

**BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT
STAFF REPORT**

Date: December 6, 2010

CASE NUMBER

5644 / 4775 / 4631 / 1836

APPLICANT NAME

Goodwyn, Mills, & Cawood for
The Retirement Systems of Alabama

LOCATION

107 St. Francis Street
(South side of St. Francis Street between St. Joseph Street
and North Royal Street)

VARIANCE REQUEST

SIGNAGE: Sign Number, Sign Size, and Off Premise Sign
Variances to allow a 100 square foot address sign, eight (8)
tenant signs with a total of 1,554 square feet including one
roof-mounted sign, and a 103.8 square foot off-premise
advertising sign on a multi-tenant building in a B-4,
General Business District and also in the Lower Dauphin
Historic District

**ZONING ORDINANCE
REQUIREMENT**

SIGNAGE: One wall sign up to a maximum of 64 square
feet per tenant, the building address signs be no larger than
one (1) square foot, does not allow any off premise signage
or roof-mounted signs in a Historic District.

ZONING

B-4, General Business District.
Historic District Overlay (Lower Dauphin)

AREA OF PROPERTY

0.9 Acre ±

**TRAFFIC ENGINEERING
COMMENTS**

None received

**CITY COUNCIL
DISTRICT**

District 2

ANALYSIS

The applicant is requesting a Sign Number, Sign Size, and
Off Premise Sign Variances to allow a 100 square foot address sign, eight (8) tenant signs with a
total of 1,554 square feet including one roof-mounted sign, and a 103.8 square foot off-premise
advertising sign on a multi-tenant building in a B-4, General Business District and also in the
Lower Dauphin Historic District; the Zoning Ordinance allows one wall sign up to a maximum
of 64 square feet per tenant, requires that building address signs be no larger than one (1) square
foot, and does not allow any off premise signage or roof-mounted signs in a Historic District.

This building is the second tallest office building in the City of Mobile, and is currently undergoing a major renovation. Additionally, the building will be occupied by a new major tenant who wishes to establish an identity with the building. The building is also proposed to be the new location of the City of Mobile's New Year's Eve Celebration and Moon Pie Drop.

The Zoning Ordinance states that no variance shall be granted where economics are the basis for the application; and, unless the Board is presented with sufficient evidence to find that the variance will not be contrary to the public interest, and that special conditions exist such that a literal enforcement of the Ordinance will result in an unnecessary hardship. The Ordinance also states that a variance should not be approved unless the spirit and intent of the Ordinance is observed and substantial justice done to the applicant and the surrounding neighborhood.

Variations are not intended to be granted frequently. The applicant must clearly show the Board that the request is due to very unusual characteristics of the property and that it satisfies the variance standards. What constitutes unnecessary hardship and substantial justice is a matter to be determined from the facts and circumstances of each application.

The applicant's justification for hardship regarding the size, number, and location of the tenant signs is that the building is a large, urban building, and that the signs are required for recognition and denotation of the building.

The Board has, with other applications, approved sign variances for the larger buildings in Downtown Mobile, notably the Holiday Inn at Government Street and South Claiborne Street, Riverview Plaza Hotel at Government Street and South Royal Street, and the Hampton Inn at South Royal Street and Conti Street. The Board has traditionally allowed a wall sign for the major tenant of a large building for each street frontage as well as the associate ground signage for ground-level identification; this signage request meets these guidelines which the Board has established. Regarding the size of the signs, the massive size of the building requires larger signs for the signs to be in the same scale as the building.

In reference to the address numbers, the numbers are abnormally large, and staff has not been able to locate a similar example within the City of Mobile. However, as the address numbers do not serve a commercial purpose and are only informational, combined with the fact that the numbers are decorative and an integral architectural feature of the new building façade, a variance may be appropriate.

