

Docket Item # 2
BAR CASE #2011-0246

BAR Meeting
September 21, 2011

ISSUE: Alterations (signage, awnings, air intake louver/air vent openings)

APPLICANT: Eat Good Meat LLC by Paul Beckmann

LOCATION: 277 S Washington Street

ZONE: CD / Commercial

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness with the conditions that:

1. That the scroll bracket is installed in the mortar, and not the brick;
2. That the sign is reduced by 5 square feet, measuring approximately 2'-6" x 5'-0";
3. That the final design of the metal scroll in the transoms above the doors is approved by Staff;
4. That the new air intake louver and air vents are painted to match the adjacent wall surface.

****EXPIRATION OF APPROVALS NOTE:** In accordance with Sections 10-106(B) and 10-206(B) of the Zoning Ordinance, any official Board of Architectural Review approval will expire 12 months from the date of final approval if the work is not commenced and diligently and substantially pursued by the end of that 12-month period.

****BUILDING PERMIT NOTE:** Most projects approved by the Board of Architectural Review require the issuance of one or more construction permits by Building and Fire Code Administration (including siding or roofing over 100 square feet, windows and signs). The applicant is responsible for obtaining all necessary construction permits after receiving Board of Architectural Review approval. Contact Code Administration, Room 4200, City Hall, 703-746-4200 for further information.



BAR CASE #2011-0246



I. ISSUE

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness at 277 S Washington Street for:

1. One 2'-6"x7'-0" wood hanging sign (17.5 square feet) with the words "Society Fair Devoted to Food" installed on the S Washington Street façade
2. Two seven watt, 6"L x 3"W x 4.5"H compact fluorescent aluminum sign lights installed in brick planter
3. Two new 72"x30" copper awnings over existing doorways on the S Washington Street façade
4. Two custom metal scroll ornaments on the interior of the glass transom above the copper awnings
5. One new air intake louver and three new air vents on north façade

The application originally included items for outdoor dining, but since the proposed dining complies with the *King Street Outdoor Dining Design Guidelines* these sections have been removed since it is the policy of the BAR to not review outdoor dining if it complies with the *King Street Outdoor Dining Design Guidelines*.

II. HISTORY

The Atrium Building at 277 South Washington Street, formerly the headquarters of the Time-Life publishing group, was constructed in **1977**. It was a postmodern effort to use historicist references as part of the design vocabulary on a large-scale commercial building. It was designed by the Alexandria architectural firm of Michael and Michael. The original design was not approved by the Board (B.A.R. Minutes 10/1/1974). The compromise design which was built was approved by City Council, on appeal.

The BAR has approved signage for a number of past tenants located within the Atrium Building, including BAR Case # 2000-0079 (May 17, 2000), BAR Case # 2002-0276 (November 20, 2002) and BAR Case # 2005-0271 (December 7, 2005). The Board approved a sign plan for this building in January 1999 (BAR Case #98-0223, January 20, 1999). The BAR has also approved exterior alterations to the building itself, BAR Case # 97-0189 (September 17, 1997). The BAR most recently approved a new trash enclosure for the building on April 6, 2011 (BAR CASE # 2011-0051).

The same applicant recently had a 2'-6" x 6'-0" or 15 square foot sign approved by the Board for 106 S Union (BAR CASE #2010-0171/172/173).

III. ANALYSIS

The proposed project complies with Zoning Ordinance regulations.

Signage

The applicant is proposing one 2'-6"x7' wood, double-sided hanging sign (17.5 square feet) with the words "Society Fair Devoted to Food" installed on the S Washington Street façade. They intend to reuse the existing metal scroll bracket.

