

Docket Item # 14  
BAR CASE #2008-0191

BAR Meeting  
November 5, 2008

**ISSUE:** Signage

**APPLICANT:** Holiday Inn by Allen Industries

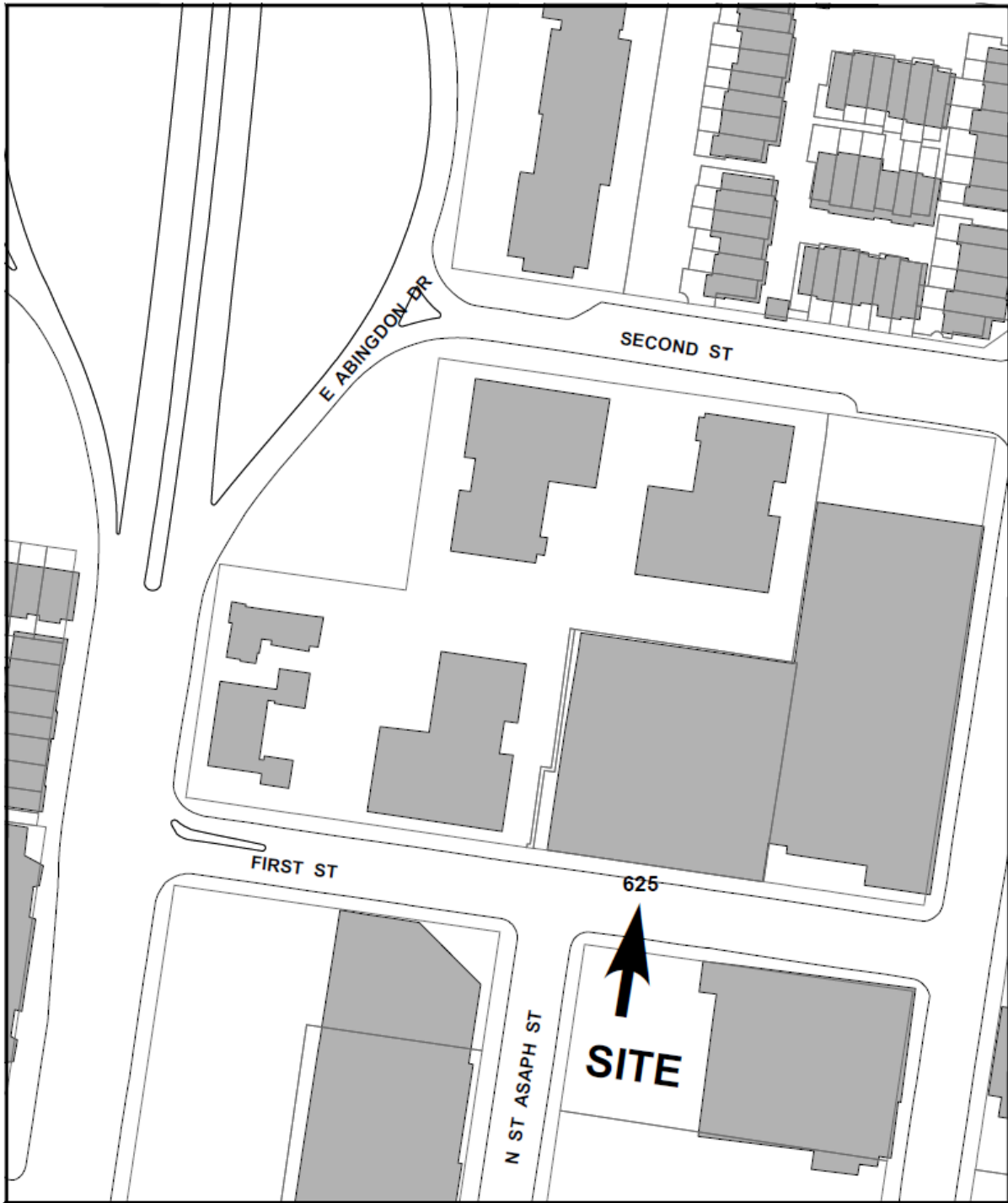
**LOCATION:** 625 First Street

**ZONE:** CD/Commercial

---

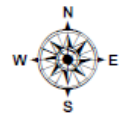
**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. That the applicant relocate the freestanding directional signs onto the subject property or seek approval of an encroachment by City Council.
2. That the building-mounted signage be anchored through the mortar joints.
3. That the lettering "Holiday Inn & Suites" be white both day and night.
4. That the applicant revise the directional signs to be externally illuminated, pending final approval by Staff
5. That the proposed green-colored uplighting and downlighting on the brick piers be eliminated.



**BAR CASE #2008-0191**

**11/5/2008**



**I. ISSUE:**

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the installation of signage and related lighting at the Holiday Inn located at 625 First Street. The applicant is replacing existing signage with new signage reflecting the hotel chain's revised logo. All of the proposed signage will be located along the First Street (south) elevation.

