

City Planning Commission Meeting
Tuesday, August 11, 2015

CPC Deadline: none
CC Deadline: 45 days from receipt
Council District: A – Guidry

PRELIMINARY STAFF REPORT

To: City Planning Commission
Design Review: 075-15

Prepared by: Brittany DesRocher
Date: July 28, 2015

Applicant: Signworx LLC, Deanna Silliker

Request: This request is an appeal of the Lake Area Design Corridor (LADC) Overlay District regulations, **Article 9A, Section 9A.13.6.3(b)** - *Design Review Standards* - *Signage* of the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance to permit the installation of an attached sign with excessive area.

Zoning: LB-2 Lake Area Neighborhood Business District and LADC Lake Area Design Corridor Overlay District.

Location: The petitioned property is located in the Second Municipal District, on Square 236, Lots 22 - 26, bounded by Harrison Avenue, Marshal Foch Street, Bragg Street and Argonne Boulevard. The municipal address is 905 Harrison Avenue. (PD5)

Proposal: The petitioned site is on the block face of Harrison Avenue between Marshal Foch Street and Argonne Boulevard. The site is located in a LB-2 Lake Area Neighborhood Business District and within the Lake Area Design Corridor. The petitioned site is on five lots of record that form a rectangular-shaped parcel with 122'-0" of frontage on Harrison Avenue, a lot depth of 132'-0", and an area of approximately 16,104 square feet. On the property is a strip shopping center whose structure measures 119'-0" wide and 78'-0" deep, for a total area of approximately 9,282 square feet. A parking lot is provided between the front façade of the building and the public right-of-way along Harrison Avenue, setting the building back from the public right-of-way approximately 45'-0". The shopping center is occupied with three commercial uses including a standard restaurant, a restaurant with bakery and a dry cleaner. The applicant occupies a unit that has 20'-0" of linear frontage on Harrison Avenue.

All of the existing businesses have attached signs, including the applicant, and the property also includes a detached sign for the entire shopping center. These signs appear to have been installed prior to November of 2007 when the Lake Area Design Corridor regulations were put into place. The applicant is proposing to replace the existing attached sign. The existing sign measures approximately 15'-0" wide and 4'-4" tall with an area of 65 square feet. The proposed sign measures 11'-0" wide and 3'-6" tall with an area of 38.5 square feet. That is a 40% reduction in size.



Figure 1: Current Signage on Petitioned Site

Why is City Planning Commission Action required?

Article 9A, Section 9A.13.8 - Appeal to City Council of the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance requires that all variances of the Lake Area Design Corridor Overlay District regulations be reviewed for recommendation by the City Planning Commission and forwarded to the City Council for final action. Attached signage is limited to one square foot per linear foot of tenant space. The applicant has 20'-0" of linear tenant space; therefore, a sign with an area of 20 square feet would be permitted. The applicant is proposing a sign with an area of 38.5 square feet. As such, a waiver of the Lake Area Design Corridor Overlay District regulations is required.

I. EVALUATION

Article 9A, Section 9A.13.8 – Appeal to the City Council of the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance notes that the City Council is to consider three standards in evaluating an appeal of the regulations of an interim zoning district.

- 1. The granting of the variance is not inconsistent with the general provisions, intent and purpose of the district regulations.*

This standard is not met. **Article 9A, Section 9A.13.6.3(a) – Signage** of the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance limits attached signs to one (1) square foot per linear foot of building width or tenant space. The applicant has 20'-0" of linear tenant space; therefore, a sign with an area of 20 square feet would be permitted. The applicant is proposing a sign with an area of 38.5 square feet. The proposed sign is excessive in area and is inconsistent with the provisions of the Lake Area Design Corridor Overlay District.

The intent of the Lake Area Design Corridor Overlay District (LADC) is to provide for a superior environment, compatibility of development, architectural quality of design, and to ensure the achievement of urban design and planned growth goals along neighborhood business and commercial corridors. Limiting the area of new signage in the district helps to achieve a positive and unified streetscape which is a goal of the overlay district. This is particularly important as older large signage is removed and replaced. Even though the applicant is reducing the size of their current sign, the staff believes that allowing a sign with excessive area in this district would set up an undesirable precedent for future waivers of sign area that would be inconsistent with the intent of the overlay district.



