

**Final LUPC Staff Report for the Application Of Lincoln Place To Erect Two Oversize Signs
June 5, 2013**

Project Description

Project Address: 1050 Frederick Street is the address assigned to this project, however the entire Lincoln Place development consists of approximately 38 acres spread over 36 lots with approximately 800 apartments when completed.

Applicant: AIMCO Venezia, LLC

Case Numbers: ZA 2012-3473
CEQA No. ENV 2010-1419-MND

The property is improved with approximately 700 apartments, most of which are being renovated and a bathroom added to each apartment. An additional 99 new units are being built, plus a new recreation center and pool, and a new Leasing Center. The new Leasing Center is located which is located where California Avenue ends at Frederick Street, between Ralphs and Ross. The applicant wishes to place two signs on the Leasing Center. In the Los Angeles Municipal Code, allowable signage is measured in square feet. One of the proposed signs would be allowed if it were the only sign erected, and the other sign is substantially larger than is allowed (hereinafter referred to as the "Oversize Sign"). Also, when the size of both signs is added together, they exceed the allowable square footage of signage on one "lot." The Oversize Sign is mounted on the wall of the Leasing Center which faces Lincoln Boulevard, and has the words "Lincoln Place apartment homes" and the web site and telephone number for the Leasing Center. The other proposed sign is above the door and it identifies the building as the "Leasing Center."

The applicant is represented by its Vice President for Redevelopment, Sean Finnegan. His telephone number is: (949) 437-0144, and his email address is Sean.Finnegan@aimco.com.

Zoning: RD 1.5-1

General Plan Land Use: Low Medium II Residential

Venice Subarea: The Venice Coastal Zone Specific Plan does not apply to this property because it is east of Lincoln Boulevard.

Hearings And Meetings Conducted: No radius map mailing was done for a Neighborhood Meeting. Instead, community members were invited who were previously involved with Lincoln Place issues, Lincoln Boulevard Community Design Overlay District issues, or with billboard issues, and they were asked to pass the word along to other potentially-interested parties. This informal meeting was held at the site on April 10, 2013. The applicant's representative, Sean Finnegan, explained the nature of the requested signage and answered questions and addressed concerns. The LUPC conducted a hearing on this application on June 5, 2013.

Description of Application:

The application seeks a zone variance from the signage restrictions set forth in Los Angeles Municipal Code section 12.21.A.7 for the R zone. The City's Notice Of Public Hearing describes the application as follows:

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 12.27-B of the Los Angeles Municipal Code, a Zone Variance from Section 12.21-A.7 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code, to allow the construction, use and maintenance of two on-site signs on one lot, identifying permitted uses and on-site leasing building, totaling approximately 97 square feet in lieu of the permitted 30 square feet in the RD 1.5-1XL Zone.

The purpose of the Oversize Sign facing Lincoln Boulevard is to have the sign be visible from Lincoln Boulevard. The applicant's justification for granting approval for the two proposed signs on the Leasing Center wall is that the applicable signage regulations would allow the installation of at least one sign on each of the 36 lots that make up the development, and instead of having many smaller signs, the applicant is willing to limit their total signage on the entire development as part of a "package deal" to 8 smaller signs, thereby eliminating sign clutter. At the public hearing, the applicant changed its position and has offered to limit the other signage to 12 signs.

The content of the words and symbols on each sign determines which part of the sign ordinance applies, and therefore the allowable square footage of the sign or signs. The largest of the proposed oversize signs, which will be visible from Lincoln Boulevard, includes both the web site and the telephone number of the leasing office. There is a disagreement between the applicant's position on which part of the sign ordinance applies, and the interpretation of the sign ordinance by the LUPC staff person preparing this report.

The important part of the application is not just the square footage of the oversize signs. The size of the lettering on the Oversize Sign determines the degree of its visibility from Lincoln Boulevard. The applicant has provided detailed drawings with this information, and any VNC recommendation must attach these drawings so that the VNC's recommendation is clear.

