

EXHIBIT NO

1

10

2-21-09

Docket Item #  
BAR CASE # 2008-0225

City Council  
February 21, 2009

**ISSUE:** Appeal of a decision of the Board of Architectural Review, Old and Historic District, approving a Certificate of Appropriateness for signage

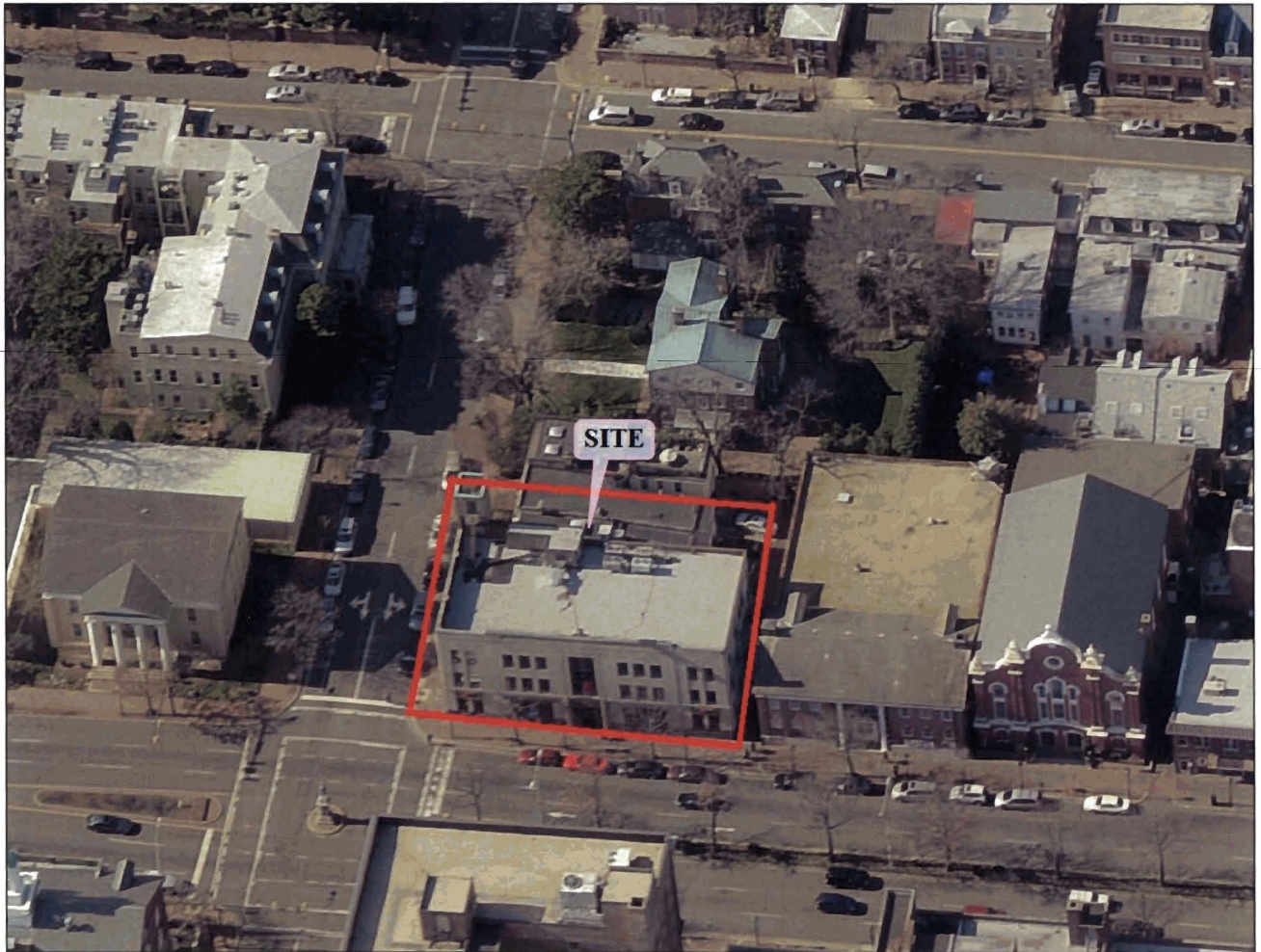
**APPLICANT:** TD Bank, NA

**APPELLANT:** Lori Murphy for TD Bank, NA

**LOCATION:** 119 South Washington Street

**ZONE:** CD/Commercial

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## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### **Issue:**

- The building tenant, TD Bank, has appealed the BAR decision of December 3, 2008 for signage at TD Bank. The applicant is appealing the amount of sign illumination approved by the BAR.
- The decision before the Council is whether the amount of signage and related illumination is appropriate for this historic commercial building fronting the George Washington Memorial Parkway in the Old and Historic Alexandria District.
- The TD Bank signage application was heard before the Board of Architectural Review on two occasions, October 15, 2008 (BAR CASE #2008-0170) and December 3, 2008 (BAR Case #2008-0225).
- At the October 15, 2008, BAR hearing the Board voted to approve the application for signage but amended the application to reduce the amount of illumination proposed by the applicant.
- After the decision at the October BAR hearing, TD Bank returned to the Board in December because they did not feel that the conditions of approval described in the meeting minutes accurately reflected the Board's action as it related to the amount of illumination of the three TD Bank signs. TD Bank asserted that the BAR had approved the illumination of all elements on the sign – the TD logo, and the halo lighting of the word "BANK" and a green racing stripe element.
- The Board's approved minutes of their October 15, 2008 meeting reflected the approved conditions for illumination, which were that the only illumination permitted for the proposed signage be the letters "TD" on the monogram box, with the green portion being opaque, and the "Bank" lettering halo-lit.
- TD Bank returned to the Board for a request for alterations to a previously approved Certificate of Appropriateness, seeking approval for additional illumination. On December 3, 2008, the BAR approved the three signs but further reduced the amount of illumination requested by the applicant, thereby making the October approval null and void.
- The decision before the Council is whether the Board's December 3, 2008 approval should be upheld.

**Recommendation:** Council should support the December 3, 2008 decision of the BAR which limited the amount of illumination on the three box signs to "...the letters "TD" on the internally illuminated monogram box and the keyline around the "TD", with the green portion around the letters being opaque." In addition, the BAR conditioned their approval on the word "BANK" and the green racing stripe having no illumination. The Board also required that the illumination be turned off from 10:00pm until dusk the next day.

## II. BACKGROUND

The Old and Historic Board of Architectural Review (BAR) approved a Certificate of Appropriateness for signage at TD Bank, 119 South Washington Street at two separate hearings, October 15, 2008 and December 3, 2008.

The conditions approved by the Old and Historic Alexandria Board of Architectural Review at the October 15, 2008 hearing are as follows:

1. That the only illumination permitted for the proposed signage be the letters "TD" on the monogram box, with the green portion being opaque, and the "Bank" lettering halo-lit;
2. That the aluminum box on which the new TD Bank signage is mounted is changed to a matte brass plaque similar to the sign backing previously approved and currently installed for Commerce Bank;
3. That the new sign backing have a beveled edge similar to the existing Commerce Bank sign;
4. That the applicant return to the Board with any proposed signage for the Prince Street doors;
5. That the new signs are no larger than the existing Commerce Bank signs; and,
6. That the illumination shall be equipped with a timer that will automatically shut off the illumination from 10:00pm to dusk the next day.

The vote was 6-0.

Subsequent to the October BAR hearing the applicant submitted a sign permit for the three box signs at TD Bank, which Staff determined to be inconsistent with the conditions approved by the BAR. The applicant subsequently returned to the BAR with a new application on December 15, 2008 and the Board further reduced the amount of signage illumination with the following conditions:

1. That the only illumination permitted for the proposed signage be the letters "TD" on the monogram box and the keyline, with the green portion being opaque;
2. That the back lit illumination on the green racing stripe and the halo-lighting for the "Bank" portion are deleted;
3. That the illumination shall be equipped with a timer that will automatically shut off the illumination from 10:00pm to dusk the next day;
4. That the opaque film on the Prince Street doors and large decorative transom be deleted.

The vote was 4-2 (Mr. Keleher and Dr. Fitzgerald voted in opposition).

### III. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The purview of the BAR and the Council on appeal for the Certificate of Appropriateness is the following:

Section 10-105(A)(1) states that “The Old and Historic Alexandria District board of architectural review or the city council on appeal shall limit its review of the proposed construction, reconstruction, alteration, or restoration of a building or structure to the building’s or structure’s exterior architectural features specified in section 10-105(A)(2)(a) through (2)(d) below which are subject to view from a public street, way, place, pathway, easement or waterway and to the factors specified in sections 10-105(A)(2)(e) through (2)(j) below; shall review such features and factors for the purpose of determining the compatibility of the proposed construction, reconstruction, alteration or restoration with the existing building or structure itself, if any, and with the Old and Historic District area surroundings and, when appropriate, with the memorial character of the George Washington Memorial Parkway, including the Washington Street portion, thereof, if the building or structure faces such highway, and may make such requirements for, and conditions of, approval as are necessary or desirable to prevent any construction, reconstruction, alteration or restoration incongruous to such existing building or structure, area surroundings or memorial character, as the case may be.”

The Ordinance under Section 10-105(A)(2) states the Standards used by the Board in rendering a decision: “Subject to the provisions of section 10-105(A)(1) above, the Old and Historic Alexandria board of architectural review or the city council on appeal shall consider the following features and factors in passing upon the appropriateness of the proposed construction, reconstruction, alteration or restoration of building or structures.”

