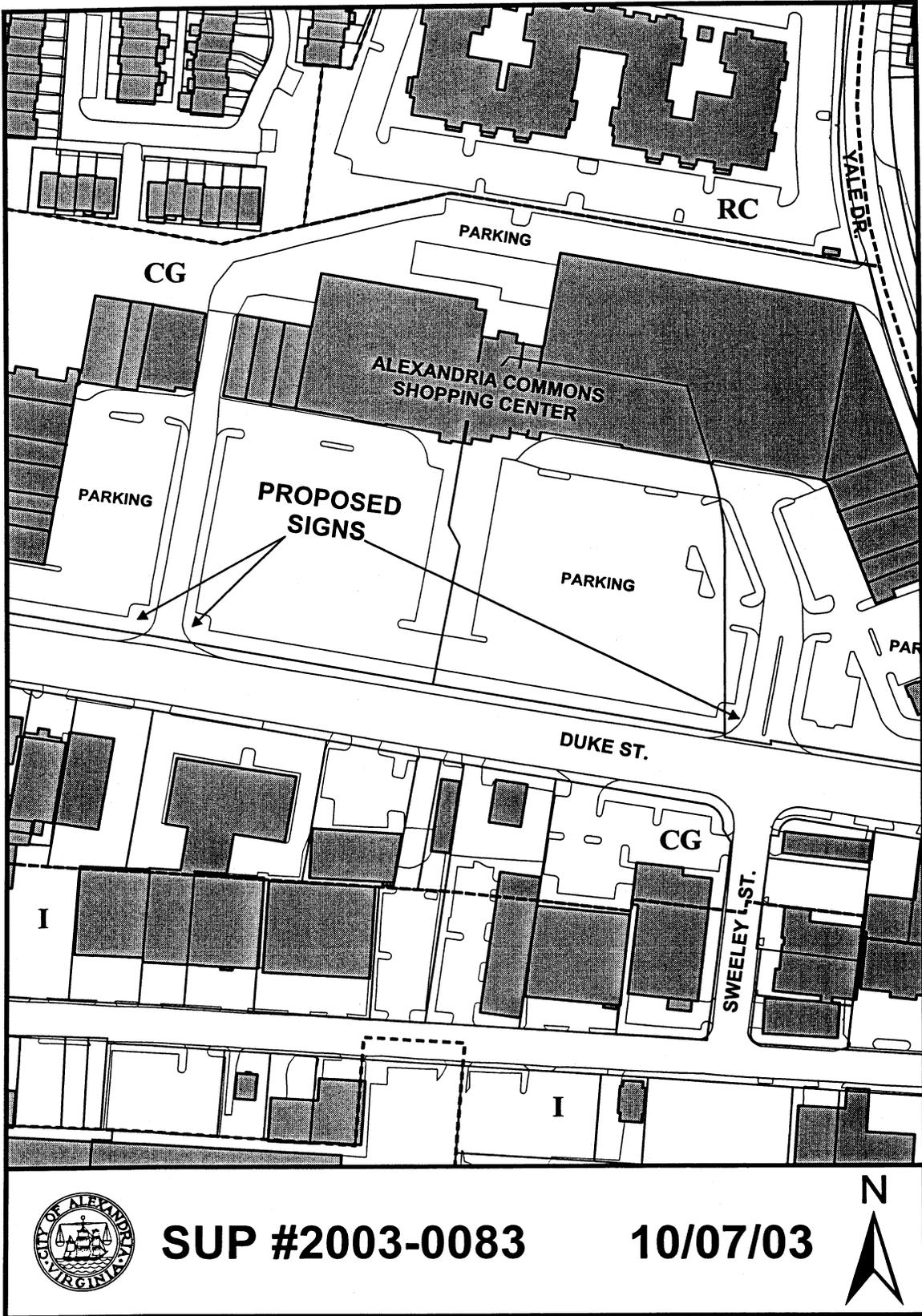
APPLICANT: JB Rosenthal Retail
by Johnathan Rak, attorney

LOCATION: 3125 Duke Street

ZONE: CG/Commercial General

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION, OCTOBER 7, 2003: By unanimous consent, the Planning Commission recommended approval of the request, subject to compliance with all applicable codes, ordinances and staff recommendations.

