



Rock Hill Board of Historic Review

Regular Public Hearing
October 14, 2021
6:00 p.m.

A G E N D A

- 1) Pledge of Allegiance
- 2) Call to Order
- 3) Staff is requesting to defer approval of minutes, September 2, 2021, regular meeting.
- 4) H-2021-09: Hold public hearing and consider a Certificate of Appropriateness request by Comporium Communications to repaint a portion of the front façade and install signage on the building located at 117 Elk Avenue, which is part of the Downtown (Old Town) Area Historic District, tax parcel 627-18-03-007.
- 5) Other Business
 - a. Certificates of Appropriateness issued by Staff
 - b. Adopt 2022 Meeting Calendar
- 6) Adjourn

Request: Repaint front façade, add signage
Address: 117 Elk Avenue
Tax Map: 627-18-03-007
Owner/Applicant: Comporium Communications

Request

Comporium Communications is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness to repaint the entrance façade and add signage to the historic façade of the Comporium Telephone Museum.



Architecture	
Construction type	Brick commercial
Years of construction	1948
Architecture type	Commercial
Historic name	Rock Hill Telephone Exchange

City of Rock Hill designation	
Historic Overlay District name	Downtown (Old Town) Area Historic District
Date of designation	12/23/1991
Tier under Historic Design Guidelines	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> National Register-listed or -eligible <input type="checkbox"/> Contributing <input type="checkbox"/> Non-contributing

National Register designation	
National Register listing	Rock Hill Downtown – expansion of district
Date of designation	Expansion has not been designated
National Register status	<input type="checkbox"/> Contributing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eligible <input type="checkbox"/> Non-contributing

Background

The Downtown (Old Town) Area Historic District is significant as the foundation of the City of Rock Hill. The Comporium Telephone Museum was established in the former Rock Hill Telephone Company Exchange building 1994.

The building is comprised of two distinct facades. The brick section was constructed in 1948 to house a number of operations that comprised the Rock Hill Telephone Company, including dial switching, testing, and long-distance termination equipment. The portion of the building where the main entrance to the museum is located was constructed in 1959 to replace the 1910 Central Office, increasing the operations area by 3300 square feet.

Standards of Review

The Board must use the following standards of review when considering requests for Certificates of Appropriateness. The applicable standards are shown in italics, with staff's assessment of each standard shown in non-italicized text.

- *Will the changes affect the exterior appearance of the property?*

There will be slight changes to the exterior as the proposal includes repainting of an existing stucco/cement surface, the installation of a blade sign at the entrance, and banner sign panels between the windows.

- *Will the change be consistent with historical, architectural, or other relevant qualities of the property or surrounding historic district?*

As the front façade has been painted previously and signage is typical for use on commercial structures, these changes would be consistent with the property itself and the surrounding historic district.

- *Will the request create a negative or positive impact on the surrounding historic district?*

The request would create a positive impact by refreshing a painted façade, adding a sign to indicate the museum entrance, and adding colorful signs to the area to attract museum visitors.

Does the request comply with the specific standards of the Historic Design Guidelines?

Staff provides the following relevant sections in relation to specific standards:

A9) Signs

Sections a & b do not apply

c. *New signs should not be the main focus of a building and should not overpower historic designs and elements.*

The proposed new blade sign is proposed to be approximately 14 square feet (2 feet wide x 7 feet tall) and will be placed to the left of the glass panels over the entrance door. The wall sign located on the painted façade will be replaced with new channel letters and logo. Three changeable banners are proposed to be installed between the windows on the brick facade, which is considered to be a historic façade.

d. *New signs should not conceal original architectural details or decorative designs.*

The signs will not conceal any architectural details or decorative designs.

e. *Signs should be placed at traditional sign locations. Wall signs should not exceed the height of the building cornice or the roof parapet. Wall signs may be applied directly to the face of the building and should be placed at traditional locations such as above, transoms, on cornice fascia boards, or below cornices.*

None of the proposed signs will exceed the height of the building. The channel letters will be applied directly to the face of the painted façade and the blade sign will be installed to the left side of the glass panels. The banners would not be located on what is considered a traditional sign location; however, because the sidewalk is larger and geared more towards pedestrian use, the banners would be located closer to the ground and the colors used would be more visible to vehicles using the parking lot and passing by on East Black Street.

f. *New signs should be selected that are legible, clear, and pedestrian-oriented.*

The new blade sign is oriented to face East Main Street and East Black Street in order to attract pedestrians to the museum entrance.

