

Docket Item # 3  
BAR CASE #2009-0049

BAR Meeting  
May 6, 2009

**ISSUE:** Signage  
**APPLICANT:** Jerald J. Littlefield  
**LOCATION:** 428 South Washington Street  
**ZONE:** CD / Commercial zone

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends approval of the application for signage with the condition that the letters be metal rather than plastic and that they be blind-mounted.

**\*\*EXPIRATION OF APPROVALS NOTE:** In accordance with Sections 10-106(B) and 10-206(B) of the Zoning Ordinance, any official Board of Architectural Review approval will expire 12 months from the date of issuance if the work is not commenced and diligently and substantially pursued by the end of that 12-month period.

**\*\*BUILDING PERMIT NOTE:** Most projects approved by the Board of Architectural Review require the issuance of one or more construction permits by Building and Fire Code Administration (including signs). The applicant is responsible for obtaining all necessary construction permits after receiving Board of Architectural Review approval. Contact Code Administration, Room 4200, City Hall, 703-838-4360 for further information.



**I. ISSUE:**

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for signage at 428 South Washington Street, a 1960s Colonial Revival brick commercial building. The building houses a medical practice.

The applicant proposes to install individual letters mounted on the wood pediment over the entrance. The base of the pediment measures approximately 12 feet 4 inches. The black letters will be of formed plastic. The letters reading “JERALD LITTLEFIELD, MD” will be 4½ inches in height and the letters reading “OPHTHALMOLOGY” will be 3½ inches in height. The proposed signage will not be illuminated

**II. HISTORY:**

428 South Washington Street is a freestanding two-story, three-bay center entrance brick building constructed circa 1960.

In 1973, the Board approved an application to install a projecting sign, presumably the sign recently removed. In 2002, the Board denied an application to paint unpainted masonry and denied an application to demolish the cornice, instead recommending that it be retained and repaired (BAR Case # 2001-0312 and 2001-0313). In 2009, BAR Staff administratively approved repairs to an existing (now removed) hanging sign (BAR Case # 2009-0011).

**III: ANALYSIS:**

Proposed signage complies with zoning ordinance requirements.

Staff notes that the applicant recently removed a projecting sign that was internally illuminated and had more text, including a phone number and address, than the Board generally supports. The applicant also has an existing wall sign, measuring approximately one square foot and reading “Jerald J. Littlefield, MD, Ophthalmology.” This sign will be retained. One sign per building less than one square foot is permitted without review by the BAR.

In respect to the proposed signage, the *Design Guidelines* generally recommend one sign per business. The *Guidelines* also advise that “signs should not be attached to a building in a manner which requires the removal of historic materials” and “individual letter signs should be blind mounted on the front of a building.” Further, due to the building’s location on Washington Street, the proposed signage must also be compatible with the memorial nature of the Parkway. Staff finds that the proposed application for signage is consistent with the *Design Guidelines* and is appropriate for this location on the Parkway. However, Staff recommends that the letters be fabricated of metal rather than plastic and that the letters be blind-mounted. Staff has contacted the applicant who has agreed to the proposed recommendation.

**IV: STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends approval of the application for signage with the condition that the letters be metal rather than plastic and that they be blind-mounted.

**V: CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS**

Legend: C - code requirement R - recommendation S - suggestion F - finding

Code Administration:

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:

