

Docket Item # 7  
BAR CASE # 2008-0013

BAR Meeting  
June 18, 2008

**ISSUE:** Alterations and Signage  
**APPLICANT:** M. Catharine Puskar  
**LOCATION:** 825 N. Washington Street  
**ZONE:** CDX/Commercial

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends approval of the application with the following condition:

1. That the applicant work with Staff to determine an appropriate height for the transformer screening wall; and,
2. That the applicant continue to work with Staff to ensure lighting levels on the site are appropriate and meet acceptable City standards.

**BOARD ACTION, MAY 21, 2008: Deferred for restudy, 5-0.**

On a motion by Dr. Fitzgerald, seconded by Mr. Spencer, the Board voted to defer the application in order for the applicant to provide revised information on the amount of exterior lighting in the parking lot and the type of freestanding light pole. The vote 5-0.

**REASON:** The Board maintained a concern about the number of freestanding poles in the parking lot, the choice of freestanding light poles, and the lighting levels, and wanted the applicant to revise the submittal for Board review and approval.

**SPEAKERS:** M. Catherine Puskar, attorney for the applicant, spoke in support  
John Hynan, representing Historic Alexandria Foundation, spoke with concerns

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

- 1) That the applicant work with Staff to reduce the number of the freestanding poles and the light output levels so as not to exceed the minimum average lighting standards for the City of Alexandria;

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- 2) That the applicant work with Staff to revise the lighting plan to include all exterior lighting fixtures such as pole lights on site, building mounted lighting installed in roof overhangs and soffits, and to include all public street lamps;
- 3) That the applicant extend display of photometrics to at least the centerline of adjoining streets; and,
- 4) That the proposed directional site signs be reduced in area to eliminate blank areas and to be only the size necessary to accommodate display of the proposed text.

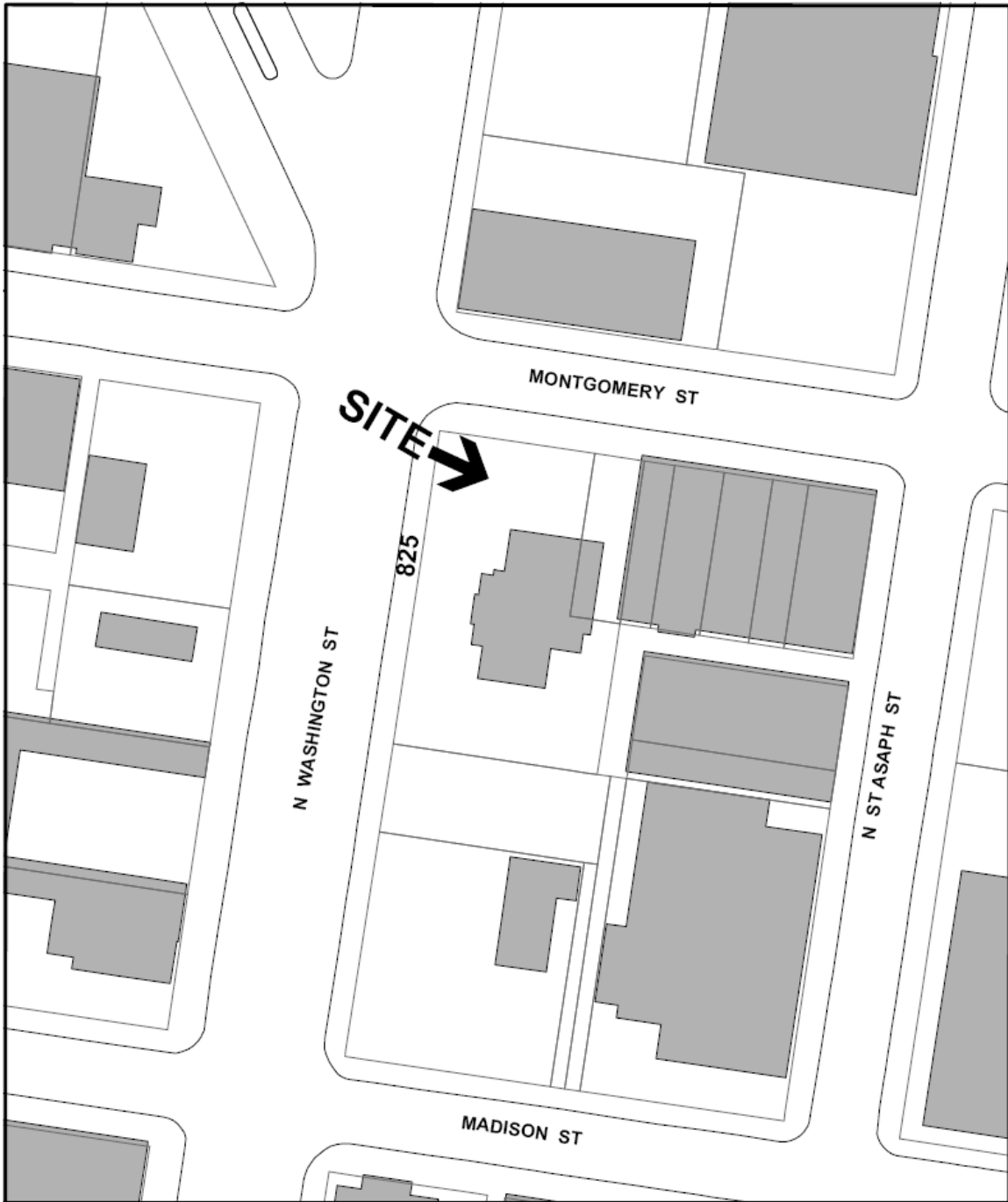
**BOARD ACTION, April 2, 2008 : Approved portions as amended, deferred portions, 7-0.**

