



New Wayfinding Market Sign

MHC Design Application | September 24, 2025

Background

Project Overview

- The Market has an opportunity to add a new sign to the newly built Waterfront elevator shaft to better direct people to Pike Place Market.
- **Funding:** Fully funded by a City of Seattle Office of Economic Development grant.
- **Initial Presentation:** Presented August 13, 2025 at MHC.
- **Outcome:** Commission declined to make a decision at that time and provided preferences for a re-design.

Current Status

- PDA incorporated MHC feedback and worked with National Sign to develop alternative designs.
- OED granted an extension, keeping the project viable.
- This presentation: PDA will show a modified design based on the previous MHC discussion.



Why This Design

- **Clarity for all audiences:** Spelling out “Pike Place Market” ensures first-time visitors domestic and international instantly recognize the destination.
- **Direct connection to Seattle’s icon:** The Market is one of the city’s most visited landmarks, yet many visitors approach from the waterfront unsure how to access it. A clear sign eliminates confusion at a key transition point.
- **Supports regional economic impact:** Better wayfinding encourages more visitors to enter the Market, supporting small businesses and farmers who rely on tourist foot traffic.
- **Brand consistency with flexibility:** The font and neon color draw on existing Market sign traditions without duplicating them, reinforcing a coherent identity across the district.



Addressing MHC Concern

Full Wording vs. “Market” Only

- **Wayfinding research supports specificity:** Generic words like “Market” are less effective at guiding visitors to a specific landmark. Visitors often misinterpret vague directional signs.
- **Pike Place Market is world-recognized:** Using the full name leverages global recognition. Shortening to “Market” risks losing the landmark value and clarity that the name itself provides.
- **Internally vs. externally used terms:** Locals and staff say, “the Market,” but visitors do not. Out-of-town guests overwhelmingly search for “Pike Place Market.”
- **Aligns with marketing and visitor expectations:** The Market’s own maps, brochures, and city guides all use the full name this signage should match what guests see elsewhere to reduce confusion.



Addressing MHC Concern

Sign Positioning

- **South-facing improves pedestrian guidance:**
 - Pedestrians on the new waterfront are the group most in need of direction.
 - Waterfront foot traffic grew 13% to 7.5M in 2024, while Seattle ferries had 4.9M riders many of whom are local commuters who already know where to go to access Pike Place Market.
- **Drivers benefit too:** Visitors arriving by car from Alaskan Way or heading to the Market Garage would gain a clear indicator from the south.
- **Future alignment:** If Heritage House renovation allows a rooftop sign, that sign would face west, creating a coordinated approach rather than a competing one.
- **Visibility is still excellent:** A south-facing sign will be clearly visible to many waterfront visitors while still being legible to westbound ferry passengers from key vantage points.



Addressing MHC Concern

Font, Alignment, and Framing

- **Brand cohesion without imitation:**
 - The proposed design uses a classic neon font style, matching the feel of Market signs but not copying “Public Market Center.”
 - The sign is left-aligned, without a clock, and uses different wording signaling inspiration rather than replication.
 - Keeping this new sign’s font consistent with the two existing major signs helps unify our branding in an environment where sign styles vary widely.
- **Historic integrity maintained:**
 - MHC guidelines call for preserving historic signs, not forbidding new signs that use similar color or letterforms.
- **Exposed frame preferences balanced:**
 - A fully open grid can reduce readability during daytime hours.
 - Mounting against the building provides a contrasting background, maintaining legibility while still using a partial frame to echo historic styles.



Addressing MHC Concern

Compliance with MHC Guidelines

- **Guideline 3.6.1 (Simplicity):** The sign remains clear and modest in lettering just a name, no additional graphics or complex shapes.
- **Guideline 3.6.2 (Location relevance):** The sign physically relates to the elevator shaft structure, which serves as the key visitor connection to the Market making it both directional and functional. Note: This elevator shaft was installed in 2023.
- **Guideline 3.6.4 (Preservation):** No historic signs are altered, obscured, or replaced. The design enhances navigation while protecting existing neon icons.
- **Secretary of Interior Standards:** By intentionally avoiding a clock and adjusting the alignment, this design does not create a false historical narrative. It reads as current wayfinding rather than conjectural replica.
- The PDA is not attempting to advertise but to serve the public's wayfinding needs.