The following standards are the most relevant to the decision made by the Board in approving the Certificate of Appropriateness for the TD Bank signs, as amended:

- (b) Architectural details, including, but not limited to, original materials and methods of construction, the pattern, design, and style of fenestration, ornamentation, lighting, signage, and like decorative or functional fixtures of buildings or structures; the degree to which the distinguishing original qualities or character of a building, structure or site (including historical materials) are retained.
- (d) Texture, material, and color, and the extent to which any new architectural features are historically appropriate to the existing structure and adjacent existing structures.
- (e) The relation of the features in this sections 10-105(A)(2)(a) through (d) to similar features of the preexisting building or structure, if any, and to buildings and structures in the immediate surroundings.
- (f) The extent to which the building of structures would be harmonious with or incongruous to the old and historic aspect of the George Washington Parkway;

- (h) The extent to which the building or structure will preserve the memorial character of the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

During both the October and December BAR meetings, the Board was particularly concerned that the signs not adversely impact the historic building and setting, especially as it fronts the George Washington Memorial Parkway. The *Design Guidelines* specifically state that “The Board is particularly concerned with the maintenance and memorial character of the George Washington Memorial Parkway which passes through Alexandria as Washington Street. Therefore, requests for signage on Washington Street must be compatible with the memorial character of the parkway.” The *Guidelines* also strongly discourage internally illuminated signs. As such, when the case was first before the Board in October, Staff recommended that the signs have no internal or halo illumination.

An informal survey of the businesses along Washington Street reveals that there are very few internally illuminated signs. The vast majority of the signs are hanging signs, window signs and individual letter pin-mounted signs. Many of the signs are either not illuminated or are illuminated by exterior building lighting. The exceptions are Ross, the gas stations with their internally illuminated box signs advertising the business and the gas prices, and two banks. Chevy Chase Bank at 500 South Washington Street has low lit internally illuminated letters and the Bank of America at 600 North Washington Street has an internally illuminated monument sign. However, unlike TD Bank, these banks are not located in historic buildings.

The previous bank tenant at 119 South Washington Street, Commerce Bank, received BAR approval in 2005 for the illumination of the “C” logo on their three signs, provided that the illumination was turned off at 10:00 pm until dusk the next day (BAR Case #2004-0261, March 16, 2005).

Although the Board did not agree with Staff’s initial recommendation of no internal or halo illumination, the amount of illumination ultimately approved by the Board was significantly less than what TD Bank initially proposed.

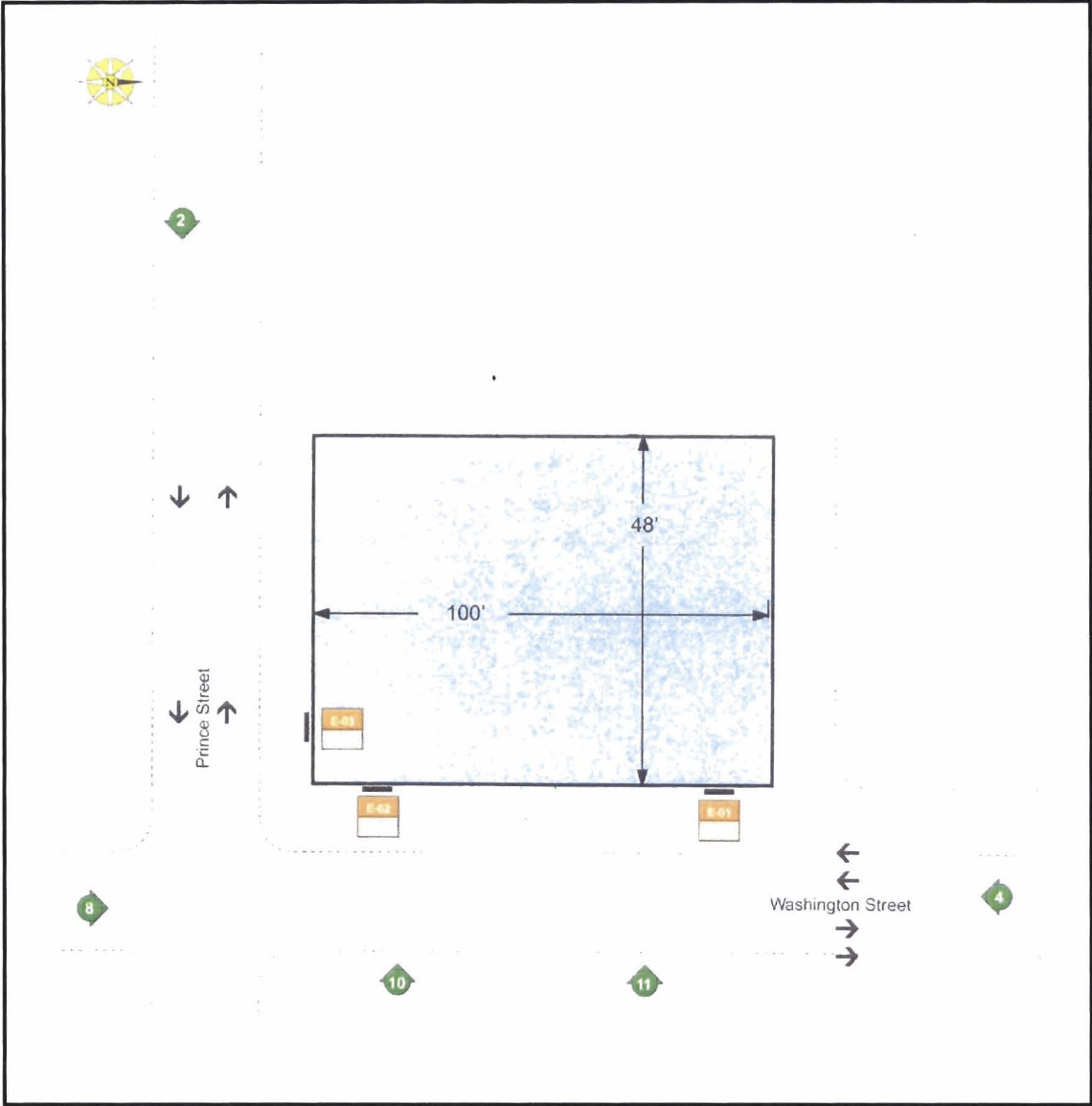
#### **IV. RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that Council support the December 3, 2008 decision of the BAR.

Attachment 1: BAR Staff Report, October 15, 2008

Attachment 2: BAR Staff Report, December 3, 2008

**STAFF:** Faroll Hamer, Director, Department of Planning and Zoning  
Stephen Milone, Division Chief, Zoning and Land Use Services  
Lee Webb, Principal Planner, Boards of Architectural Review  
Stephanie Sample, Planner III, Boards of Architectural Review



Site Plan as submitted for the 12/3/08 OHAD BAR Hearing





Washington Street Elevation as submitted for the 12/3/08 OHAD BAR Hearing

**TD Bank**

Alexandria / South Washington VA-ALEX01  
119 South Washington Street, Alexandria, VA 22314

ORIGINAL PHOTOGRAPH

COMPOSITE PHOTOGRAPH with PROPOSED SIGNAGE

**E01, E02 Front Elevation**

**Existing Signage:**  
Internally Illuminated Letters  
2'-10" tall 8'-0" wide 4 1/2" deep  
Square Footage = 22.67 sq ft

**Existing Fascia:**  
Material: Stone  
Condition: Clean and in good repair  
SW Fascia Color: 7050

**Fascia Restoration:**  
Level of Restoration TBD by Actual Site Conditions

FRONT VIEW  
Scale: 3/4" = 1'-0"

T-CL-BG-W/ T-CL-2'6" QTY. REQ'D.: TWO (2)  
FACE LIT: TDP-W/ HARD LIT "BANK & FACE STOPS"

SECTION VIEW  
Scale: 3/4" = 1'-0"

**NOTE:**  
SHIELD BACKGROUND TO BE OPAQUE LT. GREEN

**NOTE:**  
A TIMER WILL AUTOMATICALLY SHUT OFF THE INTERNAL ILLUMINATION OF THE SIGN FROM 10:00 PM TO DUSK THE NEXT DAY.

**EXTRA SCOPE OF WORK**

**Permitting Information**

Permitting pertaining to this sign

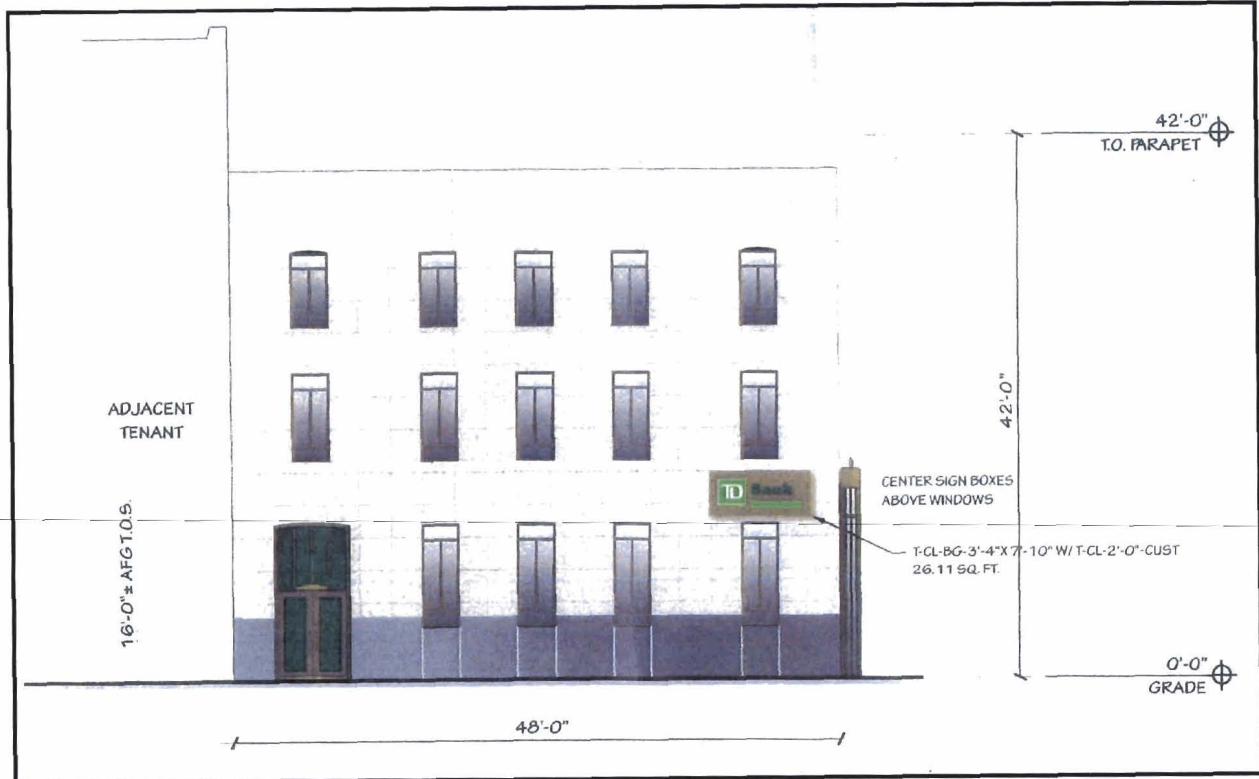
All signs shall not exceed 1 SF per LF of building facade

