

Docket Item # 4
BAR CASE #2011-0363

BAR Meeting
January 18, 2012

ISSUE: Certificate of Appropriateness (storefront reconfiguration)
APPLICANT: East Banc, Inc. by Robert M. Gurney, FAIA
LOCATION: 326 King Street
ZONE: KR/King Street Retail

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness, with the following conditions:

1. That the existing CVS signage and the second floor office signage be removed from the north and west elevations and that a coordinated sign plan for this building be submitted to the Board before any new signs are approved for the ground floor tenant;
2. That the applicant clean and repaint the concrete egress stairs on the east side of the King Street façade.

****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.

I. ISSUE

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness at 326 King Street in order to reconfigure the existing storefront on the side gabled, main (north) portion of the building. The flat roofed, S. Royal Street portion of the building will not be altered.

In addition, the applicant is requesting approval of new conical shaped exterior light fixtures.

The applicant has begun to explore new signage options for the space, but this application does not include a comprehensive sign program.

II. HISTORY

The two-story, brick-faced, Georgian Revival commercial building at 326 King Street was constructed in **1961** as part of an urban renewal project. The main portion of the building fronts King Street and has a side gabled slate roof with three dormers. It features a denticulated wood cornice at the top and a thin, cast concrete belt-course between the first and second floors. The flat roofed rear portion of the building fronts on S. Royal Street and has minimal detailing with the exception of the pedimented entry door surround and belt-course which matches the north façade. The first floor windows have segmental arches and the second floor windows have a flat brick jack-arch. (Staff notes that the segmental arch lintel over the existing first floor windows is typically used in the second half of the 19th century and not the earlier Georgian period.)

The BAR approved a number of alterations and signs for the building in the 1970s while it was occupied for Alexandria National Bank. In the 1990s, the BAR approved various signs and alterations, including a new door opening on the S. Royal Side BAR Case #90/83, 8/15/90; BAR Case #93-201, 11/3/93; BAR Case #96-179, 8/21/96; BAR Case #98-0217, 1/20/99). The current reverse channel illuminated signs were approved for CVS in 1996 (BAR Case #96-0249, 11/6/96) and for Long and Foster Realtors in 2007 (BAR Case #2007-0257, 12/19/07).

In the fall of 2011, a fire occurred at the electrical transformer in the rear of the building causing severe damage to the south wall of the S. Royal Street portion. BAR Staff administratively approved replacement in-kind of damaged windows, precast window sills, face brick, and a wood gate for the trash/transformer area (BAR Case #2011-00323).

III. ANALYSIS

The proposed project complies with Zoning Ordinance regulations.

Staff would like to commend the applicant for patiently working with Staff through several design concepts and revisions.

Storefront Window Reconfiguration

The *Design Guidelines* state that “windows are a principle character defining feature of a building and serve both functional and aesthetic purposes.” This is especially true for commercial spaces when the windows make up the storefront of a retail space. The building at 326 King Street was built as a commercial structure but it appears residential because of the

small scale window openings relative to the masonry wall area. With the vacancy of its most recent tenant, the owner of the building wishes to open up the ground floor retail space so that it will appear more commercial and contribute to the success of any future retail tenant.

The proposal includes seven new custom made, fixed sash that are 6'-0" wide by 10'-0" high *Hope's Jamestown 175 Series* window units and two new *Hope's Jamestown 175 Series* door units, all of which have a fixed transom above it. The Hope's brand units are set into black steel jambs and have a flat 1 ¾ muntin profile in a non-traditional configuration. The window units are recessed approximately 4 1/2" from the outside brick to center of glass, which will slightly cover the inside edge of the brick. Below each window unit is a rowlock brick sill. The height of the rowlock bricks increase slightly from right (west) to left (east) to accommodate the change in grade at the sidewalk. The double door unit is recessed three feet back, parallel to the street, as it is now. While the metal of the first floor windows and doors are to be black, the applicant intends to paint the windows, cornice, and dormers a very dark shade of green.

