



STAFF REPORT

DRCC #: 26-4009F

DATE: February 5, 2026

PROJECT NAME: 204 North Union Street -- Façade Sign

Latest Submission Received: January 14, 2026

Applicant:

Robert Lonsdale
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Architect:

Gary R. O'Connor, A.I.A.
Gary R. O'Connor -- Architect, LLC
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Project Location:

Road	Municipality	County	Block(s)	Lot(s)
204 North Union Street	Lambertville City	Hunterdon	1006	36-38, 40

Jurisdictional Determination:

Zone A	Minor	Nongovernmental
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Subject to Review for:

Drainage	Visual	Traffic	Stream Corridors
	X		

Documents Received: Architectural plan (1 page) dated January 7, 2026, prepared by Gary R. O'Connor -- Architect, LLC.

**THIS STAFF REPORT IS ISSUED AS A GUIDE TO APPLICANTS IN
COMPLYING WITH DRCC REGULATIONS. IT IS NOT AN APPROVAL. NO
CONSTRUCTION SHALL BEGIN UNTIL A CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL
HAS BEEN ISSUED.**

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The application is complete and shall be presented to the Commission for their action with a staff recommendation of approval at the February 18, 2026, meeting based upon the following analysis:

Existing Conditions: The project site is a 1.33-acre lot located on the easterly side of North Union Street in the City of Lambertville, Hunterdon County, approximately 357 feet east of the Delaware and Raritan Canal and within Commission Review Zone A. The site is bounded by to the north, attached residential dwellings on comparatively small lots to the west, a commercial building and additional residences along Elm Street to the south and further residential development to the east.

In the existing condition, the site has been improved with a one-story, brick former factory building that has been repurposed since the 1980s for commercial and office uses. The building was likely constructed in 1937 on the site of a former 19th century industrial site, and is visible on historic aerial imagery dating to 1951.



The project site is not visible from the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park due to several intervening structures.

The Commission has issued several approvals related to the project site. In 2010, a General Permit No. 1 was issued for a project to construct an entry on the building (DRRC #10-4009), as well as a general permit for the in-kind replacement of HVAC equipment (DRCC #10-4009A). In 2018, a general permit was issued for an ADA-compliant ramp (DRCC #18-4009B). In 2022, a certificate of approval was issued for a project to convert a portion of the building used as an antique store into a retail cannabis dispensary (DRCC #22-4009C), and a General Permit No. 1 was issued for in-kind sign replacements at a Buddhist Center in the building complex (DRCC #22-4009D).

Proposed Project: The applicant proposes to erect a 20 square-foot façade sign on the west elevation of the building where one does not presently exist. The project would not

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result in the creation of any impervious surface coverage or the disturbance of any land. The proposed signage would not be visible from the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park due to several intervening structures on Block 1005.

Stream Corridor: There are no streams or mapped watercourses on the project site, the nearest being a tributary of the Delaware River known locally as Ely Creek, which runs beneath the canal and is partially conveyed in a pipe, located approximately 400 feet to the north. Therefore, the project is not subject to stream corridor impact review pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:45-9.1(a).

Stormwater Runoff & Water Quantity: The project does not propose an increase in impervious surface coverage. Therefore, the proposed project is not subject to stormwater runoff and water quality impact review pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:45-8.

Visual, Historic and Natural Quality Impact: N.J.A.C. 7:45-10.2(a) directs that the Commission shall review all projects in Zone A to determine if the project is in accord with the goals for the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park as defined in the park's Master Plan. The visual, historic, and natural quality impact review is intended to assure that development within Zone A is not harmful to the character of the environmental types identified in the Master Plan as comprising the park.

The project is located in an "Urban" canal environment as described in the Master Plan. The Urban canal environment name is characterized at N.J.A.C. 7:45-10.2(a) by the enclosure of the canal by dense development. The Master Plan states at Page 14 that goals for this section of the canal in the City of Lambertville are the completion of the multi-use trail and the placement of trees and shrubbery for definition and privacy. Therefore, nothing with respect to the proposed signage is incompatible with the Master Plan.

The provisions of N.J.A.C. 7:45-10.3(a) and (b), respectively, which discourage projects within certain portions of Review Zone A and authorize the Commission to require specific compensatory measures that mitigate the project's potential for harmful impact on the park as a condition of approval, are inapplicable to the proposed project, which is located in an Urban canal environment.

N.J.A.C. 7:45-10.4(a) directs that the projects in Review Zone A shall be set back from the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park sufficiently far so that the visual and natural quality of the park are not adversely affected. In Urban canal environments, there are no minimum setbacks except as may be prescribed by municipal ordinances. The project is, therefore, in compliance with this requirement.