Max. Square Footage for sign sq ft

**TRIANGLE SIGN & SERVICE**

Existing and Proposed Washington Street Signage as submitted for the 12/3/08 OHAD BAR Hearing





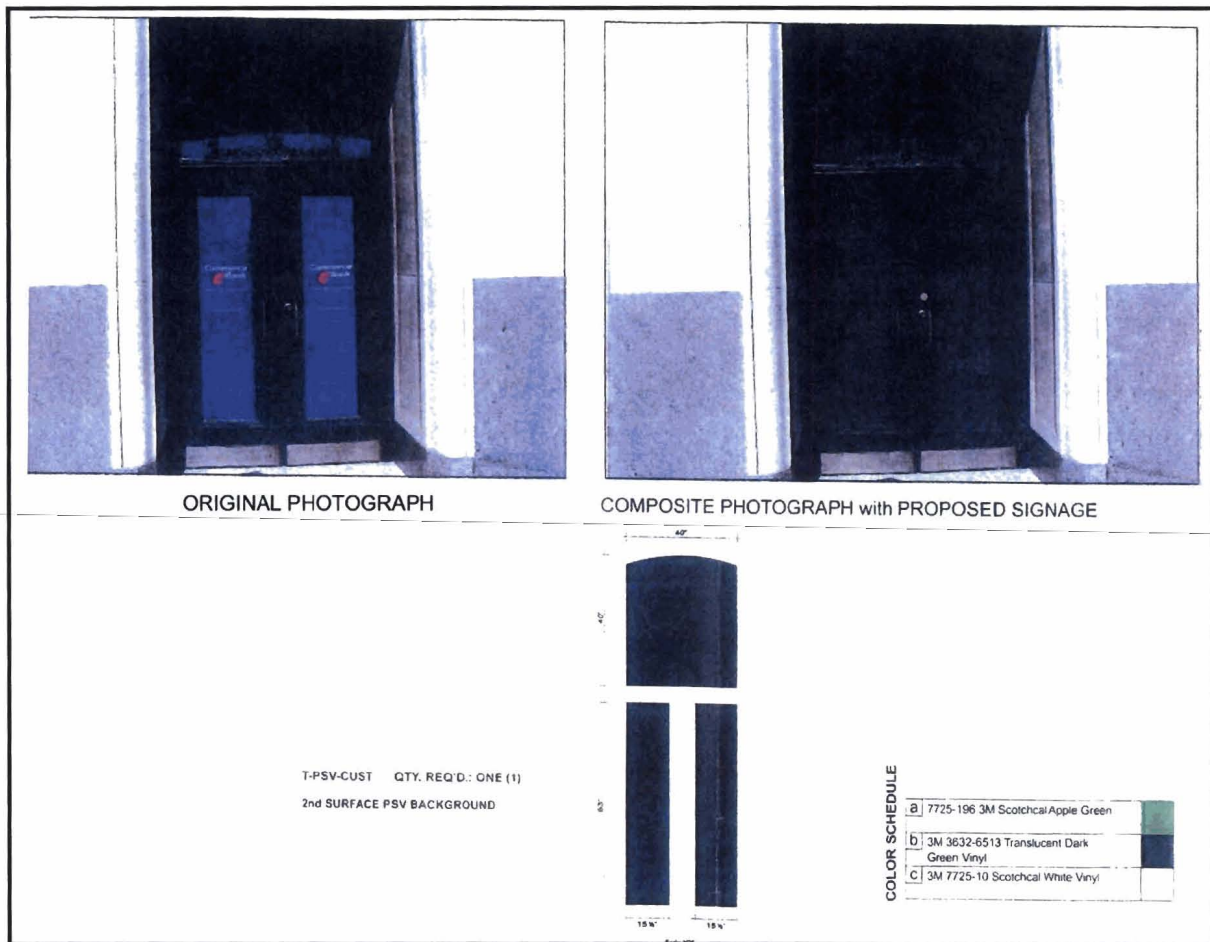
Proposed Prince Street Elevation as submitted for the 12/3/08 OHAD BAR Hearing



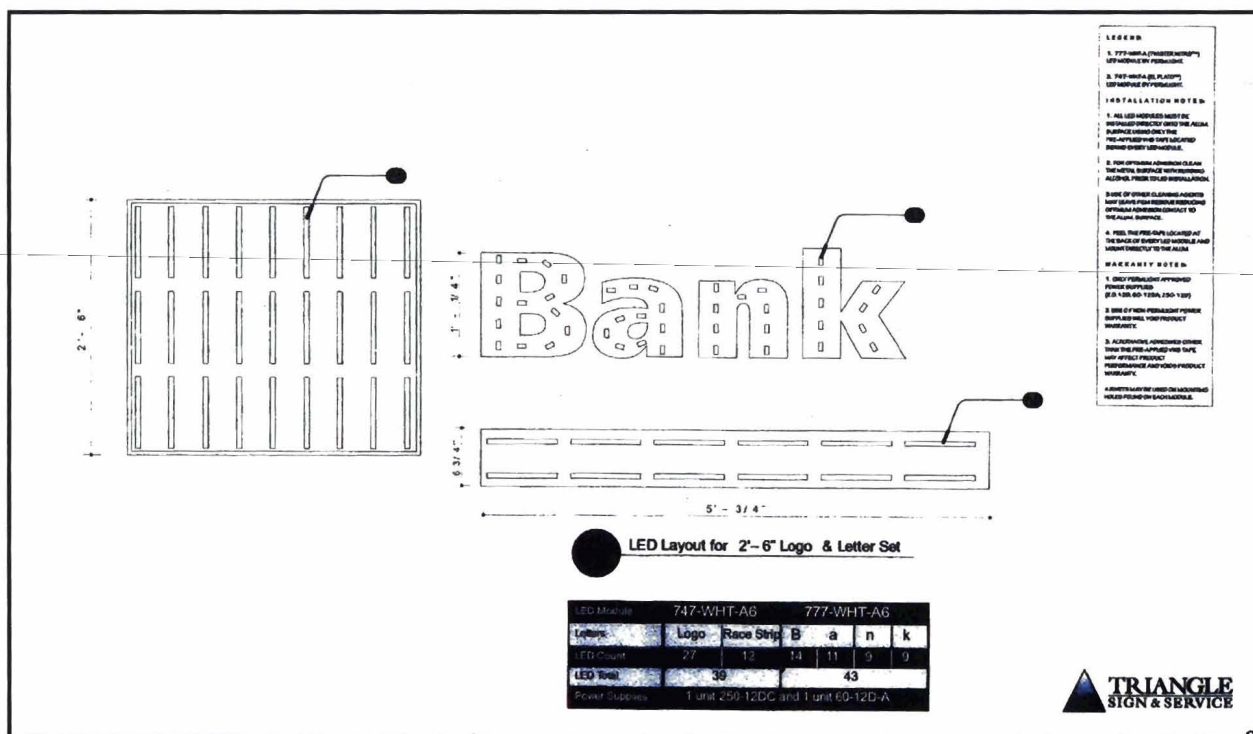
Existing and Proposed Prince Street Signage as submitted for the 12/3/08 OHAD BAR Hearing



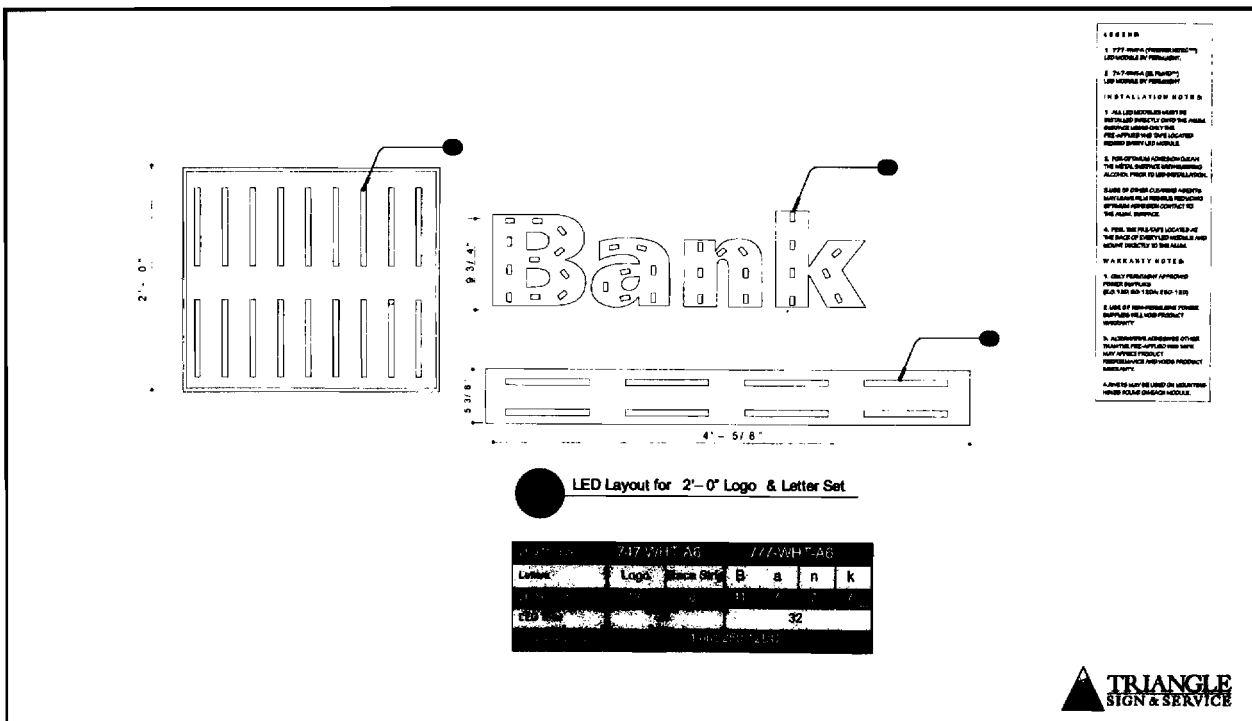
Photo of Existing TD Bank Sign as submitted for the 12/3/08 OHAD BAR Hearing



