



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

**County Board Agenda Item
Meeting of May 17, 2008**

DATE: May 8, 2008

SUBJECT: SP #125 SITE PLAN AMENDMENT, Northrop Grumman Corp., amend rooftop sign; 1000, 1100 Wilson Blvd. (RPC # 12-001-010, -011)

Applicant:

Northrop Grumman Corporation

By:

Walsh, Colucci, Lubley, Emrich & Walsh, PC
2200 Clarendon Boulevard, 13th Floor
Arlington, VA 22201

C.M. RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the Site Plan Amendment request to modify an existing rooftop sign for the Northrop Grumman Corporation as proposed at 515 square feet, subject to all previously approved conditions and one amended condition.

ISSUES: The applicant requests to replace the existing rooftop sign for the Northrop Grumman Corporation with one that is larger in area and different in design. There are no issues with the proposed site plan amendment.

SUMMARY: The Northrop Grumman Corporation, the major tenant occupying one of two towers of the Arland Towers site plan at 1000 and 1100 Wilson Boulevard in Rosslyn, requests a site plan amendment to modify its existing rooftop sign. The site plan amendment is requested to allow the tenant a sign that provides for greater visibility with an increase in sign area and better design using updated technology. The existing 315 square foot rooftop sign was approved in April 2003 at 375 square feet. It is located on the northeast façade of the 1000 Wilson Boulevard building and includes blue, back lit text indicating the tenant's name. It is proposed that this rooftop sign be replaced with a 515 square foot sign, with white channel mounted

County Manager: _____

County Attorney: _____

Staff: Samia Byrd, DCPHD, Planning Division

PLA-4950

letters, backlit with LED lights. The proposed increase in sign area and the design modifications are consistent with the *Sign Guidelines for Site Plan Buildings*. Therefore, staff recommends that the site plan amendment to allow a 515 square foot sign as proposed be approved, subject to all previously approved conditions and one (1) amended condition.

BACKGROUND: A site plan amendment is requested to replace an existing rooftop sign for the Northrop Grumman Corporation, a tenant of the Arland Towers (Twin Towers) site plan project in Rosslyn. The proposed sign would be larger in area and of a different design than was originally approved in 2003 and therefore requires County Board approval.

Site: Located at 1000 and 1100 Wilson Boulevard, the site is bound as follows:

To the north:	Wilson Boulevard.
To the west:	North Lynn Street.
To the east:	Route 110
To the south:	River Place North Co-op

Zoning: “C-O” Commercial Office Building, Hotel and Multiple Family Dwelling Districts.

General Land Use Plan Designation: “High” Office-Apartment Hotel District (3.8 FAR office, 4.8 FAR apartment and 3.8 FAR hotel); Rosslyn Coordinated Redevelopment Districts.

Neighborhood: Radnor/Ft. Myer Heights Civic Association; Proximate to the North Rosslyn Civic Association.

Existing Development: The three-building Arland Towers site plan project is a mixed use commercial development in Rosslyn. The site plan was approved in 1978 and is comprised of two, 30-foot office towers totaling 896,000 square feet. A 65 foot, 137,800 square foot commercial center adjoins the two towers. The primary tenants of the two office towers are Northrop Grumman Corporation and WJLA News Channel 7 at 1000 Wilson and 1100 Wilson Boulevard, respectively.

Proposed Development: The following table sets forth statistical details for the proposed rooftop sign.

Sign Dimensions	Area (Sq. Ft)	Text	Location	Materials
5’-6 1/8” – Height 93’-6 1/4’ – Length	515	Northrop Grumman	Horizontally positioned on the northeast façade of the office tower along the Route 110 right of way.	Internally illuminated LED reverse channel mounted letters with 3/16” white acrylic applied to face.
Total Sign Area	515			

Approved Plans and Policies: Section 34 of the Zoning Ordinance; *Sign Guidelines for Site Plan Buildings*.

DISCUSSION: In 2003, a rooftop sign was approved by site plan amendment for the Northrop Grumman Corporation. The approval specifications included a 375 square foot sign located five (5) feet from the building wall on the northeast façade of the 1000 Wilson Boulevard tower, with letters not taller than 4.1 feet. The existing rooftop sign includes the tenant’s name, “Northrop Grumman” in aluminum face and reverse channel letters, and is blue by day and backlit white by night with neon lighting. The sign is 315 square feet (3.75 sq ft x 84 sq ft) which is 60 square feet smaller than that approved due to constraints with attaching the letters to the building at the time the sign was installed.

