



BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS STAFF REPORT

To: Members of the Board of Zoning Appeals

From: Rachel Christenson, AICP, On-call Planner for the Town of Munster

Meeting Date: September 12, 2023

Agenda Item: BZA Docket No. 23-002

Hearing: **PUBLIC HEARING**

Application Type: **Developmental Standards Variances**

Summary: HP Munster Investment LLC seeking a variance from TABLE 26-6.701.B WALL SIGN SPECIFIC STANDARDS to permit a nonconforming sign on a Hyatt Place Hotel at 9420 Calumet Avenue.

Applicant: HP Munster Investment LLC

Property Address: 9420 Calumet Avenue

Current Zoning: SD-PUD

Adjacent Zoning: North: SD-M
South: SD-M/PUD
East: CD-4.A
West: SD-M

Action Requested: Approval of Variance Request

Additional Actions Required: Findings of Fact

Staff Recommendation: Denial

Attachments: Sign Renderings by Coast Sign dated 08.28.2023

BACKGROUND

Figure 1: Maple Leaf Crossing PUD outlined in red. Subject property highlighted in blue.

Amit Shah of HP Munster Investment LLC was originally seeking approval of a variance related to signage for a Hyatt Place hotel currently under construction at 9420 Calumet Avenue in the Maple Leaf Crossing Planned Unit Development. The applicant is seeking to install large projecting signs above the 3rd story window sill on the north and south sides of the structure.

The Maple Leaf Crossing PUD is governed by the Maple Leaf Crossing Planned Unit Development. The associated development standards contain the following provision regarding signage:

IV. Signage Design Criteria

Signage shall be compliant with §26-6.701 unless a variance is obtained from the Board of Zoning Appeals.

DISCUSSION

The petitioner has revised the signage plan several times based on feedback from staff and the Board of Zoning Appeals. At this time, the petitioner is presenting two different options for building signage. Both include Large Projecting Signs that are proposed to be installed higher than what the Munster Character Based Code allows.

Standard	Permitted	Option 1	Option 2
Height (max)	Below the window sills of the 3 rd story	Above the window sills of the 3 rd story	Above the window sills of the 3 rd story
Area (max)	50 sf	10.8 sf	43.1 sf
Depth (max) - thickness of sign	18 inches	12 inches	15 1/4 inches
Projection (max) – distance projects from the building facade	7 ft (84 inches)	14 3/8 inches	28 3/4 inches

The zoning code states the following language:

Large Projecting Signs: Table 26-6.701.B Sign Types Specific Standards

- *Height (max): Top of Sign shall be located below the cornice of a 2 Story building or below the window sills of the 3rd Story of a Building with more than 2 Stories.*

Because the top of a Large Projecting Sign must be located below the window sills of the 3rd story of a building with more than 2 stories, the petitioner has expressed interest in requesting from the BZA that he be able to move the sign to a higher story.

In Figure 2, the size of the Large Projecting Sign illustrated is in compliance with the Munster Character Based Code, but is above the window sill of the 3rd story. To be in compliance, the sign would need to be relocated to under the window sill of the 3rd story.

Figure 3 illustrates a second Large Projecting Sign option. The size of this sign is also in compliance with the Munster Character Based Code, and again, is above the window sill of the 3rd story. If this sign is relocated to under the window sill of the 3rd story, the sign would not meet the clearance standards (must be 12 ft clear above the sidewalk).

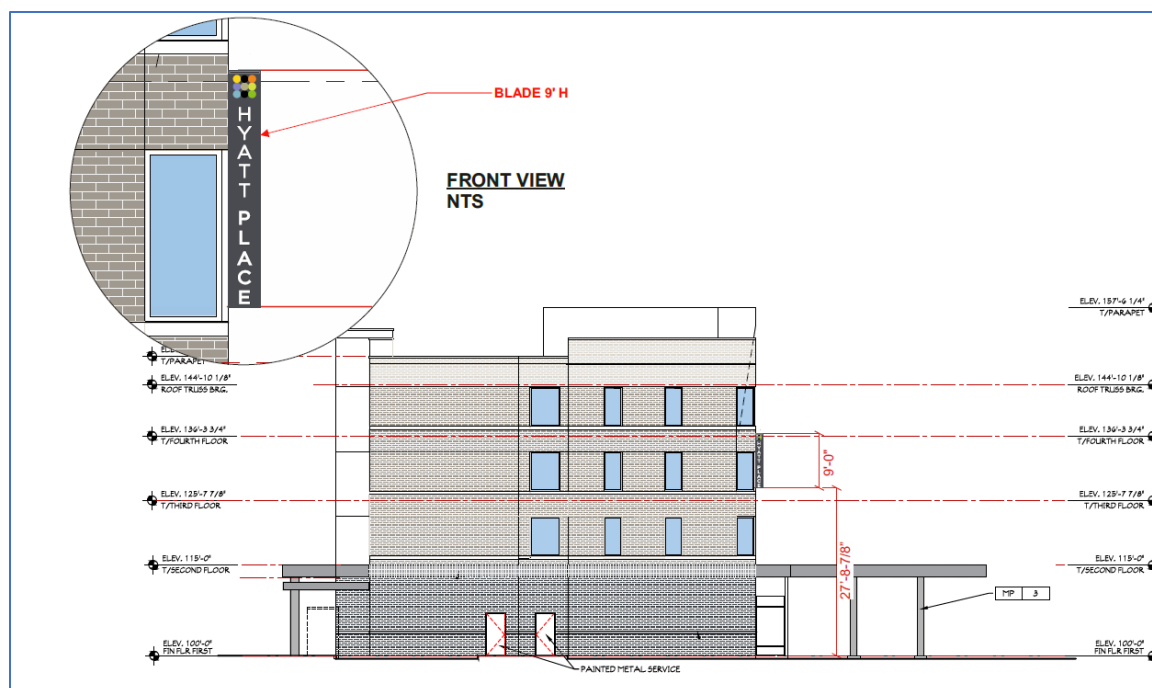


Figure 2: First Sign Option- 9' in height.

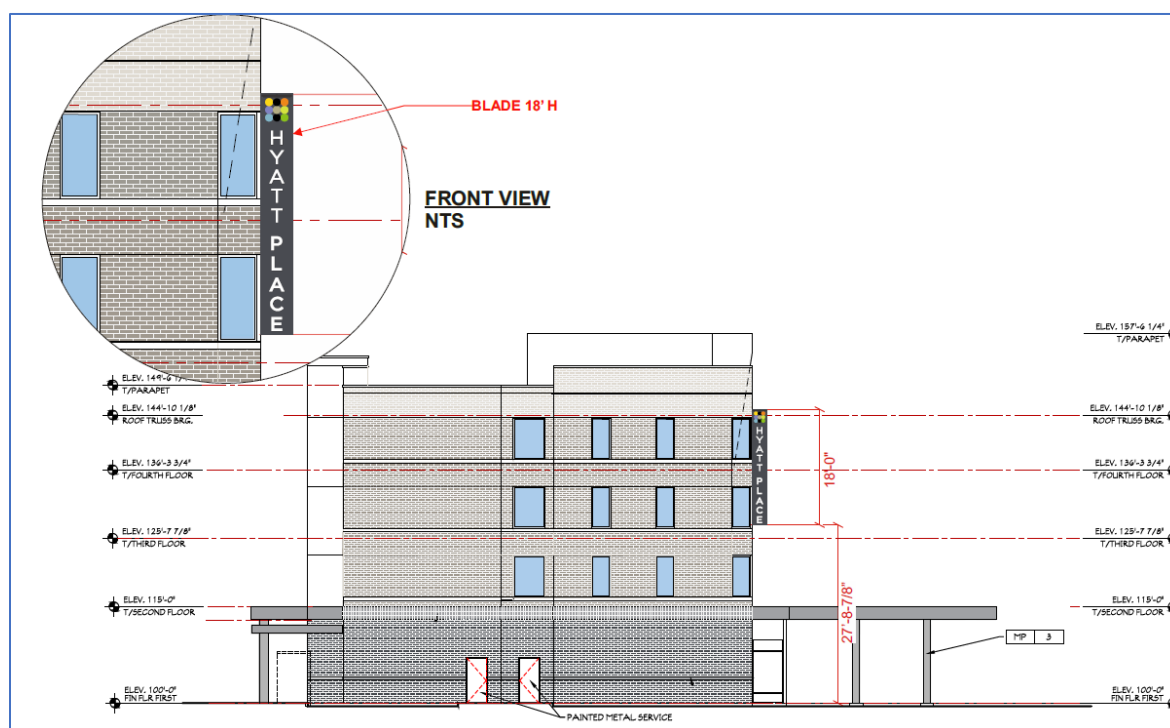


Figure 3: Second Sign Option- 18' in height.