The Board combined docket item #'s 5 and 6 for discussion. On a motion by Mr. Smeallie, seconded by Dr. Fitzgerald, the Board voted to approve portions of the application with the following conditions:

- 1) That the proposed sign within the south gable of the building be deleted;
- 2) That all PNC text and logos be deleted from the proposed directional signs at the project;
- 3) That the proposed signs on the front/west elevation and in the north gable end of the building not be internally illuminated.

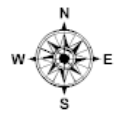
The Board deferred for restudy all proposed new external lighting, including any freestanding poles or bollard lighting. The roll call vote on the motion was 7-0.

**REASON:** The Board found the proposed demolition and alterations appropriate and inkeeping with the Zoning Ordinance and the Design Guidelines, but found that the proposed signage needed revisions per the Conditions of the approval, and the proposed external lighting needed restudy.



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**Update:** Since the May 21, 2008 Board meeting, the applicant has made additional revisions to the project's lighting scheme in response to the Board's concerns. The applicant has also provided information on the proposed lights and poles, and the lighting levels.

## **I. ISSUE:**

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for external lighting as detailed below:

### Gooseneck Lights:

The Applicant is proposing to install two (rather than the three as previously shown) new gooseneck lamps within the north gable end of the building to provide lighting over the new channel lettering signs that read "PNC BANK" with logo. The applicant has deleted the internal illumination. The lamps will be installed above the signage. The applicant provided manufacturer information on the gooseneck lamps.

### Soffit Lighting:

New lighting will be installed within the existing openings in the soffit and roof overhang over the new signage approved for the front façade, next to the entrance. The applicant has provided a detail showing the lighting and manufacturer information.

### Parking Lot and Street Lighting:

1. Ten (reduced from twelve) freestanding pole lights are proposed in the parking lot and around the perimeter of the property to illuminate the drive aisles and sidewalks that surround the building. The poles will be 12' in height and have been revised in style. The new style has a more traditional street lamp appearance and is manufactured by a company called Antique Street Lamps, with the model being DS7. The fixtures and poles are black metal, with clear glass tops.
2. The existing two street light poles fronting North Washington Street will be replaced with a traditional acorn style light pole manufactured by Union Metal. This is the City approved style for replacement light poles along Washington Street. A cut sheet was provided by the applicant.

The applicant has met with City Staff to discuss the lighting levels within the property and has revised them to reflect the accepted City standards.

The applicant is also now proposing a brick screening wall to shield the ground level transformer. The height of the wall has not been determined pending clarification of the height of the new transformer. The transformer is located at the southeast corner of the building, adjacent to the drive-through aisle. The brick will be painted to match the building.

## **II. HISTORY:**

Originally constructed in 1940 as a Howard Johnson's restaurant, 825 North Washington Street has remained remarkably intact since its construction along Washington Street. The building is a good example of roadside architecture of this period and reflects the Colonial heritage and

intended character of the George Washington Memorial Highway through its modest scale and Colonial Revival details and design elements.

