

NORTH CENTRAL COLLEGE

NEW ACADEMIC BUILDING

STANDARDS FOR A SIGN VARIANCE

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

North Central College has completed construction of a new academic building located on the west side of the Campus and the south side of Chicago Avenue adjacent to Downtown Naperville (“HSE Building”). This building will house the Health Sciences program and the Engineering lab. It will open for instruction for the Fall 2021 semester.

Because of its location on the Chicago Avenue hill, all four sides of the building are visible. Therefore, the building has been designed with four finished façades.

Due to this visibility of the HSE Building, the College wants to identify the building on each façade.

The north and south façades of the HSE Building provide access to the building; each proposed sign on these façades is 71.6 square feet in area. The proposed sign on the east façade is 86.6 square feet and the west façade sign is 147.6 square feet in area.

According to City staff, North Central College is considered an “Educational Campus” and therefore is entitled to signage on the north façade, with a sign not to exceed 32 square feet in area. Therefore, North Central College is requesting variances to (i) increase the number of permitted signs from one to four and (ii) increase the size of the signs as described herein.

The variance is in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and the adopted comprehensive master plan.

The purpose of the Sign Regulations is to promote “the optimum conditions for communication between people and their environment.” The HSE Building is a 3 story (north side)/4 story (south side) structure located on Chicago Avenue and adjacent to Downtown Naperville. Because of its location, it needs to be identified as part of the North Central College campus, rather than a commercial building. The proposed size of each of the signs is reasonable and appropriate based on the design and the architecture of each of the façades. Since each of the four façades is visible and the north and south façades provide access to the HSE Building, having a sign on each façade is appropriate. Also, the architecture of the HSE Building dictates that the signs should be placed at the top of each façade. These signs provide effective communication for the community, thereby being in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Sign Regulations.

These proposed signs also maintain the integrity of the College campus, thereby being in harmony with the Comprehensive Master Plan.

Strict enforcement of the Zoning Regulations would result in practical difficulties or impose exceptional hardships due to special and unusual conditions which are not generally found on other properties in the same zoning district.

The special and unusual conditions of the HSE Building are its location on the Chicago Avenue hill and therefore its visibility and its size. With all four façades visible, it is reasonable to include a sign on each façade. Due to the size and design of the HSE Building, a larger size of the signs is appropriate to maintain the architectural integrity of the building. If the Sign Regulations were strictly enforced, the HSE Building would not be effectively identified.

The variance, if granted, will not alter the essential character of the neighborhood and will not be a substantial detriment to adjacent property.

The HSE Building is a transitional structure between the low intensity of the North Central College campus and the high intensity of Downtown Naperville. This building is adjacent to other College facilities and adjacent to Downtown establishments. The HSE Building maintains the character of the College Campus, but it also complements Downtown Naperville. The proposed signage is similar to the signage of several Downtown properties (e.g., Water Street Shops/Hotel Indigo/River Square Shopping Center/Barnes and Noble building) and it is similar to signage on other campus buildings (e.g., Wentz Science Center/Benedetti – Wehrli Stadium). Therefore, the requested variances will not alter the essential character of the neighborhood nor be a substantial detriment to adjacent properties.