VARIANCE STANDARDS

The variance process is established to provide relief to a property owner when, due to unique circumstances, compliance with the zoning code imposes a hardship or practical difficulty on a property owner. The BZA is under no obligation to grant a variance. It is the petitioner's responsibility to prove a hardship or practical difficulty. The BZA should ask the petition to address the criteria listed below.

Sec. 26-6.804.I of the Munster Zoning Code states that the basis for a variance is as follows:

g. General Standards.

A Variance may be granted only if the Decision-Making Authority has made the following determinations for such Variance:

- i. the practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships that would be incurred by strict application of the Use or Development standard, as applicable, are unique and not shared by all properties in the vicinity and are not self-imposed;

Staff finds that the Hyatt Place hotel is a brand-new building with multiple options for signage, which were known at the time that the development plan for the building was approved by the Munster Plan Commission, and therefore it is difficult to conclude that any difficulties with installing code compliant signage are not self-imposed, which indicates that this criterion has not been met.

- ii. such Variance is the minimum Variance that will relieve such practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships, as applicable;

Staff finds that the petitioners are requesting a sign variance, which indicates that this criterion has not been met.

- iii. such Variance is in the spirit of the general purposes and intent of this Article as stated in Division 1; and

Staff finds that the general purpose of the zoning ordinance is to limit the amount of signage to specific sizes and types to improve the aesthetics of the Town, which indicates that this criterion has not been met.

- iv. such Variance is so designed as to provide reasonable consideration to, among other things, the character of the neighborhood, District, or Civic Zone, the conservation of property values in the vicinity, and the guidance of Development in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan.

Staff finds that the character of Maple Leaf Crossing is a pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use development, but the proposed signage is oriented to distant vehicular traffic rather than the pedestrian, which indicates that this criterion has not been met.

h. Specific to Development standards Variances:

1005 Ridge Road • Munster, IN 46321 • (219) 836-8810 • Police/Fire Emergencies 911
Police Non-Emergency (219) 836-6600 • Fire Non-Emergency (219) 836-6960

www.munster.org

A Variance from Development Standards may be approved or approved with conditions only if:

- i. it will not be injurious to the public health, safety, morals, and general welfare of the community;

Staff finds no evidence that the proposed signage will be injurious to the community.

- ii. the use and value of the area Adjacent to the property included in the Variance will not be affected in a substantially adverse manner; and

Staff finds no evidence that the proposed signage will adversely affect the use and value of the adjacent area.

- iii. the strict application of the Development standards will result in practical difficulties in the use of the property.

Staff finds that Hyatt Place hotels in other locations have implemented compliant sign programs, which could be applied in this case as well.

The applicant has also addressed these criteria in the attached application.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

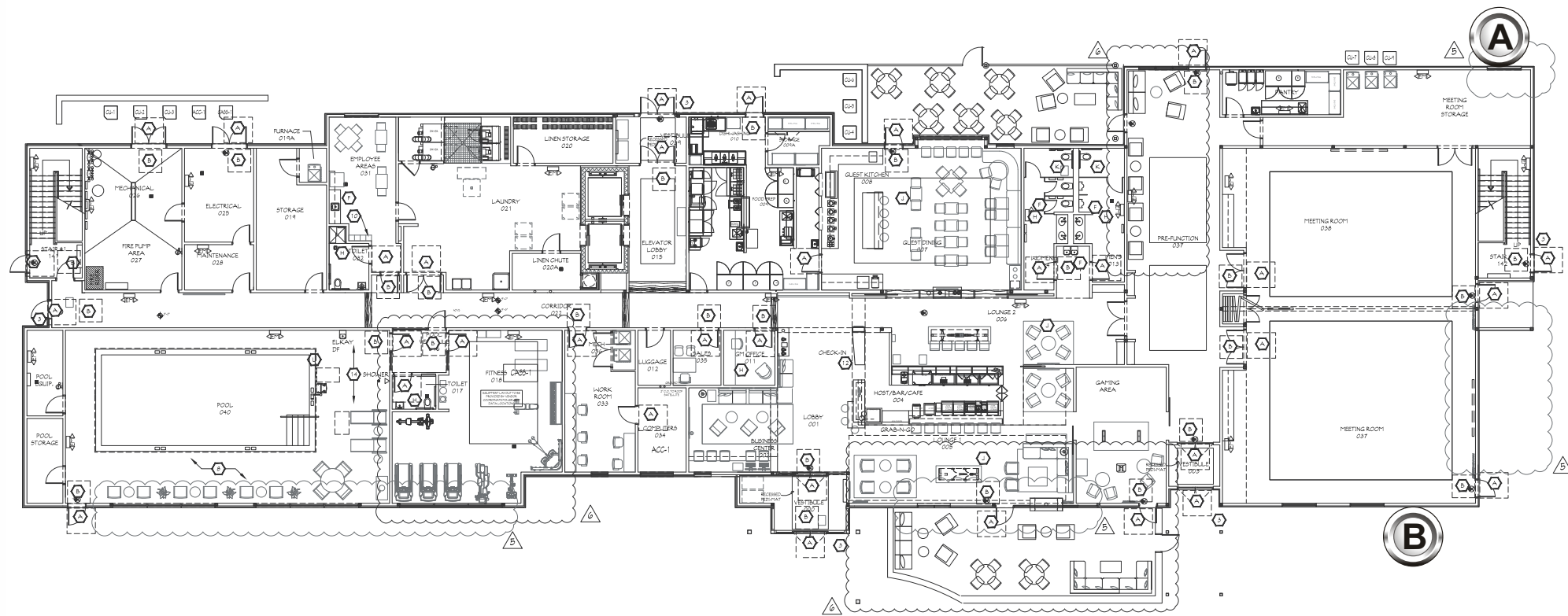
The petitioner is able to meet the standards of the Munster Based Character Code if the first signage option is selected and located under the window sill of the third story. Therefore, staff is recommending the Board of Zoning Appeals deny this variance request.

MOTION

The Board of Zoning Appeals may wish to consider the following motion:

Motion to deny BZA Docket No. 23-002, a variance to signage standards at 9420 Calumet Avenue.

SITE PLAN



CUSTOMER APPROVAL

Customer Signature

Date

SIGNAGE SPECIFICATIONS

- OPTION: 1 & 2**
A ILLUMINATED DOUBLE FACE BLADE SIGN
Manufacture and Install (1) set of Channel Letters
- OPTION: 1 & 2**
B ILLUMINATED DOUBLE FACE BLADE SIGN
Manufacture and Install (1) set of Channel Letters