NATIONAL SIGN
C O R P O R A T I O N

National Sign Design Specs

Design Specs



1 New Conditions
Scale: NTS



NATIONAL SIGN
CORPORATION

1541 S. 92nd Place, #B, Seattle, WA 98108
P. 206-282-0700
www.nationalsigncorp.com

JOB INFORMATION:

Pike Place Market
1527 Western Avenue
Seattle, WA 98101-1521

REPRESENTATIVE:

Tom Hubbard

DESIGNER:

Mark Mahan

DATE:

06/02/25

DESIGN NUMBER:

24-00843 V6

SCALE:

As Noted

JOB NUMBER:





XX

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Sign Conceptual

Design Colors

Colors	Gray 	Red 	Black 	White 
PMS	Cool Gray 9 C	187 C	Black	White
Translucent Vinyl	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Paint	N/A	N/A	Verify building color	MP 27386



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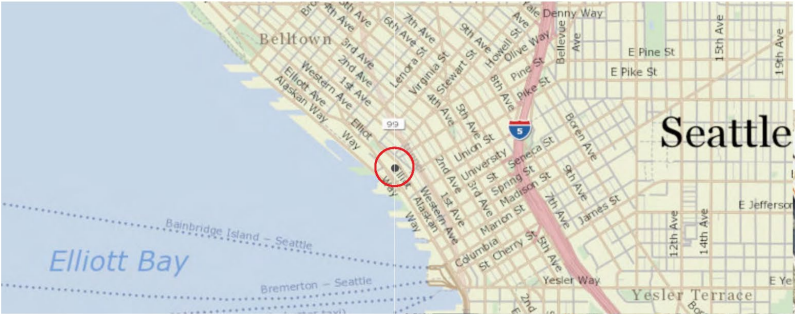
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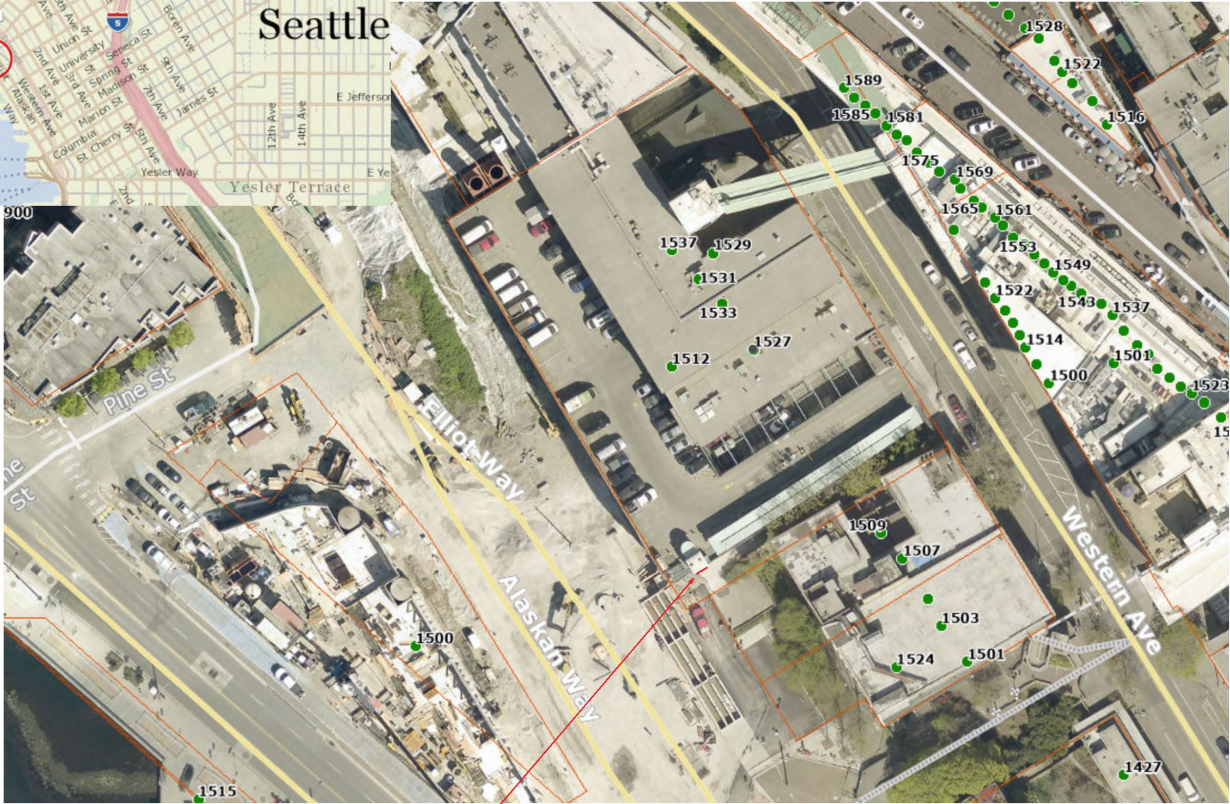
SIGN(S) TO BE MANUFACTURED
TO U.L. SPECIFICATIONS AND
WILL BEAR THE U.L. LABEL(S).
INSTALL IN ACCORDANCE WITH
NATIONAL ELECTRICAL CODE(S).