The applicant proposes to replace the existing wall sign on the First Street elevation. The existing signage consists of internally-illuminated green letters and an internally-illuminated orange and gold monogram. The proposed wall sign will be located in the same location and have a square footage of approximately 74 square feet (representing a reduction of 100+ square feet). The proposed signage will include an internally-illuminated monogram with a white "H" on a green background. The background will be a brighter/lighter green in the upper left corner and will gradually deepen toward the lower right corner. The lettering for "Holiday Inn & Suites" will be comprised of internally-illuminated channel letters. During the day, this portion of the sign will have white letters and at night, when illuminated, it will be green in color. This will be done through the application of a green translucent film.

The applicant also proposes to replace two existing directional signs. These signs are located at the vehicular entrance and exit on First Street. Each sign currently measures approximately five square feet and is posted at a height of 6'3". The proposed directional signs will measure approximately two square feet (representing a reduction of three square feet). The signs will have green lettering and banding on a white background. The signs will read "Enter" and "Exit", respectively, and also have a directional arrow. The directional signs will be illuminated by fluorescent lighting.

As part of the signage scheme, the applicant is requesting approval for six green accent lights that are part of the hotel's branding. On the brick piers that form part of the port cochere, the applicant proposes two downlights with green bulbs at 70 watts. On the second and third stories, the applicant proposes four uplights affixed to four piers projecting a green light bulbs measuring 150 watts. The proposed fixtures are contemporary in design and made of die cast aluminum. The lights are proposed to be metal halide. The beam of the accent lighting is proposed to be directed only onto the brick piers. The lights will be angled so as to prevent light spillage.

**II. HISTORY:**

The Holiday Inn and Commonwealth Center was constructed beginning in 1982. The boundary line for the Old and Historic Alexandria runs through the building, as amended in November of 2000.

In 2007, the Board approved alterations to convert a window opening to a door (BAR Case #2007-00228, 11/14/2007). Staff could locate no prior approvals for the existing signage.

**III: ANALYSIS:**

The proposed wall sign complies with zoning ordinance requirements. The existing and proposed freestanding directional signs are not in zoning compliance. The applicant must either relocate the freestanding directional signs onto their property or must seek approval of an encroachment by City Council for the sign to remain in the public right-of-way.

The *Design Guidelines* advise that “signs should be designed in styles, materials, type faces, colors and lettering that are appropriate and sympathetic to the historic style of the building.” Further, the *Guidelines* note that “signs should be as simple as possible and avoid repetitious and undue verbiage.” The proposed signage is generally appropriate for this non-historic building and does not have excessive verbiage. The proposed signage represents a significant reduction in square footage from what currently exists. Staff finds the reduction in amount and size of signage to be an improvement over the existing conditions. Regarding logos and branding, the *Guidelines* note that “modifications of standard sizes and colors are often required by the Boards.” The proposed monogram and lighting script are the only forms of a logo and branding. Staff finds the proposed amount acceptable and not overwhelming to the building. The applicant notes that Holiday Inn hotels typically have, as part of their branding, green external lighting. Staff has concerns regarding this aspect of the proposed project, which are identified below.

*Proximity to George Washington Memorial Parkway:*

The *Design Guidelines* also note that the Board “is particularly concerned with the maintenance of the 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.” While this building is not located on Washington Street, Staff notes that it is partially visible from Washington Street. Staff recommends that some of the proposed lighting be eliminated or reduced to ensure compatibility with the memorial nature of the parkway.

*Illumination:*

The *Design Guidelines* identify internally illuminated signs as strongly discouraged by the Boards. Staff finds that in this location, on a non-historic building and across from a grocery store and surface parking lot, an illuminated sign is acceptable. Further the reduction in square footage of signage will mean that the proposed signage has less illumination than what currently exists. Staff is concerned about the change in color on the lettering of the wall sign from day to night. The applicant has indicated that during the day the sign will be white against the brick background but at night the lettering will be green. Staff finds that the white lettering is more appropriate and recommends that the lettering be white at all times. Regarding the freestanding directional signs, Staff recognizes the need for illumination of these directional signs, but finds that their nature as an illuminated box is not ideal. Staff recommends that the internal illumination be eliminated from the design of the directional signs. Staff recommends that the applicant revise the directional signs to be externally illuminated, pending final approval by Staff.

*Lighting:*

Staff notes that the use of colored exterior lighting, used at many Holiday Inns, is not appropriate in this location. The use of green-colored uplighting and downlighting on select piers on the building is not compatible with the character of the historic district. Staff does not recommend approval of the proposed lighting. Staff notes that globe lights are currently mounted on both the east and west face of each of the brick piers on both the north and south side of the driveway drop-off lane along the building façade.