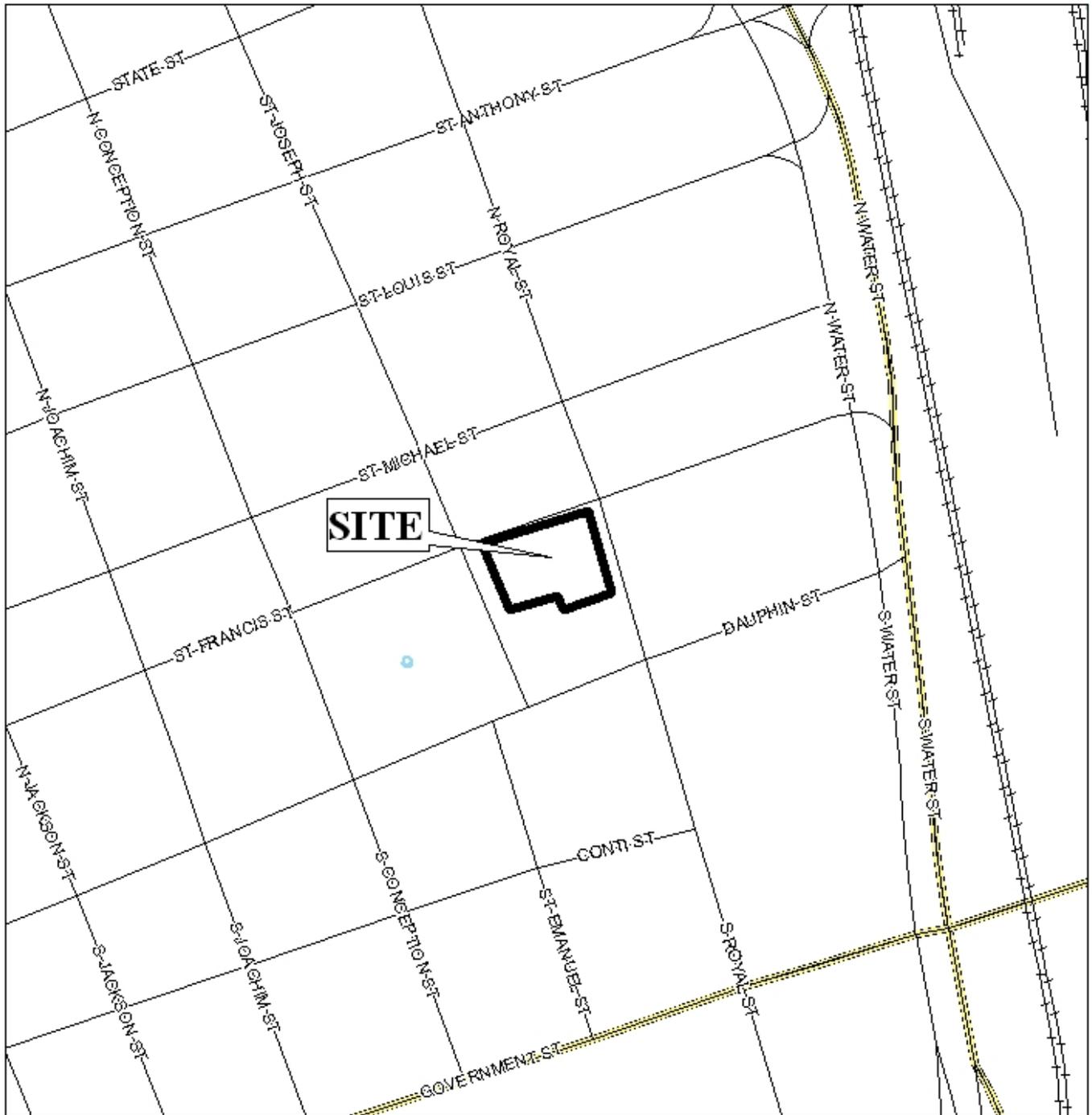
Lastly, this request includes a request for off-premise advertising signage. The off-premise signage is noted as "specialty signage" and is basically a large Moon Pie effigy. "Moon Pie" is a brand name, and the sign is technically a form of advertising; however, the City of Mobile has created the annual Moon Pie Drop as part of its New Year's Eve celebration, and the Moon Pie is fast becoming a symbol of the City of Mobile. The signage is merely to provide a permanent housing for the Moon Pie Drop. Given the association with the City and the fact that the signage is directly related to a City Event, this request for variance should be approved.

It should be noted that because the site is located within a Historic District, any and all signage must be approved by the Architectural Review Board of the Mobile Historic Development Commission, and any approvals from the Board should be contingent upon historic approvals.

RECOMMENDATION Based upon the preceding, this application is recommended for approval subject to the following conditions:

- 1) approval of the Architectural Review Board; and
- 2) full compliance with all municipal codes and ordinances.

LOCATOR



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REQUEST Sign Number, Sign Size, and Off Premise Sign Variances



BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT VICINITY MAP - EXISTING ZONING



This site is surrounded by business land use.