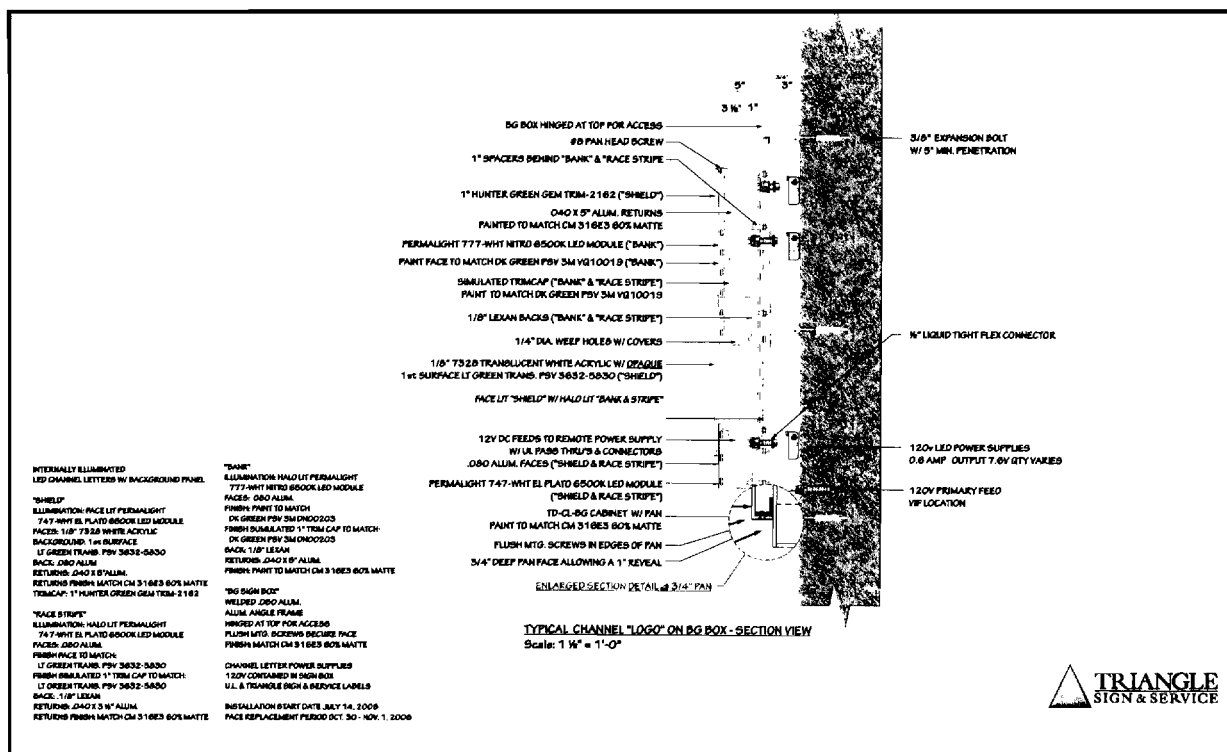
Existing and Proposed Prince Street Door/Transom as submitted for the 12/3/08 OHAD BAR Hearing



LED Layout for Washington Street Signs as submitted for the 12/3/08 OHAD BAR Hearing



**LED Layout Prince Street Sign as submitted for the 12/3/08 OHAD BAR Hearing**



Section of Sign as submitted for the 12/3/08 OHAD BAR Hearing

BAR Meeting  
October 15, 2008

**ISSUE:** Signage  
**APPLICANT:** TD Bank, NA  
**LOCATION:** 119 South Washington Street  
**ZONE:** CD/Commercial

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**BOARD ACTION OCTOBER 15, 2008: Approved as amended, 6-0.**

On a motion by Mr. Neale, seconded by Ms. Neihardt, the Board voted to approve the application as amended with the following conditions:

1. That the only illumination permitted for the proposed signage be the letters "TD" on the monogram box, with the green portion being opaque, and the "Bank" lettering halo-lit;
2. That the aluminum box on which the new TD Bank signage is mounted is changed to a matte brass plaque similar to the sign backing previously approved and currently installed for Commerce Bank;
3. That the new sign backing have a beveled edge similar to the existing Commerce Bank sign;
4. That the applicant return to the Board with any proposed signage for the Prince Street doors;
5. That the new signs are no larger than the existing Commerce Bank signs; and
6. That the illumination shall be equipped with a timer that will automatically shut off the illumination from 10:00pm to dusk the next day.

The vote was 6-0.

**REASON:** The Board generally agreed with the Staff analysis but found that some illumination was acceptable.

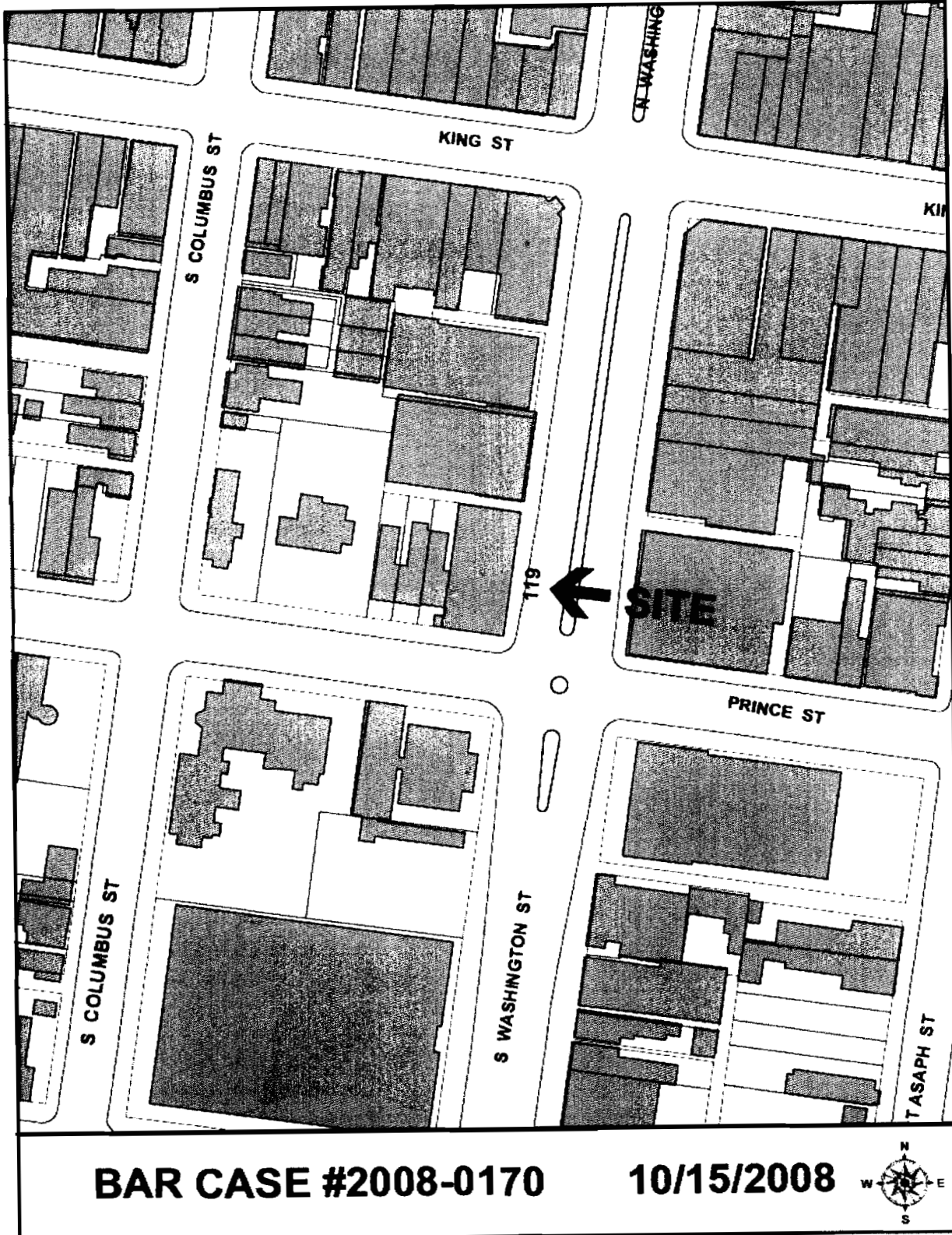
**SPEAKER:** Laurie Murphy, representing the applicant, spoke in support.  
John Hinan, representing Historic Alexandria Foundation, spoke of the Staff recommendations.  
Gary Nethan, representing the applicant, spoke in support.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends approval of the application with the following

conditions:

7. That the proposed signs not be illuminated;
8. That the aluminum box on which the new TD Bank signage is mounted is changed to a matte brass plaque similar to the sign backing previously approved and currently installed for Commerce Bank;
9. That the new sign backing have a beveled edge similar to the existing Commerce Bank sign;
10. That the applicant return to the Board with any proposed signage for the Prince Street doors; and
11. That the new signs are no larger than the existing Commerce Bank signs.