The *Criteria & Standards for Administrative Approval for Signs within the Historic Districts* states that “a one-piece double-sided hanging sign” can have “a maximum square footage of 7 square feet.” While the Board has the authority to approve a larger hanging sign, Staff feels that the proposed 2’6”x7’0” hanging sign (17.5 square feet) is too large, even for this enormous building, and that approval of this large of a sign would set a difficult precedent for other buildings along Washington Street. Staff recommends reducing the proposed signage by 5 square feet to make the sign 2’-6”x5’0” (12.5 square feet). While many would still consider this to be too large, it is important to take the extreme mass of the property into consideration. The Atrium Building appears to be 3 stories to the untrained eye, when it is in fact, 5 stories tall. It also encompasses half of an entire city block. While Staff and the Board encourage signs to target pedestrians more than automobiles, the expansive nature of Washington Street and the wide sidewalk, combined with the massing of the Atrium Building, encourage the use of a larger sign at this particular site.

The frontage of this space is 67’ which would allow the BAR to approve the proposed 17.5 square feet of signage as the zoning ordinance allows the BAR to approve one square foot of sign for every linear foot of frontage. However, it is important to note that most signs in the historic district are not as large, or as numerous, as the maximum allowed under the Zoning Ordinance. The typical square footage of hanging signs within the historic district is 7 square feet.

It is also important to note that The National Park Service reviewed this application and had no comments in regards to the proposed design and any potential negative affects it could have on the memorial character of the GW Parkway.

Lighting

The applicant proposes 2, 7 watt 6”L x 3”W x 4.5”H compact fluorescent aluminum sign lights to be installed and concealed within the existing planter on the S Washington Street façade. The lights will be installed on either side of the proposed hanging sign. The proposed lighting is minimal in scale and wattage and is appropriate for the site considering the amount of lighting that exists on S. Washington Street during the evening.

Awnings

The *Design Guidelines* state that “awnings should be appropriate and sympathetic to the historical style of the building to which they are attached.” The original canvas awning proposal within the segmental arched storefront windows was grossly out of scale (fig.9). The 2 copper awnings now proposed are of a simple shed style which will be attached onto the glass panels over the doors by metal scroll brackets. This placement will not cover or harm any character-defining features or building fabric on the late-twentieth-century storefront. In addition, the rounded detail of the brackets will complement the arched brick storefront and not overwhelm the large amount of glass like a heavy wood frame would. The proposed awnings and will be made of copper and will not only provide visual interest but also a cover for patrons when it rains. Staff enthusiastically recommends approval of these unique copper awnings, as submitted.

Metal Scroll Ornaments

The applicant has discussed with Staff the possibility of including a custom metal scroll piece on the interior of the glass transoms above the copper awnings (fig.11). While it is an interior feature, it's visibility as a part of the store front requires it to have BAR review. Staff is very supportive of this detail and encouraged the applicant to include it in the application. However, since the applicant is still working on the final design of this piece, Staff recommends approval of this feature, with the final design to be approved on a Staff level.

New Openings

The proposed air intake louver and air vents are to be located near the middle of the block on a secondary wall elevation. The three air vents will each measure less than one square foot: two 8" exhaust flues with caps being used for the bread oven and 1 12" exhaust flues with cap for the hot water heater. The air intake louver measures 3'x6'. The applicant proposes to paint all 4 openings to match the existing brick. While the applicant is installing four new openings on the building, Staff supports the installation since they will be located on a secondary wall elevation. Staff also feels that they will be minimally visible due to the scale and massing of the building.

STAFF

Courtney Lankford, Historic Preservation Planner, Planning & Zoning
Al Cox, FAIA, Historic Preservation Manager, Planning & Zoning

IV. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

Legend: C - code requirement R - recommendation S - suggestion F- finding

Zoning & SUP Comments

- F-1 The proposed restaurant and outdoor dining were approved by SUP2010-00009 and ENC2010-00003 and must comply with all conditions of those approvals.
- C-1 Proposed awnings comply with zoning.
- C-2 Section 9-202(B)(4) of the zoning ordinance requires a hanging sign to be located at least 8' above the sidewalk. In this case the proposed hanging sign is located over a planter within the proposed outdoor dining area and is not located over a sidewalk. Based on the plan submitted the business has approximately 65' of frontage and the 17.5 square foot sign is complying.
- C-3 The outdoor dining components must comply with the King Street Outdoor Dining Guidelines, do not require BAR approval and should be removed from the application.