R Approve

VI. IMAGES

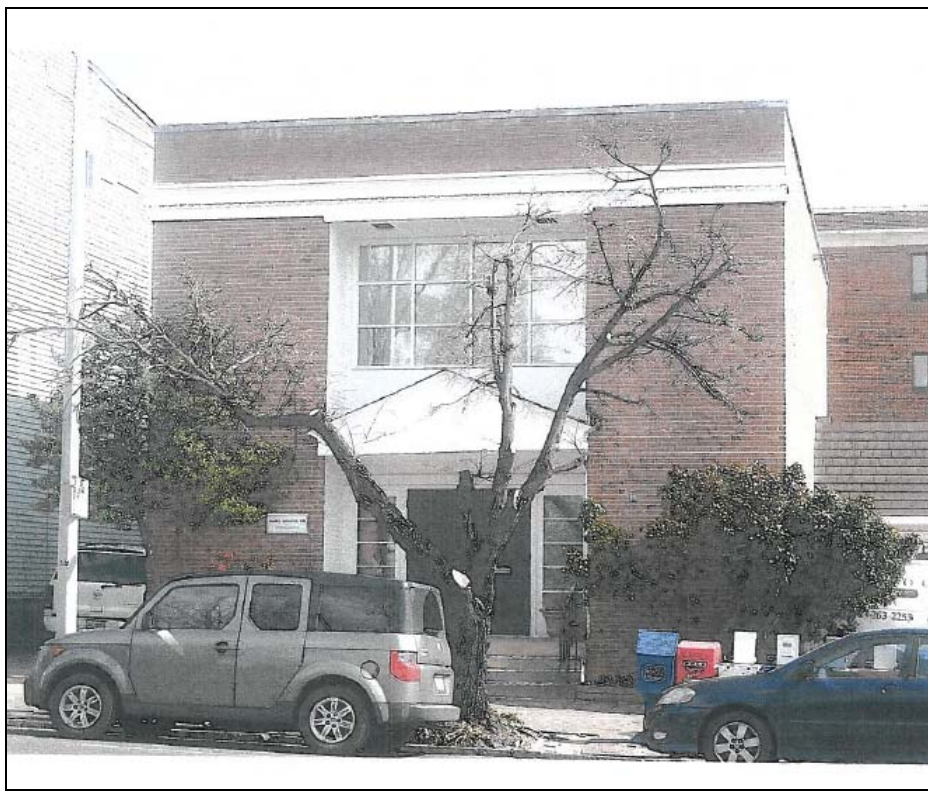


Figure 1. Front elevation of 428 South Washington Street.

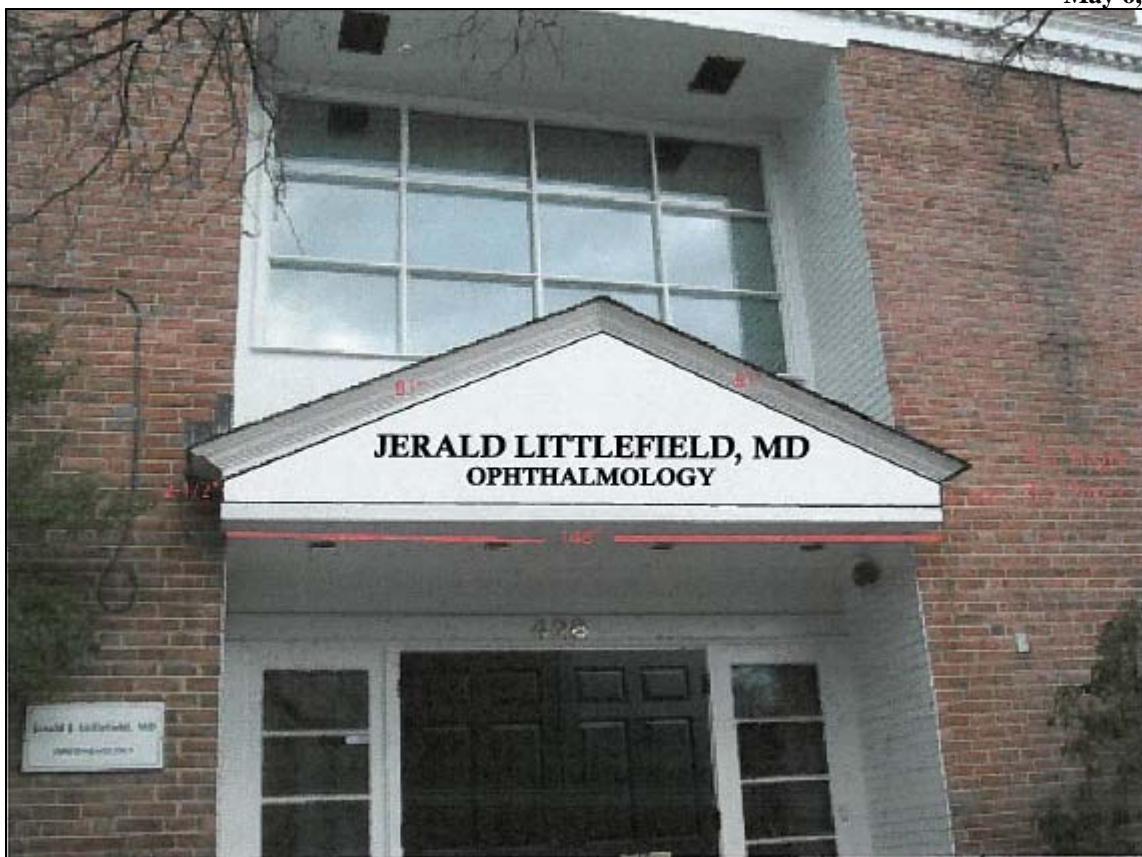


Figure 2. Proposed signage in pediment.