Reason: The Planning Commission agreed with the staff analysis.



SUP #2003-0083

10/07/03



STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends **approval** subject to compliance with all applicable codes and ordinances and the following conditions:

1. The applicant shall replace the disturbed front entrance landscaping once the signs are installed.
2. The three new signs shall be consistent in size, location, and design with those submitted with this application.

Staff Note: In accordance with section 11-506(c) of the zoning ordinance, construction or operation shall be commenced and diligently and substantially pursued within 18 months of the date of granting of a special use permit by City Council or the special use permit shall become void.

DISCUSSION:

1. The applicant, JB Rosenfield Retail, requests special use permit approval for two additional free standing signs and a site plan modification for three signs at 3125 Duke Street (Alexandria Commons).
2. The subject property is two lots of record with a combined frontage of approximately 1,138 feet on Duke Street and a total lot area of 12.6 acres. The site is developed with the Alexandria Commons Shopping Center. Access to the property is from Duke Street.

Alexandria Commons, located on the north side of Duke Street just south of the intersection of Duke and Quaker Lane, is a shopping center comprised of 146,133 square feet of retail, office, and personal service space, and 635 parking spaces. There is one existing free standing sign in the parking lot of the shopping center. There are two vehicular entrances from Duke Street.

3. On April 15, 1989, City Council granted SUP#2241 to construct an oversized sign of 185 square feet. The zoning ordinance at that time identified the maximum sign area for a free standing sign at the shopping center to be 150 square feet, which could be increased with a special use permit. On September 5, 1989, City Council approved SUP#2241-A to amend the content of the sign. The sign is the only freestanding sign currently on the property.
4. The applicant proposes to install three new monument signs at the shopping center. Two of the proposed signs would be located on both sides of the westernmost vehicular entrance, one of which will be installed in front of the existing concrete retaining wall on the west side of the entrance. The other sign is proposed on the western side of the easternmost vehicular entrance. Two of the signs require special use permit approval for exceeding the maximum of two signs allowed on the property. All three signs require a modification to the Duke Street building setback line.
5. The proposed signs will each be approximately 5.75 feet in height, from the base of the sign structure to the top of the supporting pillars, 15.00 feet in length, and 1.66 feet in width (see attached picture). The total sign area for each of the three signs, calculated from the sign face only, is 30.54 square feet, totaling 91.62 square feet of additional sign area for the shopping center. Landscaping is proposed to remain in the area around the signs.
6. Number of Signs: Section 9-202 (B)(5)(d) of the zoning ordinance allows the maximum number of freestanding signs to be increased above the allowable two with a special use permit if the commercial lot has a frontage in excess of 300 feet. In this case, the lot width of the subject property is 1,230 feet along Duke Street, therefore, the number of signs may be increased with a special use permit.

7. Building Setback Line: Section 7-1006 (B) of the zoning ordinance states that the building setback line on both sides of Duke Street from Diagonal Road to Quaker Lane shall be at least 60 feet from the existing centerline of Duke Street. Section 7-1006 identifies the intent of this setback provision is to provide sufficient area for use as sidewalks and highway right-of-way and in order to provide for a consistent building line. Structures, such as signs, are not permitted within the setback area.

In this case, the signs are proposed to be located approximately 15 feet inside the setback area (approximately 45 feet from the centerline of Duke Street). Section 11-416 (A) of the zoning ordinance allows a modification of the setback if the planning commission determines that such modification is necessary or desirable for good site development, that specific and identified features of the design make up for those impacts otherwise protected by the regulations for which modification is sought and that such modification will not be detrimental to neighboring property or to the public health, safety and welfare. Staff construes the application to be a request for a site plan modification under this section.

8. Zoning: The subject property is located in the CG/Commercial General zone.
9. Master Plan: The proposed use is consistent with the Taylor Run/Duke Street small area plan chapter of the Master Plan which designates the property for commercial use.