Brand Standards

Sign Location



1 Vicinity Map
Scale: NTS



2 Aerial View
Scale: NTS



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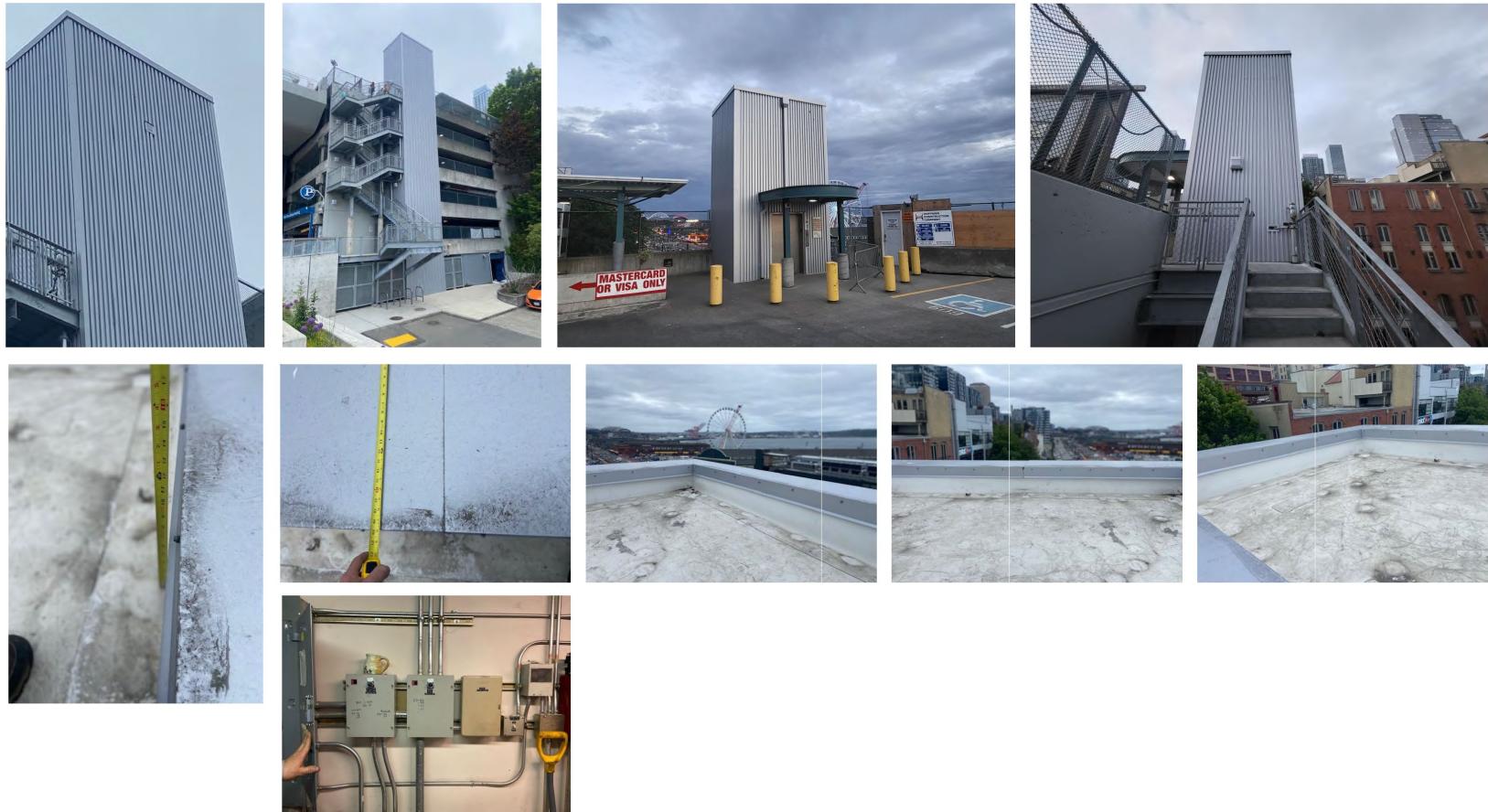
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DESIGN TO BE MANUFACTURED
TO ALL APPLICABLE UL AND
NATIONAL ELECTRICAL CODES.