According to records, in 1951, the Board approved an addition to the building while it was operating still as Howard Johnson's. In 1960, the Board approved exterior alterations as the building was "remodeled"—the extent of these alterations is not known. In 1964, the Board approved a change in signage for the building. In 1976, the Board approved the construction of another addition. In 1978, the Board denied a request to replace the existing cupola and recommended it to be repaired in kind with the design to be maintained. In 1978, the Board approved alterations to the signage for Howard Johnson's.

The tenant of the building changed in 1985 when the restaurant Wendy's began occupying the location. In 1985, the Board approved some minor alterations to the building and new signage for Wendy's.

The 1958 Sanborn map shows the building footprint to be very similar to the current footprint of today. It appears that the addition approved in 1951 was to the rear of the building and was the bigger of the two additions approved by the Board since the building was constructed in 1940.

On April 2, 2008, the Board approved the Permit to Demolish the rear kitchen addition and other alterations and signage, but deferred the external lighting proposal.

### **III. ANALYSIS:**

The proposed signs, lighting comply with Zoning Ordinance requirements.

As stated in the initial reports, Staff is very supportive of the proposed alterations to the building and feels they are minimal in order to convert the building to a banking use. The proposed alterations do not detract from the character-defining features of this prime example of mid-century "Roadside Architecture", conceived in a commercial Colonial-Revival design vocabulary.

Due to its location along the George Washington Memorial Parkway, the manner and treatment of external lighting for this building is important. Staff appreciates the applicant working to revise the amount of lighting, the lighting levels, and the style of the new fixtures and light poles. With the reduction in the number of new freestanding light poles, the new traditional style fixtures, and the decrease in pole height to 12', Staff supports the lighting scheme for the site and parking lot, as well as the two replacement poles fronting North Washington Street. Staff also supports the use of the gooseneck lamps and the continued use of lighting in the overhang to illuminate the new sign next to the main entrance.

Staff also believes that the applicant has made considerable improvement to reducing the lighting levels on the site to acceptable City levels, and will continue to ensure these are met through the plot plan review process.

### **IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. That the applicant work with Staff to determine an appropriate height for the transformer screening wall; and,
2. That the applicant continue to work with Staff to ensure lighting levels on the site are appropriate and meet acceptable City standards.

**V. 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 Prior to the issuance of a demolition permit or land disturbance permit, a rodent abatement plan shall be submitted to Code Enforcement that will outline the steps that will be taken to prevent the spread of rodents from the construction site to the surrounding community and sewers.
- C-2 Construction permits are required for this project. Plans shall accompany the permit application that fully details the construction as well as layouts and schematics of the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems.
- C-3 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-4 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-5 Permission from adjacent property owners is required if access to the adjacent properties is required to complete the proposed construction. Otherwise, a plan shall be submitted to demonstrate the construction techniques utilized to keep construction solely on the referenced property.
- C-6 Wall letters / signs must comply with USBC [H103-H111] Please indicate the method to be used for anchoring the letters to the wall.
- C-7 Roof drainage systems must be installed so as neither to impact upon, nor cause erosion/damage to adjacent property.
- C-8 Roof drainage must not run toward adjacent property. If the footprint area of the addition: (1) exceeds the footprint area of the existing structure, or (2) the roof drainage of the existing structure is hard piped, or (3) the roof drainage from the addition will cause erosion or damage to an adjacent property, then run-off water must be hard piped (schedule 40 PVC pipe;  $\geq 3$ " in diameter) to the storm, sewer, inlet box, building sub drain, street flume or curb.

