

Docket Item #9
BAR CASE# 2004-0259

BAR Meeting
April 20, 2005

ISSUE: Sign & Awnings
APPLICANT: Riverton Residential LLC, by Bob Biroonak
LOCATION: 610 Bashford Lane
ZONE: RCX Residential

BOARD ACTION, FEBRUARY 2, 2005: On a motion by Ms. Quill, seconded by Mr. Keleher the Board deferred the application for restudy. The vote on the motion was 3-2 (Chairman Hulfish and Ms. Neihardt were opposed).

REASON: The Board believed that additional discussions should take place between the applicant and the community regarding the design and placement of the sign.

SPEAKERS: Bob Biroonak, applicant, spoke in support
Martin Miesel, Member, Old Town North Urban Design Advisory Committee, spoke in opposition
Alan Voorhees, Chairman, Old Town North Urban Design Advisory Committee, spoke in opposition

BOARD ACTION, JANUARY 5, 2005: This docket item was removed from the Proposed Consent Calendar by Mr. Voorhees. On a motion by Ms. Neihardt, seconded by Dr. Fitzgerald the Board deferred the application for study. The vote on the motion was 4-0.

REASON: Because the applicant was not present, the Board deferred the application for restudy.

SPEAKERS: Alan Voorhees, Chairman, Old Town North Urban Design Advisory Committee, spoke in opposition

Sally Ann Greer, 1168 North Pitt Street, member, Old Town North Urban Design Advisory Committee, spoke in opposition

Update: The application has been revised since the February 2, 2005 hearing to reduce the size of the wall sign on Bashford Lane and to include replacement awning covers. In 1986, the Board approved five awnings for the buildings at 610 Bashford Lane. The current owner replaced the awning covers on the five existing frames without BAR approval. Each of the new awning covers includes signage reading "Riverton." The zoning regulations allow only one sign for a multifamily dwelling (Section 9-201 (B)(3)). Thus, the existing awning covers do not comply with the zoning ordinance. The awnings proposed in this application are to replace the existing, noncompliant awnings.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the proposed sign and a single replacement awning at the main entrance on Bashford Lane with the conditions that the white stripes be eliminated and that a canvas type fabric be used. Staff also recommends that the existing noncomplying awnings be removed within 30 days.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for a sign and awnings for Riverton Condominiums at 610 Bashford Lane. The proposed sign will be attached to an existing metal fence above a brick garden wall located at the main entrance on Bashford Lane. The sign measures 7' in length by 3' in height and reads, "Riverton, A Condominium" in ½" thick white acrylic letters. The 2" thick oval shaped sign panel will be painted black.

The five existing awnings are proposed to be recovered. The new awning material is proposed to be Weblon, a vinyl laminated fabric material. The awnings will have black and white horizontal stripes with a solid black face. The building numbers will be included on the face of the awnings in 8" high white letters.

II. HISTORY:

610 Bashford Lane is a series of two story brick buildings that were originally constructed around 1940 as rental apartments called the Locharbor Garden Apartments. They were converted to hotel use in 1986 (SUP #1864). The Executive Club Suites hotel is now being converted to condominiums.

The Board approved site and building lighting, entry canopies and two brass individual letter signs attached to garden walls in 1986 (BAR 86-220, 12/17/86). In 1996, the Board approved the installation of screening for a ground level generator (96-209, 9/18/96). Recently the Board approved accessibility alterations (BAR Case #2005-0042, 3/16/05).

III. ANALYSIS:

Section 9-201 (B)(3) of the zoning ordinance states a multifamily dwelling sign may not exceed 40 square feet in area and only one sign may be erected on any such property. The proposed 21 square foot sign complies with zoning ordinance requirements.

Staff has no objections to the design of the sign which meets the recommendations of the *Design Guidelines*.

Staff does however have concerns with the proposed replacement awnings. The *Design Guidelines* state that awnings should be made of a canvas type fabric. Awnings made from plastic fabric are strongly discouraged (Awnings - Page 3). The proposed vinyl laminated fabric does not comply with the *Guidelines*.

Awnings should play a secondary role to the style, ornament, materials, color and texture of the architecture of a building. Awnings should augment not compete with the surrounding architecture (Signs - Page 1). Staff believes that the proposed boldly striped awnings compete with the architectural character of the buildings and are therefore inappropriate.

Although the applicant is proposing to recover existing awnings previously approved by the Board, Staff does not support the number of awnings. The original awnings were approved in 1986, prior to the adoption of the *Design Guidelines*. While Staff can support a replacement awning at the main entrance, Staff believes individual awnings at each entrance is unnecessary. Staff recommends that there only be one awning, which will assist in the identification of the condominium office entrance.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Therefore, Staff recommends approval of the proposed sign and a single replacement awning at the main entrance on Bashford Lane with the conditions that the white stripes be eliminated and that a canvas type fabric be used. Staff also recommends that the existing noncomplying awnings be removed within 30 days.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

C-1 Wall letters / signs must comply with USBC [H103-H111].

C-2 A construction permit is required for the proposed project

Office of Historic Alexandria:

“No comment”