In addition to the rooftop sign for the Northrop Grumman Corporation, also in 2003 a rooftop sign was approved for the 1100 Wilson Boulevard Tower tenant, WJLA News Channel 7. The WJLA rooftop sign totals 304 sq ft, is located on the northeast façade of the building and includes the ABC 7 logo and “WJLA-TV” text.

Under the *Sign Guidelines for Site Plan Buildings*, allocation of signs for multiple building site plan projects is based on the proportion that each building represents of the total linear frontage. The table below provides the total amount of square footage permitted for rooftop signs for the Twin Towers site plan as well as indicating the proportion available for each building, and the amount of rooftop sign area previously approved and existing.

Building Length @ Street Frontage/Public R-O-W ¹	Linear Feet ²	Percentage	Sign Area Approved	Sign Area Existing
1000 Wilson Boulevard	515 ft	48%	375 sq ft	315 sq ft
1100 Wilson Boulevard	558 ft	52%	304 sq ft	304 sq ft
Total Length at Street Frontage/Public R-O-W	1,073 ft	100%	679 sq ft	619 sq ft

As indicated above, the total permitted area for rooftop signs for the site plan project is 1,073 square feet, with 515 square feet available for 1000 Wilson Boulevard and 558 square feet available for 1100 Wilson Boulevard. Based on the area of the existing rooftop signs at 315 square feet for 1000 Wilson Boulevard and 304 square feet for 1100 Wilson Boulevard, each building would have an additional 200 square feet and 254 square feet for rooftop sign area, respectively. Total remaining rooftop sign area for the site is 454 square feet.

The applicant proposes to replace the existing 315 square foot rooftop sign with an enlarged sign at 515 square feet. This is an increase in 140 square feet above what was originally approved and 200 square feet above what exists today. This increase would maximize the proportionate amount of sign area available for 1000 Wilson Boulevard. Following is the overall impact of this modification on rooftop sign area for the project.

¹ Linear street frontage includes the building wall of the two towers fronting on Wilson Boulevard, the portion of commercial space between the towers and the portion of 1100 Wilson Boulevard building that fronts on North Lynn Street. Specifically, 1000 Wilson Boulevard includes frontage for the 30 foot tower and the 65 foot commercial section; 1100 Wilson Boulevard includes frontage for the 30 foot tower and indoor retail mall fronting North Lynn Street. .

² This number provides a technical correction of calculation provided in 2003 at 998 linear feet (1000 Wilson Boulevard at 468 ft and 530 ft for 1100 Wilson Boulevard).

Street Frontage/Public R-O-W ³	Linear Feet	Proportion Available	Sign Area Existing	Proportion Existing	Sign Area Proposed	Proportion Proposed
1000 Wilson Boulevard	515 ft	48%	315 sq ft	32%	515 sq ft	48%
1100 Wilson Boulevard	558 ft	52%	304 sq ft	30%	304 sq ft	30%
Total	1,073 ft		619 sq ft		819 sq ft	

As indicated above, the proposed sign area is consistent with the *Sign Guidelines for Site Plan Buildings* and maximizes the sign area allocation amount available for 1000 Wilson Boulevard. As proposed, there would be no additional square footage available to approve another rooftop sign for this building. It should be noted, however that even with the maximum allocation for sign area at 1000 Wilson Boulevard being proposed, sign area for the site plan project would remain below the maximum permitted 1,073 square feet at 819 square feet. The property owner of the Arland Towers project, Monday Properties is in agreement with the sign area allocation for the Northrop Grumman sign proposed as indicated in the attached letter.

In addition to the modifications proposed to the rooftop sign area, the modifications proposed to the design of the rooftop sign are consistent with the *Sign Guidelines for Site Plan Buildings*. The Guidelines provide that “signs should be designed to be compatible both with the architectural style of the building and with other project signs. Restrained design of letterforms and subdued colors of illumination (blue, green and white as opposed to red or yellow or for instance) are strongly encouraged.” The channel mounted letters would be white, block style, and back lit with LED lights. The proposed sign would be well integrated with the architectural style of the building which is silver in color. And although the sign area would increase by 200 square feet, the proposed sign would only occupy 52% of the building face given the total area of 178 feet as compared to the total proposed length of the sign at 93.5 feet. In addition, the installation and design of the sign to include LED lighting provides an upgrade from the technology currently utilized that is more energy efficient and will eliminate the halo effect often seen with signs illuminated with the type of neon lighting existing today. Specifically, the indirect lighting source provided with neon lights is more prone to spillover beyond lighting the letters themselves. LED lighting produces a sharper image and utilizes 90% less energy than neon lights in illuminating signs.