Commercial storefronts historically had large open windows that allow individuals to see into the space from the street or sidewalk. These large openings provide light into the store, display products for sale, and contribute to personnel safety. The structure that sat on this site before it was torn down to accommodate an urban renewal project had large open storefront windows with paneling beneath them and a recessed door opening (figure 3). In reflecting this historic feature, the applicant has chosen to open the first floor up through a more modern approach that suits the 1961 date of construction. An earlier design study showed one long continuous glass storefront which created the uncomfortable illusion that the masonry second floor of the building was floating. Staff feels the present proposal is innovative while also sensitive to the remaining portions of the structure. The new window openings are well proportioned and align with the smaller window openings on the second floor. They allow significantly improved visual access to retail displays on the building interior, yet remain in scale with the overall façade and retain the load bearing masonry building character. The custom designed metal sash window and door frames are high quality and contemporary without shouting above the traditional building form and materials. A similar modern interpretation of a Colonial Revival building with modern commercial store windows can be found at 325 S. Washington Street (figure 4).

Lighting

The applicant is proposing that new exterior light fixtures flank each side of the new openings, creating a repetitive rhythm down the front façade. These light fixtures are untreated copper and will achieve full patina over time. The fixtures will extend 17.5" from the wall and are 8.5" tall with a 100W incandescent bulb. Staff feels these high quality light fixtures conform to the *Design Guidelines*, and therefore, supports their installation.

Signage

The Design Guidelines state that "buildings with multiple businesses and retail tenants should have a sign plan providing for coordinating graphics and placement." In the mock up, the applicant shows the two CVS and the two Long and Foster signs removed from the façade. However, they do not include a proposed coordinated sign plan for new signage. Staff supports the simple signage shown in the transom above the King Street entrance, as seen in Figure #9, but does not feel that the existing reverse channel individual letter illuminated signs are

appropriate for this structure, as they are too numerous and cumulatively out of scale, especially considering the proposed reconfiguration. Staff recommends approval of the reconfigured storefront with the condition that the overall signage for this building be restudied, including a stipulation that the second floor office tenant only have signage at their entrance which is located on the rear portion of the building on S Royal Street.

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

Code Administration

- F-1 The review by Code Administration is a 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 Ken Granata, Acting Plan Review Supervisor at ken.granata@alexandriava.gov or 703-746-4193. (Code)
- C-1 Building and trade permits are required for this project. Five sets of *construction documents* sealed by a *Registered Design Professional* that fully detail the construction as well as layout and schematics of the revised electrical system shall accompany the permit application(s)
- C-2 New construction must comply with the 2009 edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-3 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the 2009 edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-4 The architect shall provide window manufacturer specification, opening of window size, lintel size and type.
- C-5 All electrical wiring and installation shall comply with NFPA 70, 2008.

Transportation & Environmental Services

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1. Applicant shall be responsible for repairs to the adjacent city right-of-way if damaged during construction activity. (T&ES)
- R2. 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 all plans submitted for approvals. (T&ES)

FINDINGS:

- F1. An approved grading plan will not be required for the proposed improvement based on the information provided. (T&ES)

CITY CODE REQUIREMENTS

- C1. Any work from or within the public right-of-way requires a separate permit from T&ES. (Sec. 5-2) (T&ES)
- C2. Roof, surface and sub-surface drains shall be connect to the public storm sewer system, if available, by continuous underground pipe. Where a storm sewer is not available, the 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. (5-6-224) (T&ES)
- C3. 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)
- C4. 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)
- C5. All improvements to the city right-of-way such as curbing, sidewalk, driveway aprons, etc. must be city standard design. (Sec. 5-2-1) (T&ES)
- C6. All secondary utilities serving this site shall be placed underground. (Sec. 5-3-3) (T&ES)

V. IMAGES



Figure 1: Existing view of the corner of King and S Royal Street.



Figure 2: Proposed view of the corner of King and S Royal Street.