Figure 2: Proposed Signage

2. *Harmony and compatibility with adjacent land uses would not be adversely affected.*

This standard is not met. The Lake Area Design Corridor Overlay District was adopted by City Council in November of 2007 in an effort to encourage a higher quality of design in the applicable areas. Since the regulations are relatively new, there are examples of non-compliant signs in the immediate area including the adjacent businesses. However, there are also several examples of compliant signs that have been installed under the current regulations. In order for the overlay district to have its intended effect of creating a harmonious streetscape, the regulations regarding signage area must be adhered to for all new signage.

3. *Special conditions and circumstances exist which are peculiar to the land, structures or buildings and which are not applicable to other land, structures or buildings in the same district.*

This standard is not met. The conditions on the site are similar to those of nearby businesses. The sign would be located approximately 45'-0" from the public right-of-way and would be clearly visible. Additionally, the applicant uses a portion of a detached sign located adjacent to the public right-of-way giving the business even more visibility. There are no special conditions or circumstances that would prevent the petitioned site from meeting the signage area regulations of the overlay district. The applicant simply

does not desire to comply with the regulations.

As this request does not meet the three standards under which appeals are to be considered in **Article 9A, Section 9A.13.8** of the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance, the staff does not support the application.

II. SUMMARY

Design Review docket 075/15 is an appeal of the Lake Area Design Corridor (LADC) Overlay District regulations, **Article 9A, Section 9A.13.6.3(b) - Design Review Standards - Signage** of the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance. The applicant is proposing to replace an existing sign that was installed prior to adoption of the Lake Area Design Corridor Overlay District. Under the current regulations, the applicant would be permitted an attached sign with an area of 20 square feet. The proposed sign has an area of 38.5 square feet. Even though the applicant is reducing the size of their current non-compliant sign, the staff believes that allowing a sign with excessive area in this district would set up an undesirable precedent for future waivers of sign area that would be inconsistent with the intent of the overlay district. There are examples of similarly situated businesses in the area with compliant signs. Additionally, there are no special conditions or circumstances that would prevent the petitioned site from meeting the signage area regulations of the overlay district. As such, it does not meet the criteria for appeals. Therefore, the staff recommends denial of Design Review 075/15.

III. PRELIMINARY STAFF RECOMMENDATION¹

The staff recommends **DENIAL** of Design Review 075/15.

