

Docket Item #14  
BAR Case #2003-0212

BAR Meeting  
September 17, 2003

**ISSUE:** Signs  
**APPLICANT:** Lawrence Vallieres  
**LOCATION:** 815 King Street  
**ZONE:** CD/Commercial

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STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends deferral of the application for restudy.

DISCUSSION:

Applicant s Description of the Undertaking:

After a short redecoration, Siam 815 will reopen trading as The Flying Fish Seafood Restaurant, an upscale American seafood & steak restaurant with a sushi bar and a small pub dining area downstairs.

Issue:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for signage for the Flying Fish Restaurant at 815 King Street. The name Flying Fish will be 6" high silver brushed aluminum letters mounted on top of the metal marquis on the left side of the restaurant. On the right side of the marquis, the applicant proposes installing 6" gold brushed aluminum letters reading One Flight Down.

In addition to the individual letter signs, the applicant proposes window lettering. The left side of the storefront will read Seafood, Steaks, Sushi (cozy dining in back) with a fish logo. The right side of the storefront will read One Flight Down, Sports, Spirits, Sushi, Karaoke Room with an arrow pointing downwards. Both window signs measure 2.4' x 2.5'.

History and Analysis:

815 King Street is a six story steel frame, limestone faced building constructed in 1941 and was originally named the Rupley Building. When it was completed, the *Alexandria Gazette* editorialized that the handsome new near-skyscraper was the largest of its kind in Virginia, north of Richmond.

The Board recently approved new storefronts for the building (BAR Case #2002-0083, 6/19/02). In 1999, the Board approved the signage for Siam 815 (BAR Case#99-0011, 2/17/99).

The proposed signs comply with zoning ordinance requirements.

The *Design Guidelines* state that Generally, only one sign per business is appropriate. While the Board has often approved more than one sign for a business, the clear presumption of the Guidelines is that having fewer signs is more appropriate than having more.

The *Design Guidelines* state that signs should be as simple as possible and avoid repetitious or undue verbiage. In the opinion of Staff, signs should identify the name and function of the business. Staff does not support the directional sign, One Flight Down. The proposed individual letter sign, simply advertises that the restaurant has an additional level. Staff also does not support the overly large window lettering with its list of menu items, and features. The Board has often approved menu boards for the exterior of restaurants, and in the opinion of Staff is where food items should be advertised.

Therefore, Staff recommends deferral of the application for restudy.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement

C-1 A construction permit is required for the proposed project.

Historic Alexandria

No comment.