BAR CASE #2008-0170

10/15/2008



**I. ISSUE:**

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the installation of three signs for TD Bank at 119 South Washington Street. The existing tenant, Commerce Bank, has been purchased by TD Bank.

The applicant proposes to replace the existing Commerce Bank signs with new TD BANK signs measuring 3'6" by 10'2". The existing matte brass background on which the individual sign components are mounted will be replaced with an aluminum box painted a brass color. The TD portion of the sign will be a box sign made of aluminum with an acrylic face. The green and white sign will be internally illuminated. The dark green individual letters which make up the BANK portion of the sign will be constructed of aluminum and will be halo lit. The green racing strip below the word BANK will also be an internally illuminated box sign.

**II. HISTORY:**

The three story masonry building at the northwest corner of the prominent Prince and South Washington Street intersection was built in 1930 for the Virginia Public Service Company. It is Alexandria's grandest Art Deco office building, exhibiting many characteristics of the style such as the contrast between smooth planar expanses with areas of concentrated ornamentation. The Prince and Washington Street facades have a polished granite base with limestone above. The windows are steel. Ornamentation includes a carved stone frieze panel, an ornate metal and glass entrance on Washington Street and metal panels with relief and filigree designs. The main entrance is on Washington Street and is given special emphasis through its concentration of ornamentation and vertical orientation, which contrasts with the overall horizontal form of the building. The ornamentation of the central bay begins with the elaborate door surround with half round glass and metal lighted columns and terminates with the rooftop flagpole. Large metal framed plate glass show windows flank the prominent Washington Street entrance.

The building was begun in May 1929 and completed in September 1930. It was greeted with both praise for its modernity and criticism for its brash non-traditional design. In addition to the Virginia Public Service Company, it housed offices for Seaboard Public Service Company and for the Utility Securities Company. The Virginia Public Service Company was succeeded by the Virginia Electric Power Company, which retained ownership of the building until 1950. For several decades after, it housed a variety of federal government offices. In 1988, the building underwent extensive interior renovations and the first and second floors were transformed into retail space. In 1988 and 1989, the Board approved signage and awnings for Pier 1 Imports (BAR Case #1999-0078, June 27, 1988 and April 5, 1989). The exterior of the building has a high level of integrity. With the exception of the elevator tower at the back, it appears largely unaltered from the original elevation drawings. The two large show windows on either side of the front entrance appear to have been replaced with modern metal windows in the same size nearly the same configuration as the original windows.

Frank D. Chase (1877-1937), a Chicago-based architect, designed the building. Chase founded

Frank D. Chase & Company in 1913 and was known for his design of factory and administrative building for industrial firms. Most of his buildings were located in the Chicago area. Interestingly, at one time Mr. Chase was president of the Western Electric Company. This may explain why he was chosen by the Virginia Public Service Company to design their flagship building in Alexandria. [*Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)* (Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, Inc. 1970; facsimile of 1956 edition), p. 119; Helen P. Ross, "The Last Word in Modern Office Buildings: The Virginia Public Service Building in Alexandria, Virginia," George Washington University, unpublished mss., Board of Architectural Review Staff files; Planning and Zoning Staff, Alexandria Virginia, "Twentieth Century Architectural Resources in the National Historic Landmark, Alexandria Historic District, Alexandria, Virginia," Preliminary Draft, January 30, 1997].

In 1988 and 1989, the Board approved signage and awnings for Pier 1 Imports (BAR Case #99-78, 6/27/1988 and 4/5/1989). In 1988, in anticipation of the use of the ground floor of the building by Pier 1 Imports, a request was made to enlarge the ground floor corner windows on Washington Street by combining the two paired windows into single large display windows (BAR Case #88-78, 6/1/1988). The request was opposed by Staff and the Art Deco Society of Washington and denied by the Board.

More recently, in 2004, the Board approved the current signage as well as modifications to the front entryway (BAR Case #2004-0261). The BAR heard the case on four separate occasions prior to rendering their final decision on March 17, 2004. The Board's final action is as follows:

1. Approval of the internal illumination of the red "C" in the previously approved signage;
2. The internally-illuminated "C" shall be equipped with a timer that will automatically shut off the internal illumination of the "C" from 10:00 p.m. to dusk the next day;
3. Any proposed expansion to the permitted hours for internal illumination will require a new application to the Old and Historic District Board of Architectural Review;
4. The signage is to be attached through the joints of the mortar;
5. The entry way is to be professionally conserved; and,
6. The center glass panels at the entry are to be clear glass with frosted squiggles as submitted.

### **III: ANALYSIS:**

The proposed wall sign complies with zoning ordinance requirements.

Staff has a number of concerns regarding the proposed signage, namely the illumination of the sign, the size of the signs and the aluminum box on which the individual sign components will be mounted.

Staff also notes that the *Design Guidelines* recommend that, in general, only one sign per business is appropriate (Signs - page 3). In this case, however, Staff believes the strong symmetrical nature and the length of the Washington Street facade (over 94 feet long) calls for two equal sized signs on

either side of the center axis. The fact that the building is located on a corner makes the additional signage on Prince Street acceptable.

*Illumination:*

Staff finds the proposed illumination – both through internal illumination and halo lighting – to be inappropriate for this important historic building, especially given its location along the George Washington Memorial Parkway. The *Design Guidelines* specifically state that “The Board is particularly concerned with the maintenance and memorial character of the George Washington Memorial Parkway which passes through Alexandria as Washington Street. Therefore, requests for signage on Washington Street must be compatible with the memorial nature of the parkway.” In addition, the *Guidelines* specifically discourage the use of internally illuminated signs. Staff recommends that the proposed lighting of the TD BANK sign be deleted. While Staff would prefer to see the signs not illuminated in any way, Staff could support a more subtle form of lighting such as gooseneck lights mounted above the signs.

*Size:*

The application materials indicate that the proposed signs will be the same size as the existing signs. However, the measurements provided are larger than the existing signs. Staff believes that the proposed signs should be no larger than the existing signs, which are 9.5’ in length along Washington Street and 7.5’ in length on the Prince Street elevation (the height of the existing and proposed signs is the same).

*Sign backing:*

When the existing Commerce Bank signs were approved in 2005, Staff supported the applicant’s proposal to use a matte brass plaque as a backer for the sign components because it minimized the number of penetrations into the limestone facade. In addition, the matte brass plaque helped to relate the otherwise modern looking signage to the Art Deco style building. Staff does not believe that the proposed aluminum box is the most appropriate material for the new signs and would prefer to see the applicant use a backing similar to the one installed for the Commerce Bank signs, including a beveled edge.

*Prince Street door:*

The submitted drawings show that the Prince Street door will have clear glass providing views into the bank. What currently exists is a completely opaqued door with a small area of signage identifying Commerce Bank. Staff can only assume based on the drawings that the existing signage and opaque film will be removed. The applicant should be aware that should new signage be proposed for this location it will need to be reviewed and approved by the Board.

**IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. That the proposed signs not be illuminated;
2. That the aluminum box on which the new TD Bank signage is mounted is changed to a matte brass plaque similar to the sign backing previously approved and currently installed for Commerce Bank;
3. That the new sign backing have a beveled edge similar to the existing Commerce Bank sign;
4. That the applicant return to the Board with any proposed signage for the Prince Street doors; and
5. That the new signs are no larger than the existing Commerce Bank signs.

**V. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS**

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

Code Enforcement:

F-1 The applicant shall obtain a sign permit for the proposed sign and/ or wall lettering.

C-2 Wall letters / signs must comply with USBC [H103-H111] Please indicate the method to be used for anchoring the letters to the wall.

C-3 Electrical plans shall accompany the permit application that fully details the signage as well as layouts and schematics of the electrical system.

Office of Historic Alexandria:

No comments received.

National Park Service:

No comments received.