Analysis Of Issues

A. Lincoln Boulevard Community Design Overlay District

One of the 36 lots in the Lincoln Place development is located in the Lincoln Boulevard Community Design Overlay District, which provides that "If a portion of a project is within the CDO boundary, the CDO guidelines and standards and requirements contained herein shall apply to the entire project." The Lincoln Boulevard CDO imposes a Q Condition with permanent limitations on the properties in its boundaries, including restrictions on signage:

10. Signage

- a. Prohibited Signs: Off-site Signs (including Billboards); Pole Signs; freestanding signs on walls and fences; Illuminated Architectural Canopy Signs; Roof Signs; Inflatable Signs, including inflatable devices used for display or to attract attention; blinking, flashing, electronic, moving signs and/or signs with any rotating or moving parts that give the impression of movement;
- b. Prohibited improvements: For existing sign types as listed above, the enlargement of signs, the augmentation of signs with lighting or digital displays, and the addition of sign facing (such as a second face on the back of an off-site sign) shall be prohibited.
- c. Each premise or business with a direct public entrance on the exterior of a building shall be permitted one wall sign. If the premise abuts another street, alley, or public parking area, an additional sign is permitted on the building at that location.

d. Wall sign size shall not exceed one-and-one-half square feet per one foot of building facade length.

There are many reasons why the CDO should not apply to the Lincoln Place development. The one lot that is within the CDO boundaries is a tiny lot that is not improved or otherwise used and is not really a part of the Lincoln Place development. Also, it appears from the L.A. County Tax Assessor's maps that the Lincoln Place lot which is located in the Lincoln Boulevard CDO boundary is not legally tied to any of the other lots in the development. The drafters of the Lincoln Boulevard Community Design Overlay District clearly did not include the Lincoln Place development within the boundaries of the CDO. Finally, the CDO boundaries apply to commercial property, and Lincoln Place is residential property.

It seems clear that the Lincoln Boulevard CDO was not intended to apply to the Lincoln Place development. The fact that the proposed Oversize Sign is intended to be visible from Lincoln Boulevard supports completing an analysis of whether that sign is consistent with the spirit, but not the letter, of the CDO.

B. LAMC Section 12.27.A.7. - Does Subsection (f) or (h) Apply?

The applicant has applied for a variance from LAMC Section 12.27.A.7., and only subsections (f) and (h) are potentially relevant:

LAMC 12.21.A.7. (Amended by Ord. No. 174,547, Eff. 6/10/02.) No nameplate, sign or advertising matter of any kind shall be placed or maintained on any lot in any zone except in accordance with the following regulations:

(f) There may be one or more unlighted signs pertaining to the prospective rental or sale of the property, but the total area of all these signs shall not exceed 20 square feet on any lot in an "A" Zone, nor exceed 12 square feet on any lot in an "R" Zone;

(h) There may be one or more signs identifying the buildings or permitted use (except that no signs shall be permitted to identify a home occupation) on any lot in any "R" Zone, but no one sign may have a surface area which exceeds 20 square feet, nor shall the total surface area of all these signs exceed 30 square feet;

The first aspect of this ordinance that should be noted is that it applies to "any lot," and the applicant has 36 lots in the development, and can therefore erect one or more of the described signs on each of the 36 lots without any additional permits. The purpose of this application is to obtain permission to erect the two large signs proposed for the Leasing Center, as part of a "package deal" to limit visual clutter.. Aside from the question of whether the Lincoln Boulevard CDO applies to the development and to this application, the primary issue is whether subsection (f) or (h) applies to this application and to the smaller signs that are part of the "package deal." This determination depends on the content of the sign. Subsection (f) applies to signs "pertaining to the prospective rental ... of the property," and subsection (h) applies to signs "identifying the buildings or permitted use." Subsection (f) does not allow illuminated signs and limits the size of the signs to smaller signs than subsection (h), and subsection (h) appears to allow illuminated signs, simply because it does not prohibit illuminated signs like subsection (f).

The applicant contends that subsection (f) does not apply and that subsection (h) applies. The applicant representative provides the following reasoning:

Section 12.21.A.7(h) applies here, as the sign will identify Lincoln Place and the permitted leasing center on the parcel subject to the variance request. We do not believe that Section 12.21.A.7(f) applies for at least two reasons. First, the property subject to the variance request is a parcel on which only the leasing center will be located. No apartment buildings are being constructed on the leasing center parcel. Though the leasing center will clearly be used to rent out apartments throughout the greater Lincoln Place community, the proposed signs subject to the variance request do not pertain to the prospective rental or sale of the leasing center. Second, the intent of subsection (f) is to apply to “For Sale,” “For Lease,” or “For Rent” signs commonly found on residential properties. We are not proposing any such signs.