Sections g & h do not apply

i. *New signs should be in keeping with the size of other signs in the area.*

The proposed blade and wall signs are comparable in size to other signs in the area. The banners will change on a somewhat regular basis depending upon the museum exhibits.

- j. The color of signs should not be restricted in most cases; however, sign colors should complement overall building colors and no more than two or three colors should be used per sign.***

The signs and banners would be limited to the Comporium color palette of gray, yellow and white

Section k does not apply

- l. Signs should be mounted to minimize damage to historic materials. Mounting bolts on masonry buildings should be applied within mortar joints rather than the face of the masonry.***

The applicant proposes to install the banners on brackets installed on the brick façade due to concerns over wind loads and the stability of the mortar. However, installation on historic brick may create a situation where water infiltration could lead to damage of the interior of the brick which would not be apparent for a number of years.

Section m does not apply

B10) Colors and Textures

Original architectural features should be preserved and maintained.

- a. Historic colors and textures should be maintained. Original masonry exteriors should not be painted unless there are significant contrasts in the brick and mortar. Conversely, masonry exteriors that have been painted should be maintained.***
- b. The introduction and use of colors should not be restricted, but it is encouraged that colors complement each building and its neighbors. The overall dominant colors in the Downtown area are variations of red, brown, and grey reflected by the widespread use of brick, stone, and concrete materials.***

The applicant is proposing to repaint the existing stucco/cement façade beside the main entrance gray.

Section c does not apply

Public Input

Staff has taken the following actions to notify the public about this public hearing:

- September 22: Sent public hearing notification postcards to property owners within 300 feet of the subject property.
- September 22: Posted public hearing signs on subject property.
- September 24: Advertised the Board of Historic Review public hearing in *The Herald*.

To date, staff has not received any public comments.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends the Board approve the Certificate of Appropriateness request with the following conditions:

- the overall signage request be reviewed and approved by zoning staff prior to installation;
- at any time there is a change in the banners, the design of these be reviewed and approved by zoning staff prior to installation; and
- the installation of the banner brackets be at mortar joints rather than in the brick face itself due to the possibility of water infiltration creating damage to the historic brick. If mortar stability is a concern, the mortar joints should be evaluated by a brick mason and reinforced, if necessary, to accommodate the installation of the brackets.

