

Docket Item # 23
BAR CASE # 2007-0235

BAR Meeting
November 14, 2007

ISSUE: Signage
APPLICANT: Potts & Co.
LOCATION: 115 South Patrick Street
ZONE: CD Commercial

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the application with the condition that the sign on the south elevation of the building facing parking lot be eliminated.

(Insert sketch here)

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for three signs for the business Potts & Co. located at 115 South Patrick Street. Two of the proposed signs consist of black lettering reading “Potts & Co. Floral Designs and Special Events” painted on the south and east sides of the building in sign painter’s enamel ink. The letters will be 29” overall in height and 105” in width. The second proposed sign reads “Old Town Ally Market” and will be located above the brick arch on the east side of the building. The lettering will also be in sign painter’s black enamel paint. The letters will be 6.375” tall with the maximum height of the arch reaching 29.74”. The length of the arched sign is 84.5”.

II. HISTORY:

According to Ethelyn Cox in *Historic Alexandria Virginia, Street by Street*, the three story building at 115 South Patrick Street probably dates from a house built by James Russell around 1812. Purchased in 1825 by the Reverend William H. Wilmer, Rector of St. Paul’s Church and sold by Wilmer’s widow in August 1837. By 1850 the owner was C.C. Bradley, who probably restyled the early house (Cox, page 101).

The Board approved a wall sign for a cleaners business located at this location (BAR Case 2005-0204, 9/24/2005 and BAR Case #2004-0188, 9/23/04).

III. ANALYSIS:

The property in subject is zoned CD, Commercial Downtown and the proposed signs comply with the Zoning Ordinance requirements.

According to Sanborn maps, the building frontage facing South Patrick Street is 34.0 ft +/- (maximum sign area allowed 34.0 sq ft). The proposed signs facing South Patrick Street total 24.75 sq ft. The building’s frontage facing the adjacent parking lot is 36.0 ft +/- (maximum sign area allowed is 36.0 sq ft). The proposed signage facing the parking lot totals 21.0 sq ft.

Section 9-202(B)(1) of the zoning ordinance states all signs displayed below 20 feet height on any building wall which faces a street, alley or parking area, shall not exceed one square foot for each foot of building width facing such street, alley or parking area.

Section 9-202(B)(4) of the zoning ordinance states a sign may be displayed flat against a building wall or at an angle...so long as the sign does not project more than four feet from the building wall...at least eight feet above a sidewalk.

The BAR Design Guidelines discuss painted signs saying “signs painted directly on a building are permitted. Their use on unpainted masonry surfaces, however, is discouraged because they are difficult to remove if the building changes”. In the case of 115 South Patrick Street, the building’s brick façade has already been painted. Therefore, the staff feels that the proposed painted signs would be in accordance with the design guidelines specification. Similarly, the staff feels the design of the sign is harmonious with the historic nature of the structure and will not distract from the property’s historic significance.

Signs should be as simple as possible and avoid repetition and undue verbiage. The Board prefers that each individual business have one sign. However, corner buildings have been permitted to install two signs on each exposed elevation. The subject property has requested approval for signs on the east façade and on the south elevation. Although each elevation is exposed, the property is not located on a corner and the staff feels the installation of a sign on the south façade facing a parking lot that does not serve the proposed use is redundant and unnecessary. Therefore the staff recommends approval of the “Potts & Co. Floral Designs and Special Events” and “Old Town Ally Market” painted signs on the east façade of the property, but would recommend that the “Potts & Co. Floral Designs and Special Events” located on the south elevation be eliminated.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the application with the following condition that the sign on the south elevation of the building facing parking lot be eliminated.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

F-1 The applicant shall obtain a sign permit for the proposed sign.

C-1 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.

Historic Alexandria:

R-1 Approval.