

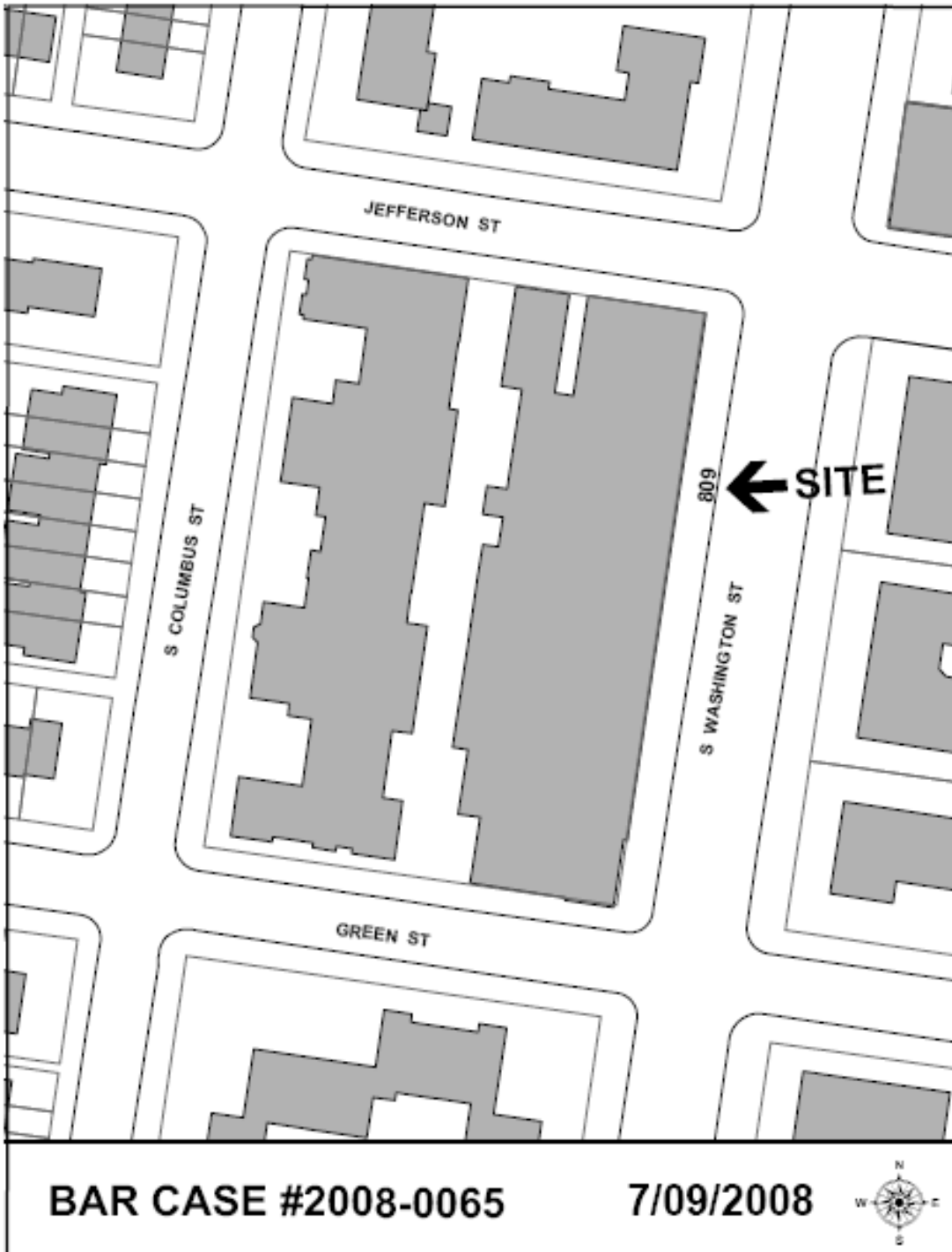
Docket Item # 7
BAR CASE #2008-0065

BAR Meeting
July 9, 2008

ISSUE: Signs and Lighting
APPLICANT: Old Town Sign Company
LOCATION: 809 South Washington Street
ZONE: CRMU/L, Commercial

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

1. That the second story wall mounted OLD TOWN HARDWARE sign be deleted;
2. That the ACE banner in the second floor storefront window be removed and a smaller and more appropriate vinyl decal sign identifying either ACE or OLD TOWN HARDWARE be installed on the window, to be approved by Staff.