A more reasonable position is that subsection (f) applies to the Leasing Center signs and any other signs placed in the development that have the web site or the telephone number of the leasing office, since those signs pertain to the prospective leasing of the property. The same reasoning would apply to any smaller signs which have a directional arrow pointing toward the “Leasing Office.” If subsection (f) applies, the signs could not be illuminated and would be limited to 12 square feet instead of 30 square feet. While the applicant asserts that subsection (f) is intended to apply to “For Sale” or “For Rent” signs, subsection (f) allows a 4' by 3' sign (12 square feet), which would be a very large “For Rent” sign. Subsection (h) regulates “signs identifying the buildings or permitted use,” such as the “Recreation Center.”

The applicant’s Master Land Use Permit Application seeks relief only from subsection (h). The applicant is not asking for a variance from subsection (f) to have the illuminated signs or to have signs exceeding 12 square feet per lot, because the applicant is taking the position that subsection (h) applies. This is likely to be a subject of future disagreement, as the applicant has provided examples of the intended smaller signs which are illuminated and have the telephone number of the leasing office.

C. Can Findings Be Made To Support A Variance For The Two Proposed Signs?

There are two signs proposed for the Leasing Center, and the proposed Oversize Sign would be illuminated. There are many signs on Lincoln Boulevard installed to identify businesses and seek customers, which is the same purpose as the proposed Oversize Sign. It is reasonable for the applicant to have the opportunity to announce its location and advertise its apartments. The two proposed signs will not cause any visual blight. There is no compelling reason for rejecting the application, if the size of the lettering is clearly defined, and if it is part of “package deal.”

The square footage of the sign, or the height of the letters, does not fully describe the size of the letters. To define the dimensions of the lettering on the Oversize Sign, the information needed is the measurements for the width of the stem, crossbar, and bowl of the letters. These are the upright and sideways parts of the letters (please see <http://www.fontshop.com/glossary/>). The applicant has described the lettering as “thin lettering,” and has provided the specifics in the drawings which are attached to this staff report.

D. What Is A Reasonable Limit On The Total Number Of Signs As Part Of A “Package Deal”?

The final issue is whether the applicant’s proposal to limit the number of smaller signs to reduce the visual clutter is a satisfactory proposal. The applicant originally offered to limit the number of signs to 8, then changed it to 12 without notice at the public hearing. A map of the “lots” in the development shows that 15 or 16 of the 36 lots front on the three public streets on the perimeter of the development (Frederick Street, Penmar Avenue, and Lake Street), and that number is really 14 or 15 lots because one of the lots is the lot with the two proposed signs that are the subject of this application. The remaining lots front on public streets within the interior of the project, where installation of signage will not significantly affect visual clutter. In other words, the applicant’s offer to limit the number of smaller signs to 12 signs, when there are only 15 lots that would merit placement of a smaller sign, is not a substantial reduction as part of a “package deal” in exchange for the right to erect the two proposed signs.

Conditions Of Approval Proposed By Applicant

The applicant has proposed the following condition of approval:

Overall Signage Program at Lincoln Place. In addition to the two (2) On-Site Signs approved as part of this Variance, the property owner shall be limited to the construction, installation, use, and maintenance of up to twelve additional (12) On-Site Signs on the 36 lots of the Lincoln Place apartment community (Tract No. 15214, Parcel 1, Lots 7 through 41; Tract No. 14328, Parcel 2, Lot 3; Parcel Map LA No. 2010-2994, Lots A and B; and Parcel Map LA No. 2010-2995, Lots A through D). The additional 12 On-Site Signs shall comply with the signage restrictions set forth in the Municipal Code in effect at the time of this variance approval.

Proposed LUPC Motion

The LUPC recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. The proposed sign mounted on the wall of the Leasing Center and facing Lincoln Boulevard shall be constructed in substantial accordance with the plans and drawings attached as Exhibit “A,” and with exact compliance with the plans and drawings attached as Exhibit “A” with respect to the dimensions of the lettering of the sign facing Lincoln Boulevard.
2. The applicant shall be limited to 6 additional signs on lots which have a boundary on any of the three public streets on the perimeter of the development (Frederick Street, Penmar Avenue, and Lake Street). There is no limitation on the additional signs which the applicant can install on lots which do not have a boundary on any of the three public streets on the perimeter of the development.