VI. IMAGES

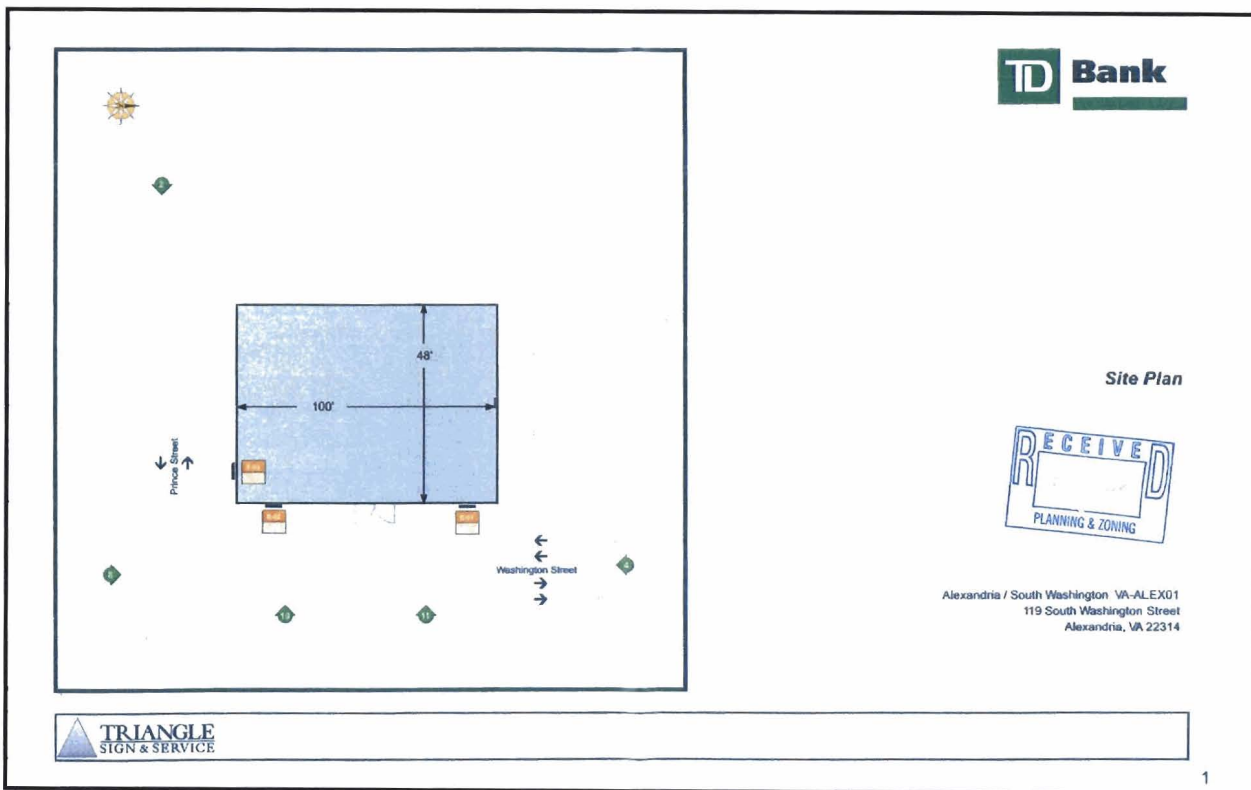


Figure 1: Sign locations



Figure 2: Existing and proposed Washington Street signs

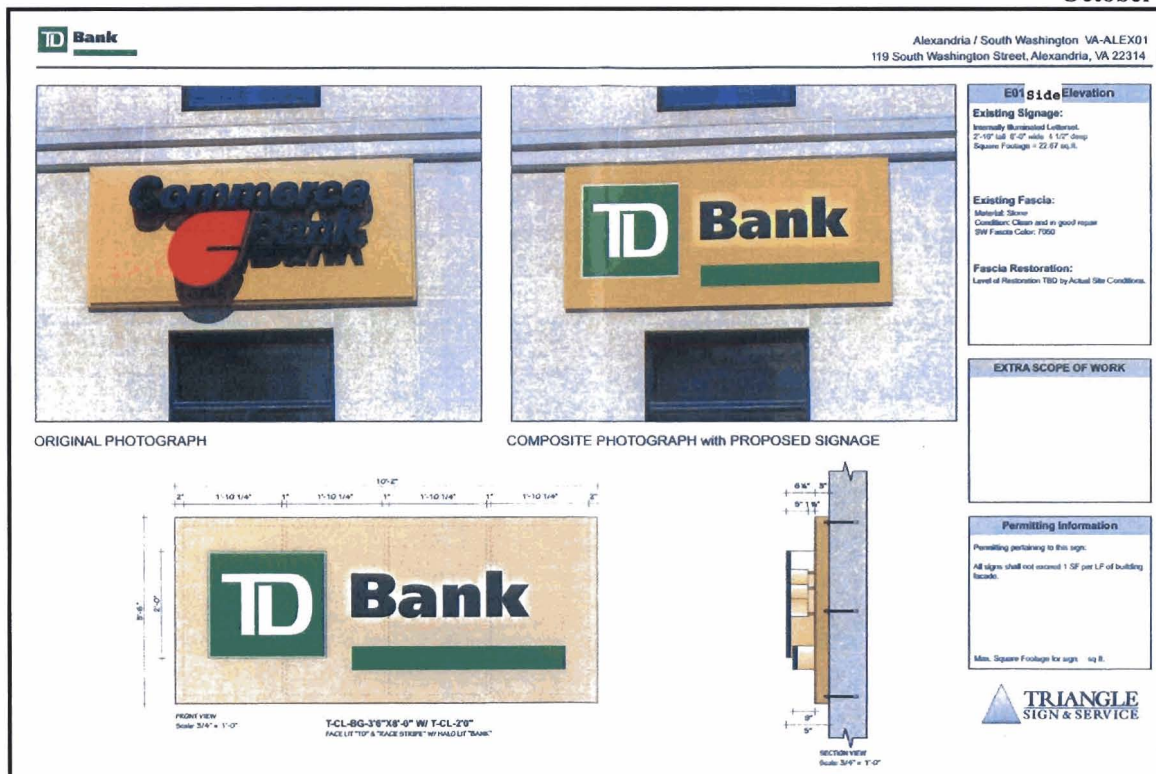


Figure 3: Existing and proposed Prince Street sign



Figure 4: Proposed Washington Street elevation

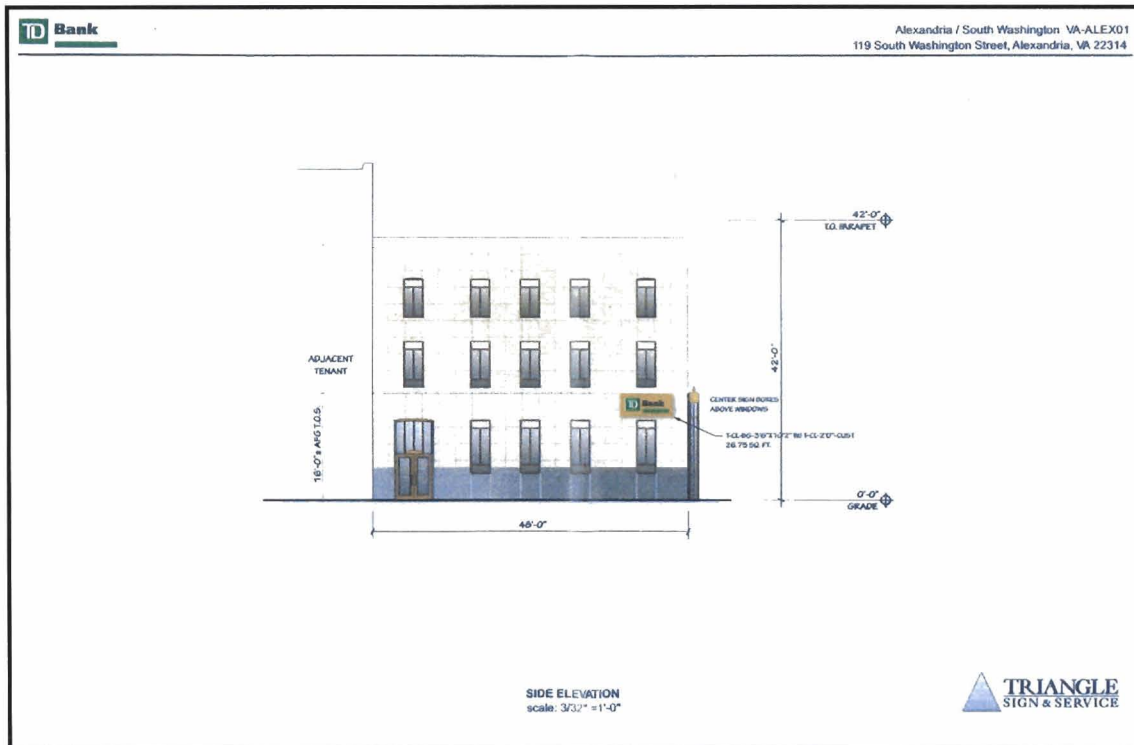


Figure 5: Proposed Prince Street elevation





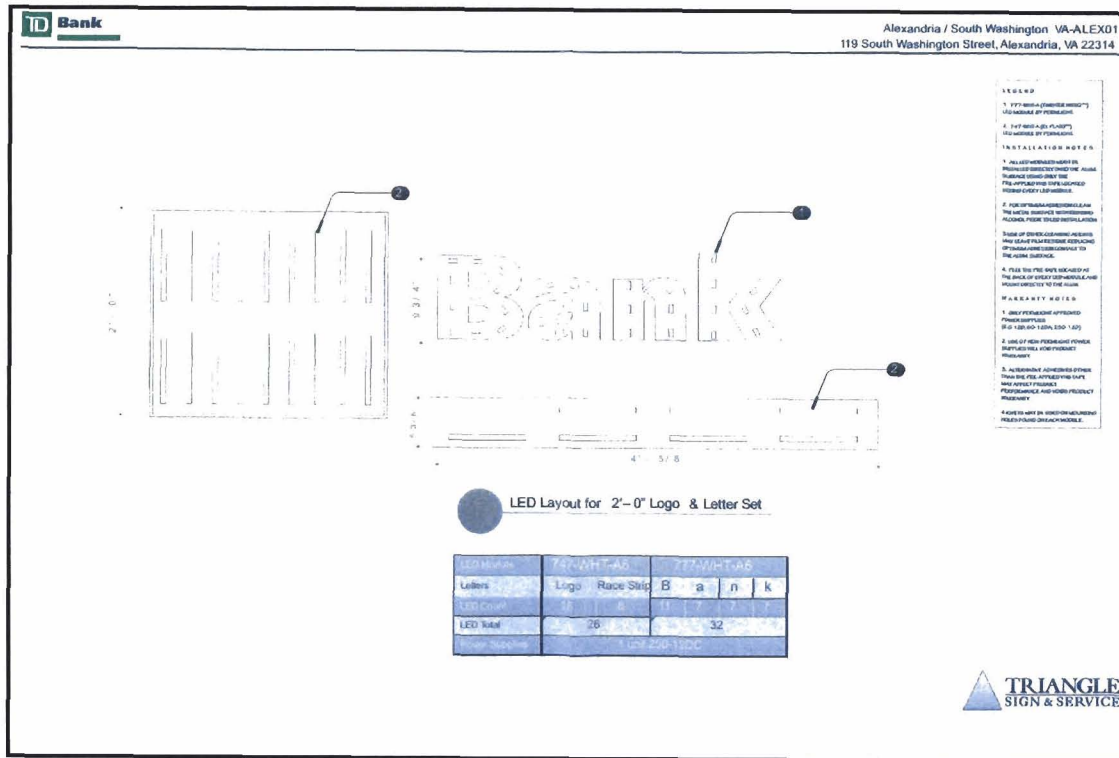


Figure 8: LED layout for Washington Street signs



BAR Meeting  
December 3, 2008

**ISSUE:** Alterations to previously approved plans (signs)

**APPLICANT:** TD Bank, NA

**LOCATION:** 119 South Washington Street

**ZONE:** CD/Commercial

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**BOARD ACTION DECEMBER 3, 2008: Approved as amended, 4-2.**

On a motion by Mr. Spencer, seconded by Ms. Neihardt, the Board voted to approve the application as amended with the following conditions:

1. That the only illumination permitted for the proposed signage be the letters "TD" on the monogram box and the keyline, with the green portion being opaque;
2. That the back lit illumination on the green racing stripe and the halo-lighting for the "Bank" portion are deleted;
3. That the illumination shall be equipped with a timer that will automatically shut off the illumination from 10:00pm to dusk the next day;
4. That the opaque film on the Prince Street doors and large decorative transom be deleted.