I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for signage and lighting for Ace Old Town Hardware at 809 South Washington Street. All signs are proposed to be composed of individual aluminum letters with a baked enamel paint. The applicant proposes the following four signs and lighting:

Entrance sign

An ACE logo sign is proposed to be installed above the entrance to the store. The burgundy sign will measure 10” in height and 2’ in length.

Storefront window sign (north window)

OLD TOWN HARDWARE is proposed to be located on the sign band above the storefront window. The sign is proposed to measure 10” by 10’ and will be a dark green color. The HARDWARE portion of the sign is proposed to be in a larger font that the OLD TOWN portion of the sign.

Storefront window sign (south window)

BENJAMIN MOORE PAINTS is proposed to be located on the sign band above the storefront window. The sign is proposed to measure 10” by 7.8’ and will be a dark green color. The PAINTS portion of the sign is proposed to be in a larger font than the BENJAMIN MOORE portion of the sign.

Second story sign

An OLD TOWN HARDWARE sign is proposed to also be installed on the second floor above the Next Day Blinds window fronting South Washington Street. The upper portion of the sign, OLD TOWN, is proposed to measure 10” by 5’8” and the lower portion, HARDWARE, is proposed to measure 1’ by 10’. The ivory sign will be illuminated by existing gooseneck lights.

Lighting

The applicant will also install three gooseneck lights above each of the storefront signs facing South Washington Street. The metal lights will be painted a flat white color.

II. HISTORY:

According to the Sanborn Fire Insurance maps, 809 South Washington Street is part of a commercial strip built between 1955 and 1958, in a simple Colonial Revival style.

The Board approved façade alterations and signage for the prior tenant, Storehouse Home Furnishings, on December 21, 1994 (BAR Case #94-0205). The Board has approved a number of other building alterations and signage for this commercial strip over the years.

III: ANALYSIS:

The proposed wall signs comply with zoning ordinance requirements.

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The Board is particularly concerned with the maintenance and memorial character of the George Washington Memorial Parkway which passes through Alexandria as Washington Street. Therefore, requests for signage on Washington Street must be compatible with the memorial nature of the parkway.

The *Design Guidelines* recommend only one sign per business as appropriate. In this instance, because the business has two street frontages (the store occupies the entire second floor of the building fronting on Washington Street and Jefferson Street) and because it is in an area of the historic district that is both pedestrian and vehicular in nature, Staff has no objection to the installation of more than one sign for this business.

However, Staff believes that the applicant's proposal for four signs facing Washington Street is excessive. Furthermore, the applicant has installed a large banner with the ACE logo in the second story storefront window facing South Washington Street. Although the vinyl banner is set back approximately 4' from the front of the window, it is highly visible and effectively functions as an additional sign identifying the business.

Staff recommends that the Board approve the three proposed signs on the front façade: the ACE logo sign and the OLD TOWN HARDWARE and BENJAMIN MOORE PAINTS sign above the storefront windows. The signs are relatively modest in size and not overwhelming to the storefront facade. Staff recommends that the second story sign be deleted because it will be minimally visible and unnecessary given the abundant street level signage. (The Board previously approved a second story sign for Storehouse; however, that sign was installed along the Jefferson Street frontage, and the Washington Street signage for Storehouse was limited to a single sign, unlike the proposal set forth by the applicant). Staff also recommends that the ACE banner in the second story window be removed. Staff would not object to the installation of a smaller and more appropriate window sign, such as an applied vinyl decal, identifying either Old Town Hardware or Ace in the second story window. Should the Board agree, Staff recommends that the applicant work with Staff to identify an appropriate design.

The proposed signs, with the modifications recommended by Staff, meet the recommendations contained in the *Design Guidelines* for the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

During the review of the signage application, Staff became aware of a newly installed 6' white vinyl fence at the rear of the applicant's property. The property owner, Washington Real Estate Investment Trust, was advised that the fence was not appropriate in the historic district and revised plans were subsequently submitted for an appropriate 6' wood fence. On July 2, 2008, Staff administratively approved the wood fence since it replaces a fence that was previously in that location. The property owner will install the new wood fence in approximately one week.

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

1. That the second story wall mounted OLD TOWN HARDWARE sign be deleted;

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2. That the ACE banner in the second floor storefront window be removed and a smaller and more appropriate vinyl decal sign identifying either ACE or OLD TOWN HARDWARE be installed on the window, to be approved by Staff.