STAFF ANALYSIS:

Staff does not object to the proposed freestanding signs located at 3125 Duke Street. Although, staff would like to minimize the amount of signs along Duke Street in general, the proposed signs are low monument signs and are less automobile oriented than other freestanding signs seen along Duke Street. The signs leave sufficient area for the sidewalk and highway right-of-way, and do not interfere with the existing building setback line. In addition, the shopping center is at a higher grade and less visible from Duke Street, and the low monument signs will provide additional visibility for the center, while maintaining the pedestrian landscape.

Staff recommends approval of the special use permit.

STAFF: Eileen Fogarty, Director, Department of Planning and Zoning;
Barbara Ross, Deputy Director;
Valerie Peterson, Urban Planner.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

Legend: C - code requirement R - recommendation S - suggestion F - finding

Transportation & Environmental Services:

F-1 No comments.

Code Enforcement:

C-1 Construction permits are required for the proposed projects.

Health Department:

F-1 No comments.

Police Department:

F-1 No objections.

Parks and Recreation:

R-1 The applicant shall replace the disturbed front entrance landscaping once new signs are installed.

All applicants must complete this form. Supplemental forms are required for child care facilities, restaurants, automobile oriented uses and freestanding signs requiring special use permit approval.

1. The applicant is (check one) the Owner Contract Purchaser
 Lessee or Other: _____ of the subject property.

State the name, address and percent of ownership of any person or entity owning an interest in the applicant, unless the entity is a corporation or partnership in which case identify each owner of more than ten percent.

There are no individual owners with more than 10% ownership
of the corporation.

If property owner or applicant is being represented by an authorized agent such as an attorney, realtor, or other person for which there is some form of compensation, does this agent or the business in which the agent is employed have a business license to operate in the City of Alexandria, Virginia?

- Yes. Provide proof of current City business license
 No. The agent shall obtain a business license prior to filing application, if required by the City Code.

2. Submit a floor plan and a plot plan with parking layout of the proposed use. One copy of the plan is required for plans that are 8½" x 14" or smaller. Twenty-four copies are required for larger plans or if the plans cannot be easily reproduced. The planning director may waive requirements for plan submission upon receipt of a written request which adequately justifies a waiver. This requirement does not apply if a Site Plan Package is required.

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

3. The applicant shall describe below the nature of the request in detail so that the Planning Commission and City Council can understand the nature of the operation and the use, including such items as the nature of the activity, the number and type of patrons, the number of employees, the hours, how parking is to be provided for employees and patrons, and whether the use will generate any noise. (Attach additional sheets if necessary)

The site contains one (1) existing free-standing monument sign.

The applicant requests permission to add three (3) free-standing signs along the Duke Street frontage at the mouths of the 2 entry points to the shopping center. Two (2) signs will flank the western entrance and one (1) sign will be located on the western side of the eastern entrance.

The subject of the SUP request is:

(1) permission for two (2) free-standing signs. (1 of the 3 signs is allowed by ordinance Section 9-202(B)(5).)

(2) permission for all three (3) free-standing signs to encroach the building setback line of Duke Street.

USE CHARACTERISTICS

4. The proposed special use permit request is for: *(check one)*

- a new use requiring a special use permit,
- a development special use permit,
- an expansion or change to an existing use without a special use permit,
- expansion or change to an existing use with a special use permit,
- other. Please describe: _____

5. Please describe the capacity of the proposed use:

A. How many patrons, clients, pupils and other such users do you expect? Specify time period (i.e., day, hour, or shift).

Not applicable

B. How many employees, staff and other personnel do you expect? Specify time period (i.e., day, hour, or shift).

Not applicable

6. Please describe the proposed hours and days of operation of the proposed use:

Day:

Hours:

Not applicable

Not applicable

7. Please describe any potential noise emanating from the proposed use:

A. Describe the noise levels anticipated from all mechanical equipment and patrons.

Not applicable

10. Will any hazardous materials, as defined by the state or federal government, be handled, stored, or generated on the property?