N.J.A.C. 7:45-10.4(b) directs that projects in Review Zone A shall maintain a reasonable height and scale relationship to nearby structures or vegetation. In the Urban canal environment, the height of structures may vary according to the height of existing structures that have a visual relationship to the proposed structure. The proposed façade signs would not alter the height of the existing building. Therefore, this requirement is inapplicable to the proposed project.

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N.J.A.C. 7:45-10.4(c) directs that for projects in Review Zone A, the exterior appearances of a project shall be in keeping with the character of the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park's individual environments. Specifically, proposed building colors shall harmonize with the man-made or natural surroundings of the project and shall be typical of colors found in the park environment. Proposed building materials and textures shall harmonize with the surrounding man-made and natural materials. The proposed sign would be fabricated from 6.0-millimeter aluminum clad metal (ACM), onto which a digital print with clear laminate would be applied:



ACM is a lightweight, durable cladding material consisting of two thin aluminum sheets bonded to a solid, low-density polyethylene or fire-retardant mineral core. Commission staff determines that the proposed materials and colors are typical of numerous signs approved by the Commission in the City of Lambertville, and that the project is in compliance with this requirement.

The provisions of N.J.A.C. 7:45-10.4(d)1, which direct that for projects in Review Zone A, electric, telephone, cable television, and other such lines and equipment shall be underground or otherwise not visible from the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park, are inapplicable to the proposed project.

The provisions of N.J.A.C. 7:45-10.4(d)2, which direct that exposed storage areas, out-buildings, exposed machinery service areas, parking lots, loading areas, utility buildings, and similar ancillary areas and structures shall either be completely concealed from view from the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park or designed to minimize their visual impact on the park, are inapplicable to the project.

The provisions of N.J.A.C. 7:45-10.4(d)3, which direct that no commercial signs or outdoor advertising structures in excess of 80 square feet surface area shall be visible from the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park, are inapplicable to the proposed project.

The provisions of N.J.A.C. 7:45-10.4(d)4 regulate all commercial signs and outdoor advertising structures in excess of 6.0 square feet surface area. The provisions of N.J.A.C. 7:45-10.4(d)4i, which direct that in the Urban canal environment, no freestanding signs

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shall be erected within 200 feet of the park boundary, are inapplicable to the proposed project, which proposes a façade sign.

The provisions of N.J.A.C. 7:45-10.4(d)4ii, which direct that in the Natural or Rural canal environments, no sign shall be visible from the park, are inapplicable to the proposed project, which is located in an Urban canal environment.

The provisions of N.J.A.C. 7:45-10.4(d)4iii, which direct that no signs or other advertising device of any size with moving or moveable parts or with flashing, animated, or intermittent illumination shall be visible anywhere within the park, is inapplicable to the proposed project, which proposes no flashing, animated or intermittent illumination.

The provisions of N.J.A.C. 7:45-10.4(d)4iv, which direct that in the Urban canal environment, no freestanding sign or other advertising devices or parts thereof visible from the park shall be more than 100 feet above ground level, is inapplicable to the project, as the proposed sign is neither freestanding, nor 100 feet in height.

The provisions of N.J.A.C. 7:45-10.4(d)4v., which regulate the height of freestanding signs or other advertising devices in Suburban or Transportation canal environments, are inapplicable to the proposed project, which is located in an Urban canal environment.

N.J.A.C. 7:45-10.4(d)5 directs that wherever possible, natural terrains, soils, stones, and vegetation should be preserved, and that new vegetation, stones, and soils should be native to the environment in which they are placed. The applicant proposes no new landscaping or the removal of any existing landscaping. This requirement is, therefore, inapplicable to the proposed project.

N.J.A.C. 7:45-10.4(d)6 directs that projects located in any officially designated Federal, State or local historic district or site shall be assessed for their impact upon that district or site. Recommendations to avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate the impacts of a project on a listed property shall be made in consultation with the New Jersey Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and based upon the United States Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring and Reconstructing Historic Buildings.

The project site is located outside of the boundaries of the Delaware and Raritan Canal Historic District, which encompasses the canal bed and all structures within 300 feet of the centerline of the canal. As noted above, the project site is located approximately 357 feet east of the canal.

The project is located within the boundaries of the Lambertville Historic District, which generally encompasses the area from Delaware River to N.J. State Highway Route No. Route 29 and N.J. State Highway Route No. 179 (Bridge Street); and from north of Cherry Lane to south of Weeden Street. The district was added to the National and State Registers of Historic Places in 1983.