The vote was 4-2 (Mr. Keleher and Dr. Fitzgerald voted in opposition).

A motion to reconsider the item was made by Mr. Keleher and was seconded by Ms. Neihardt. The motion failed with Mr. Smeallie, Mr. Spencer, Mr. Neale and Dr. Fitzgerald voting in opposition.

**REASON:** The Board generally agreed with the Staff analysis and found that the only acceptable illumination were the letters "TD" and the keyline in the monogram box. The Board did not find the illumination of the racing stripe or the "Bank" portion of the sign to be appropriate.

**SPEAKER:** Laurie Murphy, representing the applicant, spoke in support of the application. John Hynan, representing Historic Alexandria Foundation, spoke in support of the staff recommendations.

Gary Nethan, representing the applicant, spoke in support of the application.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

5. That the only illumination permitted for the proposed signage be the letters "TD" on the monogram box, with the green portion being opaque, and the "Bank" lettering halo-lit;
6. That the white outline is deleted and the opaque green material be extended to the edge of the logo portion of the sign;
7. That the back lit illumination on the green racing stripe is deleted or that the racing stripe is deleted entirely;
8. That the illumination shall be equipped with a timer that will automatically shut off the illumination from 10:00pm to dusk the next day;
9. That the opaque film on the Prince Street doors and large decorative transom be deleted.

**I. ISSUE:**

The applicant, TD Bank, is requesting approval of modifications to previously approved plans for signage at 119 South Washington Street. The applicant appeared before the Board on October 15, 2008 and received the following approval:

On a motion by Mr. Neale, seconded by Ms. Neihardt, the Board voted to approve the application as amended with the following conditions:

1. That the only illumination permitted for the proposed signage be the letters "TD" on the monogram box, with the green portion being opaque, and the "Bank" lettering halo-lit;
2. That the aluminum box on which the new TD Bank signage is mounted is changed to a matte brass plaque similar to the sign backing previously approved and currently installed for Commerce Bank;
3. That the new sign backing have a beveled edge similar to the existing Commerce Bank sign;
4. That the applicant return to the Board with any proposed signage for the Prince Street doors;
5. That the new signs are no larger than the existing Commerce Bank signs; and
6. That the illumination shall be equipped with a timer that will automatically shut off the illumination from 10:00pm to dusk the next day.

The vote was 6-0.

The applicant asserts that the approved minutes do not reflect the action taken by the Board, specifically as they relate to the TD logo portion of the signs and the back lit green racing stripe (condition #1).

The applicant is also proposing to completely obscure the glass on the Prince Street double doors and large transom with a dark green vinyl film.

**II. HISTORY:**

The three story masonry building at the northwest corner of the prominent Prince and South Washington Street intersection was built in 1930 for the Virginia Public Service Company. It is Alexandria's grandest Art Deco office building, exhibiting many characteristics of the style such as the contrast between smooth planar expanses with areas of concentrated ornamentation. The Prince and Washington Street facades have a polished granite base with limestone above. The windows are steel. Ornamentation includes a carved stone frieze panel, an ornate metal and glass entrance on Washington Street and metal panels with relief and filigree designs. The main entrance is on Washington Street and is given special emphasis through its concentration of ornamentation and vertical orientation, which contrasts with the overall horizontal form of the building. The ornamentation of the central bay begins with the elaborate door surround with half round glass and metal lighted columns and terminates with the rooftop flagpole. Large metal

framed plate glass show windows flank the prominent Washington Street entrance.

The building was begun in May 1929 and completed in September 1930. It was greeted with both praise for its modernity and criticism for its brash non-traditional design. In addition to the Virginia Public Service Company, it housed offices for Seaboard Public Service Company and for the Utility Securities Company. The Virginia Public Service Company was succeeded by the Virginia Electric Power Company, which retained ownership of the building until 1950. For several decades after, it housed a variety of federal government offices. In 1988, the building underwent extensive interior renovations and the first and second floors were transformed into retail space. In 1988 and 1989, the Board approved signage and awnings for Pier 1 Imports (BAR Case #1999-0078, June 27, 1988 and April 5, 1989). The exterior of the building has a high level of integrity. With the exception of the elevator tower at the back, it appears largely unaltered from the original elevation drawings. The two large show windows on either side of the front entrance appear to have been replaced with modern metal windows in the same size nearly the same configuration as the original windows.

Frank D. Chase (1877-1937), a Chicago-based architect, designed the building. Chase founded Frank D. Chase & Company in 1913 and was known for his design of factory and administrative building for industrial firms. Most of his buildings were located in the Chicago area. Interestingly, at one time Mr. Chase was president of the Western Electric Company. This may explain why he was chosen by the Virginia Public Service Company to design their flagship building in Alexandria. [*Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)* (Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, Inc. 1970; facsimile of 1956 edition), p. 119; Helen P. Ross, "The Last Word in Modern Office Buildings: The Virginia Public Service Building in Alexandria, Virginia," George Washington University, unpublished mss., Board of Architectural Review Staff files; Planning and Zoning Staff, Alexandria Virginia, "Twentieth Century Architectural Resources in the National Historic Landmark, Alexandria Historic District, Alexandria, Virginia," Preliminary Draft, January 30, 1997].

In 1988 and 1989, the Board approved signage and awnings for Pier 1 Imports (BAR Case #99-78, 6/27/1988 and 4/5/1989). In 1988, in anticipation of the use of the ground floor of the building by Pier 1 Imports, a request was made to enlarge the ground floor corner windows on Washington Street by combining the two paired windows into single large display windows (BAR Case #88-78, 6/1/1988). The request was opposed by Staff and the Art Deco Society of Washington and denied by the Board.

In 2004, the Board approved signage for the previous bank tenant, Commerce Bank, as well as modifications to the front entryway (BAR Case #2004-0261). The BAR heard the case on four separate occasions prior to rendering a final decision on March 17, 2004. As noted above, the BAR approved three TD Bank signs on October 15, 2008 (BAR 2008-0170).

**III: ANALYSIS:**

The materials submitted with this application reflect the majority of the conditions set forth by the Board, including the beveled edge, the size of the signs and the automatic shut off for the illumination. It should be noted that the matte brass backing is actually an aluminum box with a matte brass finish, exactly like the sign for the previous tenant, Commerce Bank.

The *Design Guidelines* chapter on windows specifically states that: “Street level windows on commercial buildings should not be painted or otherwise made opaque.” Although commercial doors are not directly addressed, Staff believes the same recommendation should apply. As a result, Staff recommends that the proposed opaque film be eliminated.

The area of disagreement between Staff and the applicant relates to the illumination of the three boxed signs. While Staff continues to have reservations about the illumination of signs along the George Washington Memorial Parkway, in October the Board did approve some degree of illumination. While Staff was initially concerned that the illumination behind the green portion of the logo sign would still allow light to come through, the photograph of another TD Bank sign provided by the applicant demonstrates that the green portion is completely opaque. However, Staff believes that the white stripe around the TD logo is unnecessary and recommends that it be deleted and that the green color be continued to the edge. Staff would also argue that the Board never intended to recommend approval of the back lit green racing stripe and recommends that it either not be illuminated or that it be removed entirely.

Because the submitted materials already reflect a number of the Board’s previous conditions, only the relevant conditions are being brought forward, along with Staff’s new recommendations.

**IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. That the only illumination permitted for the proposed signage be the letters “TD” on the monogram box, with the green portion being opaque, and the “Bank” lettering halo-lit;
2. That the white outline is deleted and the opaque green material be extended to the edge of the logo portion of the sign;
3. That the back lit illumination on the green racing stripe is deleted or that the racing stripe is deleted entirely;
4. That the illumination shall be equipped with a timer that will automatically shut off the illumination from 10:00pm to dusk the next day;
5. That the opaque film on the Prince Street doors and large decorative transom be deleted.

**V. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS**

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

Code Enforcement:

- F-1 The applicant shall obtain a sign permit for the proposed sign and/ or wall lettering.
- C-2 Wall letters / signs must comply with USBC [H103-H111] Please indicate the method to be used for anchoring the letters to the wall.
- C-3 Electrical plans shall accompany the permit application that fully details the signage as well as layouts and schematics of the electrical system.

Office of Historic Alexandria:

No comments received.

National Park Service:

No comments received.