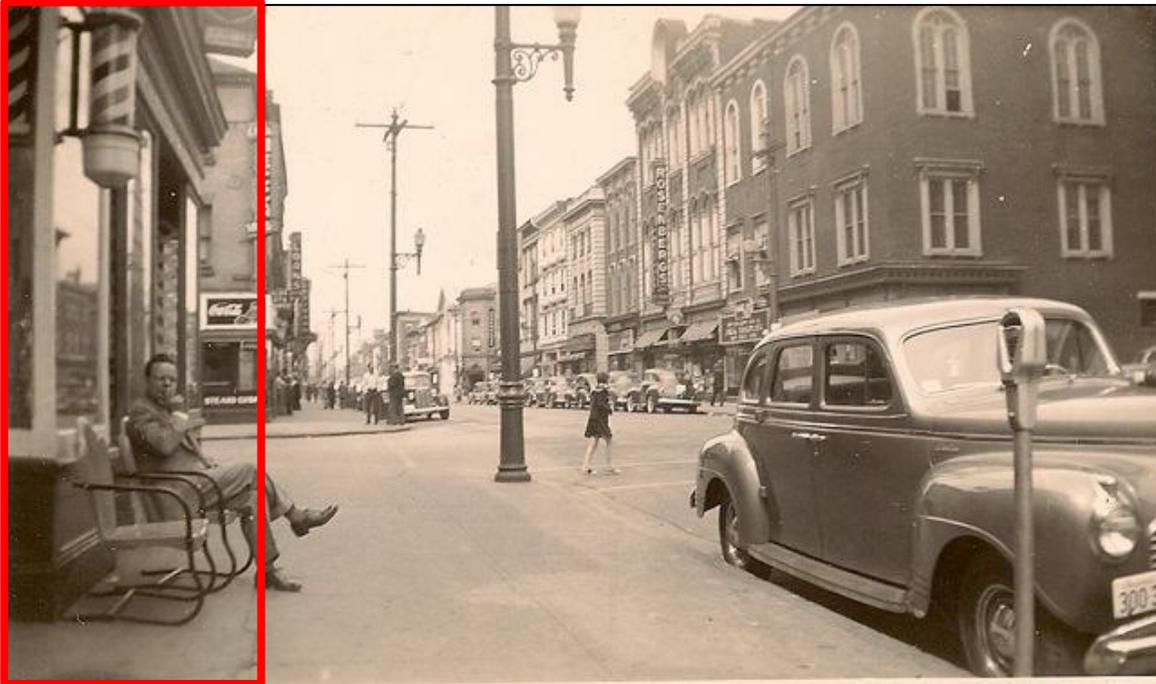


Figure 3: View of the intersection of King and Royal, taken from the east (looking toward the 400 block). The building on the left, behind the man on the chair, is the former building at 326 King Street. Photo courtesy of Jimmy Webster, 1941



Figure 4: View of a similar retail building at 325 S Washington Street.