Historical Background: For most of the 19th century, the project site was the location of the Lambertville Spoke-Manufacturing Company, which manufactured products for

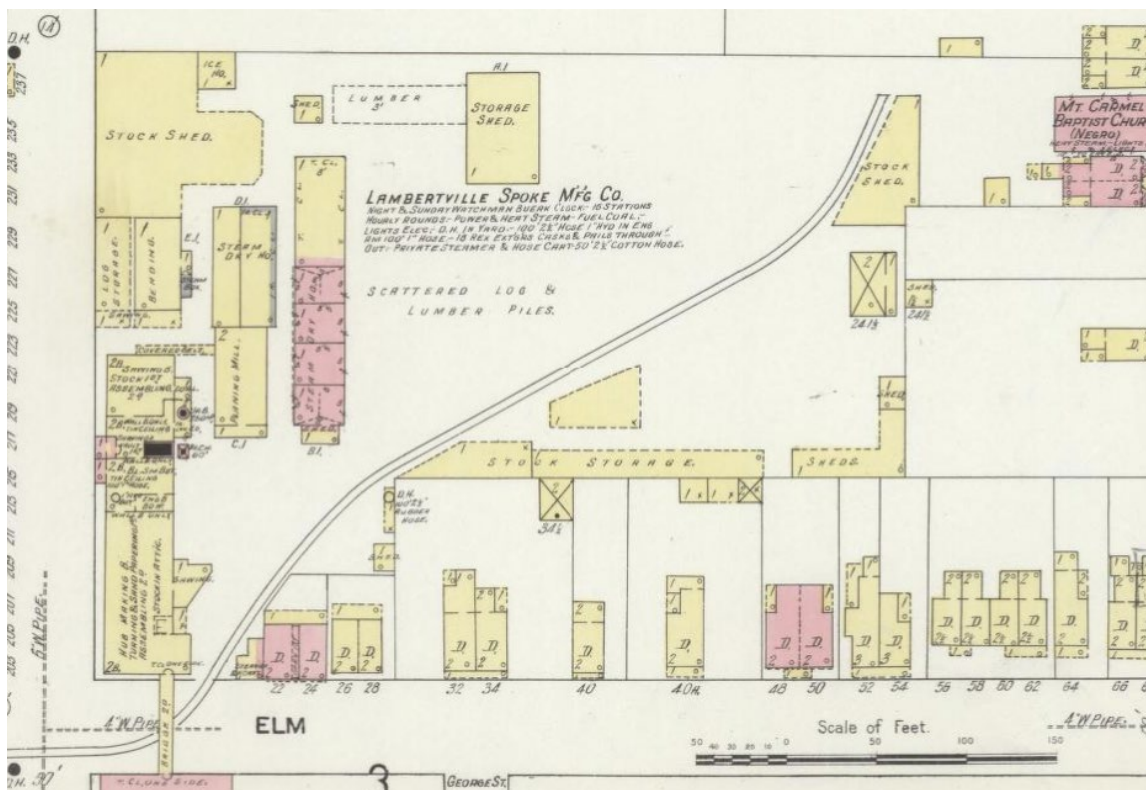
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carriage manufacturers and wheelwrights, including wheel spokes, rims, and felloes (the outer rim of a wheel, to which the spokes are inserted).

During the Civil War, the company built a substantial number of wheels, wooden underparts for carriages and wagons and supplied many of the caissons and cannon wheels for the Union Army. Logs were hauled to the mill and sawed into workable lengths in a building north of the project site, while several factory buildings were located along Elm Street (See 1912 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company map below).



After the automobile ushered in the demise of carriage wheel manufacturing, the Morris Canning Company moved into the site in 1913 under the direction of F.A. Woodward. At its height, the factory employed 150 workers canning tomatoes, pears, apples, and string beans. The company appears to have endured a fire which destroyed several buildings on the site in 1918, as well as a judgment against them for selling 500 cases of adulterated tomato puree, and operated until at least 1927.

In the meantime, the Philadelphia Leather Goods Company moved to Lambertville in the early 1930s, occupying a site on York Street. They changed their name to "Luggage Kraft" (or "Luggage Craft" depending upon the publication and date) and built a factory on the project site. In 1949, Luggage Kraft changed its name to "York Luggage" after the original building in which they were first located in Lambertville. York Luggage operated in Lambertville into the early 1980s, after which time the building was converted to commercial and office uses.

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Architectural Background: The 1982 Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park Historic Resource Survey indicates that the building does not possess any architectural significance and is not designed in a particularly noteworthy style.

Commission staff observes that the present building post-dates the period of historic significance of the Lambertville Historic District (1800-1924) by 13 years. Commission staff also notes that the building upon which the signage would be placed possesses no architectural significance. Therefore, Commission staff determines that the project would not impact any officially designated Federal, State or local historic district or site, that consultation with the SHPO is not warranted in this case, and that the project is in compliance with this requirement.

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends approval.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Hutchison", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

John Hutchison
Executive Director

- c. Hunterdon County Planning Board
City of Lambertville Planning Board

Please refer to the Commission project number (DRCC #) when making a submission, a resubmission, or transmitting project correspondence or documents.