Site Plan

Sign Location



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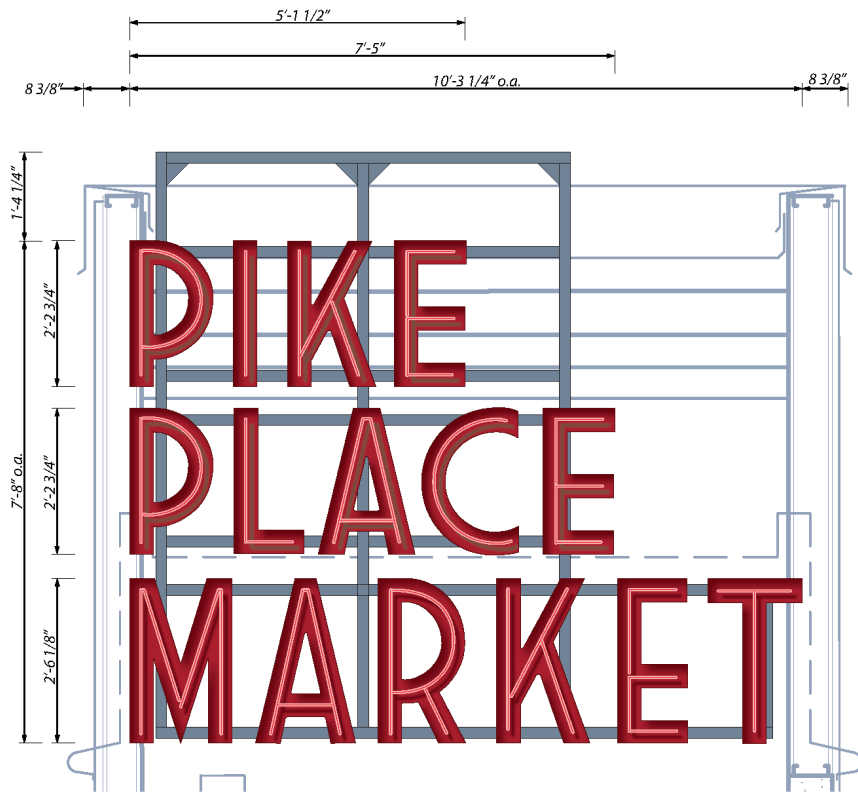
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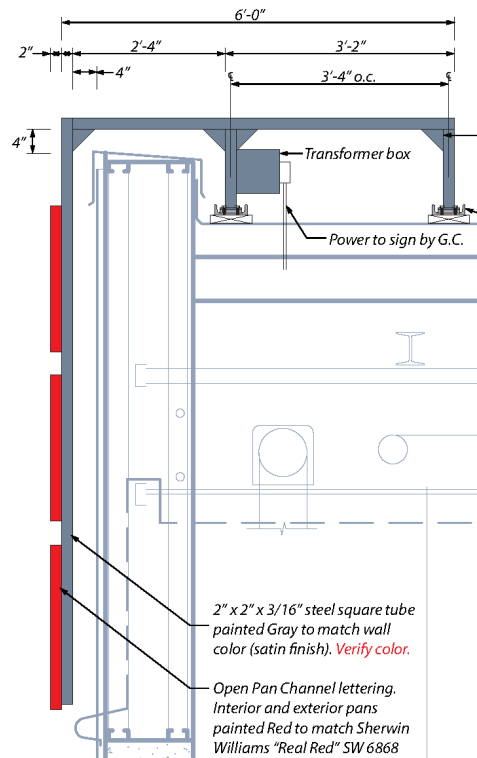


SHOWN TO BE MANUFACTURED
TO ALL SPECIFICATIONS AND
PRACTICES OF THE U.S.A. AND
NATIONAL ELECTRICAL CODE.

Survey Information



1 Front View- Detail
Scale: 1/2"=1'-0"



2 Side View
Scale: 1/2"=1'-0"

1/4" Steel gusset plates painted Gray to match wall color (satin finish). *Verify color.*

6" x 2" x 3/8" steel C channel mounting stringers painted Gray to match wall color (satin finish). *Verify color*

(4 per plate) 1/2" x 1" HSS rated bolts with lock washers drilled and tapped.

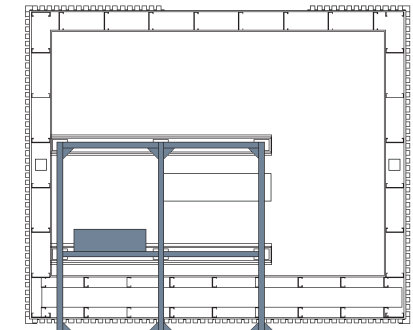
Transformers to be contained within transformer box. Power to sign by others 120volt 20 amp circuit req. *Verify circuits required.*

Seal all wall penetrations with heavy duty all weather silicone-clear.

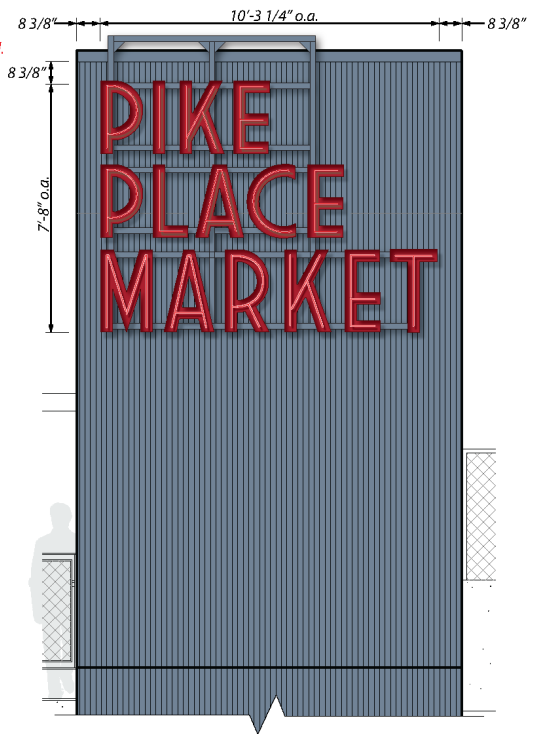
2" x 2" x 3/16" steel square tube painted Gray to match wall color (satin finish). *Verify color.*

Open Pan Channel lettering. Interior and exterior pans painted Red to match Sherwin Williams "Real Red" SW 6868 (satin finish).