Yes. No.

If yes, provide the name, monthly quantity, and specific disposal method below:

11. Will any organic compounds, for example paint, ink, lacquer thinner, or cleaning or degreasing solvent, be handled, stored, or generated on the property?

Yes. No.

If yes, provide the name, monthly quantity, and specific disposal method below:

12. What methods are proposed to ensure the safety of residents, employees and patrons?

Not applicable

ALCOHOL SALES

13. Will the proposed use include the sale of beer, wine, or mixed drinks?

Yes. No.

If yes, describe alcohol sales below, including if the ABC license will include on-premises and/or off-premises sales. Existing uses must describe their existing alcohol sales and/or service and identify any proposed changes in that aspect of the operation.

PARKING AND ACCESS REQUIREMENTS

14. Please provide information regarding the availability of off-street parking:

A. How many parking spaces are required for the proposed use pursuant to section 8-200 (A) of the zoning ordinance?

Not applicable

B. How many parking spaces of each type are provided for the proposed use:

 Standard spaces Not applicable

 Compact spaces

 Handicapped accessible spaces.

 Other.

C. Where is required parking located? on-site off-site (check one)

If the required parking will be located off-site, where will it be located:

Not applicable

Pursuant to section 8-200 (C) of the zoning ordinance, commercial and industrial uses may provide off-site parking within 500 feet of the proposed use, provided that the off-site parking is located on land zoned for commercial or industrial uses. All other uses must provide parking on-site, except that off-street parking may be provided within 300 feet of the use with a special use permit.

D. If a reduction in the required parking is requested, pursuant to section 8-100 (A) (4) or (5) of the zoning ordinance, complete the PARKING REDUCTION SUPPLEMENTAL APPLICATION.

15. Please provide information regarding loading and unloading facilities for the use:

A. How many loading spaces are required for the use, per section 8-200 (B) of the zoning ordinance? Not applicable

B. How many loading spaces are available for the use? Not applicable

C. Where are off-street loading facilities located? Not applicable

D. During what hours of the day do you expect loading/unloading operations to occur?
Not applicable

E. How frequently are loading/unloading operations expected to occur, per day or per week, as appropriate?

Not applicable

16. Is street access to the subject property adequate or are any street improvements, such as a new turning lane, necessary to minimize impacts on traffic flow?

Not applicable

SITE CHARACTERISTICS

17. Will the proposed uses be located in an existing building? Yes No

Do you propose to construct an addition to the building? Yes No

How large will the addition be? _____ square feet.

18. What will the total area occupied by the proposed use be?

_____ sq. ft. (existing) + _____ sq. ft. (addition if any) = _____ sq. ft. (total)

19. The proposed use is located in: (check one)

a stand alone building a house located in a residential zone a warehouse

a shopping center. Please provide name of the center: _____

an office building. Please provide name of the building: _____

other, please describe: Three (3) additional free-standing signs

FREESTANDING SIGN SUPPLEMENTAL APPLICATION

Supplemental information to be filed by applicants requesting special use permit approval of an additional freestanding sign. A plat showing the location of all existing and proposed signs and elevations of all proposed signs must be submitted.

1. How many freestanding signs exist on the property? 1

2. Please provide the size of each existing freestanding sign(s), including, length, width and square footage of the sign face, and the height of the sign above grade:

(1) EXISTING FREESTANDING SIGN

LENGTH 12'-0"

WIDTH 3'-6"

HEIGHT 30'-0"

3. Provide the length of frontage for every street that the subject property touches.

1230 FEET OF FRONTAGE ON DUKE STREET.

600 FEET OF FRONTAGE ON YALE DRIVE

4. How many businesses are located on the property? 29

5. How many signs are proposed? (3) FREESTANDING SIGNS; ALTHOUGH (1) IS ALLOWED BY ORDINANCE.

6. Provide the size of each proposed freestanding sign(s), including, length, width and square footage of the sign face, and the height of the sign above grade:

FOR (3) PROPOSED SIGNS:

LENGTH - 15'-0"

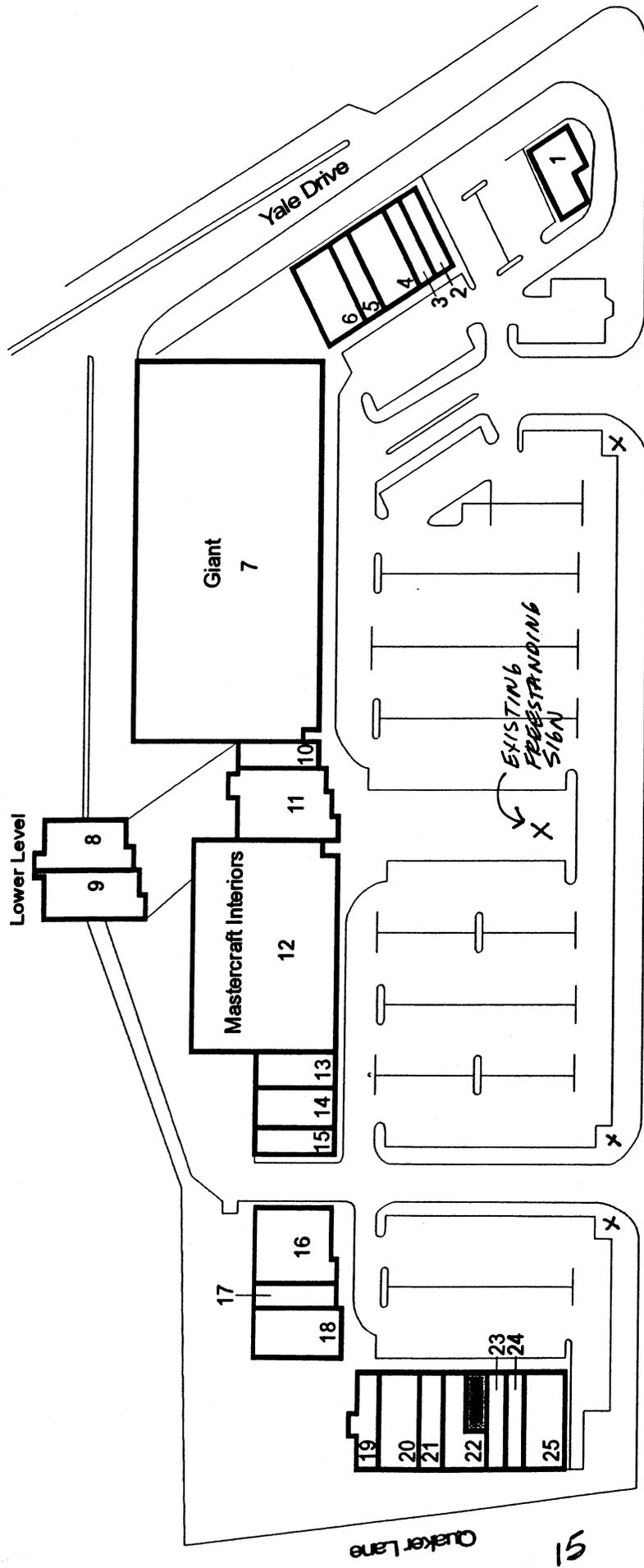
WIDTH - 1'-10"

HEIGHT - 6'-11¹/₄"

7. How will the sign(s) be illuminated? _____

THE SIGN WILL BE ILLUMINATED INTERNALLY.