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LEGEND															
	R-1	R-2	R-3	R-A	R-B	H-B	T-B	B-1	LB-2	B-2	B-3	B-4	B-5	I-1	I-2



NTS

**BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT
VICINITY MAP - EXISTING ZONING**

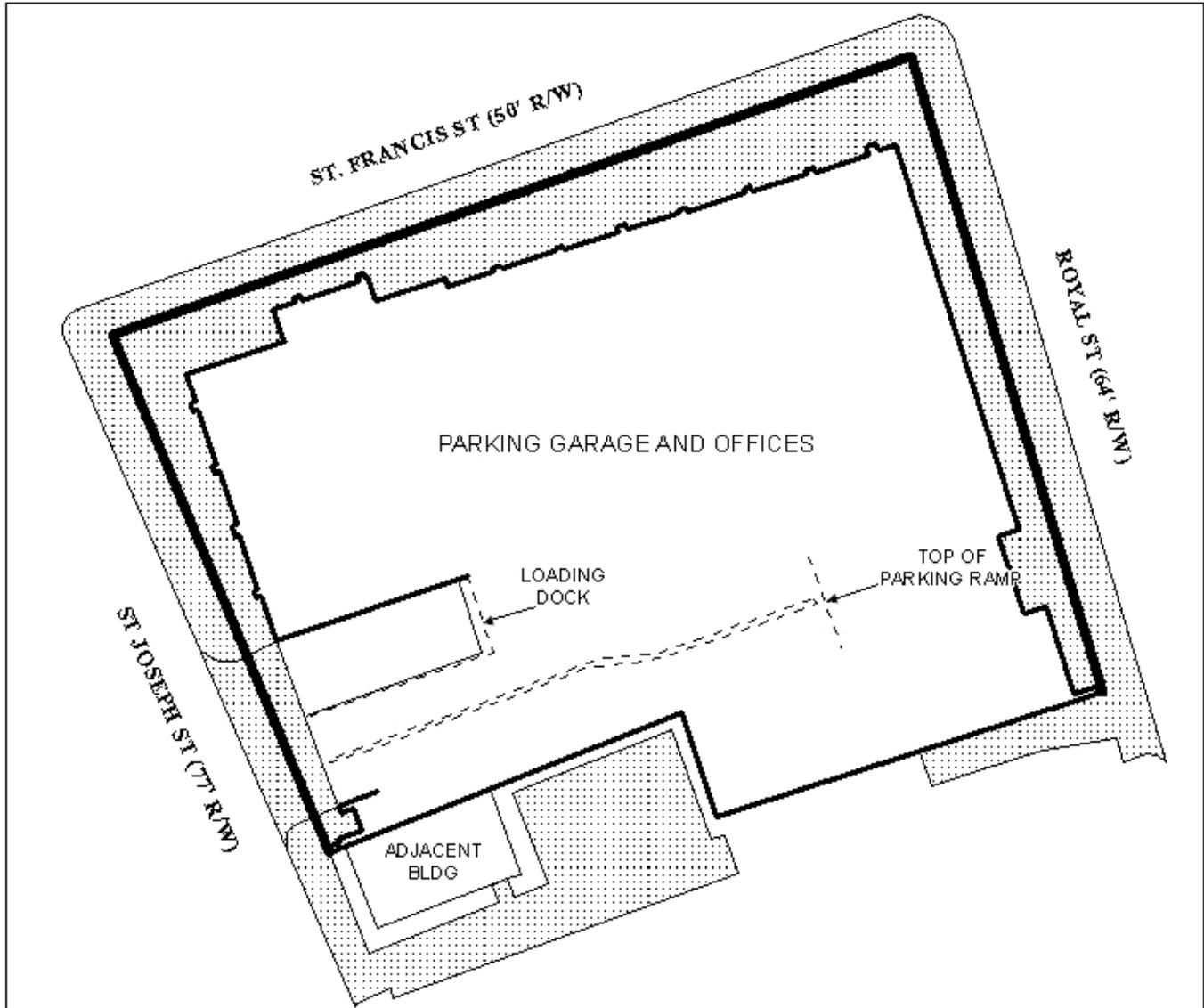


This site is surrounded by business land use.

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SITE PLAN



This site plan illustrates the existing building and lot configuration.
See detail site plans for proposed sign designs.

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EAST ELEVATION LOW



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WEST ELEVATION LOW



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NORTH ELEVATION LOW



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EAST ELEVATION WITH SPECIAL AMENITY



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TOWER SOUTH EAST ELEVATION



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TOWER WEST ELEVATION



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NTS