1/tube Clear Red (neon)=Intense Red, 15mm, 30ma.



4 Plan View- Detail
Scale: 1/4"=1'-0"



3 South Elevation Partial
Scale: 1/4"=1'-0"



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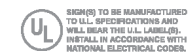
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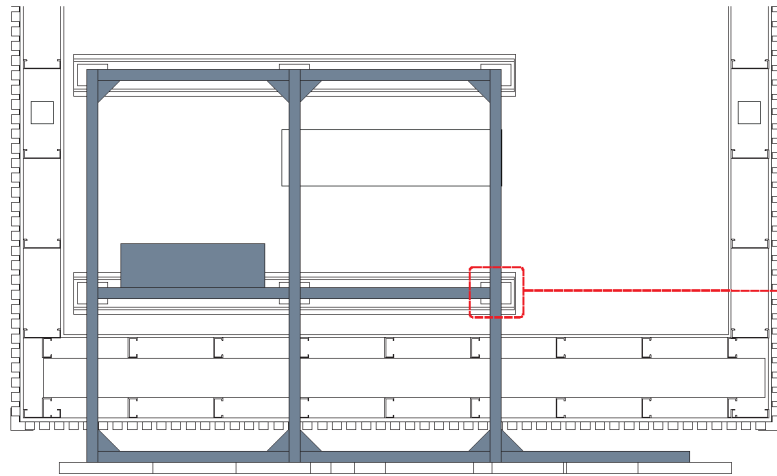
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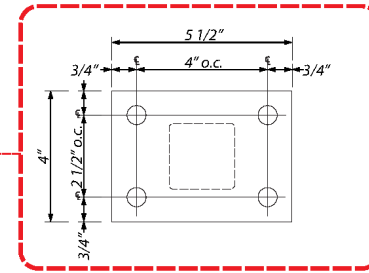
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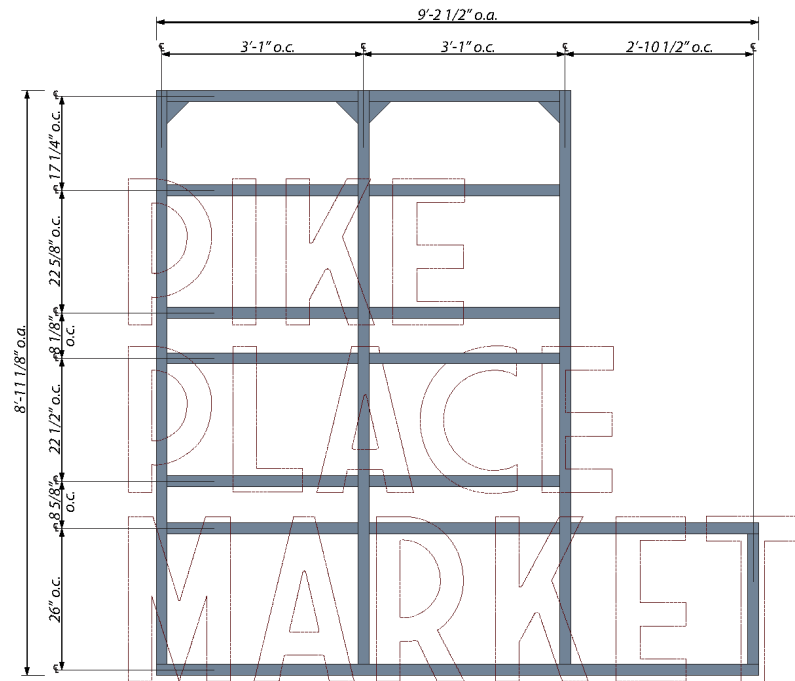
Sign Details



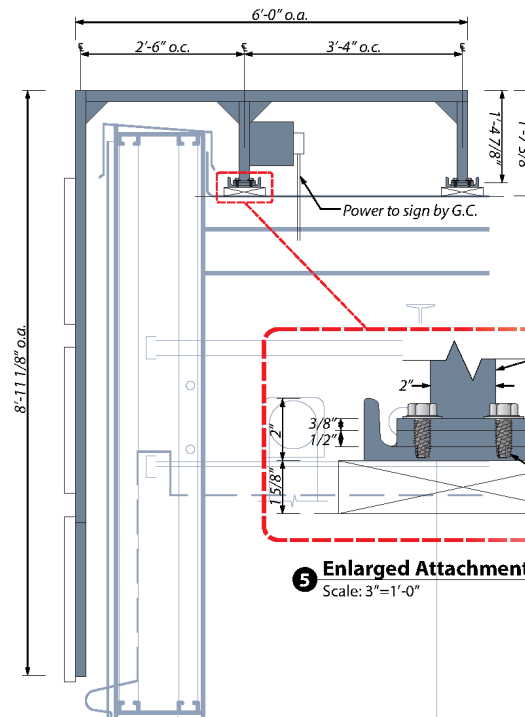
3 Plan View- Detail
Scale: 1/2"=1'-0"