LUPC Hearing

At the LUPC hearing, the applicant accepted the proposed LUPC motion with two proposed changes: the applicant desired 8 additional signs on lots which have a boundary on a perimeter street instead of 6 signs, and the applicant desired to exclude from this limit any signs that are historical markers, security signs, occupant name and address signs, or signs required by

governmental regulations. The LUPC agreed to these changes, and passed the following motion unanimously:

The LUPC recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. The proposed sign mounted on the wall of the Leasing Center and facing Lincoln Boulevard shall be constructed in substantial conformance with the plans and drawings attached as Exhibit “A,” and in exact conformance with the plans and drawings attached as Exhibit “A” with respect to the dimensions of the lettering of the sign facing Lincoln Boulevard.

2). The applicant shall be limited to 8 additional signs on lots which have a boundary on any of the three public streets on the perimeter of the Lincoln Place property (Frederick Street, Penmar Avenue, and Lake Street). There is no limitation on the additional signs, which the applicant can install on lots, which do not have a boundary on any of the three public streets on the perimeter of the Lincoln Place Property. The 8 additional signs on lots which have a boundary on any of the three public streets on the perimeter of the Lincoln Place property shall comply with the signage restrictions set forth in the Municipal Code in effect at the time of this variance approval. This condition does not limit the ability to install, replace, repair, and/or maintain any code required, historic, name plate (name of occupant), security, or house/apartment number (address) signage at the Lincoln Place Apartment Community.

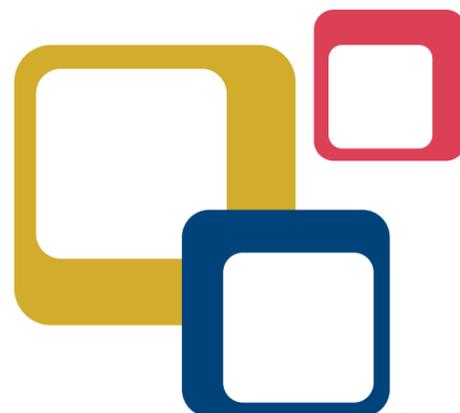
Motion made by Robert Aronson, seconded by John Reed, passed 8-0

This concludes the Staff Report.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert A. Aronson
LUPC Member

Exhibit A



LINCOLN PLACE

apartment homes

SIGN LOCATION SUBMITTAL

1050 Frederick Street, Venice, CA 90291

April 11, 2013



www.quantum-signs.com

..949.454.6078..

FAX: 949-454-6079

15801 ROCKFIELD BLVD. #C
IRVINE, CA 92618



Project:
 Lincoln Place
 Apartments

Address:
 1050 Frederick Street
 Venice, CA 90291

Account Manager:
 Ryan To

Designer:
 R. Chavez

Date:
 April 11, 2013

Scale:
 As noted

Drawing #
 Leasing Center Variance Final_120712

Revisions:

Client Initial of Approval

X:

Date:

Page: S01.00

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A

MAIN IDENTIFICATION SITE MAP

1. A03 - LEASING WALL IDENTIFICATION
2. B01 - LEASING CENTER ID/DIMENSIONAL

SCALE: NTS

Project:
Lincoln Place
Apartments

Address:
1050 Frederick Street
Venice, CA 90291

Account Manager:
Ryan To

Designer:
R. Chavez

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A SITE MAP

SCALE: NTS

Project:
 Lincoln Place
 Apartments

Address:
 1077 Elkgrove Avenue
 Venice, CA

Account Manager:
 Ryan To

Designer:
 R. Chavez

Date:
 April 11, 2013

Scale:
 As noted

Drawing #
 lincoln place.ai

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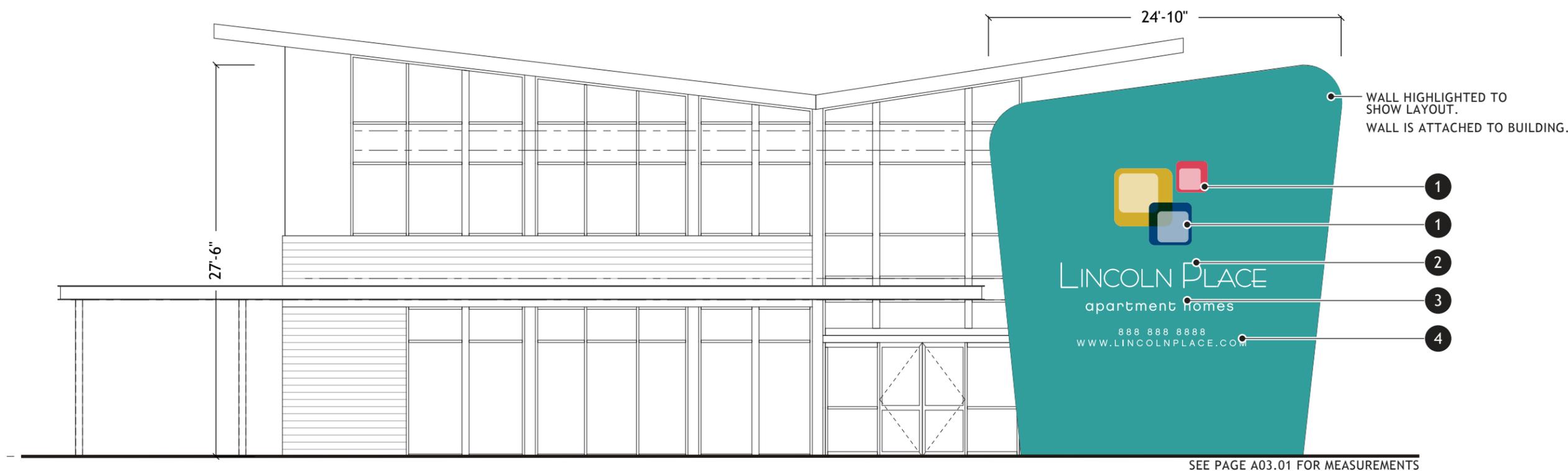
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A LEASING WALL IDENTIFICATION: ELEVATION
 QUANTITY: 1

SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

1. 4" DEEP LOGO PINNED 1 1/2" FROM STRUCTURE TO BE FACE AND HALO ILLUMINATED (LED) .
2. 4" DEEP "LINCOLN PLACE" PINNED 1 1/2" FROM STRUCTURE TO BE HALO ILLUMINATED (LED) .
3. 4" DEEP "APARTMENT HOMES" PINNED 1 1/2" FROM STRUCTURE TO BE HALO ILLUMINATED (LED).
4. 1" DEEP PAINTED ACRYLIC DIMENSIONAL LETTERING.

90 TOTAL SQUARE FEET. (189 TOTAL AREA)

Project:

Lincoln Place
Apartments

Address:

1077 Elkgrove Avenue
Venice, CA

Account Manager:

Ryan To

Designer:

R. Chavez

Date:

April 11, 2013

Scale:

As noted

Drawing #

lincoln place.ai

Revisions:

Client Initial of Approval

X:

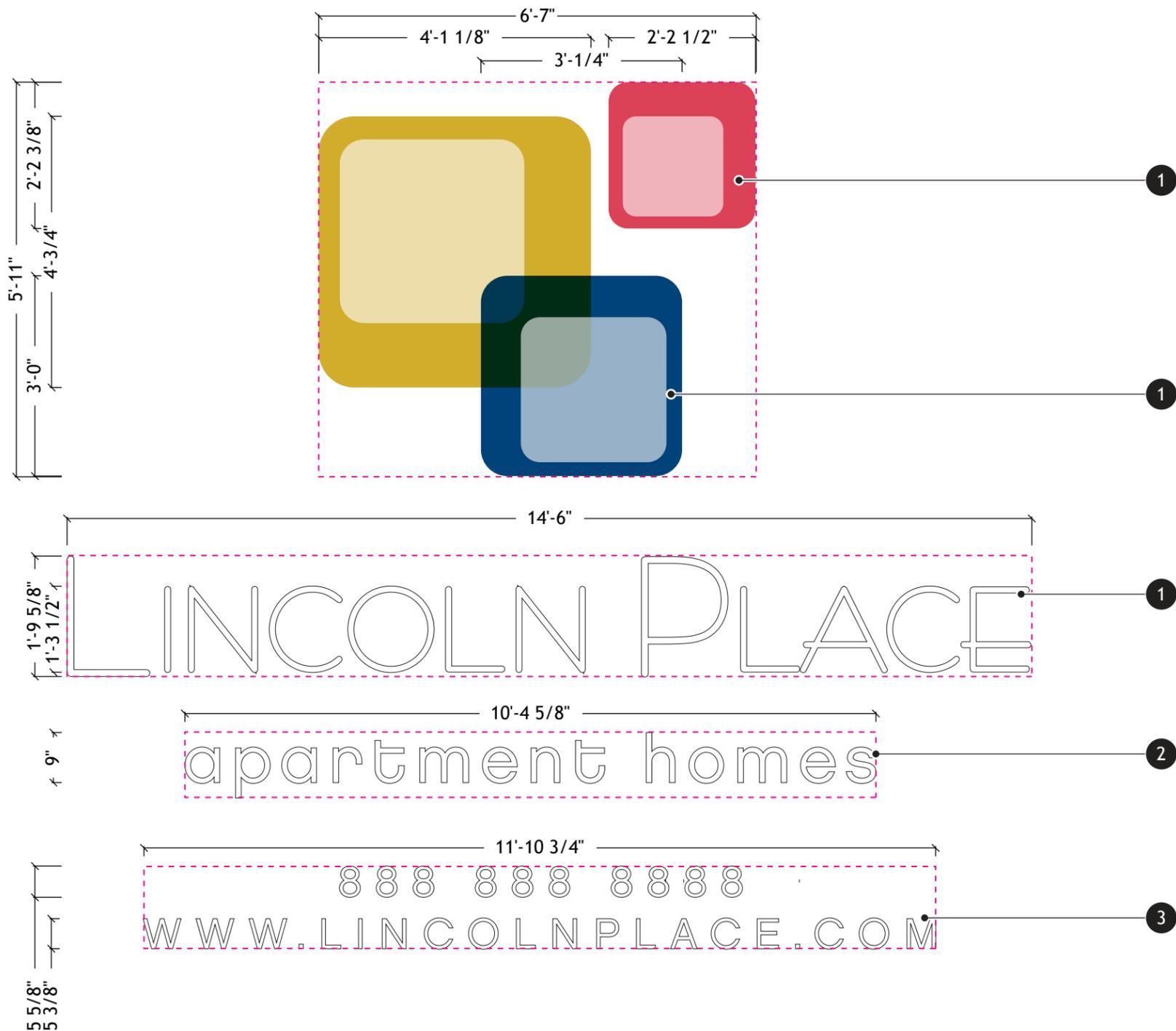
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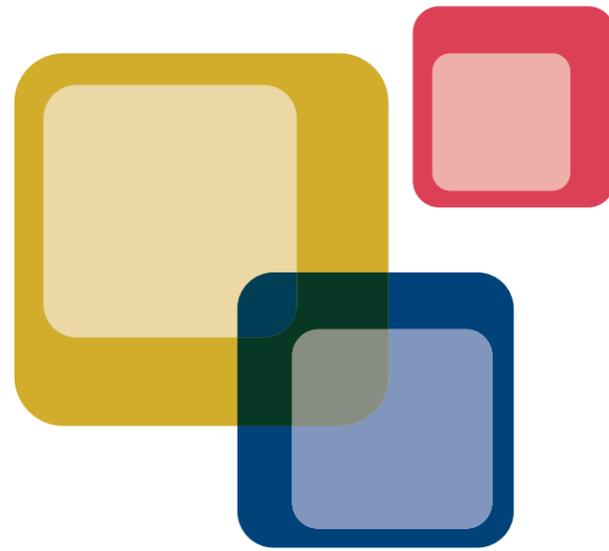


A LEASING WALL IDENTIFICATION: ELEVATION
QUANTITY: 1

SCALE: 1/2" = 1'-0"

1. 4" DEEP LOGO PINNED 1 1/2" FROM STRUCTURE TO BE FACE AND HALO ILLUMINATED (LED) .
2. 4" DEEP "LINCOLN PLACE" PINNED 1 1/2" FROM STRUCTURE TO BE HALO ILLUMINATED (LED) .
3. 4" DEEP "APARTMENT HOMES" PINNED 1 1/2" FROM STRUCTURE TO BE HALO ILLUMINATED (LED).
4. 1" DEEP PAINTED ACRYLIC DIMENSIONAL LETTERING.