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

1. That the applicant relocate the freestanding directional signs onto their property or seek approval of an encroachment by City Council.
2. That the signage be anchored through the mortar joints.
3. That the lettering “Holiday Inn & Suites” be white both day and night.
4. That the applicant revise the directional signs to be externally illuminated, pending final approval by Staff
5. That the proposed green-colored uplighting and downlighting on the brick piers be eliminated.

**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.

C-2 An Electrical permit is required for this project. Plans shall accompany the permit application that fully details the construction as well as layouts and schematics of the electrical system.

Office of Historic Alexandria:

Approve.

VI. IMAGES

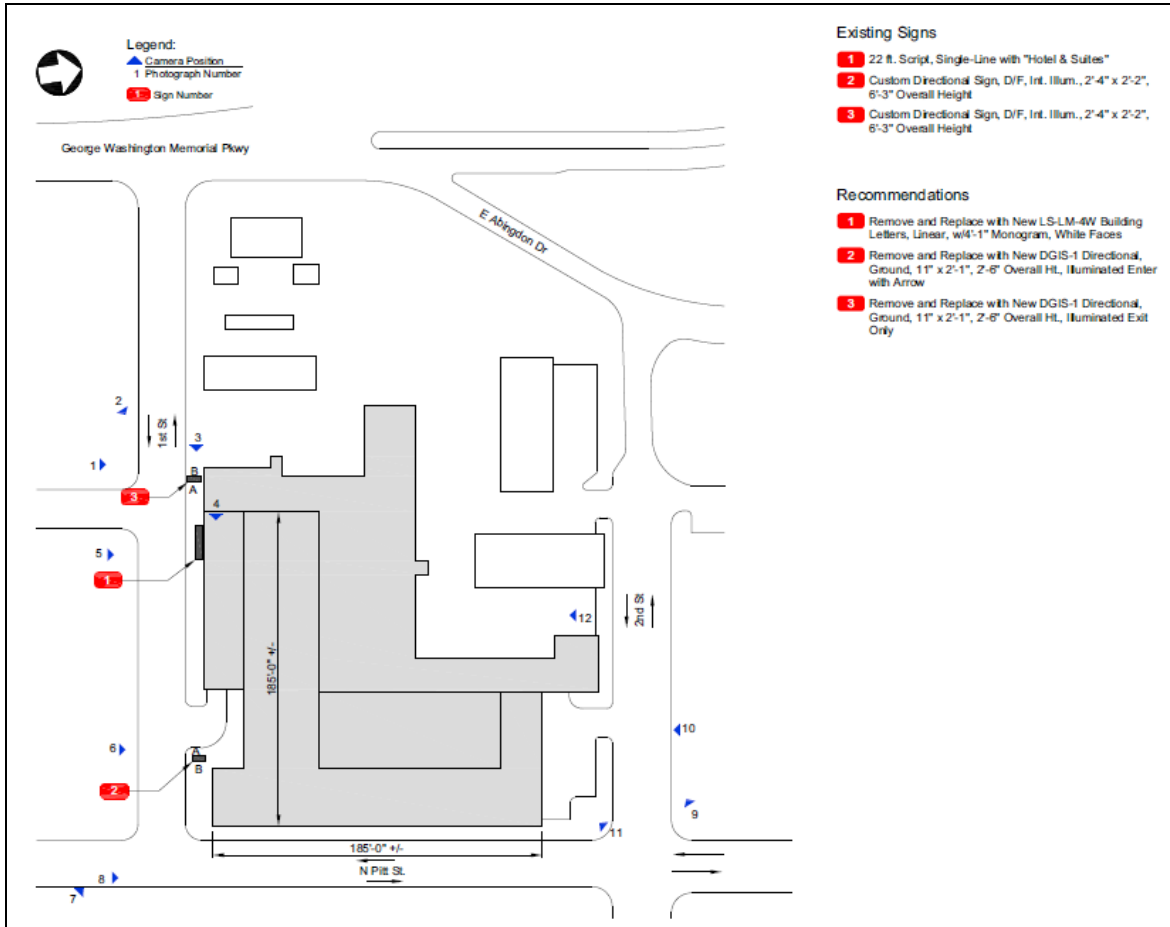


Figure 1. Site survey showing location of existing and proposed signs.



Figure 2. Existing conditions at 625 First Street.



Figure 3. Existing conditions at 625 First Street, south elevation.





Figure 4. Existing wall sign with measurements.



Figure 5. Proposed wall sign.



Figure 6. Existing freestanding directional sign (one of two).