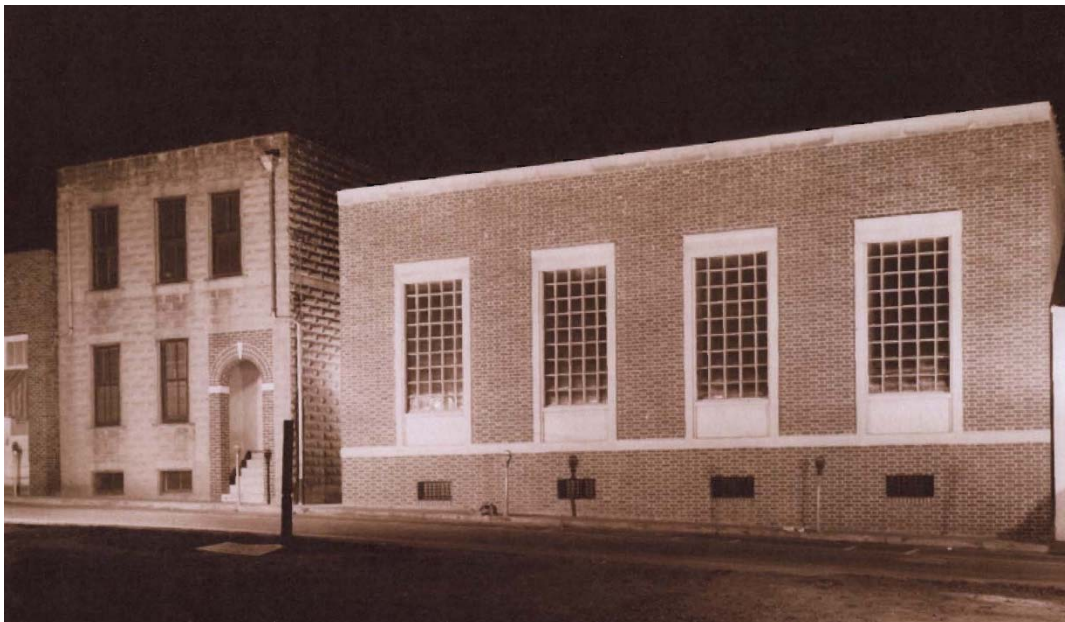
This recommendation is based on the above analysis, especially these points:

- the front façade has been painted previously; and
- the signs and banners are directed to appeal to pedestrians.

Attachments

- Historic and current site photographs
- Application and supporting materials
- Historic Resources Inventory Survey card, 1988

Staff Contact: Janice E Miller, Historic Preservation Specialist
janice.miller@cityofrockhill.com
803.817.5129



1949 (*The Comporium Story*, page 78)



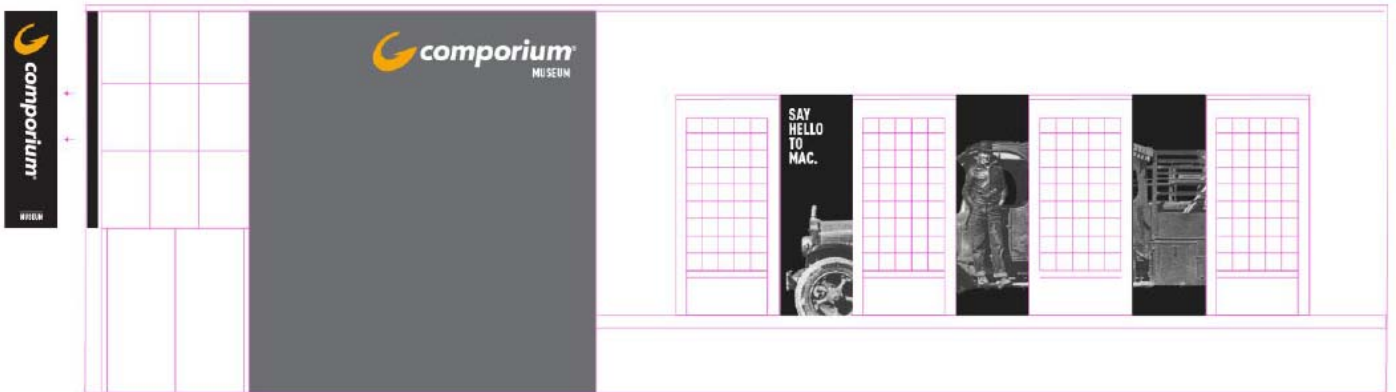
City of Rock Hill staff, 2008



City of Rock Hill staff, 2021



Applicant's renderings



CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS (COA) APPLICATION

Plan Tracking # _____ Date Received: _____ Case # H- _____ or COA # _____

Please use additional paper if necessary, for example to list additional applicants or properties, or to elaborate on your responses to the questions about the request. You may handwrite your responses or type them. You may scan your responses and submit them by email (see the above fact sheet), since we can accept scanned copies of signatures in most cases.