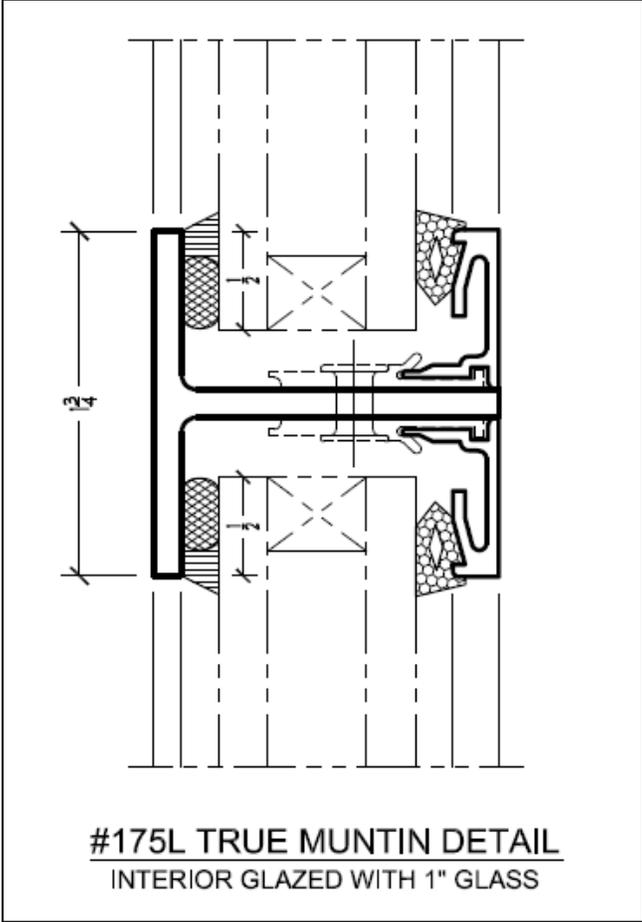


Figure 5: Muntin detail.



Figure 6: Proposed exterior light fixture.

