

Docket Item # 14  
BAR CASE # 2007-0192

BAR Meeting  
October 3, 2007

**ISSUE:** Signage  
**APPLICANT:** Mathias Turowski  
**LOCATION:** 1004-1006 King Street  
**ZONE:** KR/King Street Urban Retail

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

1. That the sign be constructed of metal letters;
2. That the sign not attached by adhesive to the brick;
3. The letters are to be pin mounted so that the fastening hardware is not visible; and
4. The sign be anchored through the mortar joints rather than directly into the masonry itself.

(Insert sketch here)

**I. ISSUE:**

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for a sign for the business at 1004-1006 King Street. The applicant is proposing to install an individual acrylic letter sign reading “European Country Living”. The sign also includes the business logo, a chair. The sign measures 48” by 31.18” and will be mounted to the west of the store entrance. The sign is proposed to be mounted to the brick using adhesive.

**II. HISTORY:**

The imposing two story brick commercial structure was constructed in 1895, according to the date stamped in its cornice. According to Sanborn maps, it originally housed a grocery and meat market on the first floor and a “public hall” on the second floor. Later, by 1921, the upper story held a clothing factory. By the mid-20th century it housed the Alexandria Furniture Company, which still occupied the building until recently. Photographs from the mid-20th century show the building with a relatively simple storefront consisting of two angled vestibules leading to recessed doorways between three sections of glazed show windows. A wide fascia board bearing signage and molded wood or metal cornice ran across the top of the storefront. The upper story of the building is more elaborate, with a series of six arched windows, a corbeled brick cornice and ornate metal cornice with peaks and finials. Fortunately, the window openings, and brick and metal cornice remain intact. The current storefront, designed by Vosbeck and Vosbeck, dates to 1971 (Permit #27909, 1/8/1971).

The Board approved a conceptual reconstruction of the façade including new retail windows as well as second floor windows in 2004 (BAR Case #2004-00152, 9/1/04). Earlier this year, the Board approved a rear addition and alterations to the building (BAR Case #2006-0286, February 7, 2007).

**III. ANALYSIS:**

The subject property is zoned KR, King Street Urban Retail. Per Sanborn maps, the building frontage is approximately 50 feet. Therefore the maximum sign area allowed is 50 square feet. The proposed sign meets Zoning Ordinance requirements.

According to the *Design Guidelines* for signs, “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 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century commercial structures (Signs – Page 3). The proposed acrylic letters are not appropriate for this 19<sup>th</sup> century building. Staff therefore recommends that the letters be constructed of metal.

Staff also has concerns with the use of an adhesive to attach the sign to the building. While specific information about the type of adhesive has not been provided, Staff is concerned that the adhesive will damage the brick. Traditionally, individual letter signs are pin mounted to buildings in the historic district. The *Design Guidelines* recommend that individual letter signs be blind mounted on the front of a building. For example, letters can be pin mounted so that the fastening hardware is not visible. On masonry buildings, signs should be anchored through the mortar joints rather than directly into the masonry unit itself (Signs – Page 4).

Staff believes that the proposed simple design of the sign is appropriate for the building and the historic district.

**IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. That the sign be constructed of metal letters;
2. That the sign not attached by adhesive;
3. The letters are to be pin mounted so that the fastening hardware is not visible; and
4. The sign be anchored through the mortar joints rather than directly into the masonry itself.

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-H111]. Please indicate the method to be used for anchoring the letters to the wall.
- C-3 A Building Permit is required for this project.
- C-4 A Sign Permit is required for the proposed project.

Historic Alexandria:

- R-1 Approve as submitted.