

Docket Item # 17
BAR CASE # 2007-0159

BAR Meeting
September 5, 2007

ISSUE: After-the-fact approval of signage

APPLICANT: Randall Yazhary

LOCATION: 309 S Washington Street

ZONE: CD/Commercial

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. Approval of the hanging sign with the condition that the sign be either wood or metal;
2. That the new hanging sign be professionally installed so that the sign is centered on the bracket;
3. Denial of the door sign with the condition that it be removed within 15 days; and
4. The applicant is to apply for a sign permit from Code Enforcement for the new hanging sign within 15 days of approval.

(Insert sketch here)

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting after-the-fact approval of signage for Today's Spa at 309 South Washington Street. A hanging sign and a wall sign have been installed. The double-sided hanging sign measures 24" by 36" and is attached to a scroll bracket at the northernmost edge of the building. The sign is constructed of a plastic material (plexiglass) and reads "Today's Spa, Spa de salon" in blue and yellow lettering. The sign also includes a drawing of a face in yellow. An 18" by 34" inch wall sign has been attached to the lower half of the salon entrance door. The design of the sign matches the hanging sign except that it also includes the word "Salon" in blue lettering.

II. HISTORY:

The building located at 309 S. Washington Street is a two-story painted brick Victorian style structure with a two-story projecting bay built c. 1880. 309 South Washington Street along with its twin at 307 South Washington Street appears on the 1885 Sanborn map.

The Board approved an after-the-fact hanging sign for Signatures Hair Salon in 1990 (BAR Case #90-219, 11/21/90). The Board denied a request for a neon sign in 1991 (BAR Case #91-196, 9/4/91).

The Board recently approved a hanging sign for Piaggio's Loft at 307 South Washington Street (BAR Case #2007-0123, 7/18/07).

III. ANALYSIS:

The subject property is zoned CD, commercial downtown. According to the applicant, the building frontage facing South Washington Street is 19 feet. The maximum sign area allowed is 19 square feet. The proposed 10.2 square feet of signage complies with zoning ordinance requirements.

The Board is particularly concerned with the maintenance of the memorial character of the George Washington Memorial Parkway which passes through Alexandria as Washington Street. Therefore, requests for certificates of appropriateness for signs on Washington Street must be compatible with the memorial nature of the Parkway (Signs – Page 4).

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). The proposed plexiglass is not appropriate for this 19th century building. Staff recommends that the sign be constructed of either wood or metal.

In staff opinion, the architecture of the building constrains the type and size of signage for commercial establishments. The logical placement of a sign would be above the first floor window or adjacent to the entrance door. The flared lintel and decorative recessed brickwork above the window would be obscured by signs placed in the first location and the projecting bay itself would partially obscure a projecting sign placed adjacent to the entrance to the salon.

Therefore staff believes that the existing sign location at the northernmost corner of the building is appropriate.

Staff has no objection to the design and size of the hanging sign. However, staff believes that the sign should not extend beyond the edge of the bracket. Staff recommends that the new wood or metal sign be professionally installed and comply with all building code requirements for attachment and installation.

The *Design Guidelines* recommend generally only one sign per business is appropriate (Signs – Page 3). Staff does not support the sign attached to the door which due to its size appears to overwhelm the door.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

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4. The applicant is to apply for a sign permit from Code Enforcement for the new hanging sign within 15 days.

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 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.
- C-3 A Building Permit is required for this project.

Historic Alexandria:

No comments were received.