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Street address of subject property: 117 Elk Avenue, Rock Hill, SC

Tax parcel number of subject property: 6 2 7 - 1 8 - 0 3 - 0 0 7

Property restrictions

Do any recorded deed restrictions or restrictive covenants apply to this property that would prohibit, conflict with, or be contrary to the activity you are requesting? For example, does your homeowners association or property owners association prohibit the activity or need to approve it first? Yes ___ No

If yes, please describe the requirements: _____


APPLICANT/PROPERTY OWNER INFORMATION

Applicant's name	Mailing address	Phone number	Email address
Shaun Barnes (Comporium)	PO Box 470	803-326-7602	shaun.barnes@comporium.com
Susan Miskelly (Comporium)	Rock Hill, SC 29731	803-326-7347	susan.miskelly@comporium.com

Are you the owner of the subject property? Yes No

If you are not the owner of the subject property, what is your relationship to it (e.g., have it under contract to purchase, tenant, contractor, real estate agent) _____

I certify that I have completely read this application and instructions, that I understand all it includes, and that the information in the application and the attached forms is correct.

Signature:  Date: 9/10/2021

If you are not the owner of the subject property, the *property owner* must complete this box.

<p>Name of property owner: _____</p> <p>If property owner is an organization/corporation, name of person authorized to represent its property interests: _____</p> <p>I certify that the person listed above has my permission to represent this property in this application.</p> <p>Signature: _____ Date: _____</p> <p>Preferred phone number: _____ Email address: _____</p> <p>Mailing address: _____</p>
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INFORMATION ABOUT REQUEST

General description of your request

Updates to the exterior of the Comporium Museum are intended to enhance its appearance in order to draw interest and increase patronage. In the 11 years since the Museum was last renovated, our corporate logo has changed and is familiar throughout the community. Updating the signage will allow this property to meet our brand standards and to aid with recognition by community members. Adding artistic banners will give passersby an idea of what they can discover inside. Painting the non-historic part of the building will freshen the look of the property and tie in to our brand identity.

On what area(s) of the structure is the being working proposed (e.g., foundation, back porch, front door, roof)?

Front of building facing municipal parking lot

What is the approximate size of the area being renovated (if applicable)?

Standards of review

The questions below are the general standards of review the Board of Historic Review must consider when determining whether your request may be granted. Please give your assessment of each question as it relates to your request.

1. Will the proposed change affect the exterior appearance of the property? Explain your response.

Yes. The proposed change will include a new sign attached to the exterior. It will also include improvements to the area around the front entrance to the Museum. This includes new paint on the stucco portion of the building around the entrance. A new blade sign attached on the left side of the building will increase visibility from Main Street and Black Street. Artistic banners attached to the brick part of the building will show potential visitors some of what they can experience inside.

2. Will the proposed change be consistent with historical, architectural, or other relevant qualities of the property or surrounding historic district? Explain your response.

Yes. Our Museum is devoted to preserving the history of the communications industry in our city, so we are taking great care with our design so that any improvements are made with the surrounding properties in mind. We have been in communication with the City to make sure we are abiding by all guidelines.

3. Will the request create a negative or positive impact on the surrounding historic district? Explain your response.

This request will create a positive impact on the surrounding historic district by creating a more vibrant, attractive property that will draw visitors to Old Town Rock Hill. The updates will provide a refreshed appearance that works well with the surrounding properties that have also had recent updates.

The Museum attracts visitors from around the country who are interested in unique museums and the history of telephony. However, we would also like to attract more local residents to the Museum, as and will be working on ways to raise awareness of our place in Old Town.

4. Does the request comply with the specific standards of the Historic Design Guidelines of the type of work that is proposed? Explain your response.

Yes. We will be applying paint only to the newer, non-historic portion of the building. The two sign additions (channel letters and blade sign) will also be attached to this portion. The banners will be developed with the relevant ordinances in mind. The attach points will be on the historic portion of the building but will be kept to a minimum so as to decrease the risk of damage to the historic part of the structure.

