

Docket Item # 8  
BAR CASE # 2007-0068

BAR Meeting  
May 2, 2007

**ISSUE:** Signs  
**APPLICANT:** The Byrum Law Offices  
**LOCATION:** 108 A South Columbus Street  
**ZONE:** CL/Commercial

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends approval of the signs with the condition that the plans be revised so that the bottom of the hanging sign is at least 8' above grade and that applicant consult with Staff on the revised plans prior to applying for the sign permit.

(Insert sketch here)

**I. ISSUE:**

The applicant is requesting approval of a certificate of appropriateness for the installation of two signs for the law offices at 108 A South Columbus Street and one for Barrister Square, the three-building development comprised of 106 A, 108 A and 110 A South Columbus Street located behind the buildings at 106, 108 and 110 Columbus Street. The first sign for the law offices will be installed on the brick pillar at the left side of the gate into the walkway leading to Barrister's Court. The second will be located on the face of the building in the court. Both signs will be metal plaques with a brass finish and black engraving. The sign on the pillar will be 16" long by 12" wide. It will have a circular logo with the name of the business, "Byrum Law Offices", framed in branches. The location, "Courtyard 108A", will be written below the circular logo. The sign to be installed on the building will be located on the left side of the door just above the mail box. It will be 12" by 12" and will have the same circular logo with the words, "Byrum Law Offices", as on the sign for the pillar. According to the applicant, the last sign, located on Columbus Street and identifying the group of three buildings on the interior court, will replace an earlier sign which had hung there until just recently. The two-sided wooden sign measuring 14" by 20" is proposed for the existing free-standing signpost located just to the right of 106 South Columbus and in front of the gates leading to Barrister's Court. The sign will hang from an existing metal scroll bracket. The sign will read, "Barrister Square".

The signs proposed for the pillar and sign post on Columbus Street are visible from the street and fall under the Board's purview. The sign on the building face will not be visible from the public right-of-way and therefore is not under review.

**II. HISTORY:**

According to real estate records, the brick row at 106A, 108 A and 110 A South Columbus Street was constructed circa 1979. Located behind a row of 19<sup>th</sup>-century townhouses at 106, 108 and 110 South Columbus Street, the development of three junior office buildings is known as Barrister Square.

BAR minutes include a notation for approval of signs for Barrister Square with the condition that the sign post be 6" x 6" rather than the 4" x 4" shown. That approval, dated January 1, 1979, appears to be for the freestanding sign post that stands at the front left corner of 106 South Columbus Street. Interestingly, the existing signpost is 4" x 4" rather than 6" by 6". Staff was unable to locate any other reviews for signage associated with the Barrister Square properties.

**III. ANALYSIS:**

The proposed flat signs, to be installed on the pillar and building face, comply with the zoning ordinance requirements (section 9-202(B)(1) & (4)). The existing freestanding sign is allowed under section 9-301(D). However the replacement sign must be installed so that the bottom of the sign is at least 8' above grade, per building code regulations.

Staff believes the proposed signs are appropriate to the historic district and surrounding buildings in terms of their size, materials and design. However, the plans for the replacement freestanding sign for Barrister Square must be revised to ensure that the sign is at the required height. At the very least, this will entail relocating or rebuilding the existing signpost. Therefore, Staff

recommends approval of the signs with the condition that the plans for the new or relocated signpost and sign be approved by Staff prior to submission of the sign permit.

**IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of the signs with the condition that the plans be revised so that the bottom of the hanging sign is at least 8' above grade and that applicant consult with Staff on the revised plans prior to applying for the sign permit.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

- C-1 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-2 Wall letters/signs must comply with USBC [H103-H-111]. Please indicate the method to be used for anchoring the letters to the wall.
- C-3 Projecting, hanging signs must comply with USBC [H103-H107, H-112] for type of materials, maximum projection, vertical clearance below all parts of the sign, and additional loads.
- C-4 A Building Permit is required for this project.

Historic Alexandria:

No comments received.