

Docket Item # 4
BAR CASE# 2008-0009

BAR Meeting
February 20, 2008

ISSUE: Sign
APPLICANT: Stokefire
LOCATION: 201 King Street
ZONE: KR/King Street Urban Retail

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application with the condition that all existing signage on the building be brought into zoning conformance (including sign area and BAR approvals) prior to the installation of the STOKEFIRE sign.

(Insert sketch here)

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for a hanging sign at 201 King Street. The double sided wood sign will be constructed of two separate hanging parts. The upper portion will be a cut out of a flame hung from black chains. The lower portion of the sign will be rectangular and have the name of the business: "STOKEFIRE", and their logo, "we name stuff." The dark brown and orange sign will measure roughly 3 feet by 1.63 feet. The sign will be hung from an existing scroll bracket installed along the King Street frontage.

II. HISTORY:

The three-story, brick building at corner of King Street and North Lee Street was constructed in 1851 as a store and warehouse for William Bayne, grocer and commission merchant. The building is occupied by a retail store on the first level and offices on the upper levels.

The Board has reviewed many signs for the multiple tenants in the building over the years. The two existing circular Comfort One hanging signs (formerly Comfort Zone) were approved in 1993 and 1996 (BAR Case #93-124, 8/18/1993 and BAR Case #96-050, 3/20/1996). In the past the Board has also approved signs for tenants which are no longer located at the building, including two signs for "Oceans of Wildlife Art Gallery" (BAR Case #1997-0178, 9/3/1997) and two signs for a second story coffee shop (BAR Case #2003-0050, 4/23/2003). More recently the Board approved a hanging sign, "The Alexandria Times", to be installed above the King Street entrance to the upper levels (BAR Case #2005-0156, 7/20/2005). That sign has since been removed.

At the present time the only approved signs on the building are the two hanging signs for Comfort One Shoes.

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed hanging sign complies with zoning ordinance requirements. However, there appear to be a number of outstanding zoning and BAR issues. First, the hanging signs for Potomac Trust Mortgage and the Sterling Title Company have not been approved by the Board. Second, the existing vertical window signage listing the names of the different types of shoes sold at Comfort One is considered special advertising and is not permitted under the Zoning Ordinance. Third, there may not be sufficient square footage along the King Street frontage for an additional sign.

The *Design Guidelines* recommend that buildings with multiple business and retail tenants have a sign plan for coordinated graphics and placement. The Board minutes from 1986 describe a previously approved plan for the building stipulating three projecting signs for the building and three directory signs. Although the Board approved a sign plan over 20 years ago for the building the Board has repeatedly approved additional hanging signs for upper level tenants. The current application is for a single hanging sign and staff has no objection.

Staff is in the process of contacting the owners of the two unapproved hanging signs (Potomac Trust Mortgage and Sterling Title Company) and Comfort One shoes, as well as the building owner, to inform them of the outstanding issues and the need for all of the unapproved signs to be brought to the Board for approval. While it is unfortunate that the current applicant is being

impacted by the other building tenants' unapproved signage, the outstanding zoning issues (sign area and BAR approvals) should be resolved prior to the installation of the proposed "STOKEFIRE" sign.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application with the condition that all existing signage on the building be brought into zoning conformance (including sign area and BAR approvals) prior to the installation of the STOKEFIRE sign.

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 and/ or wall lettering.

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.

Office of Historic Alexandria:

No comments received.