

Docket Item # 3
BAR CASE #2005-0281

BAR Meeting
February 1, 2006

ISSUE: Signs and alterations

APPLICANT: La Tasca Inc. By M. Catherine Puskar

LOCATION: 605-607 King Street

ZONE: KR/King Street Retail Zone

BOARD ACTION, JANUARY 4, 2006: On a motion by Mr. Smeallie, seconded by Dr. Fitzgerald, the Board deferred the application for restudy. The vote on the motion was 6-0.

REASON: The Board agreed believed that too many signs were proposed and that a maximum of two signs would be sufficient for the restaurant. Further, the Board believed that the torch lights that were proposed were inappropriate in the historic district. Ms. Puskar said that the windows signs could be raised on the glass as recommended in the Staff report. The applicant agreed to address the Board's concerns.

SPEAKERS: Dennis Burns, project architect, spoke in support
M. Catherine Puskar, attorney representing La Tasca Inc., spoke in support

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the revised application as submitted.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations for a new restaurant at the location formerly housing Founders Restaurant. The new restaurant, a Spanish tapas bar and restaurant, will be known as is La Tasca. The restaurant frontage spans two buildings, 605 & 607 King Street. The applicant is requesting approval of signage and new exterior light fixtures. In addition, the existing double leaf door will be replaced with a single leaf door and sidelight. The storefront woodwork will not be altered and will be repainted in a palette of cream, tan, and brown.

Signage

The proposed signage has been revised and is now composed of one hanging sign and two window signs. The hanging sign is a double sided oval redwood panel stained a burgundy color with a gold leaf border. The hanging sign will have sandblasted lettering reading, "La Tasca" in large gold letters and "Spanish Tapas Bar & Restaurant," below in smaller white letters. A gold scroll is located under the lettering. The sign measures 1' 5 3/4" high and 3' wide. It will be suspended on chains from a black iron triangular scroll bracket with rectangular black metal backplate. There will be two small light fixtures on tubular poles approximately 1' long extending out from the sign bracket and pointing in toward the sign. The light fixtures will have a black finish. The fixtures will be lit with a 30 watt bulb.

The applicant is now proposing two lettered window signs at the upper end of the storefront windows at each end. The signs, "La Tasca" in 6" high lettering will be white vinyl applied to the interior of the glass with gold lines. The gold lines are repeated on the center windows. The signage previously proposed at the bottom of each window has been eliminated.

The existing menu box, located in the middle of the storefront, will remain but with a new frame and glass to match the existing.

Lighting

There are currently four coach style lamps on the storefront facade; two on the pilasters on either side of the entrance and two along the storefront. The applicant's proposal for the torch lights has been revised. The proposal is now proposing to install the torch style light fixture in four places: on either side of the entrance and at the windows at each end. The fixture will be manufactured by Nulco Lighting and will have a decorative twisted wrought iron base with a flat black finish and flame globe of frosted glass. The total length of the fixture is 30". The torches will be attached to the wall at a slight slant and anchored at top and bottom.

Door

The applicant is proposing to replace the existing double leaf wood panel and glass door with a new single leaf wood panel and glass door with a glass sidelight. The transom will remain. According to the architect, the door must be altered to meet code requirements.

II. HISTORY:

605 King Street is a four story brick Italianate building while 607 King Street is a two story frame building. Both have been joined at the first floor level with a faux Victorian storefront. The first floor of the combined buildings has been used as a restaurant for some time, including Henry Africa, the Virginia Beverage Company and Founders Restaurant and Brewing Company. On June 7, 1995, the Board approved ADA alterations and window signage for the Virginia Beverage Company (BAR Case #95-62). The restaurant changed ownership in 2003. The Board never approved signage for that restaurant, Founders.

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed alterations and signs comply with zoning ordinance requirements. The building width facing King Street is 38 feet +/-, allowing a maximum sign area of 38 square feet. Section 9-202(B)(1) of the zoning ordinance states all signs displayed below 20 feet height on any building wall ... shall not exceed one square foot for each foot of building width facing such street... Section 9-202(B)(4) of the zoning ordinance states a building wall or at an angle...so long as the sign does not project more than four feet from the building wall...at least eight feet above a sidewalk. Section 9-202(B)(3) of the zoning ordinance states the total area of window signs shall not exceed 20 percent of any window and shall be included in the total sign area erected. Based on the submitted plans, the window signs, menu board and hanging sign totals 16 square feet; 38 square feet is allowed.

Staff believes that the revised proposal for signage and lighting is responsive to the comments of the Board at the January 4th public hearing and is compatible with the building and the historic district in design. According to the *Design Guidelines*, “generally, only one sign per business is appropriate.” (Signs - Page 3) The current proposal is now similar to the sign packages approved for the Banana Republic directly across King Street at La Madeliene restaurant in the 500block of King Street. Similarly, Staff does not object to the design or the reduced number of the torch-like exterior light fixtures.

Staff has no objection to the proposed door replacement, as required to meet code requirements.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the revised application as submitted.

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 for persons with disabilities must be provided to the building.
- C-5 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.

Historic Alexandria

No comment.