

Docket Item #6
BAR CASE# 2007-0125

BAR Meeting
July 18, 2007

ISSUE: Alterations
APPLICANT: Jemal's First Federal Holdings by GTM Architects
LOCATION: 119 North Washington Street
ZONE: CD/Commercial

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted.

(Insert sketch here)

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations to the commercial building at 119 North Washington Street. The applicant proposes to replace the existing two story bow front window with a new storefront system. The new windows will be aluminum with a brushed finish for the muntins. A multi-light grid system for the bow windows is being maintained, however, the grid system has been enlarged significantly. The individual panes will shrink from the current 56 to 12.

II. HISTORY:

The three-story First Federal Savings and Loan Association of Alexandria Building at 119-121 North Washington Street was constructed of brick-faced concrete block in 1949-50 with a bow front window with flanking brick pilasters and flanking entry doors with broken scroll pediments surmounted by a granite frieze used as an incised sign band. It was designed by local architect Robert Willgoos, a practitioner mainly of Colonial Revival architecture and a former member of the Board of Architectural Review.

In the last few years, the building has had a variety of tenants and the Board has approved a number of sign schemes. Most recently, in 2001 and in 1998 the Board approved signs for Waterhouse Investor Services (BAR Case #'s 2001-0134, 6/20/2001 & 98-106, 8/19/98).

III. ANALYSIS:

Proposed window changeout complies with zoning ordinance requirements.

While the building has had a succession of tenants since it was constructed in 1949 there have been relatively few changes to the façade with the exception of new entry doors. Thus the window alteration is the most significant change to occur to the exterior since the building was originally constructed.

In general staff believes that the new window system is compatible with the original design intent. Clearly full two height windows were not part of any design vocabulary of Colonial architecture. The original multi-light muntin pattern was clearly intended as a cipher of Colonial architecture, but even that was belied by the size of the original window panes. Although the muntin pattern is changing, no other aspect of the original exterior building design is proposed to be altered. Thus, staff believes that the fundamental architectural character of the building is being maintained while the window is updated for modern commercial retail uses. Therefore, staff has no objection.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

No comments.

Office of Historic Alexandria:

No comments were received.