- C-9 Sheeting and shoring shall not extend beyond the property line; except when the developer has obtained a written release from adjacent property owners which has been recorded in the land records; or through an approved encroachment process.
- C-10 Certification is required from the owners or owner's agent that the building has been inspected by a licensed asbestos inspector for the presence of asbestos (USBC 110.3).
- C-11 A Certificate of occupancy shall be obtained prior to any occupancy of the building or portion thereof, in accordance with USBC 116.1.
- C-12 Building Code Analysis: The following minimum building code data is required on the drawings: a) use group, b) number of stories, c) construction type, d) tenant area
- C-13 Canopies must comply with USBC 3202.3.1 for support and clearance from the sidewalk, and the applicable sections of USBC's Chapter 11. Structural designs of fabric covered canopies must comply with USBC 3105.3. The horizontal portions of the framework must not be less than 8 feet nor more than 12 feet above the sidewalk and the clearance between the covering or valance and the sidewalk must not be less than 7 feet.
- C-14 Canopies must comply with USBC 3105.1 and the applicable sections of USBC: Chapter 16. Structural designs of fabric covered canapés must comply with USBC 3105.3.
- C-15 The handicapped ramp must comply with the requirements of USBC 1010.1. The front approach to the exterior door (which is on the pull side) must comply with the landing requirements of USBC 1010.6. Handrails must comply with USBC 1010.8
- C-16 Required exits, parking, and accessibility within the building for persons with disabilities must comply with USBC Chapter 11. Handicapped accessible bathrooms shall also be provided.
- C-17 Toilet Rooms for Persons with Disabilities:
  - (a) Water closet heights must comply with USBC 1109.2.2
  - (b) Door hardware must comply with USBC 1109.13
- C-18 Toilet Facilities for Persons with Disabilities: Larger, detailed, dimensioned drawings are required to clarify space layout and mounting heights of affected accessories. Information on door hardware for the toilet stall is required (USBC 1109.2.2).
- C-19 Required accessibility to Automatic Teller Machines for persons with disabilities must comply with USBC.
- C-20 A wall location plat prepared by a land surveyor is required to be submitted to this office prior to requesting any framing inspection.

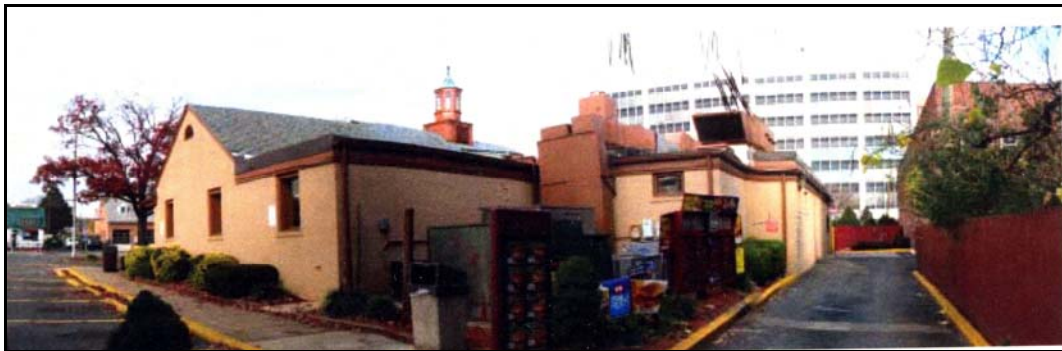


Historic Alexandria:  
No comments received.