Code Administration

- F-1 The following comments are for preliminary review only. Once the applicant has filed for a building permit, code requirements will be based upon the building permit plans. If there are any questions, the applicant may contact Thomas Sciulli, Plan Review Supervisor at 703-746-4190 or thomas.sciulli@alexandriava.gov.
- C-1 The proposed use is a change in use group classification; a new Certificate of Occupancy is required
- C-2 Building and trades permits are required for this project. Six sets of *construction documents* sealed by a *Registered Design Professional* that fully detail the construction as well as layout and schematics of the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems shall accompany the permit application(s)
- C-3 A seating plan (indoor and outdoor) showing all aisle and passageway clearances shall be submitted for occupancy load determination The proposed space used for outdoor seating with tables must provide a minimum of 15 square feet per person.
- C-4 Any configuration of outdoor seating shall comply with the following conditions:
- Fire Dept. Connections must remain accessible - not be blocked by tables or fixtures.
 - Daily Sweeping/washing of outdoor dining area is recommended to control rodent activity.
 - Fire Hydrants shall not be obstructed by tables, chairs or other fixtures.
 - The configuration of any outdoor seating shall not obstruct or diminish the required egress from the structure or any adjacent structures.

- C-5 A fire prevention code permit is required for the proposed use.
- C-6 The following code requirements apply where food preparation results in the development of grease laden vapors:
- (a) All cooking surfaces, kitchen exhaust systems, grease removal devices and hoods are required to be protected with an approved automatic fire suppression system.
 - (b) A grease interceptor is required where there is drainage from fixtures and equipment with grease-laden waste located in food preparation areas of restaurants. Food waste grinders can not discharge to the building drainage system through a grease interceptor.
- C-7 A rodent control plan shall be submitted to this office for review and approval prior to occupancy. This plan shall consist of the following:
- (a) Measures to be taken to control the placement of litter on site and the trash storage and pickup schedule.
 - (b) How food stuffs will be stored on site.
 - (c) Rodent baiting plan.
- C-8 Sufficient plumbing fixtures must be provided to accommodate the total occupancy load staff and combined indoor/outdoor patron seating capacity.
- C-9 The building shall comply with the accessibility requirements of the USBC Chapter 11.
- C-10 Building construction permits are required prior to sign attachment and copper awning installation
- C-11 All signs shall conform to VCC Appendix "H" as amended
- C-12 All sign applications shall include;
- Size and type of sign
 - Method of attachment including number and type of fasteners
 - Maximum projection, minimum height above grade, and whether the sign is illuminated or non-illuminated

Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES)

F1. Per ENC2010-00003:

1. Maintain minimum 6' wide unobstructed sidewalk. (T&ES)
 2. The applicant (and his/her successors, if any) must obtain and maintain a policy of general liability insurance in the amount of \$1,000,000, which will indemnify the applicant (and his /her successors, if any) and the City of Alexandria, as an additional named insured, against all claims, demands, suits, etc., and all costs related thereto, including attorney fees, relating to any bodily injury or property damage which may occur as a result of the granting of this encroachment. (T&ES)
 3. Neither the City nor any Private utility company will be held responsible for damage to the private improvements in the public right-of-way during repair, maintenance or replacement of any utilities that may be located within the area of the proposed encroachment. (T&ES)
 4. In the event the City shall, in the future, have need for the area of the proposed encroachment, the applicant shall remove any structure that encroached into the public right-of-way, within 60 days, upon notification by the City. (T&ES)
- F2. Conditions from other approvals shall be applied, ENC2010-0003; SUP2010-00009, SIT75-0018

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. **Recommendations for Outdoor Dining Area:**