Alexandria Commons



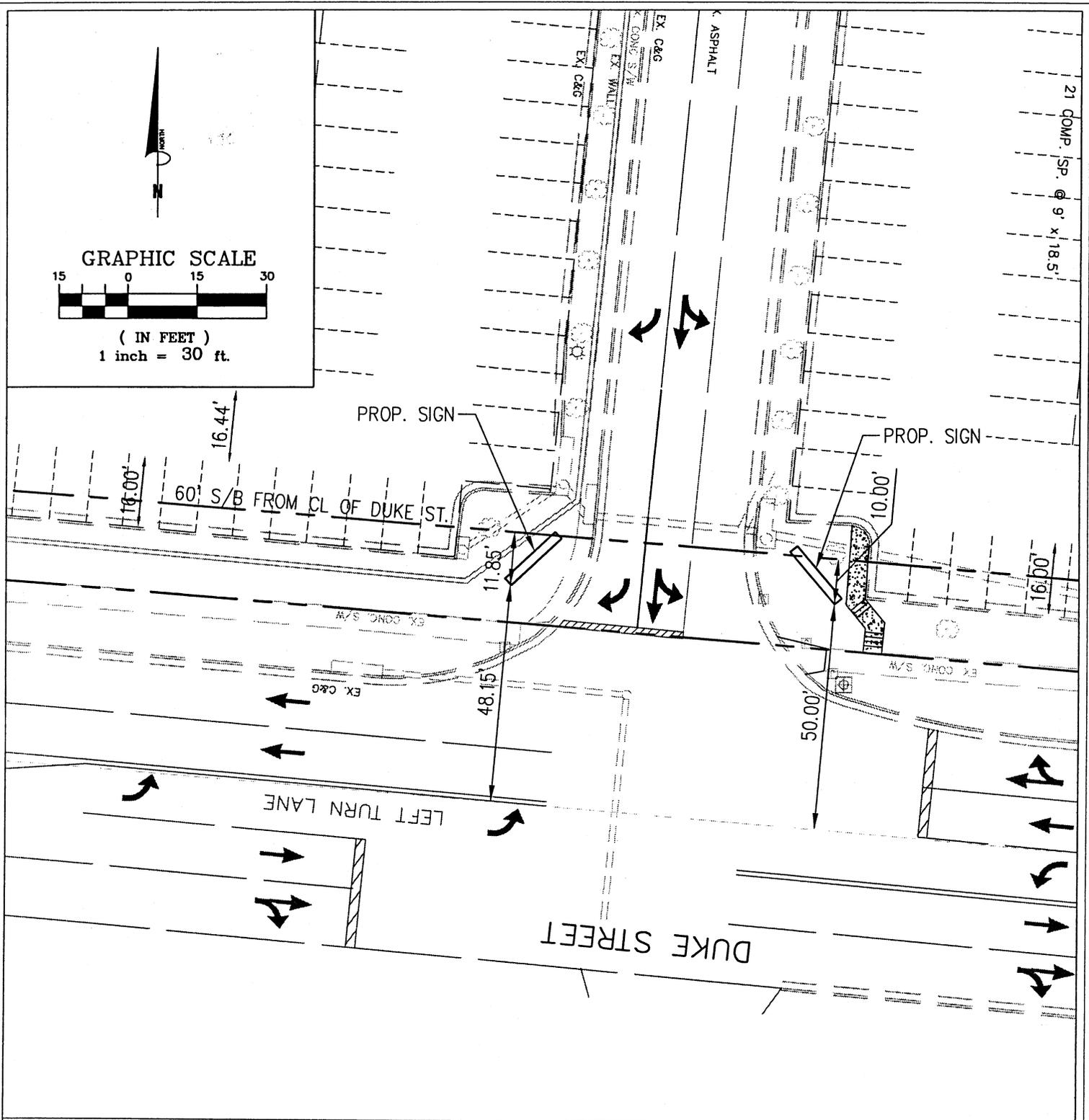
Duke Street

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(X) PREPARED FREE-STANDING SIGN LOCATIONS.

