

Docket Item #11
BAR CASE# 2005-0031

BAR Meeting
April 20, 2005

ISSUE: Signs
APPLICANT: SJM Properties
LOCATION: 600 South Washington Street
ZONE: CL Commercial

BOARD ACTION, March 2, 2005: Deferred for restudy

Update: Since the last public hearing the applicant has revised the sign proposal to reduce the size of the wall sign on Gibbon Street and changed the proposed wall sign on South Washington Street to a hanging sign.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends deferral of the application for restudy of a small plaque beside the entrance on South Washington Street and a sign to align with the existing sign for the first floor tenant on Gibbon Street.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for signs for the business SJM Properties, located at 600 South Washington Street. The proposed signs read “SJM Properties, Real Estate Co.” and include the business logo. The aluminum faced MDO signs will have a green background with white lettering.

A double sided hanging sign is proposed for the South Washington Street elevation of the building. The sign, measuring 2.4' in width by 1.7' in height, will be attached to a scroll bracket located at the second floor level to the north of the second floor windows. A wall sign measuring 3.7' in length by 2' in height will be located on the second story of the Gibbon Street elevation.

II. HISTORY:

The two story frame building at 600 South Washington Street was probably constructed before 1877.

In 1995, the Board approved a sign for “Young’s Beauty” salon (BAR Case #95-0171, 11/16/95). In 1998, the Board approved the existing signs for “InVision Salon” (BAR Case #98-0153 10/7/98). In 1999, the Board approved two new signs for “Young’s Beauty” salon (BAR Case #98-0228, 4/7/99).

III. ANALYSIS:

According to the applicant, the building frontage on South Washington Street is 20' and the frontage on Gibbon Street is approximately 42'. The proposed signs coupled with the existing signs for the first floor tenant comply with zoning ordinance requirements.

The *Design Guidelines* recommend generally only one sign per business is appropriate (Signs - page 3). However, in the case of corner buildings, the Board consistently approves one sign on each elevation. In addition, the Board has previously approved multiple signs for the tenants of this building.

The Boards are particularly concerned with the maintenance of the memorial character of the George Washington Memorial Parkway which passes through Alexandria as Washington Street. Therefore requests for certificates of appropriateness for signs on Washington Street must be compatible with the memorial nature of the Parkway. The proposed signs comply with the 1929 agreement with the National Park Service that no freestanding signs be permitted on the Parkway.

Staff commends the applicant for reducing the size of the proposed signs. However, Staff is still concerned with the locations of the proposed signs. Staff believes that the proposed signs should be coordinated with the existing signs for “InVision Salon” to prevent a jumbled appearance. Staff recommends that the wall sign on Gibbon Street be aligned with the existing wall sign.

Staff does not support the use of a hanging sign at the second floor level for an upper level tenant. In this case, a small wall plaque adjacent to the entrance would be appropriate.

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 A building permit is required for the proposed signage.

Office of Historic Alexandria:

“No comment”