

Docket Item #8
BAR CASE #2008-0061

BAR Meeting
May 7, 2008

ISSUE: Sign
APPLICANT: Potomac Trust Mortgage
LOCATION: 201 King Street
ZONE: KR/King Street Urban Retail

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends after-the-fact approval of the Potomac Trust Mortgage hanging sign.

Insert sketch map here.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting after-the-fact approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for a hanging sign at 201 King Street. The double-sided wood sign measures 22.9” by 30” and was installed on a pre-existing black metal sign bracket projecting from the corner of the building at King and North Lee Streets. The sign is white with a black border, with the words POTOMAC TRUST in black text and the word MORTGAGE in blue text. The sign also includes an image of the base of a Doric column.

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 have since left 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.

The applicant is before the Board because Staff became aware of this existing and unapproved hanging sign during the review of a hanging sign for Stokefire, another tenant at 201 King Street. The Board approved a hanging sign for Stokefire on February 20, 2008 (BAR CASE #2008-0009), with the condition that sufficient sign area be created on the King Street front of the building by removing the word “SHOE” in the window transoms. The Board also required that all existing signage on the building be brought into zoning conformance (including sign area and BAR approvals). The applicant and the two other building tenants (Comfort One Shoes and Sterling Title Company), were sent zoning ordinance violation letters on February 19, 2008. All three tenants have submitted applications to the Board for their after-the-fact signage.

III: ANALYSIS

The proposed hanging sign complies with zoning ordinance requirements.

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.

In the opinion of staff, the proposed sign meets the recommendations contained in the *Design Guidelines* for hanging signs. Staff recommends after-the-fact approval of the Potomac Trust Mortgage sign.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends after-the-fact approval of the Potomac Trust Mortgage hanging 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:

R-1 Approve.