



**Design Review Board (DRB)
Staff Report**

Signage

Case # 20-52: Iron Tribe Fitness
145 Lt. George W. Lee Ave.
Memphis, TN 38103

Applicant: Chris Haskins
Frank Balton Signs
5385 Pleasant View Rd.
Memphis, TN 38134

Background: This application is for exterior signage at the FedEx Logistics headquarters building at 145 Lt. George W. Lee, formerly the Gibson Guitar factory, located in the Beale Street district defined by the Downtown Sign Code. Specifically, the sign in question is tenant signage for Iron Tribe Fitness, a fitness business that plans to occupy a bay at the northwest corner of the building. Signage applications are typically approved administratively by staff. However, in this case, an exception from Downtown Sign Code standards is being requested by the applicant.

Project Description: The proposed sign is a wall sign measuring a total of 72 in. (h) by 246 in. (2). The sign is made up of two primary components: 38 in. (h) internally-illuminated channel letters reading “IRONTRIBE”, and a 19.5 in. (h) internally-illuminated sign cabinet with the word “FITNESS” overlaid in opaque black acrylic. Both elements will be attached to a custom aluminum panel, and mounted on the building’s brick. The sign will extend 2 ft. above the roofline of the building.

Staff Report: The Downtown Sign Code allows for above-roof wall signs by right for hotels, hospitals, and signage identifying the majority tenant of a building, if the subject building is over 50 feet in height. Because the proposed sign extends above the roofline, but does not fit into any of those use categories, administrative approval of the sign was not possible.

The applicant has proposed the current design as a way to work around an architectural feature of the subject building: the guidewires that connect to the canopy below. These guidewires

dramatically limit the space on the façade that can be used as signable area. In order to fit the proposed sign within the area above the guidewires, but below the roofline, the total sign area would need to be reduced by about 75%. Previous signage at the same corner of the building, for the Gibson Beale Street Showcase, also extended above the roofline as a way of dealing with this area limitation. It's also worth noting that the Downtown Sign Code explicitly encourages larger than usual signage in the Beale Street district, by waiving all normal size requirements for signage. Although there may possibly be other approaches to effective signage at this location, staff believes that the proposed signage is a viable adaptation to the unique features of this building.

Staff Recommendation: **Staff recommends approval.**