

Docket Item # 3  
BAR CASE #2007-0271

BAR Meeting  
January 16, 2008

**ISSUE:** Sign

**APPLICANT:** Ethiopian Airlines

**LOCATION:** 277 South Washington Street

**ZONE:** CD/Commercial

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of the hanging sign provided that the sign is installed at the same height as the hanging signs located along Washington Street.

(insert sketch here)

**I. ISSUE:**

The applicant is requesting approval of a hanging sign at 277 South Washington Street. The Ethiopian Airlines tenant space faces Duke Street and the sign will project from the Duke Street facade.

The proposed double-sided sign will be hung from a 40" black scroll bracket projecting from the building facade. The bracket will be bolted to the brick with lag bolts and masonry anchors. The sign itself will be made from urethane and will measure 24" by 36." The sign will have a white background with a red border and red lettering with the airline's green, red, and yellow logo. The word "Ethiopian" and an Ethiopian word, presumably *airlines*, will be located below in smaller text.

**II. HISTORY:**

The Atrium Building at 277 South Washington Street, formerly the headquarters of the Time-Life publishing group, was constructed in 1977. It was an early post-modern effort to use a Colonial Revival/Beaux Arts revival design vocabulary on a large-scale office/commercial building.

The Bar has approved signage for a number of current and past tenants located within the Atrium Building, including BAR2000-0079 (May 17, 2000), BAR2002-0276 (November 20, 2002) and BAR2005-0271 (December 7, 2005). The Board approved a sign plan for this building in January 1999 (BAR Case #98-0223, January 20, 1999). That sign plan specified that there are to be six signs ultimately, three on each side of the main entrance on Washington Street, affixed to the brick wall with each to be of cast bronze, blind mounted against the wall and measuring 9" x 42". If a sign met the requirements of the sign plan it could be approved administratively by Staff. The sign proposed by Ethiopian Airlines does not meet the requirements of the approved sign plan because it is a hanging sign that will be installed on the Duke Street building frontage.

**III. ANALYSIS:**

The proposed hanging sign complies with the zoning ordinance.

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).

Staff's opinion is that the proposed design and size of the sign is appropriate for this location. Staff believes that the proposed sign meets the recommendations of the *Design Guidelines*.

The application materials show the proposed hanging sign at two different heights. In the opinion of staff, the sign should be located at the same height as the other hanging signs on the building along Washington Street.

**IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of the hanging sign provided that the sign is installed at the same height as the hanging signs located along Washington Street.

**CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS**

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

Code Enforcement:

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.

F-1 The applicant shall obtain a sign permit for the proposed sign and/ or wall lettering.

Historic Alexandria

R-1 Table subject to providing material and design for bracket. Specify wood for signage.