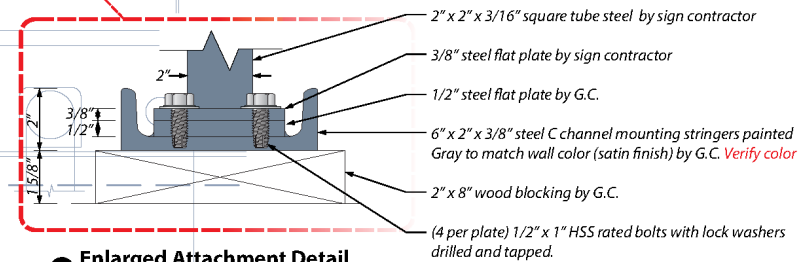
4 Enlarged Plate Detail
Scale: 3"=1'-0"



1 Front View- Detail
Scale: 1/2"=1'-0"

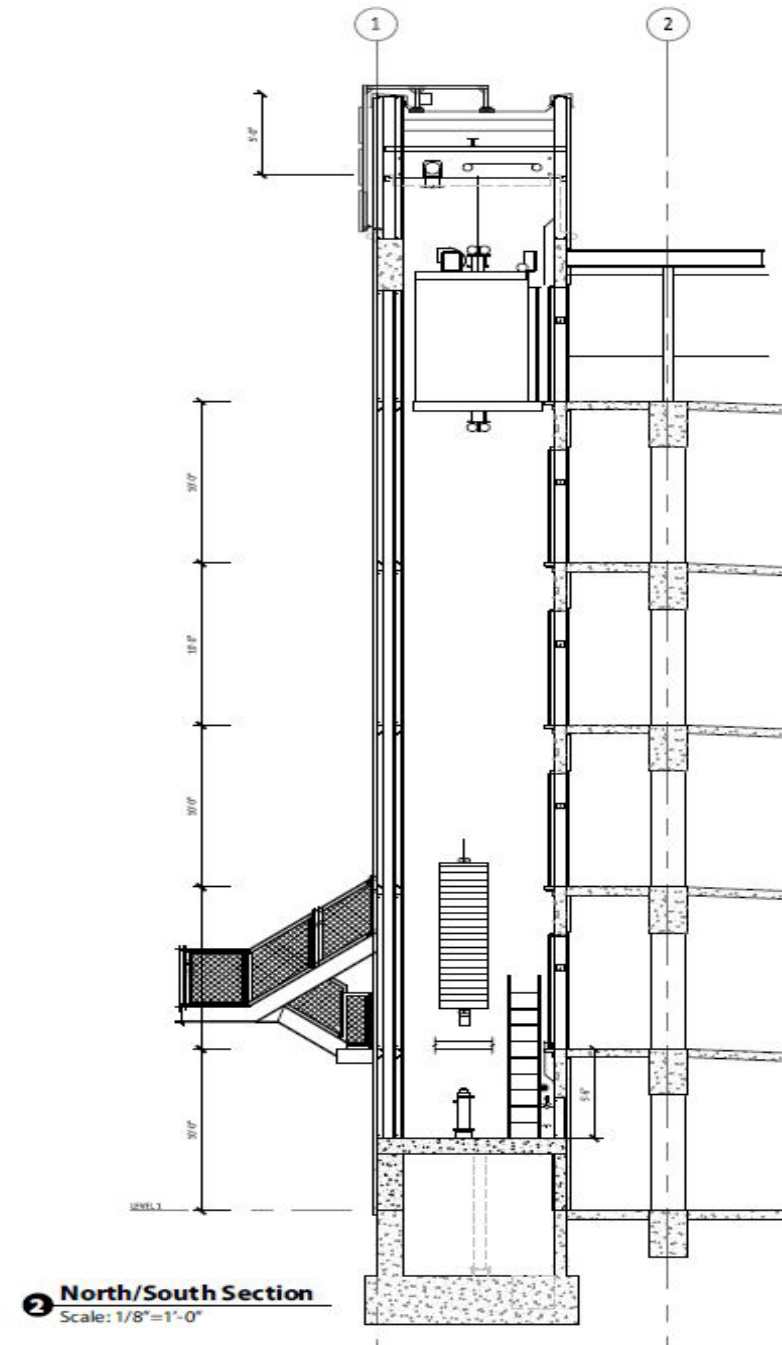
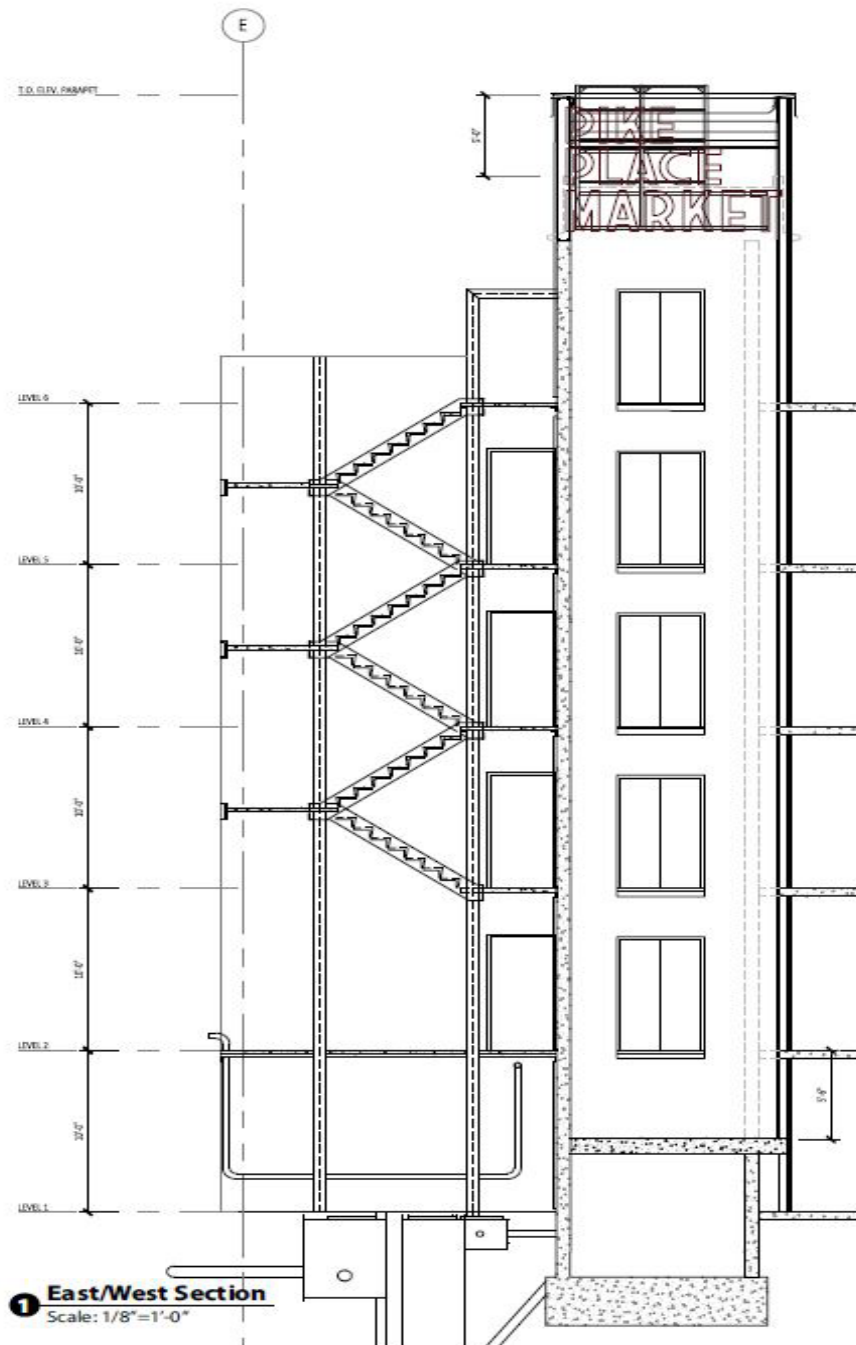