Community Process: Staff notified the Radnor/Ft. Myer Heights and North Arlington Civic Associations, as well as Rosslyn Renaissance regarding the proposed site plan amendment. To date staff has only received a response from Rosslyn Renaissance (letter attached) indicating their general support for the rooftop sign. The Rosslyn Renaissance Urban Design Committee requested that the applicant look at installing with the sign a rheostat that would allow for the lighting to be adjusted or dimmed. In response to this request and based on discussions with staff regarding the County’s continued concern about its ability to regulate the intensity of rooftop lighting, the applicant has agreed that a rheostat will be installed with the rooftop sign

³ Linear street frontage includes the building wall of the two towers fronting on Wilson Boulevard, the portion of commercial space between the towers and the portion of 1100 Wilson Boulevard building that fronts on North Lynn Street. Specifically, 1000 Wilson Boulevard includes frontage for the 30 foot tower and the 65 foot commercial section; 1100 Wilson Boulevard includes frontage for the 30 foot tower and indoor retail mall fronting North Lynn Street.

whereby, the lighting intensity could be reduced or dimmed in the event the sign is determined too bright by the County Manager. The applicant has also agreed to condition the hours of illumination for the proposed sign, where the existing sign is currently not limited.

CONCLUSION: The proposed modifications to the Northrop Grumman Corporation rooftop sign would increase the total sign area and provide upgraded technology that would result in a better quality sign than what exists on the building today. The sign would be more energy efficient, have minimal halo effect, and provide a means to control the intensity of the lighting with limited hours of illumination. None of these elements are applicable to the existing rooftop sign. Finally, the proposed modifications are consistent with the *Sign Guidelines for Site Plan Buildings*. Therefore staff recommends that the site plan amendment for a 515 square foot rooftop sign be approved subject to all previously approved conditions and the following amended condition.

1. One rooftop level sign shall be permitted and located on the northeast corner of the building identified at 1000 Wilson Boulevard under SP #125. The sign shall be no larger than ~~375~~ 515 square feet. The developer agrees to limit the rooftop signage for 1000 Wilson Boulevard, "Northrop Grumman" to one sign at the location shown on the revised drawings submitted to the County from ~~Jack Stone Sign Co. (Drawing No. 4225)~~ and ~~dated 4/8/03~~ Signs Unlimited Inc. and dated 02/14/08. The developer agrees that the sign shall be of the same materials, dimensions, text, and location as shown on the plans dated February 14, 2008, and presented to and approved by the County Board on May 17, 2008, and prepared by Signs Unlimited Inc. The sign shall be illuminated only as shown on the revised drawings dated ~~4/8/03~~ 02/14/08.

The developer agrees to install a rheostat or other appropriate variable resistor that will allow the developer to adjust the rooftop sign's lighting intensity from a level of 0 LUX to 500 LUX. The developer further agrees that if the County Manager finds that the intensity of the rooftop sign's lighting has an adverse effect on the surrounding area, the developer will, within 24 hours notice from the County Manager, reduce the intensity of the lights to a level that, in the County Manager's reasonable judgment, will no longer have such an adverse effect.

The developer agrees that the rooftop sign hours of illumination will be from dusk to 2:00 AM, seven (7) days a week.

PREVIOUS COUNTY BOARD ACTIONS:

June 6, 1972	Rezoned from "C-2" to "C-O."
September 6, 1972	Approved site plan for an office building.
October 13, 1973	Extended site plan for one (1) year.
April 20, 1974	Approved a site plan amendment to delete 37,367 square feet of parking.
October 12, 1974	Extended site plan for one (1) year.
October 4, 1975	Extended site plan for one (1) year.
October 12, 1976	Extended site plan for one (1) year.
September 10, 1977	Extended site plan for one (1) year.
February 11, 1978	Approved a site plan for an office, commercial and hotel complex.
June 24, 1978	Deferred site plan amendment to delete office to be replaced by hotel.
July 29, 1978	Approved a site plan amendment to delete approved office and replace it with a conceptual site plan for a 325-room hotel and parking for the office towers.
July 7, 1979	Extended site plan for one (1) year.
June 10, 1980	Extended site plan for one (1) year.
July 11, 1981	Extended site plan for one (1) year.
September 11, 1982	Deferred a site plan amendment to change the timing of required public improvements.
September 25, 1982	Approved a site plan amendment to reflect revised dates for developer obligations related to the loop road construction.
March 3, 1984	Denied a site plan amendment to convert the

SP #125 Site Plan Amendment
1000 Wilson Boulevard

approved hotel to office.

February 2, 1985

Deferred a site plan amendment to convert 19,000 square feet of retail space to office space and 8,500 square feet of general office space to a private health club, and advertised "On Its Own Motion" a Site Plan Amendment to convert 15,000 square feet of parking to retail and to increase parking for Phase III by 15,000 square feet.

