

Docket Item #7  
BAR CASE# 2005-0013

BAR Meeting  
February 16, 2005

**ISSUE:** Signs & Alterations

**APPLICANT:** Papyrus

**LOCATION:** 721 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 to the storefront and signage for the new retail business "Papyrus" at 721 King Street.

#### **Storefront alterations**

The rehabilitation of the building facade includes replacing the existing storefront and sign board with a new storefront system. Three large MDO panels with decorative trim will be added beneath wooden crown molding. Recessed wooden panels will be added at the base of the new large display windows. The existing aluminum single door with sidelight and transom will be replaced with a new set of single light doors. The central recessed entrance will remain. The storefront will be painted cream (Sail Cloth - Benjamin Moore) and plum (Aubergine - Benjamin Moore).

#### **Awning & Signage**

The applicant is proposing a 23' 4 ½" by 4' 10 ½" by 1' 6" awning reading "Papyrus". The shed style awning will be covered in a dark plum colored fabric material with a cream colored logo and lettering. The lettering and logo measure approximately 2' in height by 10.5' in length.

A blade sign will be located at the west end of the King Street facade, adjacent to the edge of the awning. The 2' by 2' sign will be attached to the wall by two black tubes. The sign will be plum colored with a light plum colored logo. The business name "Papyrus" will be centered on the sign in cream colored acrylic lettering.

The applicant has provided color samples which will be available at the public hearing.

### **II. HISTORY:**

The terra cotta faced brick building at 721 King Street was built in 1918 as a restaurant, Lipps Cafe. The building has undergone numerous alterations.

In 1940, a small 4' wide by 10ft high by 14'6" long brick addition was added to the east 721 King Street for use as a magazine store/new stand (719 ½ King St). At this time the building permit shows the entrance to the 721 King Street located at the eastern corner of the building. In 1943, a 22' addition was constructed to the existing newsstand at 719 ½ King Street (Building permit #4857, 1/18/43). The addition was later connected to 721 King Street (Building permit #14458, 10/3/58). Although, no permits were located, the addition has been demolished.

In 1944, a number of interior alterations were made to convert the building to a photographic studio (Building permit #5791, 6/29/44). In 1951, the Board approved alterations to the storefront, dividing the building into two by adding a second entrance and installing new storefront windows. In 1962, the Board approved additional alterations to the storefront (8/21/62). At this time the two entrances were combined to a central recessed entrance (Building Permit #18704, 9/10/62).

In 1987 the Board approved alterations to the storefront and signs (Bar Case #87-6, 1/21/87). In 1989, the Board approved a request for a sign for “King Street News” (BAR Case #88-185A, 4/5/89). In 1994, the Board approved a hanging sign for “Old Town News” (BAR Case #94-54, 4/20/94) to replace the previously approved wall sign (BAR Case #91-2, 1/2/91).

### **III. ANALYSIS:**

The building at 721 King Street is 27 feet wide. Therefore the maximum signage allowed is 27 square feet. The proposed signs and storefront alterations comply with zoning requirements.

Staff has no objections to the new entrance and the glass storefront with recessed wooden panels. As discussed above in the history section, the storefront has previously undergone numerous alterations.

The *Design Guidelines* recommend generally only one sign per business as appropriate (Signs - Page 3). Staff does not support the two proposed signs for this building. The blade sign will be partially blocked by the awning when viewed from the west. Staff is also concerned with the modern style frame for the proposed blade sign. Generally, projecting signs approved by the Board are attached to scroll brackets.

Staff also has concerns with the proposed awning. According to the *Design Guidelines*, “signs should not detract from the architectural characteristics of historic structures. Similarly, signs should not overwhelm or obscure the architecture and decorative features of historic buildings” (Signs - Page 3). While the proposed awning is simply covering a modern signboard, Staff believes that it is quite possible that an earlier storefront remains underneath the signboard. Staff recommends that before proceeding with an application for new signs for this building that exploratory research is performed first to determine if any historic fabric remains underneath the existing signboard. Staff also believes that the logo and lettering on the awning are overly large for the small scale 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.
- C-4 Required exits, parking, and accessibility within the building for persons with disabilities must comply with USBC Chapter 11.
- C-5 Wall letters / signs must comply with USBC [H103-H111].
- C-6 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-7 Awnings must comply with all applicable requirements of USBC 3105 and 3202.
- C-8 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 (USBC 3105.2).

### Office of Historic Alexandria:

“No comment”