1. Outdoor Dining area must be placed in front of parcel only; the dining area may not exceed the building edge as to not encroach into areas in front of other businesses. (T&ES)
 2. **Any barrier (whether sectional fencing or rail-type) must be freestanding, without any permanent or temporary attachments to buildings, sidewalks or other infrastructure.** (T&ES)
 3. To ensure effective pedestrian flow, all parts of any umbrella (including the fabric and supporting ribs) must be contained entirely within the outdoor seating area. (T&ES)
- R2. The building permit plans shall comply with requirements of City Code Section 5-6-224 regarding the location of downspouts, foundation drains and sump pumps. Refer to Memorandum to Industry dated June 18, 2004. [Memorandum is available online at the City web site under Transportation\Engineering and Design\Memos to Industry.]. (T&ES)
- R3. Applicant shall be responsible for repairs to the adjacent city right-of-way if damaged during construction activity. (T&ES)
- R4. All improvements to the city right-of-way such as curbing, sidewalk, driveway aprons, etc. must be city standard design and shall be submitted as a revision to the original Development Plan. (T&ES)

- R5. No permanent structure may be constructed over any existing private and/or public utility easements. It is the responsibility of the applicant to identify any and all existing easements on the plan. (T&ES)

CODE REQUIREMENTS

- C-1 The applicant shall comply with the City of Alexandria's Solid Waste Control, Title 5, Chapter 1, which sets forth the requirements for the recycling of materials (Sec. 5-1-99). (T&ES)
- C-2 The applicant shall comply with the City of Alexandria's Noise Control Code, Title 11, Chapter 5, which sets the maximum permissible noise level as measured at the property line. (T&ES)
- C-3 Roof, surface and sub-surface drains be connected to the public storm sewer system, if available, by continuous underground pipe. Where storm sewer is not available applicant must provide a design to mitigate impact of stormwater drainage onto adjacent properties and to the satisfaction of the Director of Transportation & Environmental Services. (Sec.5-6-224) (T&ES)
- C-4 All secondary utilities serving this site shall be placed underground. (Sec. 5-3-3) (T&ES)
- C-5 Any work within the right-of-way requires a separate permit from T&ES. (Sec. 5-2) (T&ES)

V. IMAGES



Figure 1: Existing east façade.

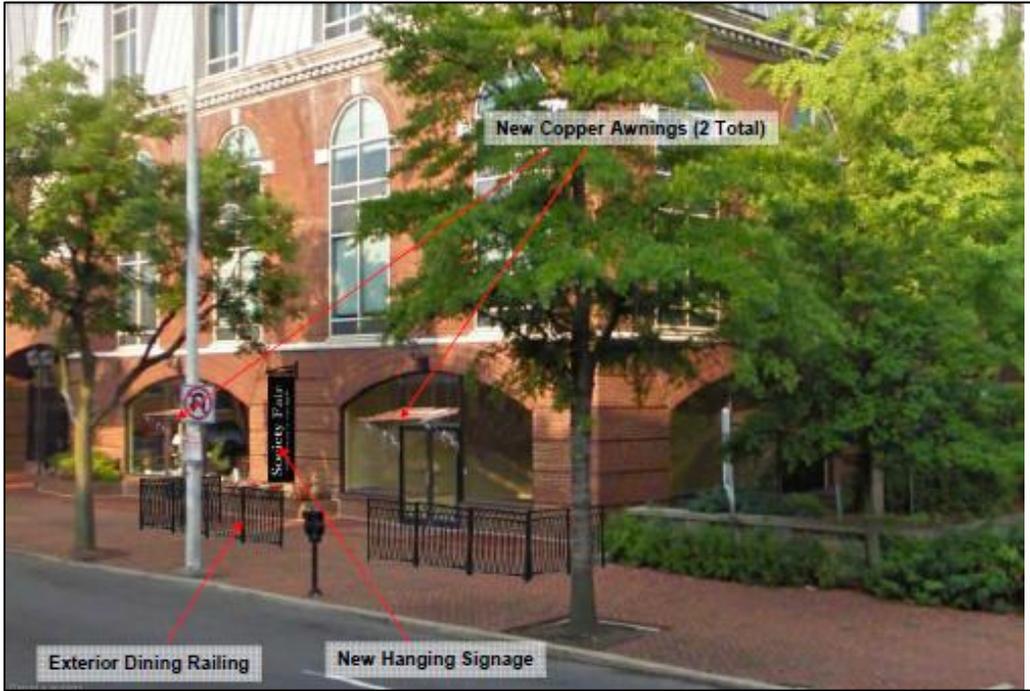


Figure 2: Proposed east façade.