COAST SIGN
1500 W. Embassy St. Anaheim, CA 92802 714.520.9144

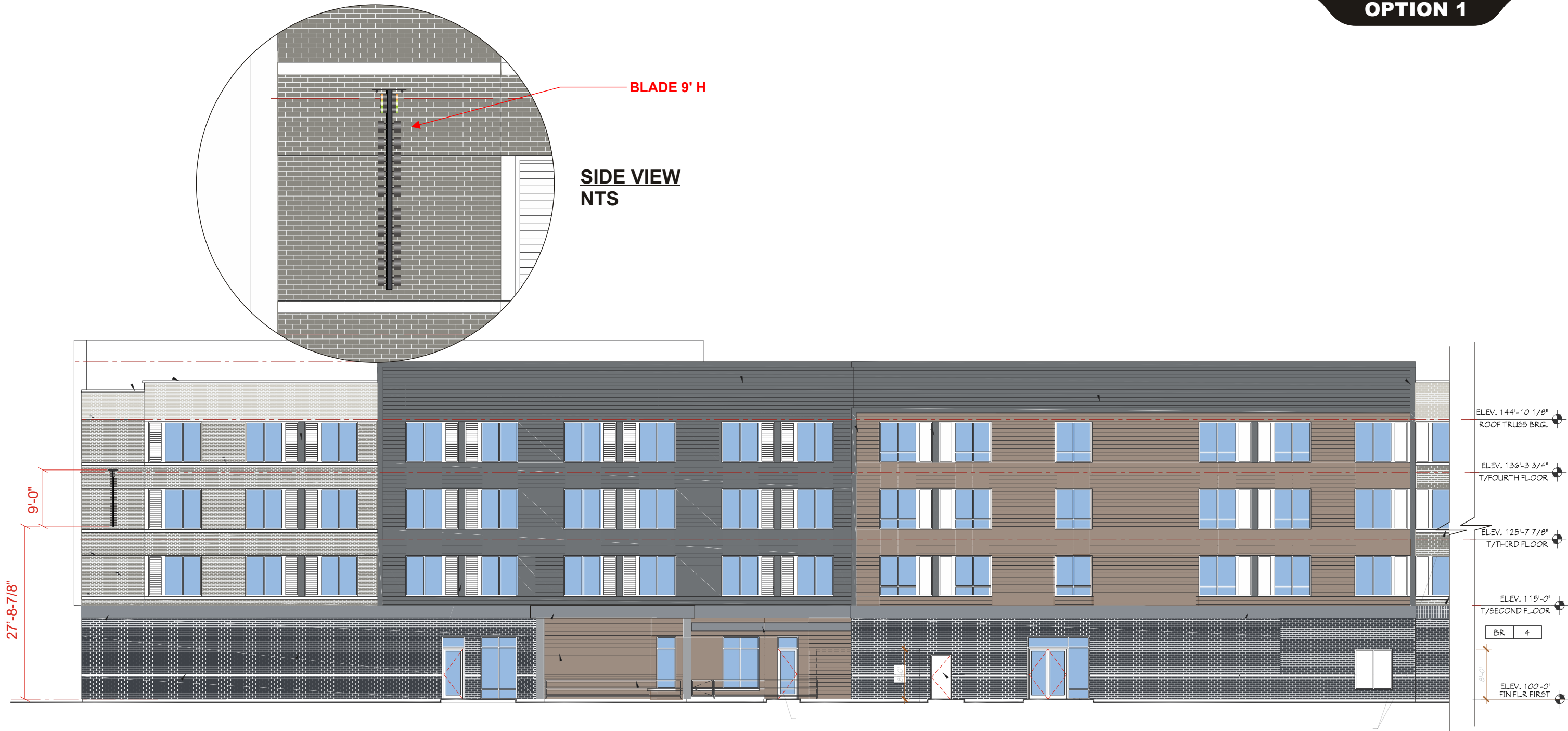
Date: 06-08-2023	Project Name: Hyatt Place
Scale: NTS	Address: 9420 Calumet Ave
Drawn: Nariel L.	City / State / Zip: Munster, IN
PM: Omeed A.	Notes:

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No.	Designer	Date	Revision Notes
1	WA	08-28-23	update blade sign
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			

No.	Designer	Date	Revision Notes
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			

DESIGN DRAWING 1 of 11
Request Number:
DEV-HYPL-00199-R1



NORTH ELEVATION @ ILLUMINATED DOUBLE FACE BLADE SIGN

Scale: 1/16"=1'-0"

COAST SIGN

1500 W. Embassy St. Anaheim, CA 92802 714.520.9144

Date:	06-08-2023	Project Name:	Hyatt Place
Scale:	NTS	Address:	9420 Calumet Ave
Drawn:	Nariel L.	City / State / Zip:	Munster, IN
PM:	Omeed A.	Notes:	

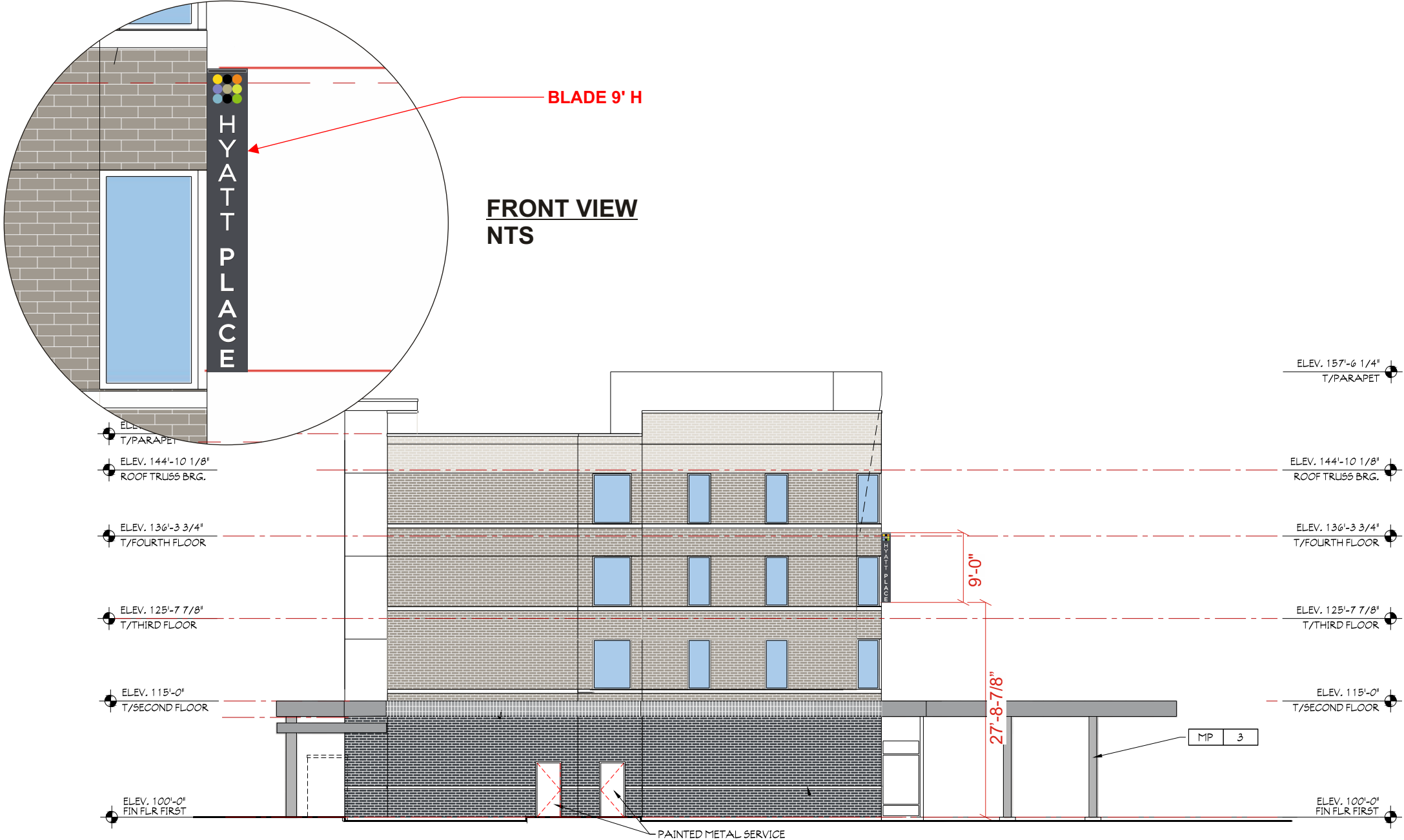
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2				8			
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DESIGN DRAWING 2 of 11

Request Number:

DEV-HYPL-00199-R1



WEST ELEVATION @ ILLUMINATED DOUBLE FACE BLADE SIGN

Scale: 1/16"=1'-0"

COAST SIGN
1500 W. Embassy St. Anaheim, CA 92802 714.520.9144

Date: 06-08-2023	Project Name: Hyatt Place
Scale: NTS	Address: 9420 Calumet Ave
Drawn: Nariel L.	City / State / Zip: Munster, IN
PM: Omeed A.	Notes:

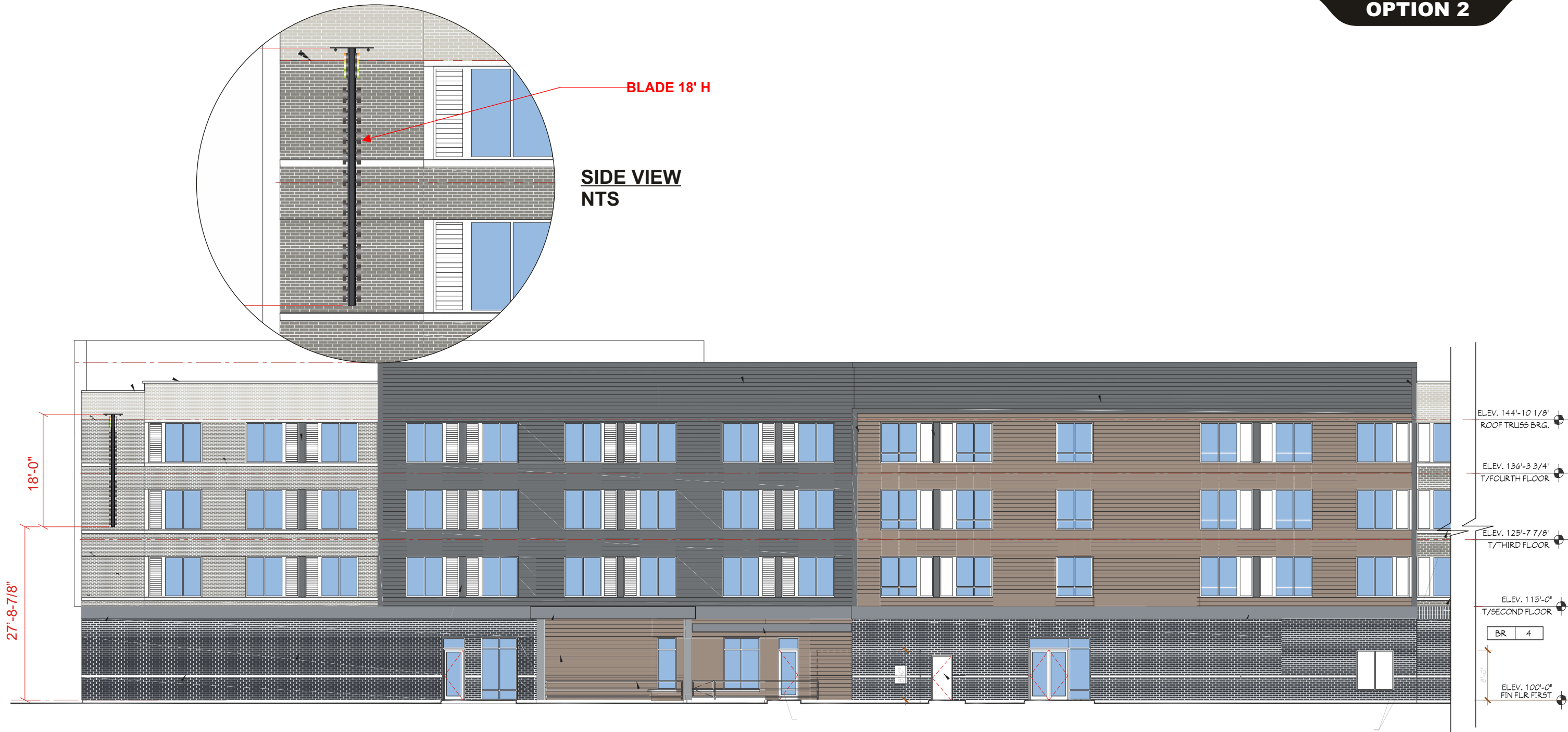
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DESIGN DRAWING 3 of 11

Request Number:

DEV-HYPL-00199-R1



NORTH ELEVATION @ ILLUMINATED DOUBLE FACE BLADE SIGN

Scale: 1/16"=1'-0"

COAST SIGN
1500 W. Embassy St. Anaheim, CA 92802 714.520.9144

Date: 06-08-2023	Project Name: Hyatt Place
Scale: NTS	Address: 9420 Calumet Ave
Drawn: Nariel L.	City / State / Zip: Munster, IN
PM: Omeed A.	Notes:

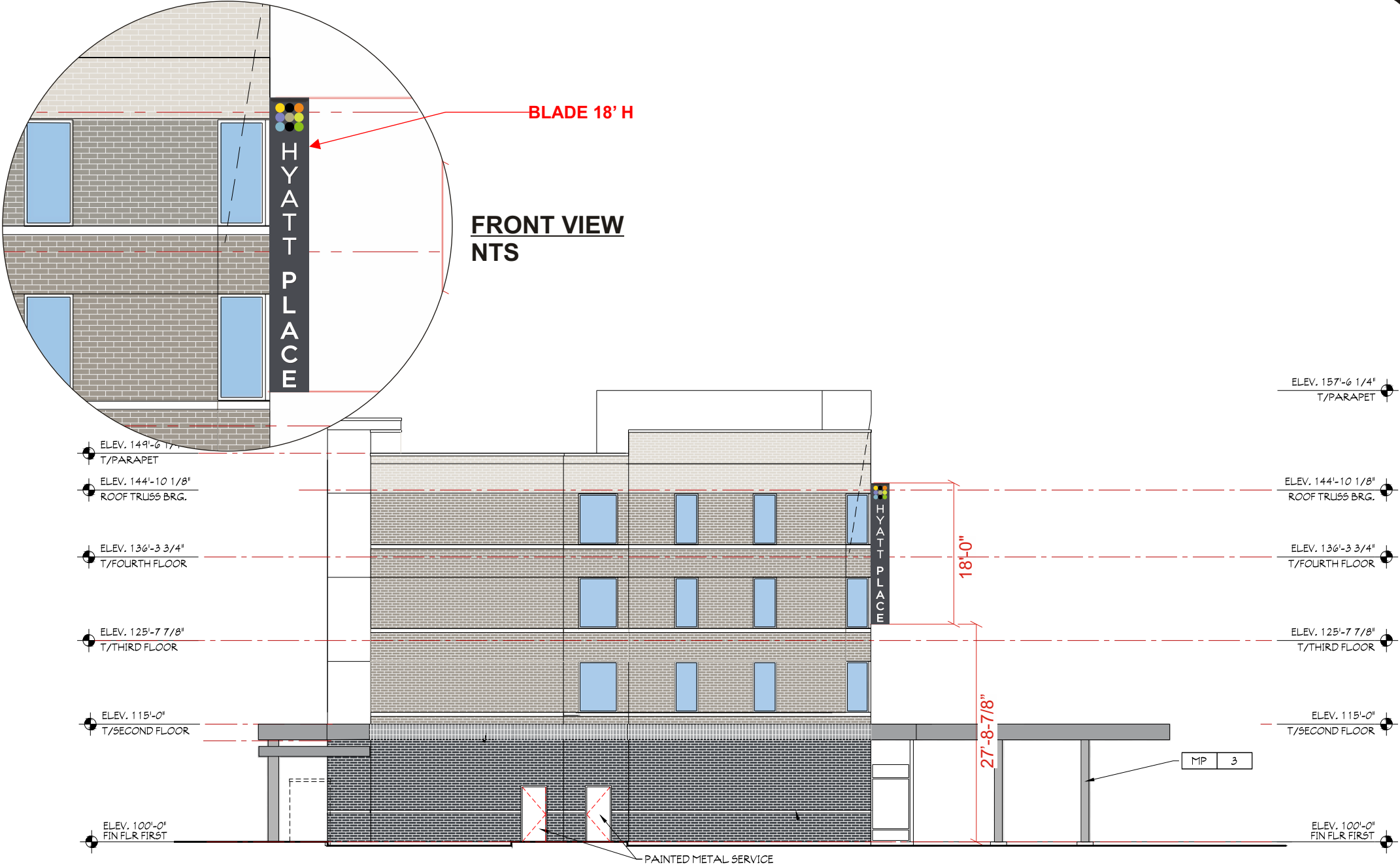
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2				8			
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5				11			
6				12			