90 TOTAL SQUARE FEET (NOTED BY DOTTED LINE)



LINCOLN PLACE

1'-2 7/8" 1'-5/8" 1" TYP STEM

apartment homes

1" TYP. STEM 6 1/4"

888 888 8888

WWW.LINCOLNPLACE.COM

6 7/8" 3 1/2" 5/8" TYP. STEM

A LEASING WALL IDENTIFICATION: LETTER MEASUREMENTS

SCALE: 1/2" = 1'-0"

Project:
 Lincoln Place
 Apartments

Address:
 1050 Frederick Street
 Venice, CA 90291

Account Manager:
 Ryan To

Designer:
 R. Chavez

Date:
 April 11, 2013

Scale:
 As noted

Drawing #
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Revisions:

Client Initial of Approval

X:

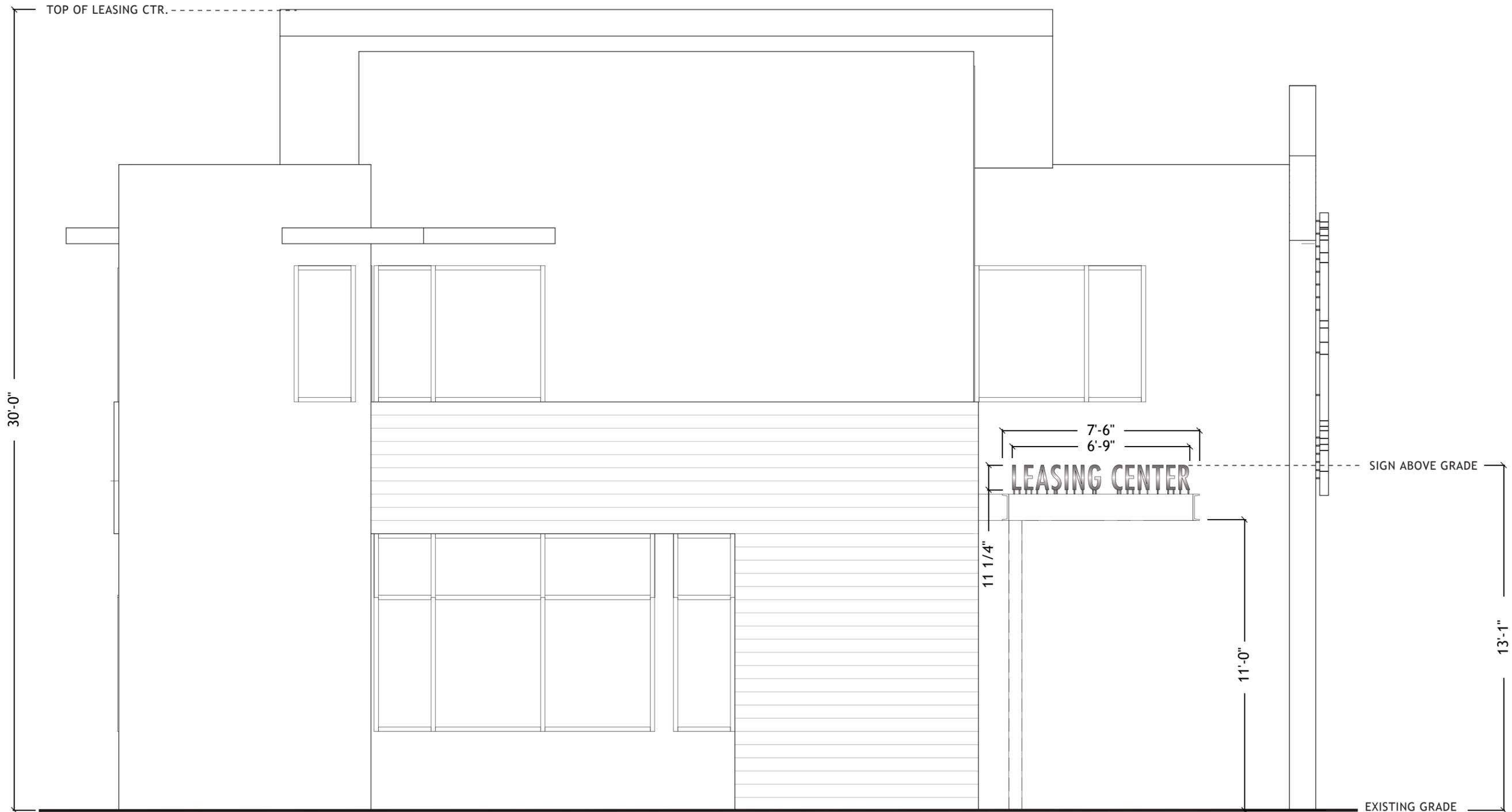
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A LEASING CENTER IDENTIFICATION - DIMENSIONAL LETTERS: WEST SIDE ELEVATION

