

Docket Item #5  
BAR CASE# 2004-0127

BAR Meeting  
September 1, 2004

**ISSUE:** New window  
**APPLICANT:** Clay Perfall  
**LOCATION:** 102 South Union Street  
**ZONE:** CD/Commercial

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**BOARD ACTION, JULY 21, 2004:** Deferred at the request of the applicant.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends deferral of the application for restudy.

**I. ISSUE:**

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for a new glass panel to be placed in front of the existing shutter doors on the second floor of the King Street elevation of the building at 102 South Union Street (the former Seaport Inn).

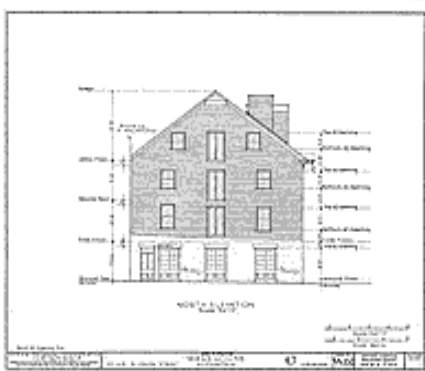
**II. HISTORY:**

According to Ethelyn Cox in *Alexandria Street by Street*, the original warehouse building at this location was constructed ca. 1787 and was owned by Col. John Fitzgerald, an important Revolutionary War figure. The rear addition dates from the early 1960s and was approved by the Board on October 12, 1960.

The first floor is presently occupied by a Starbucks and the floors above are for office use. The rear addition has been separated from the 18<sup>th</sup> century portion of the structure and is now the Mai Tai restaurant. With these new uses, the building has undergone substantive changes in the last few years. The existing windows have been replaced (BAR Case #99-004, 2/3/99 ); signs have been installed for the Starbucks restaurant (BAR Case #2000-225, 10/18/00); and the 1960 rear addition has undergone significant change including new windows, doors, signage and outdoor seating (BAR Case #2003-011, 2/5/03 & 2003-206, 3/17/04).

Despite these changes, the building retains its status as one of the most iconic buildings in the Old and Historic Alexandria District that personifies for many the 18<sup>th</sup> century architectural heritage of Alexandria. It still retains an overall architectural character that clearly links the building to the working waterfront of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The building was originally used as a warehouse and sail loft. The shuttered doors on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floor provided a convenient way to haul goods from ground level to the upper levels of the building. Thus, these shuttered openings directly link the building to its original uses.

Historic American Building Survey drawings and photographs from the 1930s and 1950s clearly show that the shuttered openings had remained in place since the 18<sup>th</sup> century.



**Figure 1** HABS drawing of King Street elevation of Fitzgerald's warehouse dated 1937



**Figure 2** HABS photograph of King Street elevation dated 1959

### **III. ANALYSIS:**

Proposed window to replace existing shutter door complies with zoning ordinance requirements.

While Staff believes that the current proposal is more sympathetic to the historic character of the building than the previous proposal to replace the shutters with a double hung window, Staff has concerns regarding the current scheme. Placing glazing on the outside over the existing shutters will, in the opinion of Staff, change the plane and, therefore, the play of light and shadow on the building. In addition, Staff believes that a single sheet of glass graphs a decidedly 20<sup>th</sup> century element onto one of the surviving surfaces of the 18<sup>th</sup> century building. Staff believes that the position of the glazing and the shutters should be reversed, that is, the glazing should be inside the shutters. This could be accomplished by hinging the shutters and having casement windows inside which could be opened to operate the shutters. This scheme would, in the opinion of Staff, retain the historic appearance of the building.

### **IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

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 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-2 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-3 Construction permits are required for this project. Plans shall accompany the permit application that fully detail the construction as well as layouts and schematics of the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems.

### Office of Historic Alexandria:

This building used to be a warehouse. If the original opening was a warehouse door as shown now, I would prefer to keep that as it helps illustrate the past use.