

Docket Item #11
BAR CASE #2004-0020

BAR Meeting
March 17, 2004

ISSUE: Signs

APPLICANT: James Keilman

LOCATION: 330 North Washington Street

ZONE: CD/ Commercial Downtown

BOARD ACTION, FEBRUARY 18, 2004: This docket item was removed from the Proposed Consent Calendar by Mr. Keilman. On a motion by Mr. Smeallie, seconded by Mr. Keleher the Board deferred the application for restudy. The vote on the motion was 6-0.

REASON: The Board believed that clearer drawings depicting the proposed signs were needed and that the drawings should show exactly where the signs were proposed to be located. The Board believed that the signs should exhibit a more pedestrian orientation rather than be so high that they were only visible from an automobile. Mr. Keilman asked that the signs be illuminated.

SPEAKERS: James Keilman, representing Wachovia Bank, spoke in support

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends deferral of the application for restudy.

DISCUSSION:

Applicant's Description of the Undertaking:

"New exterior signage at 330 North Washington Street."

Issue:

The applicant requests approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the installation of two new hanging acrylic signs on metal brackets for Wachovia bank at 330 North Washington Street.

The signs proposed are:

1. Non illuminated Wachovia bank at the north side of the main entrance on North Washington Street; and
2. Non illuminated Wachovia bank at the east side of the entrance on Princess Street.

Two different options are proposed for the size of the signs. The preferred option is a sign measuring 4' x 4'. In the second option the sign is 3.5' x 3.5'.

History and Analysis:

330 North Washington is a three and a half story brick building constructed in a Colonial Revival design dating from 1961.

Last September, the Board approved a sign package to change this bank building from First Union to Wachovia. That sign package included signs in the logo and colors of Wachovia. At that time the Board denied approval of the freestanding signs on North Washington Street and on Princess Street; and, took no action on the ATMs and the surrounds because they were not in compliance with the current requirements of the Zoning Ordinance regarding the size requirements for ATMs (BAR Case #2003-0140, 9/3/03). Since that time the freestanding sign on North Washington Street and on Princess Street have been removed. Staff is currently researching the compliance of the ATMs. In 1993 the Board approved signage for the First Union Bank (BAR Case #93-177, 10/20/93).

Section 9-202(B)(4) of the zoning ordinance states a sign may be displayed flat against a building wall or at an angle...so long as the sign does not project more than four feet from the building wall. Staff notes that the 4' sign does not meet this requirement and would require an encroachment approved by the Planning Commission and City Council. The proposed 3.5' projecting sign complies with zoning ordinance requirements.

The signs previously approved by the Board for this bank were flat signs directly on the face of the building which cannot be readily seen except standing directly in front of the building. In the opinion of Staff the projecting signs provide pedestrian identification for the bank to replace the freestanding signs. The Wachovia bank building is a large, freestanding structure and Staff believes that additional signs are acceptable on a building of this size.

The Board is particularly concerned with the maintenance of the George Washington Memorial Parkway. Therefore, requests for certificates of appropriateness for signs on Washington Street must be compatible with the memorial nature of the parkway (Signs - Page 4). Staff believes that the proposed modern frame is not appropriate for the parkway or the historic district. Staff recommends that the signs be attached to scroll brackets.

The *Design Guidelines* state that signs should be designed in styles, materials, type faces, colors and lettering that are appropriate and sympathetic to the historic style of the building (Signs - Page 3). Staff is concerned that the shape and material of the proposed signs are not compatible with the Colonial Revival style of the building. Staff recommends that the signs be flat and constructed of a more traditional material such as MDO.

The size of the proposed signs will also need to be reduced so that they project less than 4' from the face of the building.

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 Construction permits are required for the proposed project.

C-2 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.

Office of Historic Alexandria:

Insufficient reviewable detail to ascertain project. Cannot comment.