

Docket Item #6
BAR CASE #2003-0243

BAR Meeting
November 5, 2003

ISSUE: Awnings and signage
APPLICANT: Jos. A. Bank Clothiers
LOCATION: 728 S. Alfred Street
ZONE: CL/Commercial

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application with the condition that the signs be anchored through the mortar joints rather than directly into the masonry units.

DISCUSSION:

Applicant s Description of the Undertaking:

Install two (2) awnings. Install one (1) set illuminated channel letters.

Issue:

The applicant requests approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the installation of two awnings, located above the shop windows to either side of the front entrance on Washington Street. The shed style awnings will reuse the existing frames which are 5' high, 15' long and 42" deep. Based on the drawings, the bottom of the awning will be located approximately 7.5' above grade. The awnings will be of green canvas fabric. Each will have Jos. A. Bank Clothiers printed in 1' high white letters on the front valance. Also on the front or Washington Street side will be a double sided wood hanging sign. The sign will be mounted on an existing triangular metal bracket located above the front door. The hanging sign will be 26" high and 32" wide with a black background and bronze lettering and border. The sign will read, Jos. A. Bank established 1905. On the south or Jefferson Street side of the building above the two westernmost windows, there will be a sign reading Jos. A. Bank in pin-mounted reverse channel letters. The letters will be 2' high and will be of white aluminum. None of the signs will be illuminated, either internally or by exterior fixtures.

Located at the corner of South Washington Street and Jefferson Street, 728 South Washington Street is highly visible on both the front (west) and south elevations. The face of the building is set back several feet from the sidewalk.

History and Analysis:

The two story brick Colonial Revival style building at 728 South Washington Street was constructed in 1961 at a cost of \$110,935 to house the Virginia Employment Office (Permit #7446, 6/1/1961 and Permit #19833, 9/12/1963). The Board approved the plans on May 10, 1961. In 1983, prior to the conversion of the first floor for a Talbots Store, the Board approved signs and alterations (1/5/1983 and 1/19/1983). In 1989, the Board approved plans for new shop windows and, in 1992, for a fence and gate at the rear of the property (August 1, 1989 and BAR Case #92-228, 2/3/1993). In 1997, the Board approved awnings, signs and alterations for Talbots (BAR Case #97-124, 6/18/1997). Talbots moved to 601 North Washington Street in 2002.

The proposed awning, signs, projecting sign and wall sign comply with the zoning regulations.

In the opinion of Staff, the proposed signage and awnings are appropriate. The Board generally discourages the installation of more than one sign per business (*Design Guidelines*, Signs - Page 3). However, given the largely vehicular traffic on South Washington Street and the corner location of the building, Staff finds the amount of signage, which is comparable to that approved for Talbots in 1997, to be acceptable. The design of the signage is appropriate for the mid-20th

century building. Staff notes that the *Design Guidelines* (Signs - Page 4) recommend that the signs be anchored through the mortar joints rather than the masonry units. The sign company has confirmed that the signs will be mounted in this manner.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

- C-1 Awnings must comply with all applicable requirements of USBC.. Retractable and fixed awnings must have a minimum 7 foot clearance form a sidewalk to the lowest part of the framework or any fixed portion of nay retractable awning is required. The bottom of the valance of canvas awnings must have a minimum clearance of 6'-9' above the sidewalk. Retractable awnings must be securely fastened to the building and can not extend closer than 12" in from the curb line.
- C-2 Fixed awnings must be designed and constructed to withstand wind or other lateral loads and live loads required by the USBC. Structural members must be protected to prevent deterioration.
- C-3 Construction permits are required for this project.

Office of Historic Alexandria:

No comment.