

Docket Item #8
BAR CASE #2006-0221

BAR Meeting
October 18, 2006

ISSUE: Sign

APPLICANT: Jeffrey M. Schwartz

LOCATION: 103 King Street

ZONE: KR/King Street Urban Retail

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the proposed signage and denial of the proposed illumination.

(Insert sketch here)

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for both a hanging sign and a wall sign for the new business at 103 King Street. The hanging sign has two parts, both suspended from a metal scroll bracket, “Jakes of Old Town” and “Life is Good, your genuine neighborhood shoppe.” The wall sign measures 8' in length by 1.5' and reads “Jakes of Old Town”. The hanging sign will be located on the east side of the retail space above the first level. The wall sign will be centered above the entrances to the store. Both signs have white lettering and blue backgrounds. The signs will be fabricated of a polystyrene compound. The signs are proposed to be illuminated with two floodlights, one for the hanging sign and one for the wall sign with the lighting fixture to be located above the first level and to the east of the proposed wall sign.

The applicant has provided an actual sample of the sign which will be made available to members at the public hearing.

II. HISTORY:

101 - 103 King Street is a three and a half story brick building that is one of a row of ten buildings that were originally constructed in the late 18th and early 19th centuries as waterfront warehouses according to Ethelyn Cox in *Alexandria Street by Street* (pp.64-65). The north side of the 100 block of King Street is a row of largely intact buildings that provide a direct physical link to the founding of the city as a commercial waterfront port. While all of the buildings have been adaptively reused for retail and restaurant uses in the late 20th century, they have retained an exterior cohesiveness that readily exhibits their industrial origins.

In 2004, the Board approved a number of alterations to the building (BAR Case #2004-0128/129, 12/15/04).

Earlier this year the Board approved a wall sign measuring 18.25' by 1.2' for “Conrad’s Furniture Gallery” at the eastern half of the building at 101 King Street (BAR Case #2006-0147, 7/19/06).

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed hanging sign and the wall sign comply with zoning ordinance requirements.

Although the *Design Guidelines* recommend generally only one sign per business as appropriate, the Board has repeatedly approved more than one sign for businesses. Staff has no objections to the use of two signs in this case.

According to the *Design Guidelines*, “signs should be designed in styles, materials, type faces, colors and lettering that are appropriate and sympathetic to the historic style of the building. Sign styles or designs should not postdate the era of the building for which they are intended. For example, signs made of plastic are not appropriate on 18th and 19th century commercial

structures” (Signs - Page 3). Staff has no objections to the use of the polystyrene material for the proposed signs which will be indistinguishable at the proposed height.

According to the Design Guidelines, “Signs should be designed to be compatible with the historic building...signs should not detract from the architectural characteristics of historic structures” (Signs - page 3). Staff believes that the proposed signs are similar to signs for previous retail tenants at 101 and 103 King Street.

Staff, however, is concerned about the illumination of the signs. In the opinion of Staff there is sufficient nighttime illumination on lower King Street to permit ready identification of this new retail operation. Additional illumination of the type proposed with severely detract from the historic nature of the existing building. Further, Staff would also note that no illumination was proposed for the signage for the new retail tenant in the adjacent space at 101 King that was approved earlier this year.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the proposed signage and denial of the proposed illumination.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

C-1 A construction permit is required.

C-2 Wall signs must comply with USBC.

Historic Alexandria:

No comments were received.