

Docket Item # 15  
BAR CASE # 2007-0193

BAR Meeting  
October 3, 2007

**ISSUE:** After-the-fact awning  
**APPLICANT:** Columbia Limited Partnership  
**LOCATION:** 109 South St. Asaph Street  
**ZONE:** CD/Commercial

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends deferral of the application for restudy.

(Insert sketch here)

**I. ISSUE:**

The applicant is requesting approval of an after-the-fact Certificate of Appropriateness for the installation of a new awning at the entrance to the restaurant at 109 South St. Asaph Street. The awning has a dome shape and is approximately 10'3" in length, 7' in width and 2'10" in height. It extends from the face of the building almost to the curb and is supported on two brass poles. The awning is covered in a black fabric and has signage, Bookbinders, in red and yellow 9" high lettering on both the north and south faces of the awning.

**II. HISTORY:**

109 South St. Asaph Street is a two story brick structure originally built as a city fire house in 1885 and currently adaptively reused as a restaurant. The changes including a glass enclosed atrium on the south side of the building were approved by the Board. The Board originally approved the alterations and awning in 1978 with the signs for the Portner's restaurant in 1982. The current proposal is the result of a new restaurant chain that has replaced Portner's .

An encroachment ordinance for the awning to project into the public right-of-way was approved by City Council in 1981.

**III. ANALYSIS:**

The proposed marquee and signage comply with zoning ordinance requirements.

While the Board approved the previous awning, staff has serious reservations about the appropriateness of continuing the projecting awning. First, the awning obscures the architectural detailing around the entrance way which is contrary to the recommendations of the *Design Guidelines*. Second, increasingly in the past several years the Board has expressed a preference for awnings that do not obscure the streetscape. For example, in a recent case concerning 106 North St. Asaph Street the Board approved a new awning with signage after lengthy consideration of the design. The Board concluded that a relatively discreet awning was appropriate for a retail business and that an awning should not visually obstruct views along a street front (BAR Case #2007-0038, 8/1/07). Third, the Board has expressed reservations about awnings that create large signage areas and have limited the amount of signage on awnings in a number of instances. For these reasons, staff believes that a proposal for an awning with signage at this building should be restudied.

**IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends deferral of the application for restudy.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

- C-1 Awnings must comply with all applicable requirements of USBC 3105.3 and 3202.3.1. Retractable and fixed awnings must have a minimum 7 foot clearance from a sidewalk to the lowest part of the framework or any fixed portion of any retractable awning is required. Retractable awnings must be securely fastened to the building and can not extend closer than 24 inches in from the curb line (USBC 3202.3.1).
- C-2 Fixed awnings must be designed and constructed to withstand wind or other lateral loads and live loads required by the USBC. Structural members must be protected to prevent deterioration (USBC 3105.3).
- C-3 A building permit is required for the proposed project.

Historic Alexandria:

- R-1 Approve as submitted.