IV. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

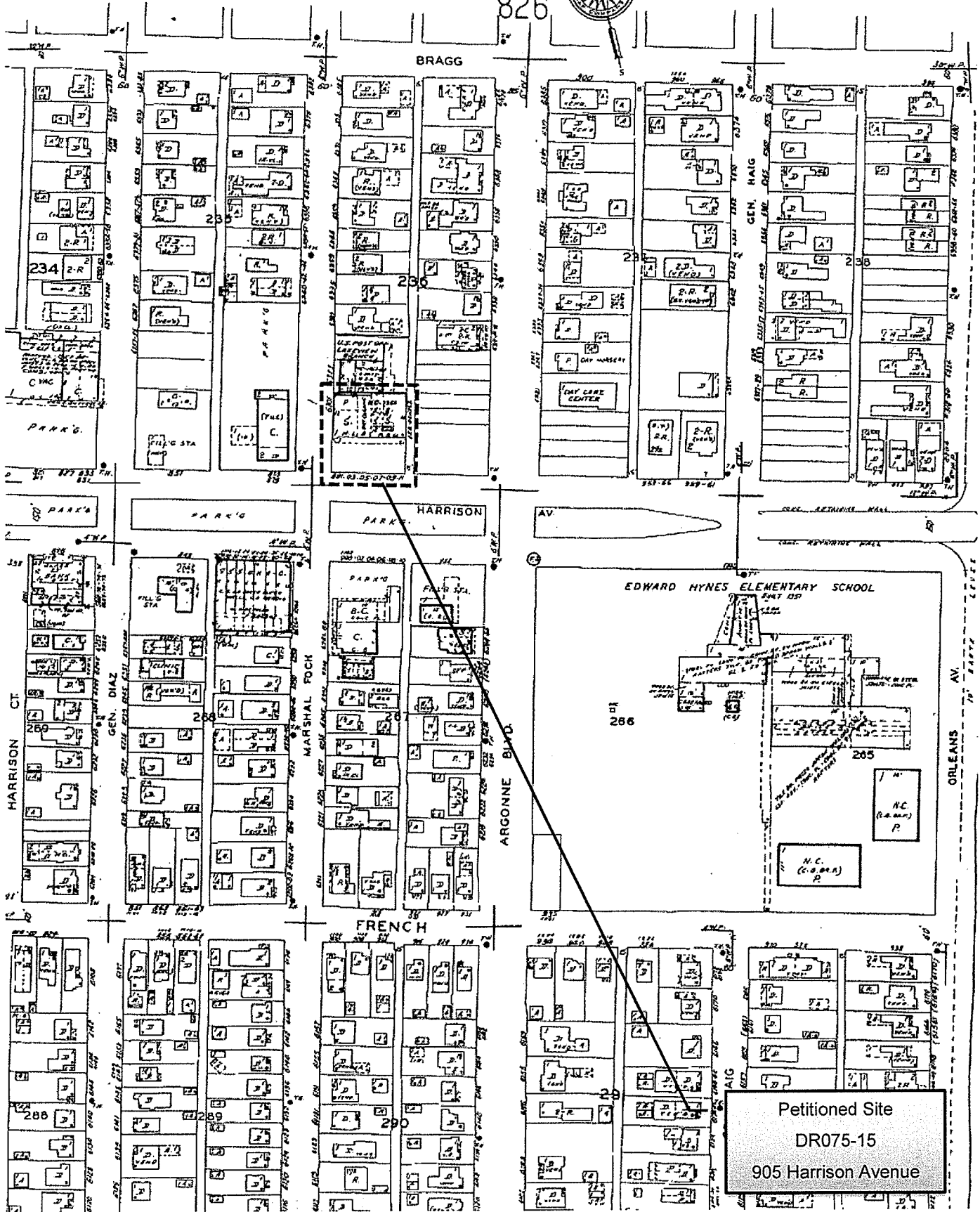
1. The proposal is not consistent with the intent of the Lake Area Design Corridor (LADC) Overlay District.
2. Granting this request would set an undesirable precedent for future variance requests.
3. The request does not meet the criteria for appeals in **Article 9A, Section 9A.13.8** of the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance.

¹ Subject to modification by the City Planning Commission.



