

Docket Item #5  
BAR Case #2004-0021

BAR Meeting  
March 3, 2004

**ISSUE:** Entryway  
**APPLICANT:** City of Alexandria, General Services Division  
**LOCATION:** 301 King Street  
**ZONE:** CD/Commercial

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STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted.

DISCUSSION:

Applicant's Description of the Undertaking:

“Construction of brick planter on both sides of the newly modified ADA main entrance of City Hall on Market Square Plaza. To facilitate the automatic door switch and card reader installations.”

Issue:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations to the Market Square entrance to the City. Two new curvilinear brick planters will be installed on either side of the double entry door. These planters are approximately 3' in height, 2'4" in width and with an overall length of 6' and will be laid up in the same brick bonding pattern as found on this elevation of City Hall. There will be a planting area that is approximately one foot in width and will have a double nosed brick coping brick along the interior edges. These new flanking planters will conceal the doors controls for ADA accessibility into the building and will serve as railings for persons with mobility impairments.

History and Analysis:

301 King Street is Alexandria City Hall. This square has been the center of governmental functions since the founding of Alexandria in 1749. The current building was designed by well known German emigre architect Adolf Cluss and constructed in 1877. It replaced an earlier building that was destroyed by fire in 1871.

In his volume on Virginia architecture, part of the Society of Architectural Historians Buildings of the United States series, Professor Richard Guy Wilson of the University of Virginia makes the observation that the 1960s addition to the Alexandria City Hall at 301 King Street “vaguely recalls the Governor's Palace in Williamsburg”. This addition on the south side of the building, a product of the City's early urban renewal program, does have a wood balustrade on the fifth floor level as well as flanking brick chimneys and like the Governor's Palace has a balcony over a relatively simple central double door entry with transom above. It was designed by Robert A. Willgoos and Dwight G. Chase, 1960-1962.

Proposed entrance alterations comply with zoning ordinance requirements.

In the opinion of Staff, the design for the front entry alterations is appropriate. It uses the garden wall in front of the Governor's Palace at the Colonial Williamsburg Restoration as its point of reference, thereby signifying its relationship with the urban renewal make-over of the Market Square face of the City Hall. Thus, Staff recommends approval. However, Staff would caution that the planter area must be diligently policed so that it does not become a trash collector.

## CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

### Code Enforcement:

- C-1 Construction permits are required for the proposed project.
- C-2 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-3 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-4 Required exits shall be accessible for persons with disabilities.

### Historic Alexandria:

No comment.