

Docket Item # 3
BAR CASE #2008-0005

BAR Meeting
February 20, 2008

ISSUE: Alterations and Signage
APPLICANT: Bill Jones for Safeway, Inc.
LOCATION: 500 South Royal Street
ZONE: RM/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the application with the condition that the black SAFEWAY sign not be halo lit and that the Safeway logo not be internally illuminated.

I. **ISSUE:**

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for a number of building alterations and signage at the Safeway supermarket at 500 South Royal Street. The alterations include: two new entrance doors off the parking lot, a rooftop vent for a new deli oven, a new wall sign, two new freestanding signs and painting exterior trim work.

Doors

The existing aluminum storefront doors off the parking lot are in poor condition and will be replaced with doors of the same size, material and style.

Rooftop Fan

A rooftop ventilation hood will be added to provide ventilation for a new deli oven/warmer. The hood will measure 12” by 18” by 14” and will be located on the northern slope of the supermarket roof. The hood will be constructed of aluminum and will be painted to blend with the surrounding roof.

Wall Sign

The applicant proposes to replace the existing red SAFEWAY wall sign facing Royal Street with a new black SAFEWAY sign and the brand’s red-and-white Safeway logo. The letter portion of the sign will measure 2’ by 11’11” and the logo will measure 2’8” by 2’11.” Safeway proposes to use reverse channel halo letters for the black SAFEWAY sign and internal illumination for the Safeway logo.

Freestanding Sign

Each existing freestanding sign will be replaced with a double-sided acrylic sign measuring 3/16.” The white sign will contain the store name in black, SAFEWAY, with the red Safeway logo above. The sign will measure 3’9” by 2’10.” The decorative scrolling at the top and bottom will be maintained.

Paint

The existing white trim will be painted with a new color scheme using more neutral earth tone shades.

II. **HISTORY:**

500 South Royal Street has been the site of the Safeway store since 1960. The Board has approved a number of alterations at the site in recent years, including a revised lighting scheme for the parking lots in 1998 (BAR Case #97-0255, 2/4/98) and rooftop screening equipment, ground-level equipment enclosure and a wall sign in 2000 (BAR Case #2000-0135, 8/16/00). In 2001, the applicant requested approval of an internally illuminated wall sign (BAR Case #2001-089). The Board approved the sign but denied the request to illuminate it stating that an internally illuminated sign in the midst of a residential area was inappropriate.

III: **ANALYSIS**

The proposed replacement of the existing non-complying free-standing sign complies with zone regulations.

Staff is generally supportive of the proposed alterations to the supermarket which are intended to improve the exterior appearance of the building. However, the proposed internally illuminated Safeway logo sign does not comply with the recommendations in the *Design Guidelines* and staff recommends disapproval of this aspect of the new sign. Halo or reverse channel signs, like the one proposed for the black SAFEWAY sign, are not addressed in the Guidelines, but rather are considered by the Board on a case-by-case basis. There are many examples of halo illuminated signs throughout the historic district approved by the Board. Two such examples are CVS Pharmacy and Long & Foster Realtors on the corner of Royal and King Streets (BAR Case 1996-0249, 11/6/96 and BAR Case 2007-0257 12/19/07). Staff believes that halo lighting is generally very subtle; nonetheless, staff feels that given the store's location in the midst of a residential neighborhood it is not appropriate. Should the Board approve the backlit SAFEWAY sign, the sign would need to operate on a timer so as not to be illuminated between the hours of 10:30 p.m. and 6:30 a.m. as required by the Zoning Ordinance.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application with the condition that the black SAFEWAY sign not be halo lit and that the Safeway logo not be internally illuminated.

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 the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-2 Additions and alterations to the existing structure and/or installation and/or altering of equipment therein requires a building permit (USBC 108.1). Five sets of plans, bearing the signature and seal of a design professional registered in the Commonwealth of Virginia, must accompany the written application (USBC 109.1).
- C-3 A construction permit is required for the proposed project.
- C-4 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-5 Wall letters / signs must comply with USBC [H103-H111] Please indicate the method to be used for anchoring the letters to the wall.
- C-6 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.

Office of Historic Alexandria:

- R-1 Approve.