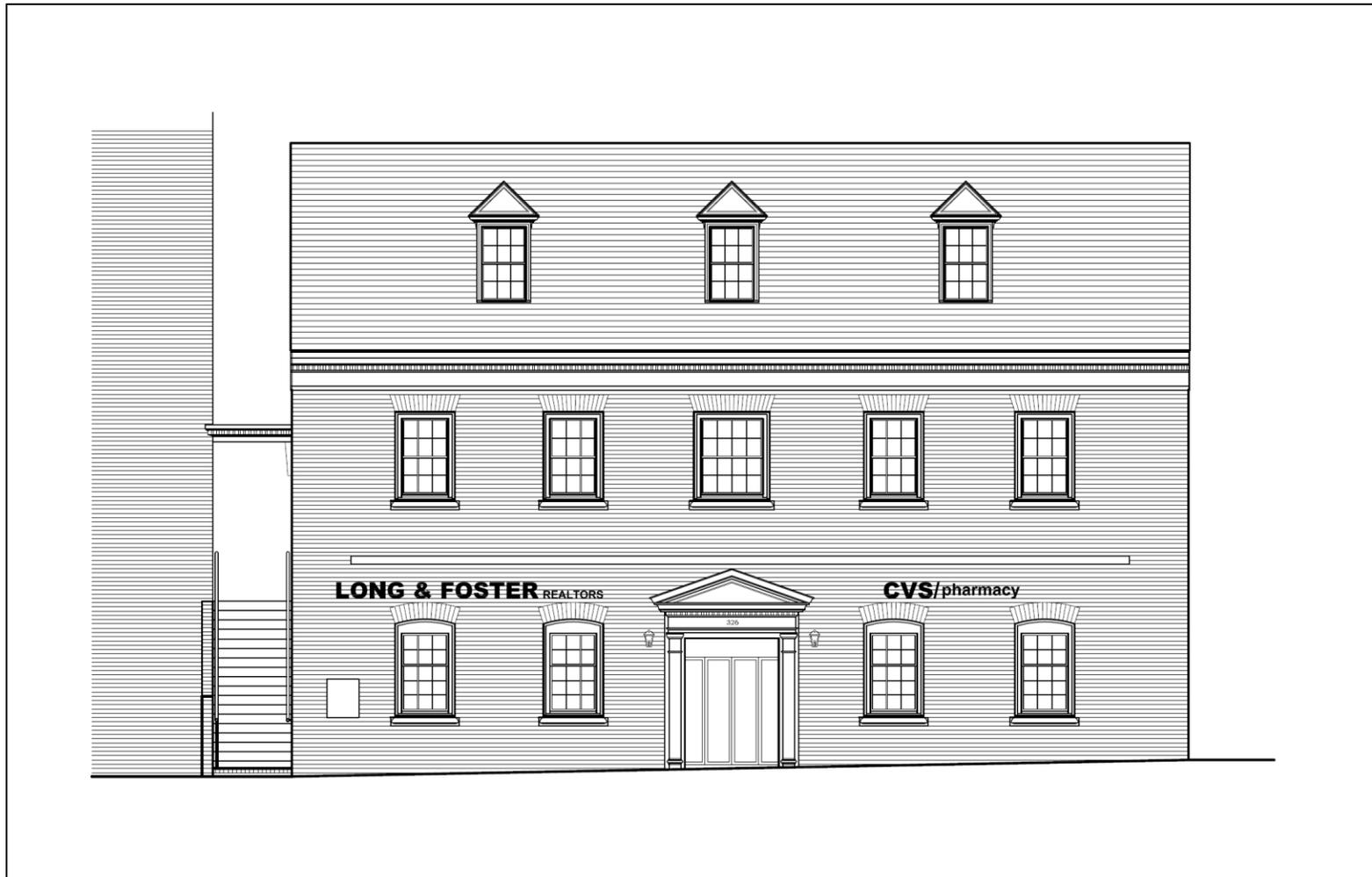


Figure 7: Existing elevation of King Street façade.



Figure 8: Existing elevation of S Royal Street façade.



Figure 9: Proposed elevation of King Street façade.

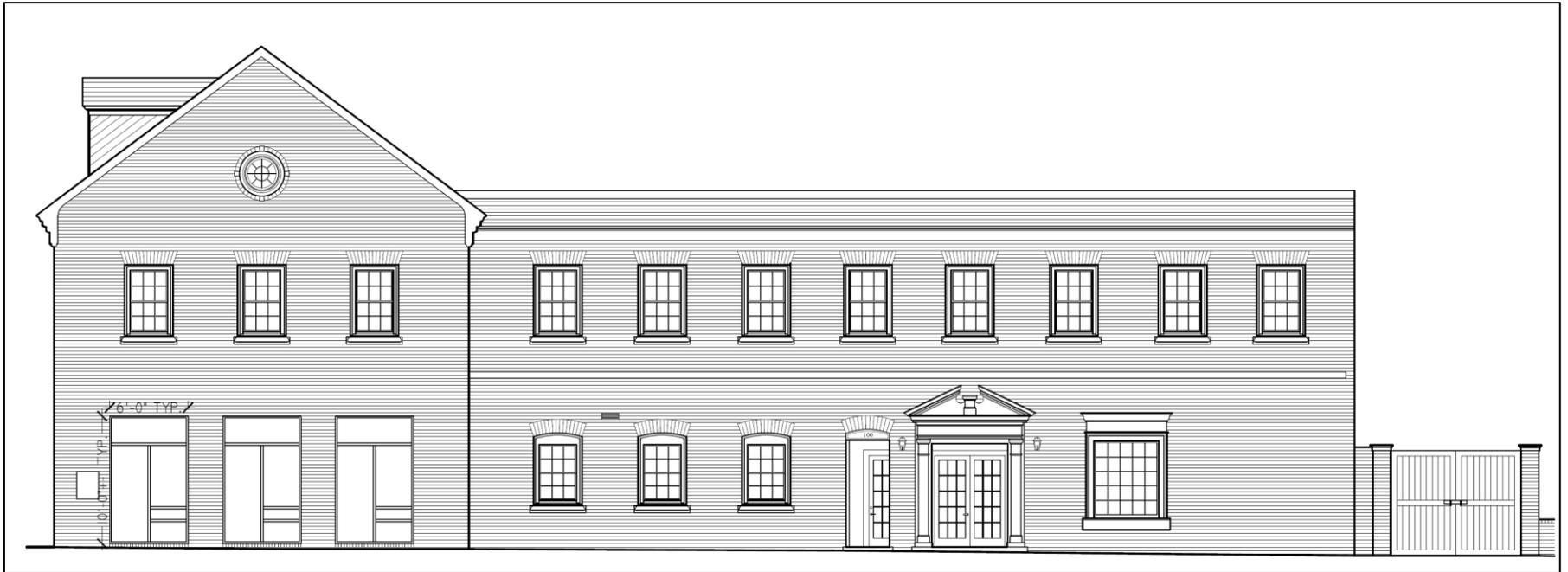


Figure 10: Proposed elevation of S Royal Street façade.