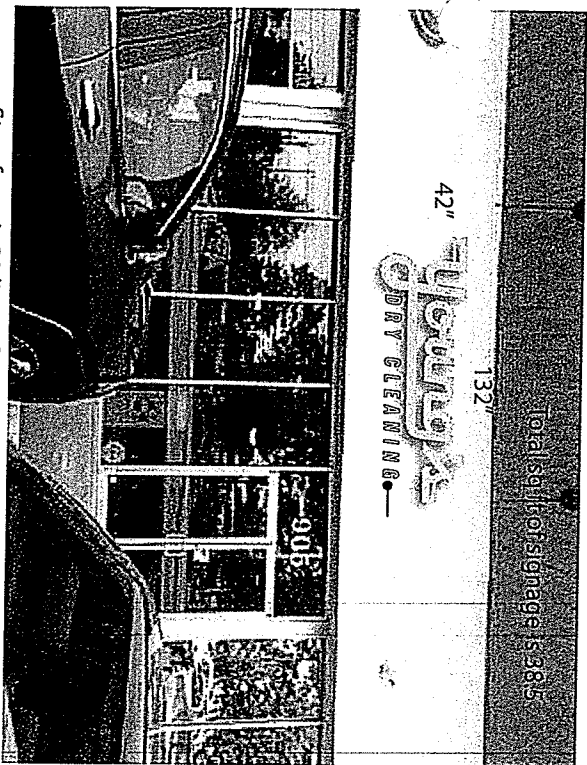
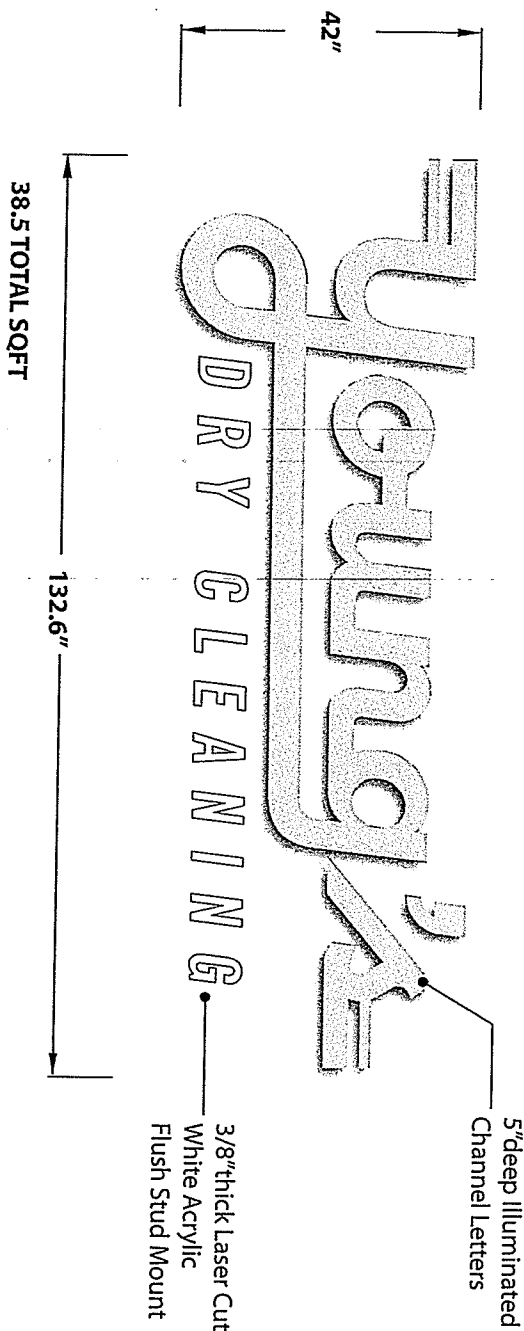
Petitioned Site
DR075-15
905 Harrison Avenue

826

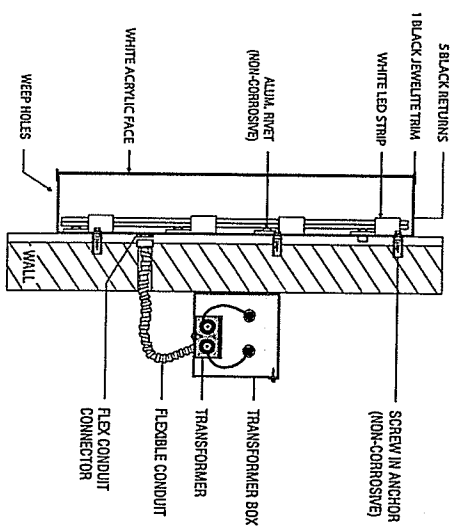


Petitioned Site
DR075-15
905 Harrison Avenue

Young's Cleaners



Storefront is 20 linear feet



LED Channel Letter
Flush Mount Detail

U.L. APPROVED
& LABELED
140 M.P.H Windload

Signworx

2512 HICKORY AVE., METAIRIE, LA 70003
OFFICE: 504-737-7446 FAX: 504-737-3299
TOLL FREE: 1-888-737-7446
VISIT OUR WEB SITE:
WWW.SIGNWORX.NET

CLIENT:
Young's Cleaners
905 Harrison Avenue
NO LA 70124

DATE: 06/24/15

JOB NUMBER:

SALESPERSON:

SIGNAGE DETAILS:
5" deep Illuminated
Channel Letters

Approval indicates that the client accepts responsibility for design content, including color, spelling, layout and quantity. Any changes after approval will incur additional production costs

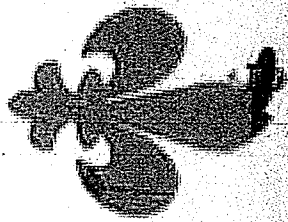
Approval Signature _____

THIS DRAWING IS THE PROPERTY OF SIGNWORX. ANY ALTERATIONS ARE PROHIBITED WITHOUT WRITTEN CONSENT OF SIGNWORX. THIS DRAWING HAS BEEN MADE AVAILABLE TO THE CLIENT TO ILLUSTRATE DESIGN OR PRODUCTION DETAILS AND ARE NOT TO BE DISTRIBUTED FOR BID WITHOUT THE WRITTEN CONSENT OF SIGNWORX.