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 Wall letters / signs must comply with USBC [H103-H111] Please indicate the method to be used for anchoring the letters to the wall.

Office of Historic Alexandria:

F-1 No comment.

VI. IMAGES



Figure 1: Proposed signage

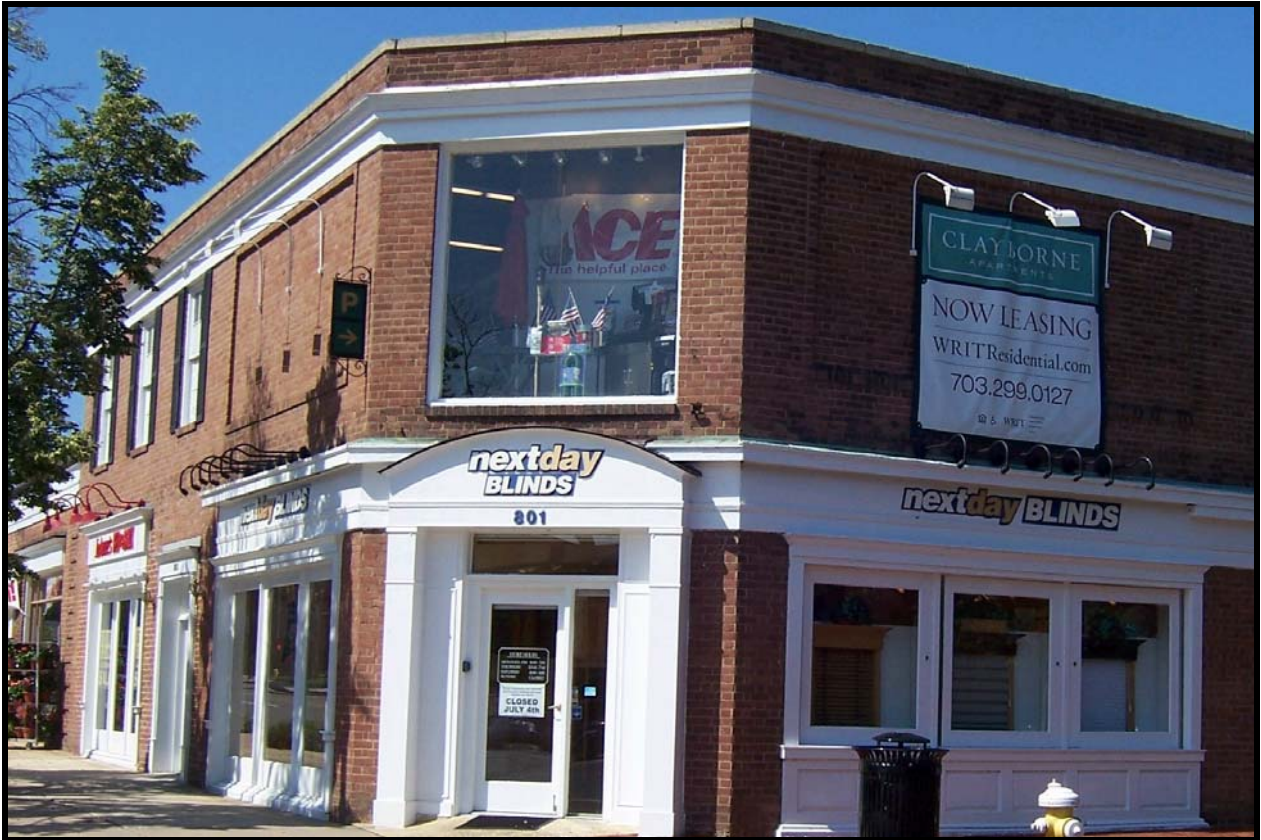


Figure 2: Photo of second floor ACE sign

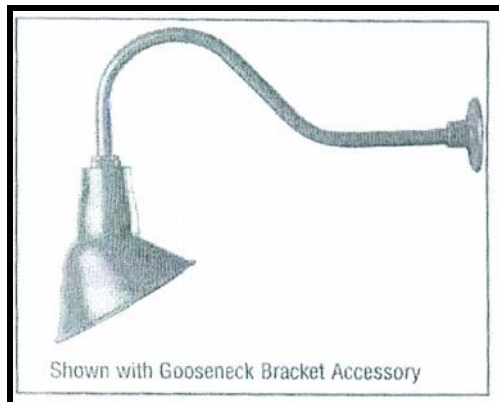


Figure 3: Proposed gooseneck light