

Illegal LED Advertising Sign at the Ameritania Hotel

230 W 54th Street, Manhattan | BIN 1024839, Block 1025, Lot 44

Prepared by Jacob van Winkle, Treasurer, West 50s Neighborhood Association (501(c)(3)) | May 6, 2026

The Property and the Sign

A 793-square-foot LED advertising sign operates on the facade of the Ameritania Hotel, illuminating into approximately 180 residential apartments across six neighboring buildings. The sign has operated continuously since 2017. The Department of Buildings has not enforced against it for eight years despite seven documented complaints, three Class 1 ECB violations, direct legislative correspondence from Assembly Member Linda Rosenthal, and inter-agency confirmation from the Department of City Planning that DOB has authority to act.

The sign is owned by **BTO Nitro Buyer LLC**, a subsidiary of Blackstone Tactical Opportunities, which acquired the advertising rights to this sign and approximately 30 other NYC parcels in June 2023 for \$3,664,558.60. The sign is operated by **New Tradition Outdoor LLC**, holder of Outdoor Advertising Company Registration #1111. The underlying property owner is **Bryant Associates LLC**.

Three Independently Verifiable Violations in DOB's Own Records

Violation A: Expired sign permit. Annual sign permit #15726 expired June 30, 2022 and shows MAILRETURN status in BIS. Operating without a current annual sign permit violates Administrative Code §28-105.1.

Violation B: 13-month outdoor advertising registration lapse. OAC #1111 expired December 7, 2023 and was not renewed until January 8, 2025. DOB classifies the renewal transaction in its own billing system as "OAC REGISTRATION FEE LATE RENEWAL." For approximately 395 days, the operator engaged in commercial outdoor advertising at this property without a valid registration. Civil penalty exposure under §28-502.6.4 is up to \$15,000 per first violation and \$25,000 per subsequent violation, with each day treated as a separate violation. Additionally, BTO Nitro Buyer LLC, which acquired the sign rights in June 2023, has never registered as an outdoor advertising company. DOB confirmed this in writing in May 2026. The OAC renewal letter expressly states that the registration is not transferable. BTO Nitro is therefore operating commercial outdoor advertising in New York City without authorization, a current and ongoing §28-502.2 violation.

Violation C: False certification on the 2017 ECB violations. Three Class 1 Immediately Hazardous violations (35295204K, 35295205M, 35295206Y) were issued October 14, 2017 against Bryant Associates ordering "REMOVE ILLEGAL SIGN." All three were heard at OATH on June 7, 2018. Bryant Associates filed Certificates of Correction, which DOB rejected on August 2, 2018. A second submission was filed and accepted by DOB on June 5, 2019. The accepted certifications attested to compliance with a remedy that demanded sign removal. The sign was not removed. The same sign at the same location, with the same operator engaged in the same conduct, has continued to operate from October 2017 to the present. Under §28-211.1, the false certification of correction is itself a violation, with criminal exposure under New York Penal Law §§175.05, 175.10, 175.30, and 175.35.

A Documented Pattern of Inspector Misapplication

DOB's own complaint file contains verbatim inspector entries showing inspectors at the working level applying the wrong zoning provision or denying jurisdiction. Inspector Badge #2882, March 16, 2020: "LOCATION IS A C6-7 ZONE, NO SIGN RESTRICTIONS." Recorded nine months after Assembly Member Rosenthal's June 2019 letter to Commissioner La Rocca identified §32-64 as the controlling residential-illumination provision. Inspector Badge #2889, May 25, 2023: "LIGHT POLLUTION IS NOT WITHIN DOB JURISDICTION." Recorded the same month the Department of City Planning confirmed §32-64 falls under DOB authority. Inspector Badge #2185, October 16, 2018: closed a nighttime light-intrusion complaint on a daytime paperwork inspection. Together these entries document a sustained pattern of DOB inspectors applying the wrong rule or denying their own jurisdiction, despite legislative correspondence and inter-agency confirmation identifying the correct provision.

What We Are Asking DOB to Do

1. Assess civil penalties under §28-502.6.4 against New Tradition Outdoor LLC for the documented 395-day registration lapse.
2. Initiate enforcement under §28-502.2 against BTO Nitro Buyer LLC for ongoing operation of commercial outdoor advertising without a valid OAC registration.
3. Reopen the three 2017 ECB violations under §28-211.1 for false certification of correction.
4. Conduct a nighttime re-inspection under §32-64, with explicit instruction that inspectors apply §32-64, not §32-644.