Existing

605 S. Ft. Harrison

15' x 4'



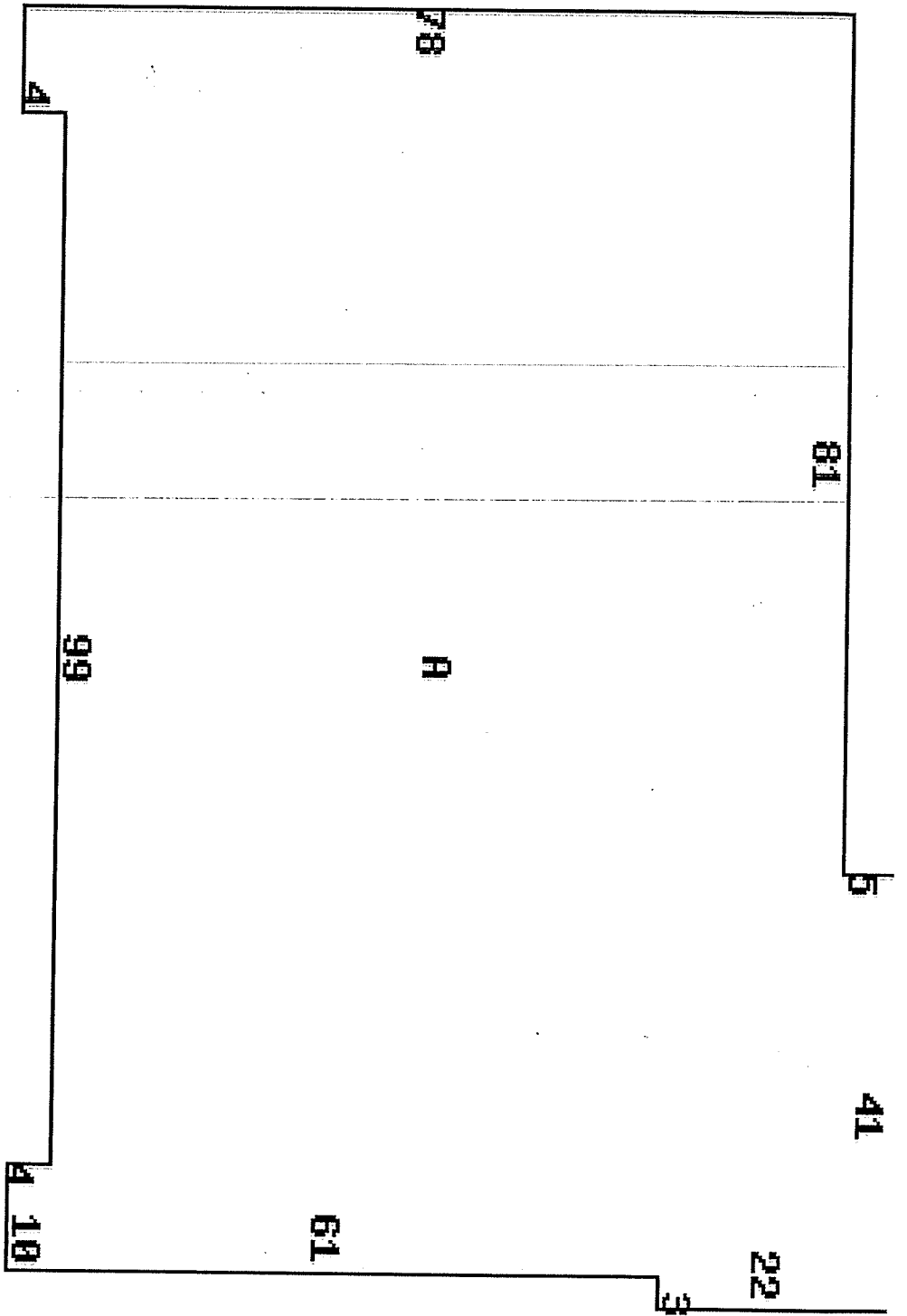
Howell's
cleaning & restoration

Custom Cleaning Care Since 1940

20' linear

905







609 HARRIS AVE

