

Docket Item #5  
BAR CASE# 2004-0191

BAR Meeting  
December 15, 2004

**ISSUE:** Signs and alterations

**APPLICANT:** Daniel O'Connell's VA Holdings, LLC

**LOCATION:** 112 King Street

**ZONE:** CD/Commercial

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## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends deferral of the application for restudy.

### **I. ISSUE:**

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations and signs for the new O'Connell's Restaurant at 112-114 King Street.

#### **Alterations**

Substantial alterations to the building facade are planned.

#### **First floor**

The two existing distinct addresses at 112 & 114 King Street will be unified into one coherent first floor facade with the construction of an entirely new storefront for the buildings. This new front will have a sign band across both storefronts with raised individual wood letter sign, "O'Connell's Restaurant." with a brown background and goldish colored letters. Underneath the sign band will be a new 6'6" wide retractable awning. Two entrances are proposed. On the east side there will be a single wood frame door with a stained glass panel flanked by two large store front windows which can be opened in good weather. The windows and door are separated by wood pilasters. On the west side a second pair of wood doors with stained glass panels are proposed. This doorway is flanked by two cast iron wall mounted lanterns and two menu boards measuring 1'8" x 1'2".

An outdoor seating area, 6' wide, is proposed in front of the buildings which will be surrounded by a 3 ½' high iron railing.

#### **Second floor**

Each of the three windows on the second floor will have a bullnose awning above and cast iron window boxes beneath. The existing roof top terrace above 114 will have a new metal railing to match that proposed for the outdoor seating area. A hanging sign is proposed to be installed on the second level. This sign, "O'Connell's Restaurant," measures 3' in height and 2'4" in width and will be installed on a metal scroll bracket. This sign will have a black background, gold lettering and an inset portrait of Daniel O'Connell. (Note: Two hanging signs are indicated on the drawings, but only one is currently being proposed.)

The storefront at 112 will be repainted in a light beige color.

### **II. HISTORY:**

The building at 112 King Street is a two-story, gable roof, painted brick building with an altered storefront and a one-story brick addition. The two-story section dates from the early nineteenth century according to Ethelyn Cox in *Historic Alexandria Street by Street*, p. 63.

The structure at 114 King Street is basically an infill of a small alley that existed between 112 and 116 King Street. That infilling originally took place between 1921 and 1941 according to information on the Sanborn Insurance Maps and then the infill area was substantially upgraded when Bullfeathers Restaurant was constructed at this location in the 1980s.

In 1991 the Board approved signage for Eastwood Bonsai of Alexandria (BAR Case #91-54, 4/3/91) at 112 King Street and also in 1991 the Board approved signs for Hats in the Belfry (BAR Case #91-57, 3/20/91).

### **III. ANALYSIS:**

Proposed signs comply with sign regulations per amendment by project architect. However, 6'6" retractable awning and outdoor seating area with permanent railings requires encroachment approval.

Staff is concerned about the new facade treatment proposed in this application. First, the proposal puts a new first floor treatment across two currently distinct individual buildings effectively eliminating 112 and 114 King Street as separate streetscape elements. Second, the first floor treatment is a high style late 19<sup>th</sup> century restaurant facade that has no relationship to the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century waterfront architectural heritage of the majority of the 100 block of King Street. Staff believes that any revisions to these facades should respect their individuality as well as the predominate architectural style of the blockface. In short, Staff believes that the design approach to the renovation of these facades should be re-worked and a design proposed that has at its root the architectural character of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century Alexandria waterfront.

Additionally, the curved rigid awnings proposed for the second floor windows are not appropriate for an early 19<sup>th</sup> century building and are discouraged by the *Design Guidelines*. The window boxes proposed beneath the second floor windows are not appropriate to the utilitarian character of the architecture of the blockface.

Staff also believes that additional information is needed before the Board can approve a Certificate of Appropriateness. Information is needed, for example, on the facade colors, the colors and material of the awnings, details of the stained glass proposed for the doors and wall lanterns.

Finally, Staff notes that both the proposed retractable awning needs approval of an encroachment ordinance by the Planning Commission and City Council. The permanent railing around the outdoor seating area will also need approval of an encroachment or should be deferred until there is a permanent outdoor dining program and regulations.

### **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 Required exit facilities shall be accessible for persons with disabilities.
- 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 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.
- C-5 Wall letters / signs, 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-6 Fixed canopies 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 (USBC 3105.2). Approved coverings shall comply with flame resistance requirements (USBC 3105.3).

### Office of Historic Alexandria:

According to our guidelines, projects should reflect in style, mass, scale and architectural details the buildings within the streetscape. They should reflect an “Alexandria” vocabulary. Applicant has made an excellent case for there being a lack of good information on the buildings which had been on this site earlier. However, that does not mean one should transplant a style from a distinctly different place. One of our most prominent Irish emigrants owned land just a few feet from this site. It would be generous and appropriate to respect the building styles he would have been familiar with or one could evaluate the styles of known tavern buildings, including Gadsby’s (1785).