Quaker Lane

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DWG: H:\1045-01\Alex Commons\1045-SIGN-EXH.dwg

SCALE: 1"=30'

DATE: 09/15/03

Bowman
CONSULTING

ALEXANDRIA COMMONS (WESTERN ENTRANCE)
CITY OF ALEXANDRIA
VIRGINIA

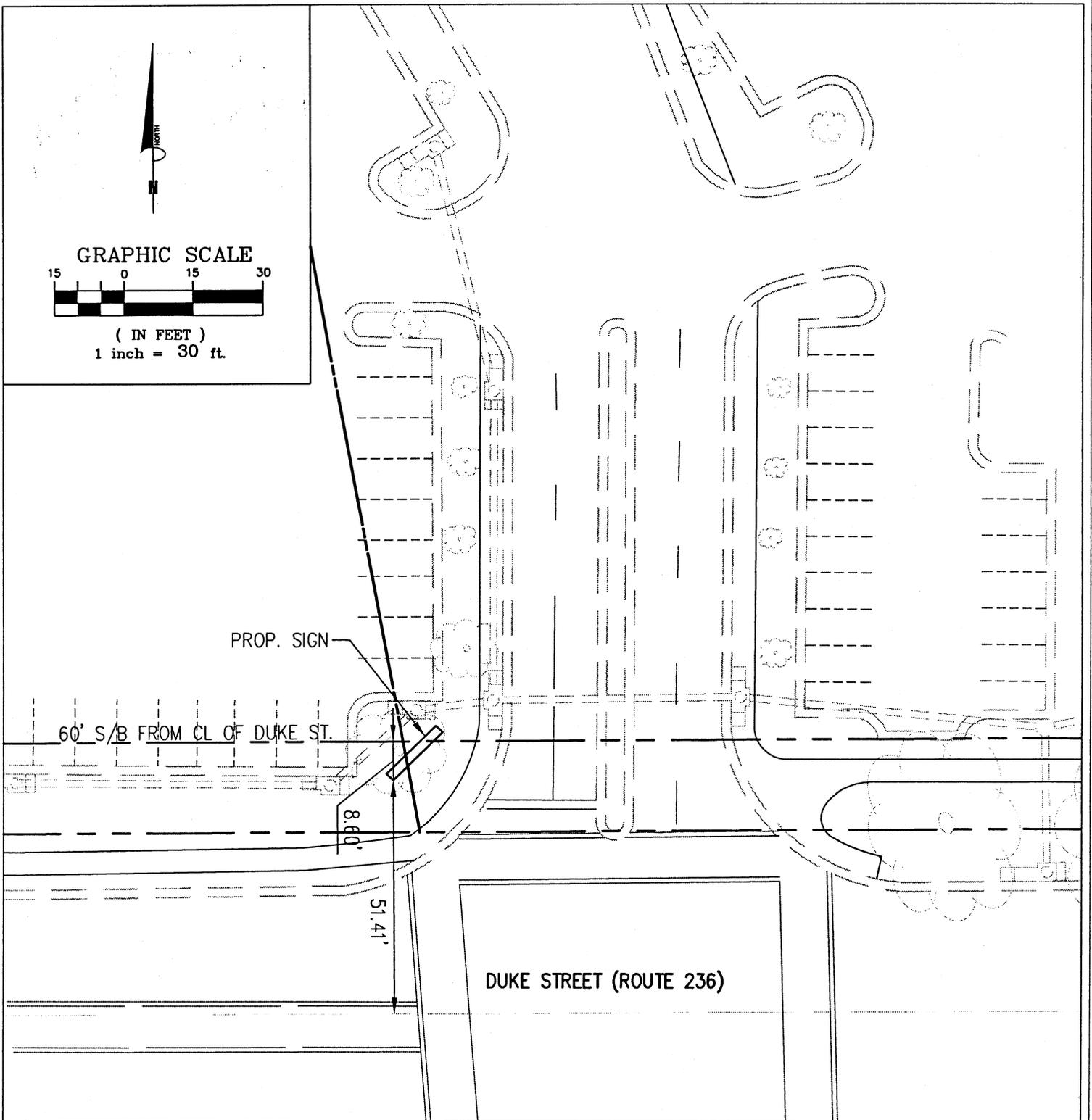
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(IN FEET)
1 inch = 30 ft.



DWG: H:\1045-01\Alex Commons\1045-SIGN-EXH.dwg

SCALE: 1"=30'

DATE: 09/15/03

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