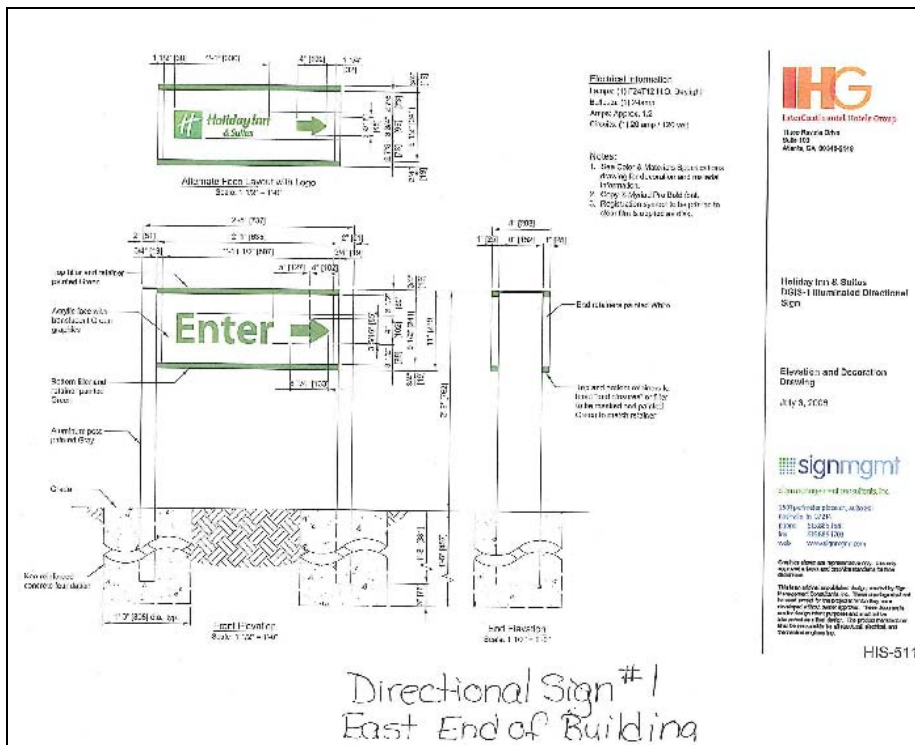


Figure 7. Proposed freestanding directional sign.





Figure 8. Proposed accent lighting.



**Figure 9. Example of similar accent lighting in blue.**

**Description of Proposed Work**

Holiday Inn & Suites; 625 First St., Alexandria VA.

1. Wall Sign:
  - a. Remove existing Wall Sign located at main entrance on First St. Current sign consists of:
    - i. **Monogram:** Internally Illuminated, orange & gold in color.
    - ii. **Holiday Inn:** Internally illuminated Channel Letters, green in color.
    - iii. **Hotel & Suites:** Smaller internally illuminated channel letters, green in color.
    - iv. **Square footage** of current sign measured by drawing a single rectangle around entire sign measures: 174.29 sq feet.
    - v. **Installation** is individual elements direct mounted to brick façade.
  - b. Replace Wall Sign in same location with the following:
    - i. **Monogram:** 4'1" X 4'1". Colors: Background base color is Matthews: MP57451, Medium Green with a gradual lightening of the color as it travels to upper left hand corner, and single 'H' graphic is White.
    - ii. **Holiday Inn:** Channel Letters: 24" H with an expanse to include these letters equaling 9'-0 3/4". Color is equal to Matthews MP57556, White.
    - iii. **& Suites:** Secondary Copy Channel Letters: S height measures 1'-3 1/2", Color matches that of the larger channel letters; Matthews MP57556, White.
    - iv. **Total width** of ALL Channel lettering is 18'-2" , with Monogram & Spacing is 23'
    - v. **Square footage** of new proposed sign measured by drawing a single rectangle around entire sign measures: 74.18 sq ft, a reduction of 100+ square feet.
    - vi. **Installation:** Individually elements of sign mounted directly to brick façade.
  - c. Remove Existing Directional Signs:
    - i. **Locations & installation method:**
      1. Driveway entrance near corner of First St and Pitt St., foundation buried in concrete median.
      2. West end of building direction across from N Saint Asaph St. foundation buried in grass median.
    - ii. **Sign types:** Internally illuminated cabinets on a single post with existing electrical junctions at site of post burial. Graphics are Monogram + Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites Entrance & Registration. Faces Measuring 2'4" X 2'2", approx 5 sq ft. Height is 6'3". Colors are: Green background with white graphics.
  - d. Replace Directional Signs
    - i. **Location:** Match to existing signs
    - ii. **Installation:** Match to existing signs, wiring to existing electrical junctions which will be shifted slightly to line up with new *two post* installation method.
    - iii. **Measurements.** Faces measure; 11" X 2'1", Approx 2 sq ft. Height is 2'6", Reducing faces by 3 sq ft and height by 3'9".
    - iv. **Colors** – White acrylic background, graphics to be 3M Scotchcal #3630-5684 vinyl.

**Figure 10. Applicant's description of proposed work.**