

Docket Item #5
BAR CASE #2006-0125

BAR Meeting
July 5, 2006

ISSUE: Awning and Signage
APPLICANT: Embellishments A La Maison
LOCATION: 1303 King Street
ZONE: KR/King Street Urban Retail

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends deferral of the application to restudy the need for an awning and to look at other sign strategies.

(Insert sketch here)

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval to install a new canvas awning with a galvanized steel frame with signage painted on the valance of the awning at 1303 King Street.

The awning would span 22'3" across the front of the building, projecting 3'6" from the face, and will be 3' tall with an additional 1' drop of the valance. There will be 8' clearance from the bottom of the awning to the sidewalk. The awning fabric will be striped, in alternating stripes of heather beige and natural. The signage located on the valance will be hand painted in black, using Edwardian script, with the lettering approximately 6" tall. The text will read "Embellishments A La Maison."

The awning will be attached to the wall using z-brackets.

II. HISTORY:

The one-story, brick-faced structure at 1303 King Street was constructed in 1998 in a conscious imitation of early twentieth-century commercial buildings. It was approved by the Board on March 4, 1998 (BAR Case #98-0010).

The Board approved signage for the previous tenant in the building, BLINK, in 1999 (BAR Case #99-00040).

III. ANALYSIS:

Proposed wall sign and awning comply with zoning ordinance requirements.

In respect to awnings, the Design Guidelines state the following:

- Awnings should be appropriate and sympathetic to the historical style of the building to which they are attached.
- Shed or sloped awnings are more appropriate than other awning forms in the historic districts.
- Awning should be made of a canvas type fabric. Awnings made from plastic fabric are strongly discouraged.
- Awnings should not overwhelm or obscure the architecture and decorative features of historic buildings.

While the building located at 1303 King Street is not a historic building, the building does have a transom feature as well as decorative brick work located above the transom and the two bayed windows on the front. The proposed full length shed style awning would obscure these architectural-features of this simplistic commercial building. Staff does not support the use of the awning with the dimensions as proposed. Due to features such as the bay windows, the transom, and the decorative brick work, staff believes that an awning would not serve to enhance the appearance of the storefront of 1303 King Street. Since the applicant was also proposing signage

on the awning, staff would suggest looking at other strategies for signage, such as a projecting sign, wall sign, or window lettering.

In addition, the applicant has already applied signage on the windows of the bays. Information on the window signs should be included in a restudy to determine if it is in compliance with the Zoning Ordinance and receive BAR approval.

Staff would recommend a deferral of the application, for the applicant to restudy the need for an awning and to look at other sign strategies.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends deferral of the application to restudy the need for an awning and to look at other sign strategies.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

C-1 A construction permit is required.

C-2 Awnings must comply with all applicable requirements of the USBC. Retractable and fixed awnings must have a minimum of 7 foot clearance from a sidewalk to the lowest part of the framework or any fixed portion of any retractable awning is required.

C-3 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.

Historic Alexandria:

Proposed awning will obscure hanging sign of adjacent business.