DESIGN DRAWING 4 of 11

Request Number:

DEV-HYPL-00199-R1



WEST ELEVATION @ ILLUMINATED DOUBLE FACE BLADE SIGN

Scale: 1/16"=1'-0"

COAST SIGN
1500 W. Embassy St. Anaheim, CA 92802 714.520.9144

Date: 06-08-2023	Project Name: Hyatt Place
Scale: NTS	Address: 9420 Calumet Ave
Drawn: Nariel L.	City / State / Zip: Munster, IN
PM: Omeed A.	Notes:

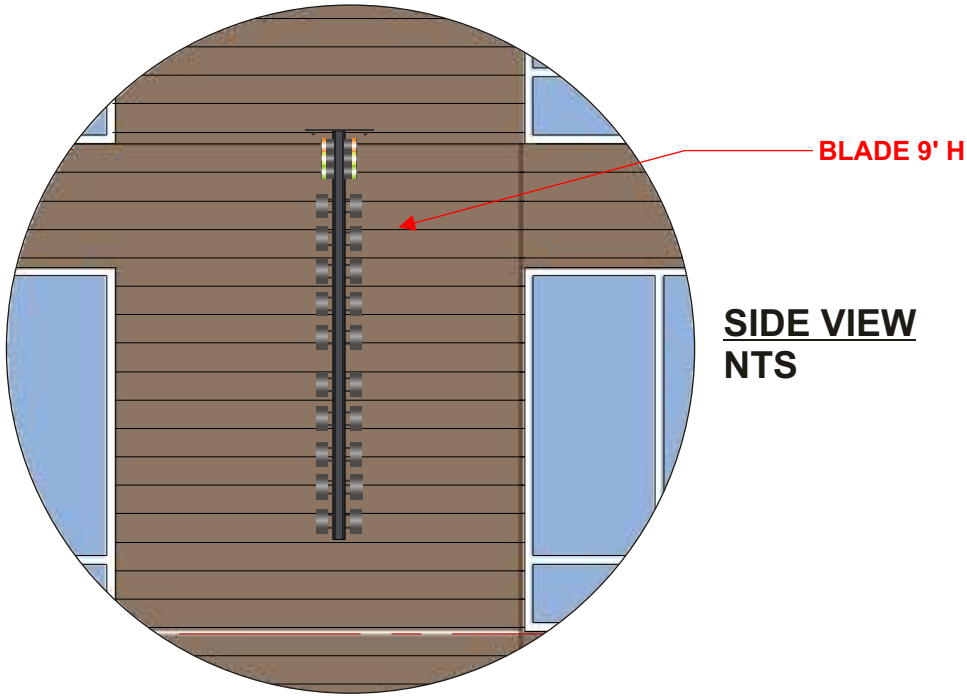
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2				8			
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5				11			
6				12			

DESIGN DRAWING 5 of 11

Request Number:

DEV-HYPL-00199-R1



SOUTH ELEVATION @ ILLUMINATED DOUBLE FACE BLADE SIGN

Scale: 1/16"=1'-0"

COAST SIGN
1500 W. Embassy St. Anaheim, CA 92802 714.520.9144

Date: 06-08-2023	Project Name: Hyatt Place
Scale: NTS	Address: 9420 Calumet Ave
Drawn: Nariel L.	City / State / Zip: Munster, IN
PM: Omeed A.	Notes:

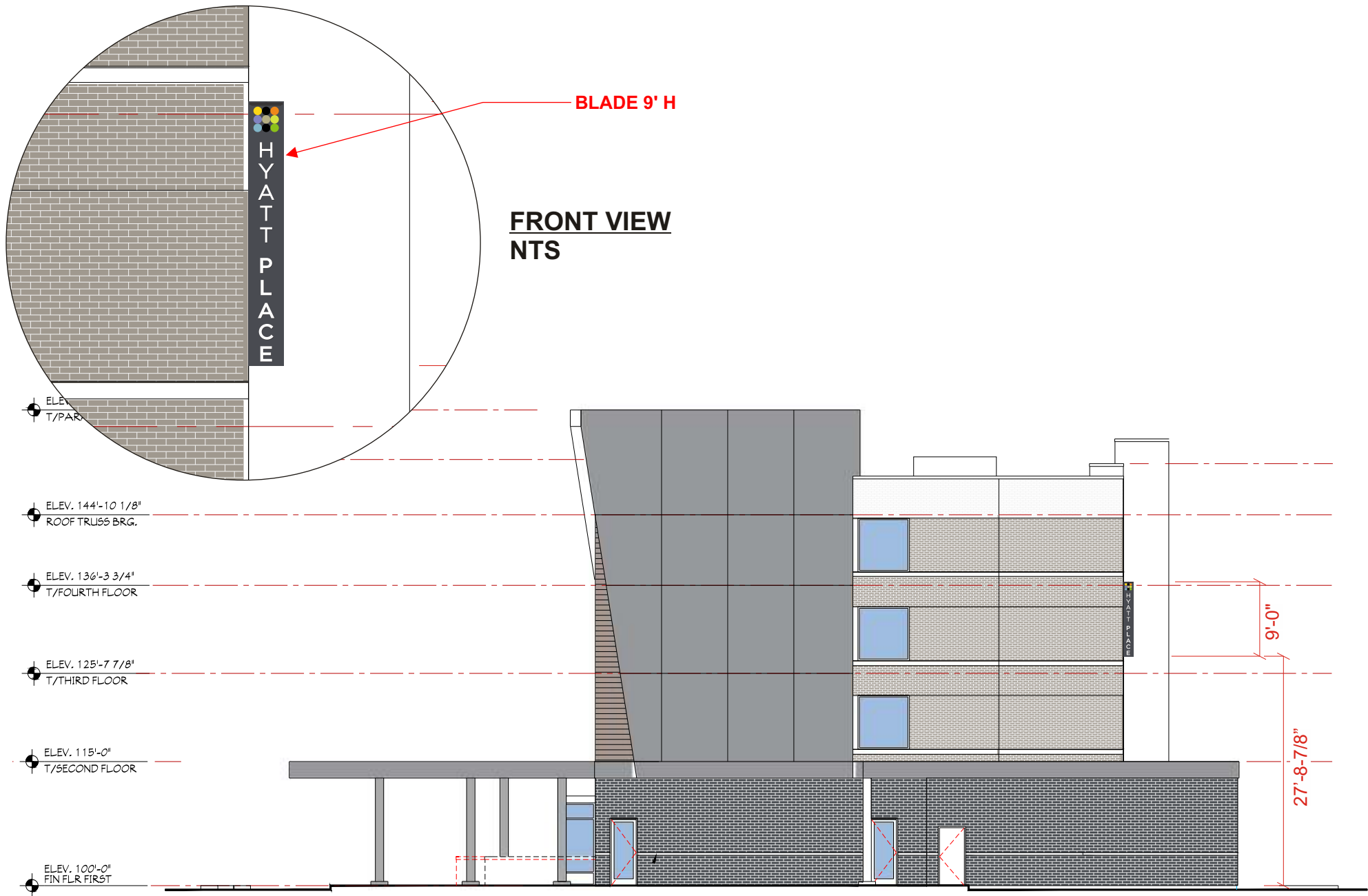
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2				8			
3				9			
4				10			
5				11			
6				12			

DESIGN DRAWING 6 of 11

Request Number:

DEV-HYPL-00199-R1



EAST ELEVATION @ ILLUMINATED DOUBLE FACE BLADE SIGN

Scale: 1/16"=1'-0"

COAST SIGN
1500 W. Embassy St. Anaheim, CA 92802 714.520.9144

Date: 06-08-2023	Project Name: Hyatt Place
Scale: NTS	Address: 9420 Calumet Ave
Drawn: Nariel L.	City / State / Zip: Munster, IN
PM: Omeed A.	Notes:

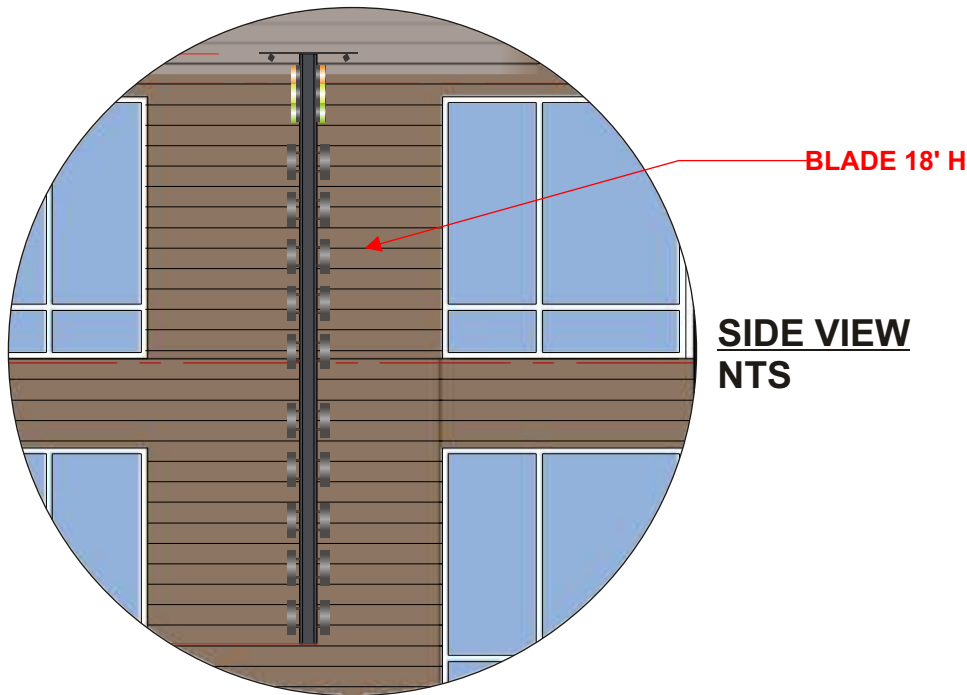
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2				8			
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DESIGN DRAWING 7 of 11

Request Number:

DEV-HYPL-00199-R1



SIDE VIEW
NTS



SOUTH ELEVATION @ ILLUMINATED DOUBLE FACE BLADE SIGN

Scale: 1/16"=1'-0"

COAST SIGN
1500 W. Embassy St. Anaheim, CA 92802 714.520.9144

Date: 06-08-2023	Project Name: Hyatt Place
Scale: NTS	Address: 9420 Calumet Ave
Drawn: Nariel L.	City / State / Zip: Munster, IN
PM: Omeed A.	Notes:

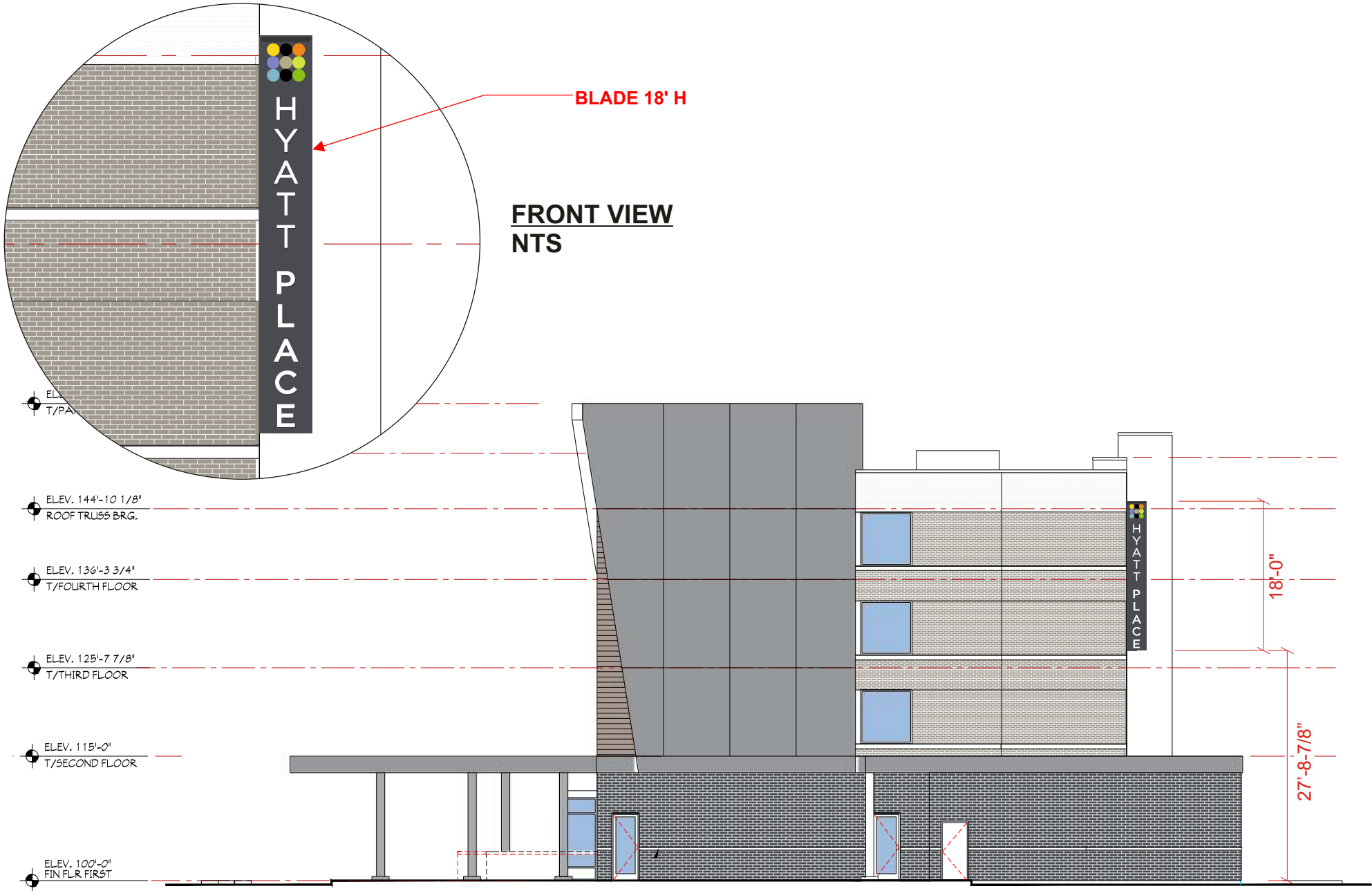
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DESIGN DRAWING 8 of 11

Request Number:

DEV-HYPL-00199-R1



EAST ELEVATION @ ILLUMINATED DOUBLE FACE BLADE SIGN

Scale: 1/16"=1'-0"

COAST SIGN
1500 W. Embassy St. Anaheim, CA 92802 714.520.9144

Date: 06-08-2023	Project Name: Hyatt Place
Scale: NTS	Address: 9420 Calumet Ave
Drawn: Nariel L.	City / State / Zip: Munster, IN
PM: Omeed A.	Notes:

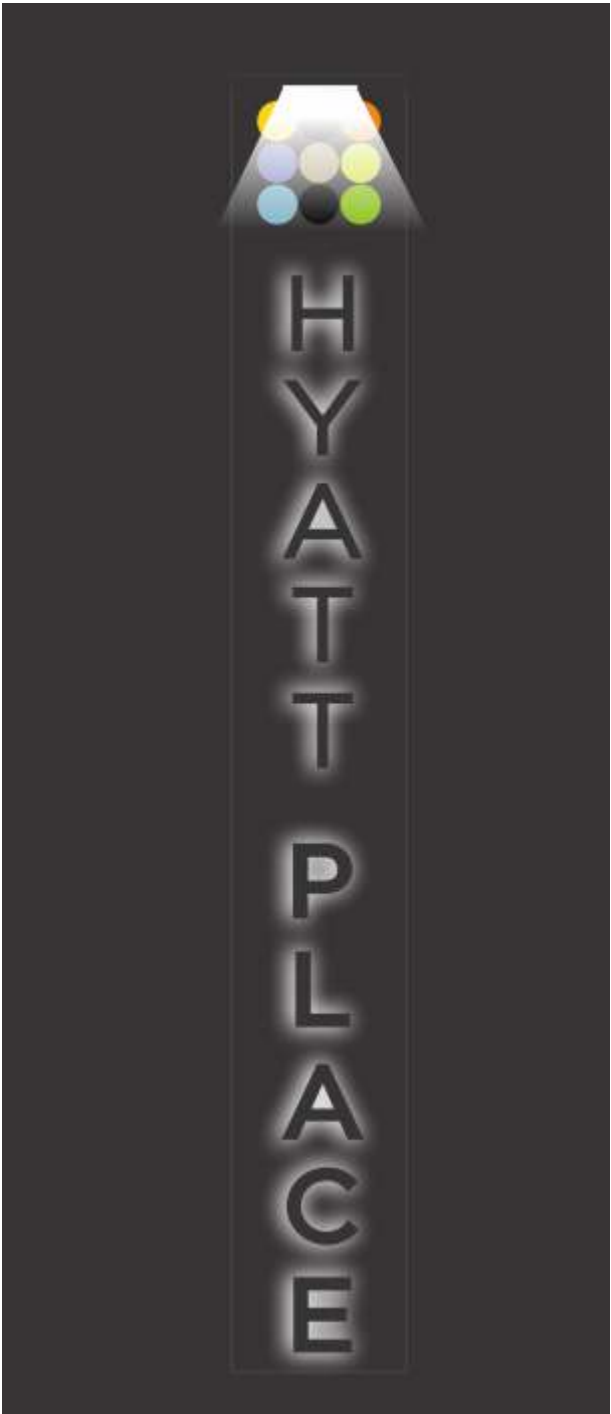
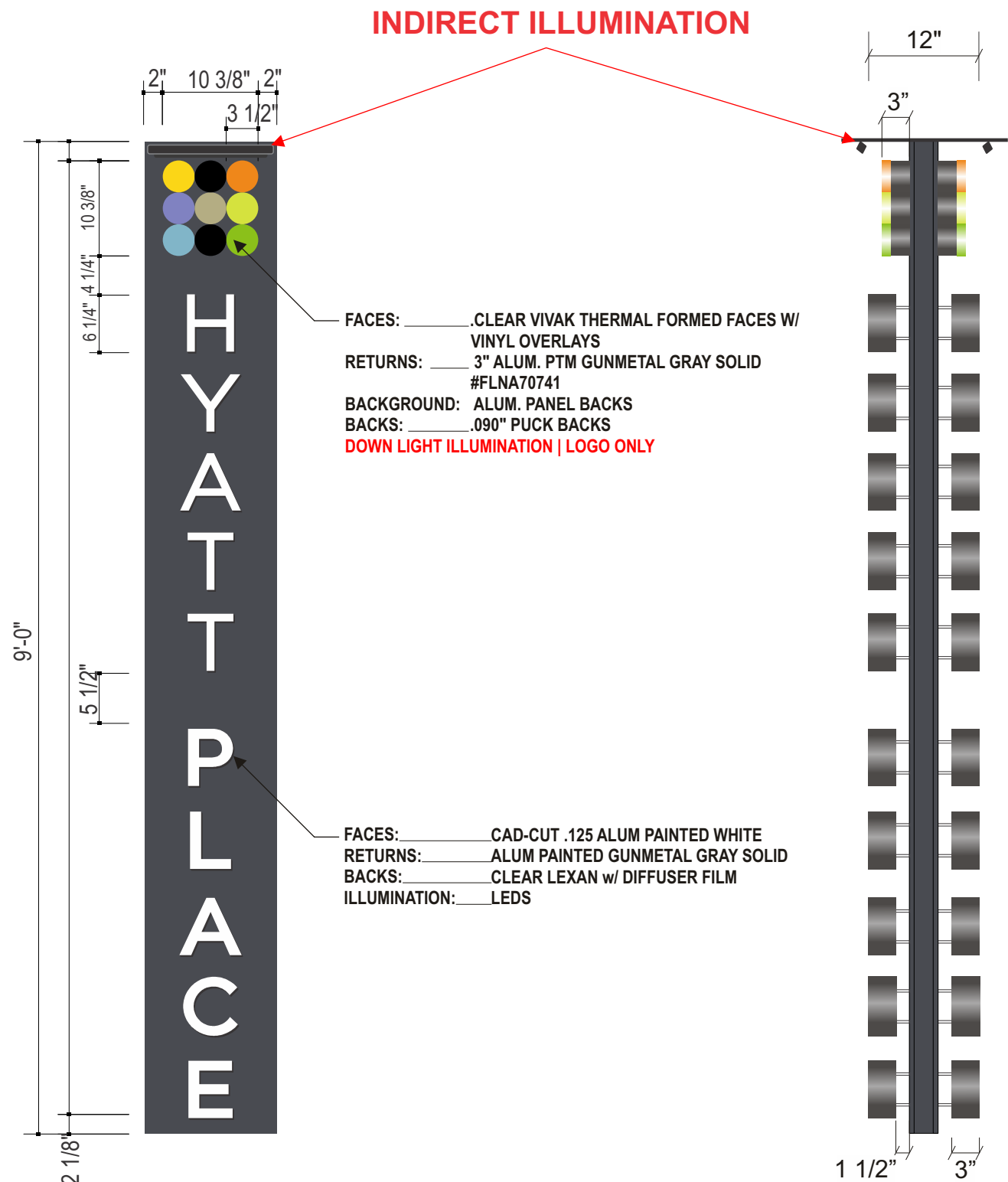
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DESIGN DRAWING 9 of 11

Request Number:

DEV-HYPL-00199-R1











NIGHT VIEW

EXACT MANUFACTURING SPECIFICATIONS
TO BE DETERMINED BY ENGINEERING DEPT.

"COLOR DETAIL"

MVPTV = MIRATEC SYSTEMS PRINTED TRANSLUCENT VINYL

 MVPTV 2ND SURFACE HYATT PLACE YELLOW W/ #30 DIFFUSER	 MVPTV 2ND SURFACE HYATT PLACE PISTACHIO W/ #30 DIFFUSER
 MVPTV 2ND SURFACE HYATT PLACE LAVENDER W/ #30 DIFFUSER	 MVPTV 2ND SURFACE HYATT PLACE ORANGE W/ #30 DIFFUSER
 MVPTV 2ND SURFACE HYATT PLACE BLUE W/ #30 DIFFUSER	 MVPTV 2ND SURFACE HYATT PLACE LIME GREEN W/ #30 DIFFUSER
 MVPTV 2ND SURFACE HYATT PLACE BLACK W/ 7725-12 OPAQUE BLACK VINYL	 MVPTV 2ND SURFACE HYATT PLACE LIGHT GREEN W/ #30 DIFFUSER

 PAINT: #FLNA70741 GUNMETAL GRAY SOLID - PER APPROVED SAMPLE	 PAINT: WHITE PAINT: INTERIOR WHITE LEP
--	---

A **B** D/F BLADE SIGN W/ HALO-LIT CHANNEL LETTERS | NON-LIT LOGO
SCALE: 3/4" = 1'-0"