QUANTITY: 1

1. 2" DEEP CLOSED BACK FABRICATED STAINLESS STEEL "LEASING CENTER" COPY TO BE PINNED ON PROPOSED CANOPY.

6.3 TOTAL SQUARE FEET.

SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

Project:
 Lincoln Place
 Apartments

Address:
 1050 Frederick Street
 Venice, CA 90291

Account Manager:
 Ryan To

Designer:
 R. Chavez

Date:
 April 11, 2013

Scale:
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Revisions:

Client Initial of Approval

X:

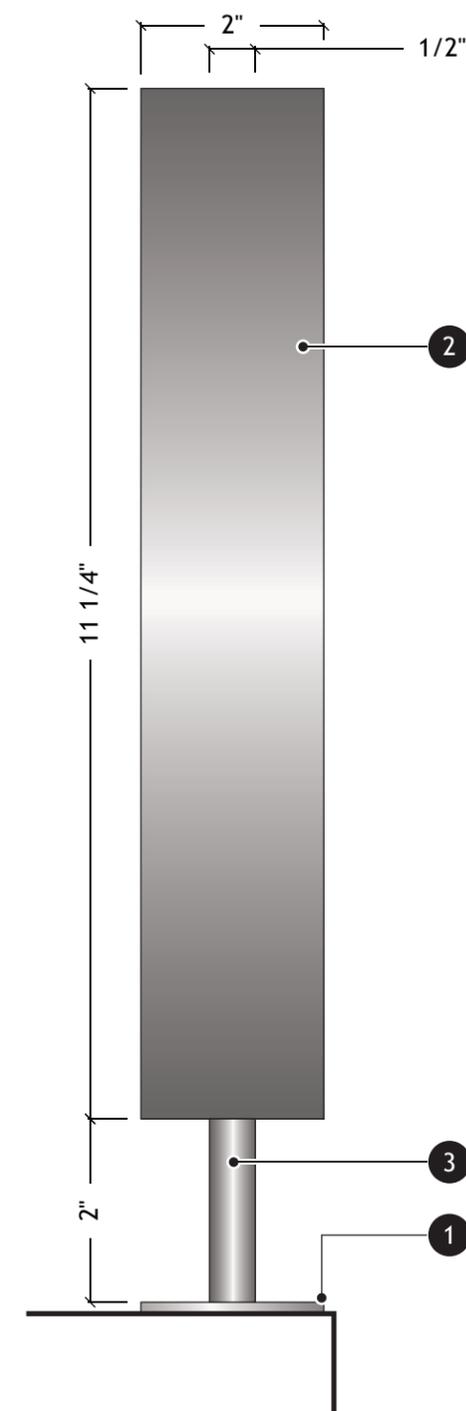
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A LEASING CENTER IDENTIFICATION - DIMENSIONAL LETTERS: ELEVATION

QUANTITY: 1

SCALE: 1" = 1'-0"

1. 1/8" MIN. BRUSHED STAINLESS STEEL PLATE MECHANICALLY ATTACHED TO BEAM STRUCTURE. PLATE TO SPACE LETTERS TOGETHER AS SINGLE SIGN UNIT.
2. 2" DEEP CLOSED BACK FABRICATED HORIZONTAL BRUSH STAINLESS STEEL "LEASING CENTER" COPY TO BE PINNED ON PROPOSED CANOPY.
3. 1/2" BRUSHED STAINLESS STEEL SPACERS.

6.3 TOTAL SQUARE FEET.

SCALE: HALF SIZE (1:2)