

Docket Item #12
BAR CASE #2003-0303

BAR Meeting
December 17, 2003

ISSUE: After-the-fact approval of signs and a new awning

APPLICANT: Ron Hamed

LOCATION: 121 South Henry Street

ZONE: CD/Commercial

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends:

1. Denial of the after-the-fact neon sign;
2. Denial of the after-the-fact window signs;
3. Deferral for restudy of the after-the-fact hanging sign; and,
4. Denial of the proposed awning.

DISCUSSION:

Applicant s Description of the Undertaking:

To apply for sign permit and awning over entrance.

Issue:

The applicant is requesting approval of an after-the-fact Certificate of Appropriateness for a hanging sign as well as window signs installed at the commercial building at 121 South Henry Street as well as a new awning.

Signs

The applicant requests approval of the following installed signs:

- " Wood (MD)) hanging sign on a metal bracket on the south side of the doorway. This sign Nails Image Professional Nails Care 684-6245" measures 2 ½ x 3' and is illuminated by a band of red light around the edge of the sign;
- " Neon Open sign in the southernmost window measuring 18" x 12";
- " Applied vinyl letter sign, Nails , in the window immediately to the south of the entry door; and,
- " Applied vinyl letter signs, Nails, Walk ins Welcome, in the window immediately to the north of the entry door.

Awning

A new bullnose awning on a metal frame is proposed to be installed over the entry door. The awning will of pink Sunbrella fabric and measures 3' in height x 4' in width and will have a white lettering, Nail Image.

History and Analysis:

121 South Henry Street is a two story, four bay wood frame building constructed prior to 1853. Originally constructed as a residence, it currently serves commercial purposes.

This application is before the Board as a result of a number of ticket issued for civil violations for the unapproved signs.

The projecting sign and awning sign comply with zoning ordinance requirements.

Signs

The *Design Guidelines* recommend that generally only one sign per retail business is appropriate. With a total of five different signs, the applicant clearly exceeds the general amount of signage

generally approved by the Board for any one business. In addition, the hanging sign contains the telephone number of the business which is generally discouraged by the *Design Guidelines*. Staff believes that the outlining of a hanging sign with illumination is inappropriate in the historic district. Further, a neon sign is installed in one of the windows which also does not meet the recommendations of the *Design Guidelines* which state that neon signs are only appropriate on buildings which post date 1926, the year neon was introduced into the United States. Based upon the recommendations for signs contained in the *Design Guidelines*, Staff recommends the following:

- " Denial of the neon sign as inappropriate to the historic architectural character of the building;
- " Denial of the windows signs as not meeting the recommendations as to sign limitations contained in the *Design Guidelines*;
- " Deferral for restudy of the hanging sign with a redesign that meets the recommendations for signs in the *Design Guidelines* so that the sign does not include the telephone and is not illuminated by the light string around the perimeter of the sign.

Awning

As stated in the *Design Guidelines*, bullnose awnings are only appropriate on late 20th century buildings. Further, it is the opinion of Staff that the bullnose awning is superfluous and will, in fact, obscure the hanging sign for the business from motorists driving south on South Henry Street. Therefore, Staff recommends denial of the proposed awning.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

- C-1 Projecting, hanging signs must comply with USBC [H103-H107, H112] for type of materials, maximum projection, vertical clearance below all parts of the sign, and additional loads.
- 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 A construction permit is required for the proposed project.

Historic Alexandria:

Is an awning necessary? Every space already has a sign.