COAST SIGN
1500 W. Embassy St. Anaheim, CA 92802 714.520.9144

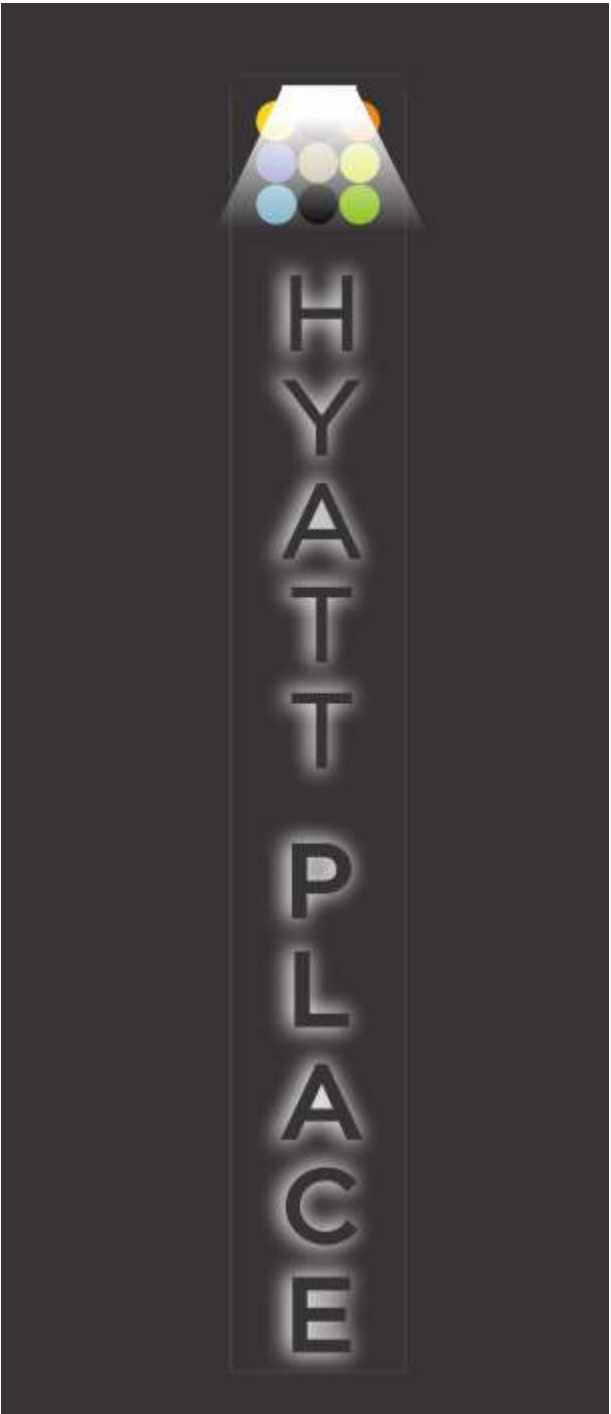
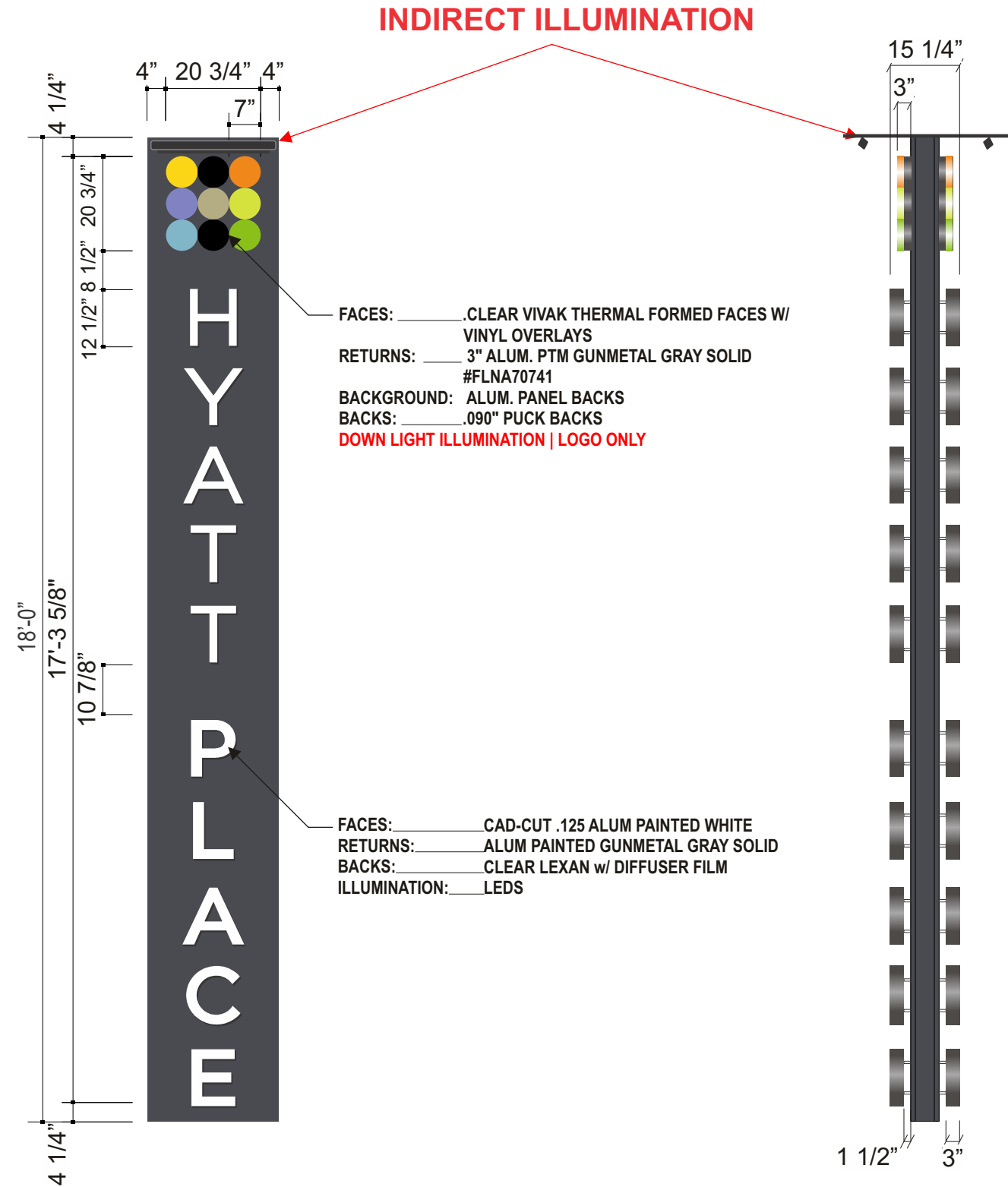
Date: 06-08-2023	Project Name: Hyatt Place
Scale: NTS	Address: 9420 Calumet Ave
Drawn: Nariel L.	City / State / Zip: Munster, IN
PM: Omeed A.	Notes:

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DESIGN DRAWING 10 of 11

Request Number:
DEV-HYPL-00199-R1












NIGHT VIEW

EXACT MANUFACTURING SPECIFICATIONS
TO BE DETERMINED BY ENGINEERING DEPT.

"COLOR DETAIL"

MVPTV = MIRATEC SYSTEMS PRINTED TRANSLUCENT VINYL

 MVPTV 2ND SURFACE HYATT PLACE YELLOW W/ #30 DIFFUSER	 MVPTV 2ND SURFACE HYATT PLACE PISTACHIO W/ #30 DIFFUSER
 MVPTV 2ND SURFACE HYATT PLACE LAVENDER W/ #30 DIFFUSER	 MVPTV 2ND SURFACE HYATT PLACE ORANGE W/ #30 DIFFUSER
 MVPTV 2ND SURFACE HYATT PLACE BLUE W/ #30 DIFFUSER	 MVPTV 2ND SURFACE HYATT PLACE LIME GREEN W/ #30 DIFFUSER
 MVPTV 2ND SURFACE HYATT PLACE BLACK W/ 7725-12 OPAQUE BLACK VINYL	 MVPTV 2ND SURFACE HYATT PLACE LIGHT GREEN W/ #30 DIFFUSER

 PAINT: #FLNA70741 GUNMETAL GRAY SOLID - PER APPROVED SAMPLE	
 PAINT: WHITE	
 PAINT: INTERIOR WHITE LEP	

A B D/F BLADE SIGN W/ HALO-LIT CHANNEL LETTERS | NON-LIT LOGO
SCALE: 3/8" = 1'-0"

COAST SIGN
1500 W. Embassy St. Anaheim, CA 92802 714.520.9144

Date: 06-08-2023	Project Name: Hyatt Place
Scale: NTS	Address: 9420 Calumet Ave
Drawn: Nariel L.	City / State / Zip: Munster, IN
PM: Omeed A.	Notes:

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DESIGN DRAWING 11 of 11

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