Exhibits

Please list any documents that you are submitting in support of this application. The ones listed below are suggested, but you may provide others that you believe would be helpful, and in some cases, staff or the Board of Historic Review may request other exhibits as well.

- Drawing of proposed modifications, if available.
- Site plans for additions, new construction, accessory structures, etc.
- Photos of the area proposed to be changed.
- Information about the proposed materials to be used.
- Information about the proposed colors to be used.

MATERIALS OVERVIEW

PAINT

Grey to match our secondary palette. Will be applied to the non-historic part of the building (left side, surrounding the front entrance).



BLADE SIGN

Double sided 34" x 142" x 12" blade sign with .5" dimensional face mount acrylic lettering. No internal lighting.



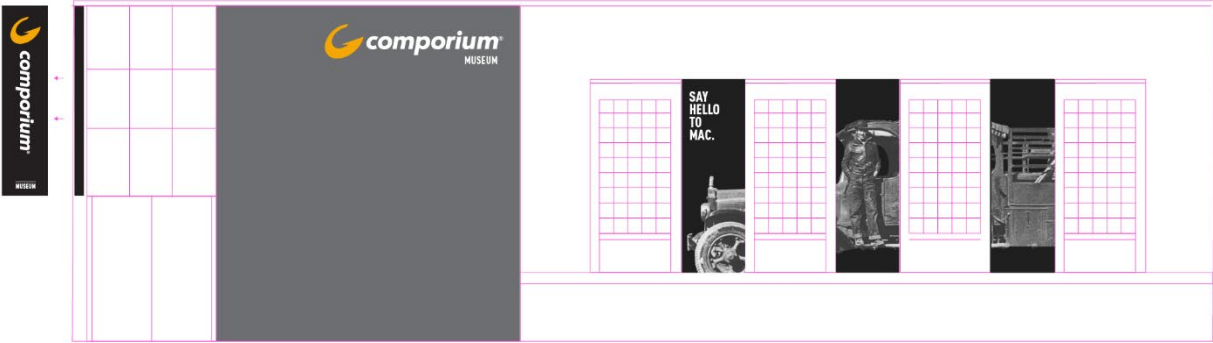
CHANNEL LETTERS

Repurpose existing channel letter sign with Comporium logo. This sign was formerly installed at Comporium's Fountain Park Place retail store. Repaint raceway as needed to match façade. Add one set of 8.75" tall white channel letters ("MUSEUM") underneath the company name/logo.

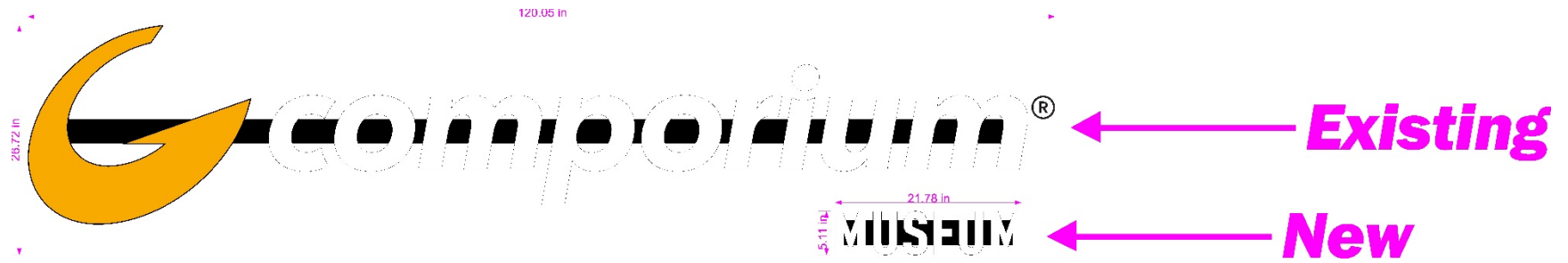


BANNERS

Three 24" x 96" single sided banners attached to wall with appropriate hardware to minimize impact to building.