**VI. IMAGES**



**Figure 1. Existing Conditions from North Washington Street**



**Figure 2. Existing Conditions Facing North**

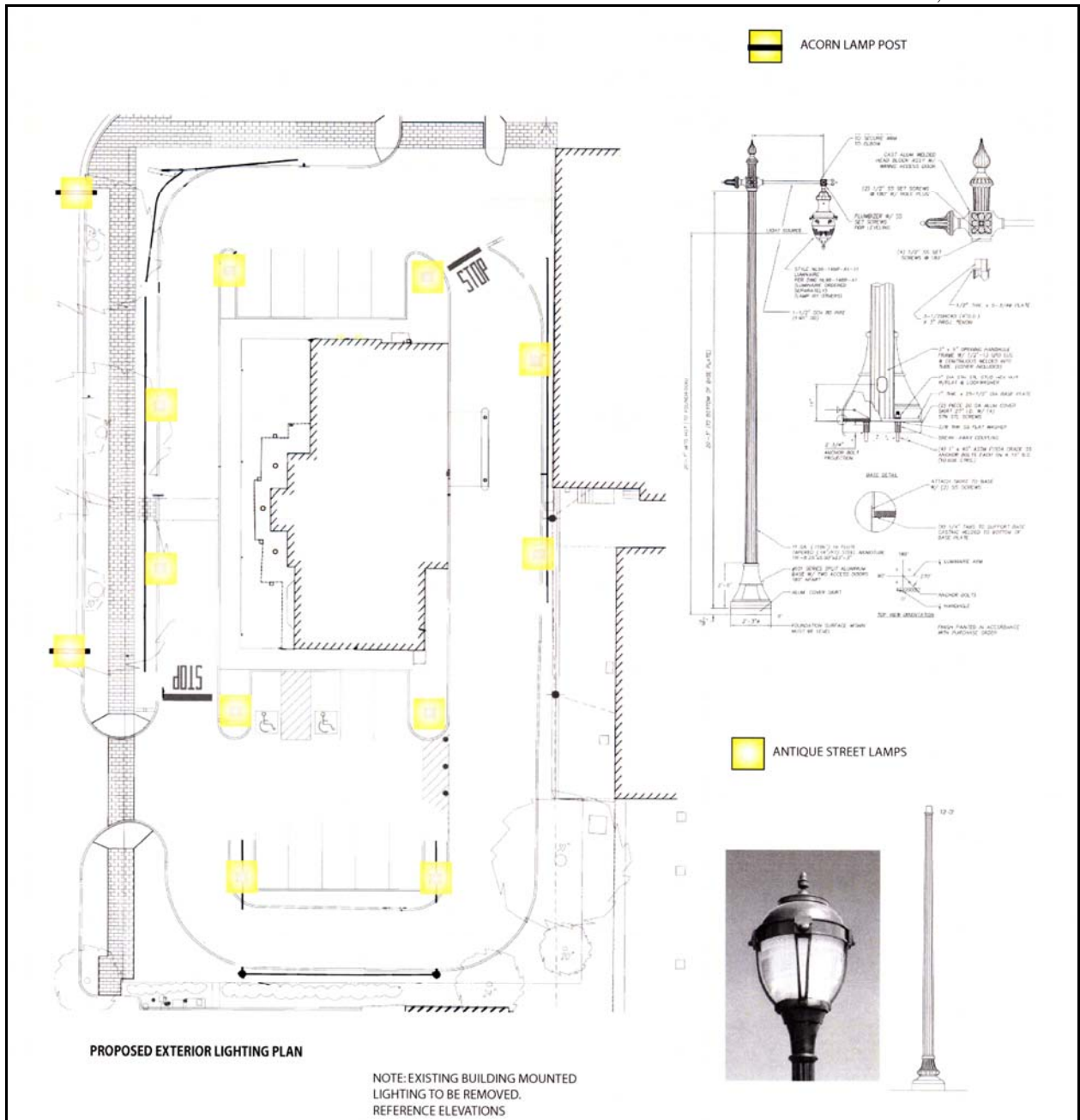


Figure 3. Proposed Lighting Plan and New Lamps

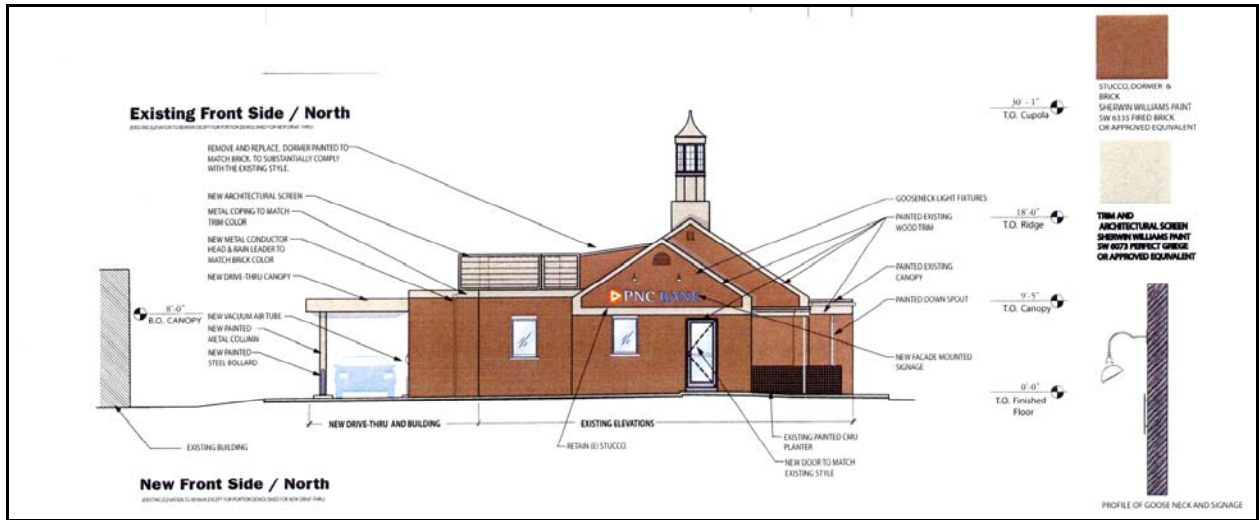


Figure 4: Proposed Alterations on North Elevation