Figure 3: Existing north façade.



Figure 4: Proposed north façade.

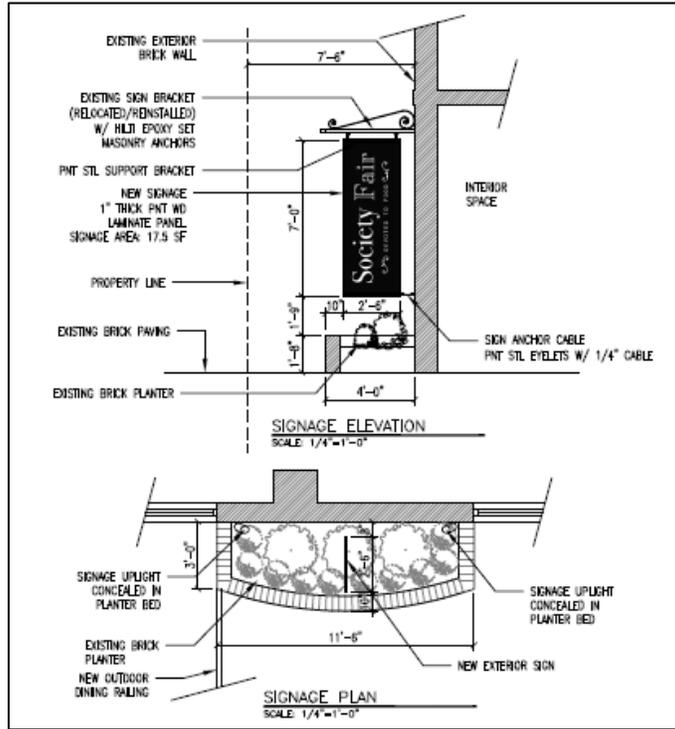


Figure 5: Proposed sign plan.

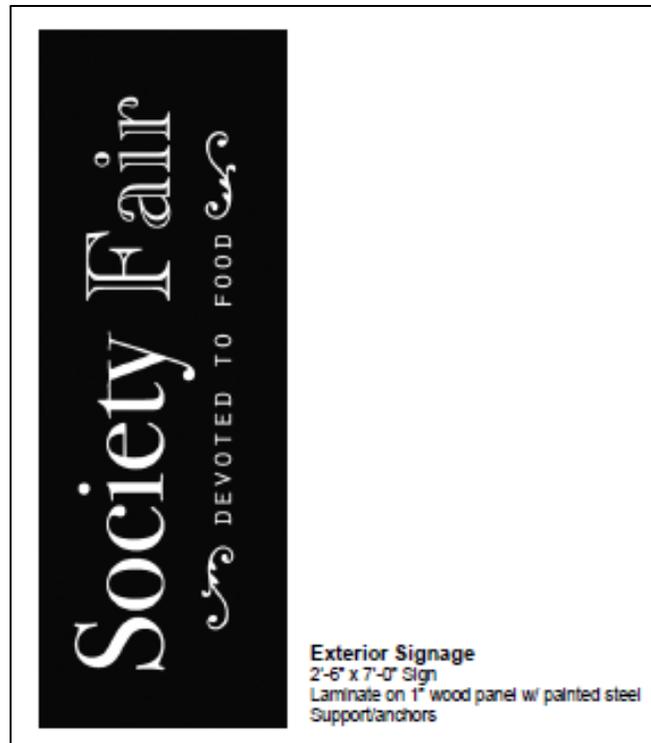


Figure 6: Proposed sign.



Figure 7: Proposed sign mock-up.



Figure 8: Staff recommended size of sign (2'-6"x5').



Figure 9: Original canvas awning application



Figure 10: Proposed copper awning and metal brackets.



Figure 11: Proposed storefront rendering with metal scroll detail in transom.