CHANNEL LETTERS

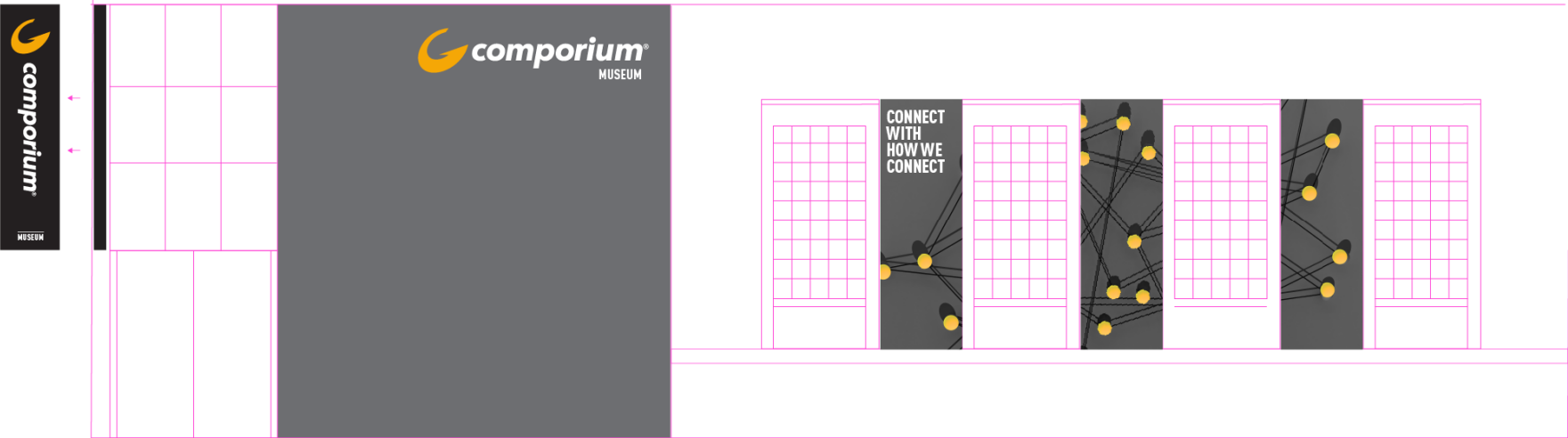




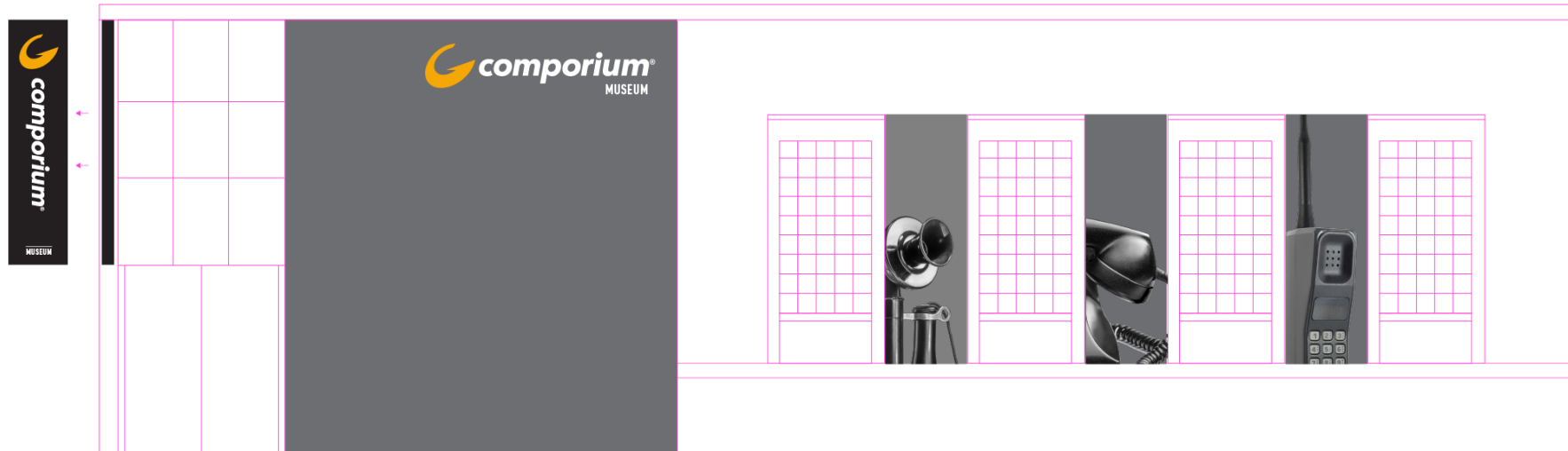
EXTERIOR WITH FLAT VERTICAL HANGING BANNERS