VI. IMAGES

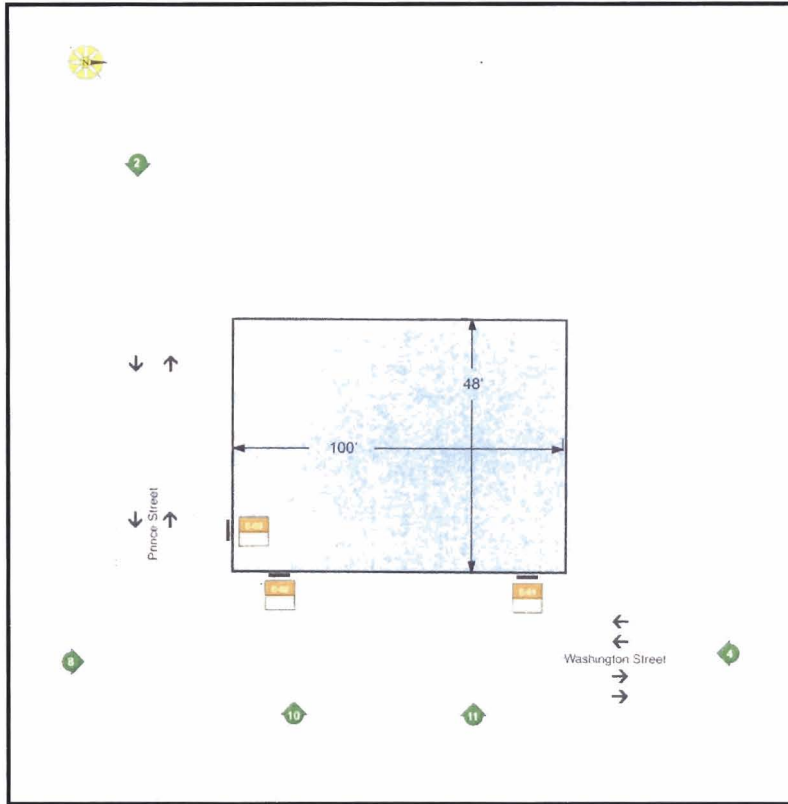


Figure 1: Site Plan



Figure 2: Washington Street Elevation



Figure 3: Existing and Proposed Washington Street Signage

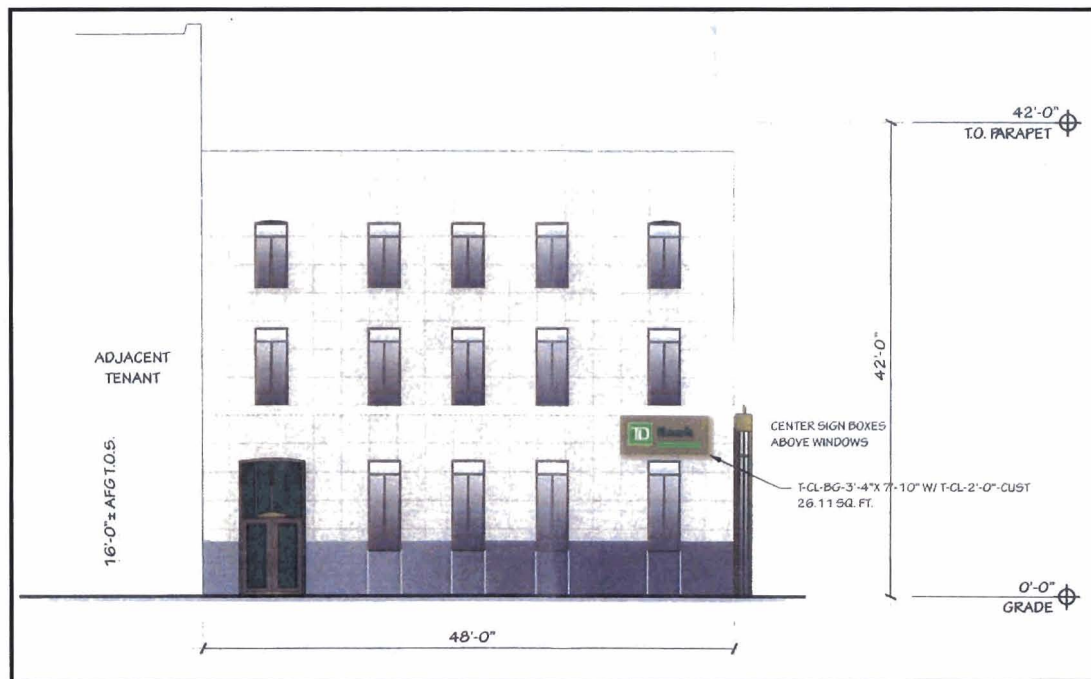


Figure 4: Prince Street Elevation

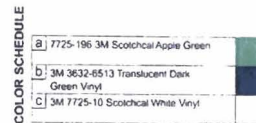


Figure 5: Existing and Proposed Prince Street Signage

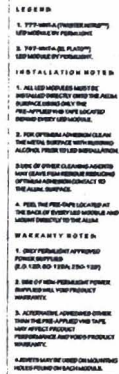


Figure 6: Photo of Existing TD Bank Sign

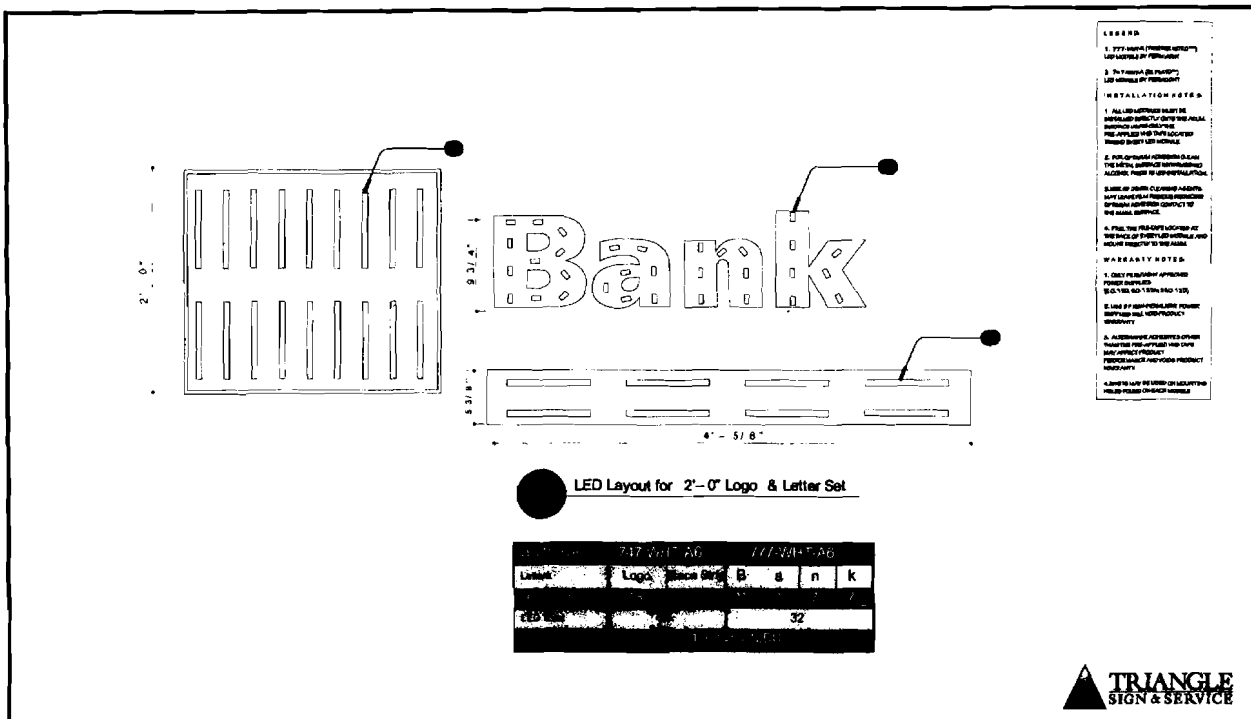




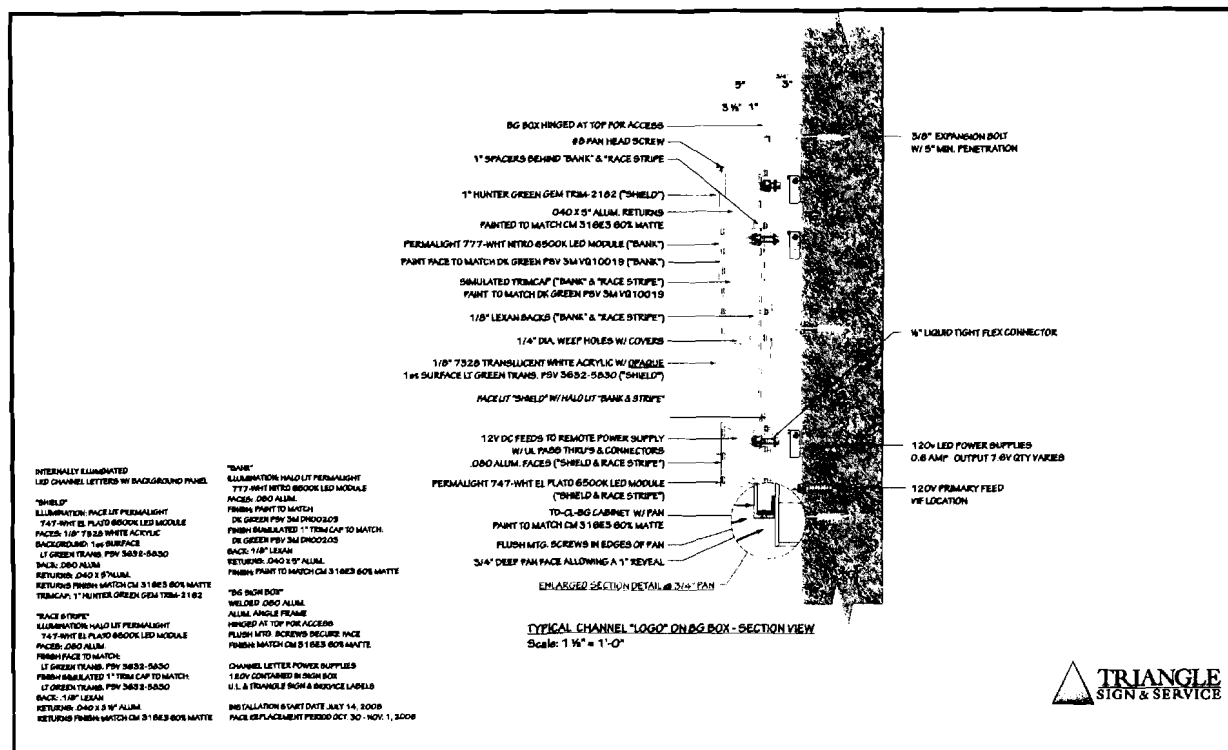
**Figure 7: Existing and Proposed Prince Street Door/Transom**



**Figure 8: LED Layout for Washington Street Signs**



**Figure 9: LED Layout Prince Street Sign**



**Figure 10: Section of Sign**