March 16, 1985

Approved a site plan amendment to convert 19,000 square feet of retail space to office space (Phase II) and 17,000 square feet of office space to a private fitness center (Phase I). Also approved the conversion of 15,000 square feet of required parking to retail space (Phase II) and increased the required parking for Phase III by 15,000 square feet.

May 18, 1985

Approved a site plan amendment for a parking garage of 363,800 square feet.

August 17, 1985

Approved a site plan amendment to extend the site plan approval for a conceptually approved 325-unit hotel from July 29, 1985 to July 29, 1988.

Denied a site plan amendment to enlarge the "USA Today" rooftop sign on 1000 Wilson Boulevard and approved a rooftop sign consisting of 224 square feet for Gannett on 1100 Wilson Boulevard.

October 5, 1985

Approved a site plan amendment to amend condition #24 to permit occupancy of Phase II building prior to completion of required parking on the Phase III site.

December 2, 1986

Approved a site plan amendment to extend the date for completion of the Phase III garage to January 15, 1987 to allow continued occupancy of Phase II.

January 10, 1987

Approved a site plan amendment to permit 15,000 square feet of parking area on the 5th floor of the 1100 building to remain in parking use, and to permit the 15,000 square feet of the parking area on the Mall Level (Level 8), and on part of Level 6 of

the 1101 building to be converted to retail gross floor area.

March 7, 1987

Approved a site plan amendment to extend the date of the completion of the Phase III site from January 15, 1987 to June 1, 1987, and to permit the continued occupancy of the Phase II building prior to completion of the required parking on the Phase III site.

November 7, 1987

Approved a site plan amendment to permit a tenant identification sign measuring 6 feet by 78 feet and reading "Gannett Foundation" on the east elevation of the penthouse level of 1101 Wilson Boulevard.

Approved a site plan amendment for the conceptually approved 325-unit hotel, an office building with 243,698 square feet of gross floor area plus 15,766 square feet of day care space on level eight, and with a height of 300 feet above mean sea level to the roof parapet on a site which for density purposes is calculated as 79,154 square feet.

February 6, 1988

Approved a site plan amendment to convert 6,300 square feet of designated commercial space on the seventh level to a television studio.

January 7, 1989

Approved a site plan amendment to permit construction of a roof garden on the penthouse, approximately 14 feet and 8 inches above the top of the parapet.

February 11, 1989

Approved a site plan amendment to permit live entertainment, including dancing in an existing restaurant.

May 13, 1989

Approved a site plan amendment to permit the operation of a child care center for 140 children, ages 1-6 years, weekdays between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m.

June 3, 1989

Approved a site plan amendment to permit installation of a 12-foot diameter satellite dish antenna on the northwest corner of the building roof.

March 10, 1990	Approved an amendment and renewal of a special exception for a site plan amendment for live entertainment, including dancing, to be extended by one hour, Thursdays through Saturdays between 7:00 p.m. and 1:00 a.m.
August 11, 1990	Deferred to October 6, 1990, a Site Plan Amendment to substitute a conference and exercise facility for the approved roof garden on the penthouse.
October 6, 1990	Deferred to November 17, 1990 a Site Plan Amendment to substitute a conference and exercise facility for approved roof garden on the penthouse.
November 17, 1990	Deferred to January 5, 1991, a site plan amendment to substitute a conference and exercise facility for approved roof garden on the penthouse.
January 5, 1991	Deferred to January 19, 1991, a site plan amendment to substitute a conference and exercise facility for approved roof garden on the penthouse.
January 19, 1991	Approved a site plan amendment to substitute a conference and exercise facility for the roof garden on the penthouse.
May 11, 1991	Approved an amendment to a special exception for a site plan amendment for live entertainment and dancing until 2:00 a.m. on Friday and Saturday evenings at New York, New York Restaurant, subject to conditions, and with a review in one (1) year.
July 13, 1991	Approved a site plan amendment to amend Condition #7 to reduce the bicycle parking requirement to 45 spaces; denied the request to convert 2,700 square feet of storage space adjacent to the loading dock to commercial space for a printing firm.
November 16, 1991 SP #125 Site Plan Amendment 1000 Wilson Boulevard	Approved an amendment to a special exception for

a site plan amendment for live entertainment and dancing until 2:00 a.m. seven nights a week at New York, New York Restaurant, subject to conditions, and with a review in three (3) years.

January 18, 1992

Approved a site plan amendment to convert 2,536 square feet of retail space to a computer training facility, subject to a condition requiring a \$30,000 contribution for the Rosslyn Renaissance.