EXTERIOR WITH FLAT VERTICAL HANGING BANNERS



EXTERIOR WITH FLAT VERTICAL HANGING BANNERS



Statewide Survey of Historic Resources
State Historic Preservation Office
South Carolina Department of Archives and History
8301 Parklane Rd.
Columbia, SC 29223-4905 (803) 896-6100

Control Number: U / 91 / / 2188
Status County No Quad No Site No

Tax Map No.: _____

Reconnaissance Survey Form

PARCEL# 6271803007

Identification

Historic Name: Rock Hill Telephone Exchange
Common Name: Rock Hill Telephone Company Museum
Address/Location: 117 Elk Ave
City: Rock Hill
Vicinity of:
Ownership: Private
Historical Use: Commercial
Current Use: Educational

County: York
Quadrangle Name: Rock Hill West
Category: building
Date: ca. 1947

SHPO NR DOE: Contributes to Eligible District

Other Designation:

Notes: 1-story, brick, flat roof; recessed single-leaf entry; concrete coping; large casement windows; concrete belt course; concrete panels covering north third of façade

Photographs

Roll No.: Neg. No.: View of:
49 18 façade

Attach Photographs Here

Program Management

Recorded by: JFM, Edwards-Pitman Environmental, Inc.

Date Recorded: 02/03/2004



1196	9/27/2021	Anthony Cooke	635 Center Street	Install vinyl siding over asbestos siding, replace non-historic windows on rear and side facades, remove non-historic porch handrail	Staff Approval - artificial siding in place, windows are replacements, handrail not original to structure
1195	9/21/2021	Frank Reed - Amelie's	157 East Main Street	Install barrel-style canopy over Caldwell Street entrance	Staff Approval - existed on building previously
1194	9/10/2021	Jack Blankenship	620 Oakland Avenue	Reface existing monument sign, add wall signs	Staff Approval - non-historic structure
1190	8/27/2021	Nate Pierce	507 East Main Street	Fence	Staff Approval - accessory structure on non-historic building



MEMORANDUM

To: Rock Hill Board of Historic Review
From: Janice Miller, Historic Preservation Specialist
RE: Calendar of Regular Board Meetings, 2022
Date: October 6, 2021

The following is the proposed calendar for regularly scheduled public hearings of the Rock Hill Board of Historic Review for 2022. All public hearings will be held at 6:00 pm the first Thursday of each month in Council Chambers of City Hall, 155 Johnston Street, unless otherwise noted.

January 6, 2022	(rain date: January 13)
February 3, 2022	(rain date: February 10)
March 3, 2022	(rain date: March 10)
April 7, 2022	(rain date: April 14)
May 5, 2022	(rain date: May 12)
June 2, 2022	(rain date: June 9)
July 7, 2022	(rain date: July 14)
August 4, 2022	(rain date: August 11)
September 1, 2022	(rain date: September 8)
October 6, 2022	(rain date: October 13)
November 3, 2022	(rain date: November 10)
December 8, 2022	(rain date: December 15) – ChristmasVille (December 1-4)

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 803.817.5129 or janice.miller@cityofrockhill.com.