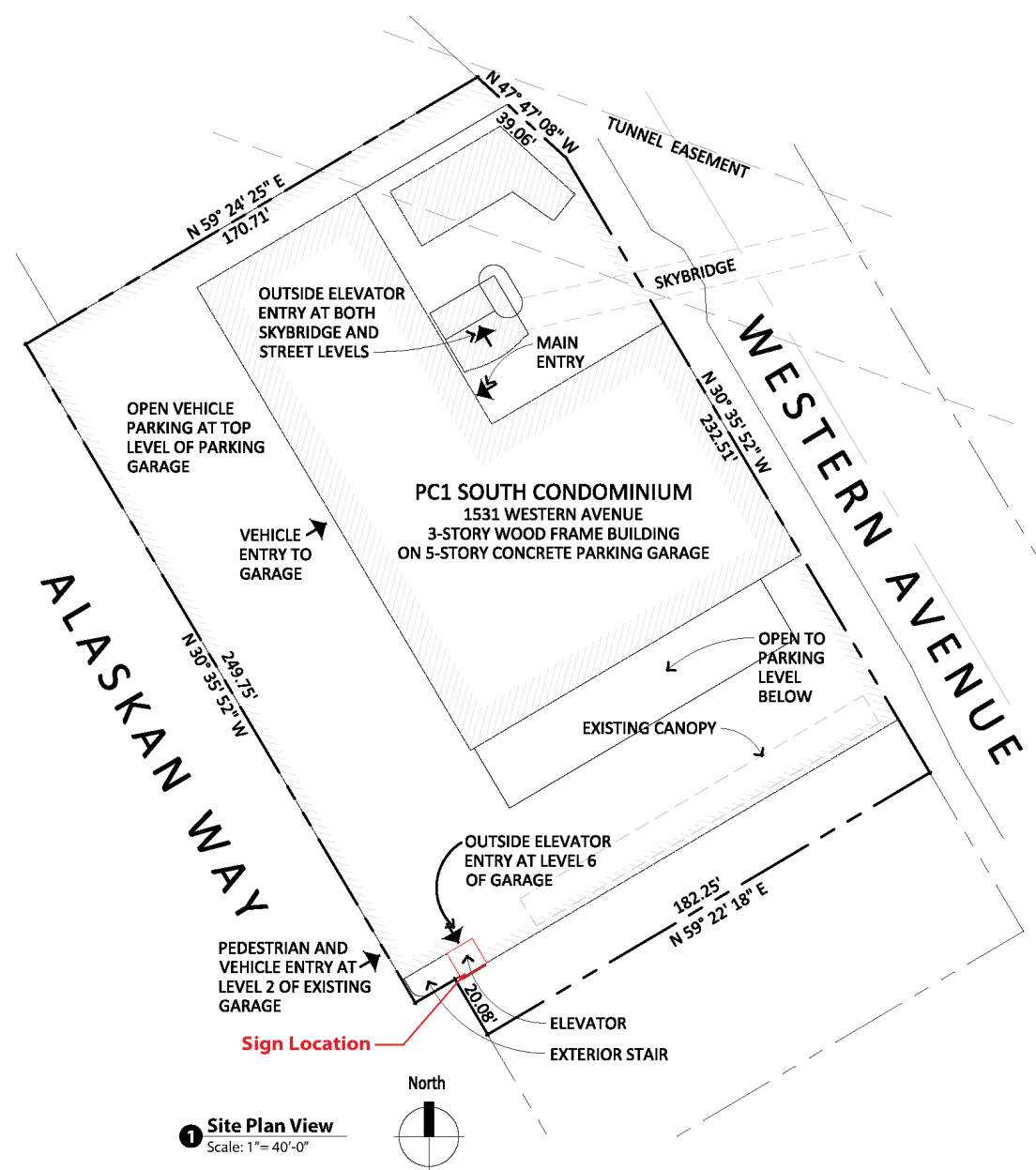
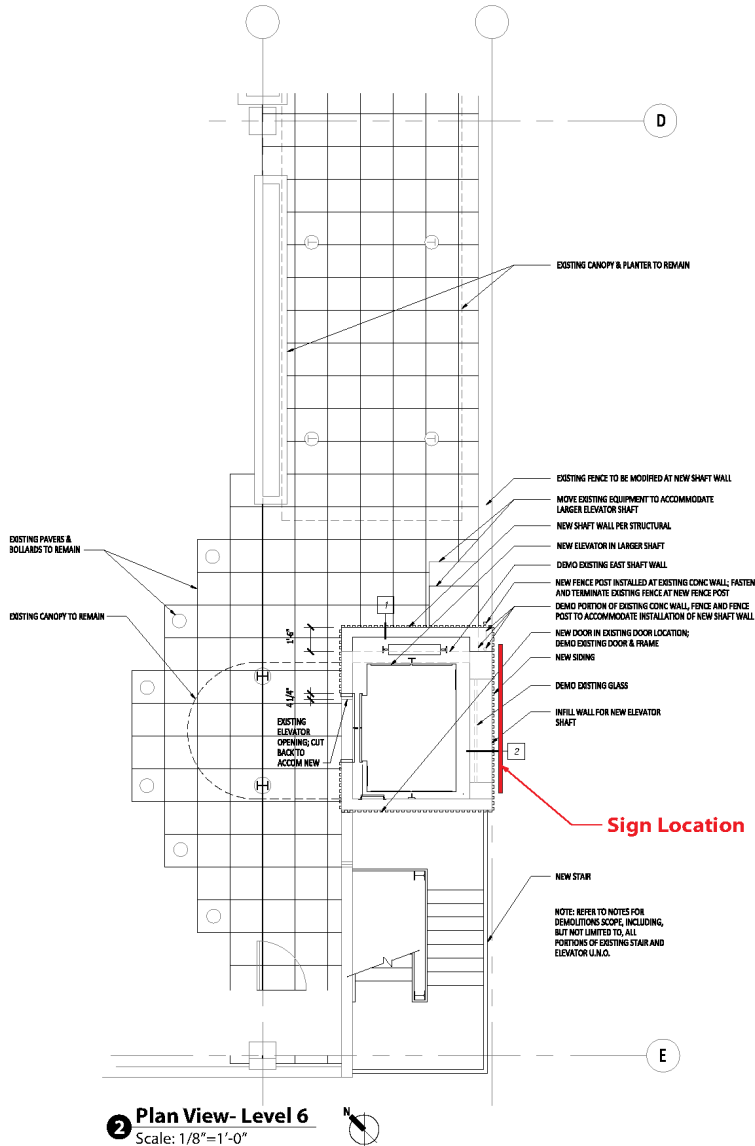
2 Side View
Scale: 1/2"=1'-0"



5 Enlarged Attachment Detail
Scale: 3"=1'-0"

Fasteners to internal elevator shaft roof structure and sealing roof membrane by G.C.





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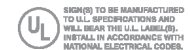
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Site Plan

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