January 16, 1993

Deferred to March 6, 1993 a Site Plan Amendment to construct a theater and auditorium and associated interior and street level facade modifications.

January 16, 1993

Deferred to March 6, 1993 a site plan amendment to convert approximately 4,000 square feet of storage space to retail G.F.A.

February 6, 1993

Deferred to March 6, 1993 a site plan amendment to convert approximately 13,400 square feet of day care space to museum, theater or office space.

March 10, 1993

Deferred to the recessed meeting of April 15, 1993 a site plan amendment to construct a theater and auditorium and associated interior and street level facade modifications.

Deferred to the recessed meeting of April 15, 1993 a site plan amendment to convert approximately 4,000 square feet of storage space to retail G.F.A.

Carried-over to March 20, 1993 a site plan amendment to convert approximately 13,400 square feet of day care space to museum, theater or office space.

March 20, 1993

Approved a site plan amendment to convert 15,766 square feet of day care space (approximately 13,400 square feet of net useable space) to museum, museum administration or theater space.

April 15, 1993

Agreed to postpone completion of the Rosslyn Loop Road for 25 years. Endorsed a traffic circulation alternative. Directed the County Manager to

develop a public participation process for development of interim alternative uses for the bridge and adjacent incomplete segments of the road.

Approved a site plan amendment to construct a 3,500 square foot theater and auditorium, and associated interim and street level facade modifications, subject to conditions.

Approved a site plan amendment to convert approximately 4,000 square feet of storage space to retail G.F.A., subject one condition.

June 5, 1993

Approved a site plan amendment to construct approximately 13,150 square feet of G.F.A. on the existing plaza deck (9,370 sq. ft.) and in a new mezzanine area within the existing tower (3,780 sq. ft.) for use as exhibit space, museum administrations and support areas, subject to conditions.

February 5, 1994

Deferred a site plan amendment to construct a park on the Loop Road bridge to March 5, 1994.

March 12, 1994

Approved a site plan amendment for the park design concept for the Loop Road bridge and approved, ratified, and affirmed the Declaration of Mutual Intent executed between the County Manager and Twin Towers Associates, Twin Towers II Associates, 1101 Associates, and Arland Towers Company, subject to the deletion of conditions number 1, 2, and 4 of the January 19, 1991 site plan amendment and the conditions in an excerpt from the March 12, 1994 County Board minutes.

May 7, 1994

Approved a site plan amendment for the installation of two receive-only antennae; one (1) 3.0 and one (1) 3.7 meters in diameter.

November 19, 1994

Continued a site plan amendment for live entertainment including dancing, in an existing restaurant from 9:00 p.m. to 1:30 a.m., seven days a week with a review in five (5) years.

June 4, 1996	Approved a site plan amendment for the conversion of approximately 1,100 square feet of mall area to retail gross floor area.
December 12, 1998	Approved a site plan amendment for the conversion of 8,500 square feet of retail designated mall area to private office space.
July 14, 1999	Approved a site plan amendment for the conversion of approximately 52,000 square feet of communication production facilities, physical fitness center, and office space total office space.
November 1, 2000	Approved a site plan amendment for a second rooftop sign at 1100 Wilson Boulevard.
April 21, 2001	Denied a site plan amendment to add a drop-off/curb pick-up area along Wilson Boulevard at 1000 Wilson Boulevard.
January 11, 2003	Approved a site plan amendment for a 315 square foot rooftop sign on 1000 Wilson Boulevard "Northrop Grumman."
March 15, 2003	Approved a site plan amendment for one rooftop sign, on electronic message sign and video display screen on 1100 Wilson Boulevard for WJLA. Approved a FAB sign on 1000 Wilson Boulevard for WJLA.
April 26, 2003	Approved a site plan amendment for one rooftop sign on 1000 Wilson Boulevard for Northrop Grumman.
September 13, 2003	Deferred a site plan amendment to convert retail space to conference center on 1000 Wilson Boulevard.
October 18, 2003	Approved a site plan amendment to convert retail space to conference center on 1000 Wilson Boulevard.
February 7, 2004 SP #125 Site Plan Amendment 1000 Wilson Boulevard	Approved a site plan amendment one rooftop sign,

on electronic message sign and video display screen on 1100 Wilson Boulevard for WJLA.

Approved a site plan amendment to add four tables to an outdoor café along North Lynn Street for Baja Fresh located at 1100 Wilson Boulevard.

September 18, 2004

Approved a site plan amendment to amend the comprehensive sign plan for one blade sign and one flat against the building sign at 1100 Wilson Boulevard for Baja Fresh, subject to the conditions of the staff report.