

Docket Item # 3  
BAR CASE # 2009-0185

BAR Meeting  
December 2, 2009

**ISSUE:** Signage & Awning  
**APPLICANT:** Columbia Firehouse Restaurant  
**LOCATION:** 109 South Saint Asaph Street  
**ZONE:** CD/Commercial

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted.

**BOARD ACTION OCTOBER 7, 2009:** Deferred portion for restudy, Approved portion as amended, 4-1.

On a motion by Mr. von Senden, seconded by Mr. Neale, the Board voted 4-1 to approve with conditions the Certificate of Appropriateness. Mr. Smeallie was opposed. The conditions of approval were:

1. That the text considered “special advertising” on the restaurant’s front window be deleted; and,
2. That only the restaurant’s logo will be permitted on the front window.

**REASON:** The majority of the Board agreed with the Staff analysis regarding the proposed signage. However, they expressed concern with the proposed menu boards to be mounted on the exterior of the building. They recommended that the applicant continue to work to develop possible design solutions for the menu boards which would not impact the existing quoining on the façade of the building.

**SPEAKERS:** Rob Blumel, agent for the applicant, expressed concern about the Staff recommendation to delete one of the proposed menu boards from their submittal. He testified that both menu boards are essential for his client’s business which house’s two separate restaurants.

John Hynan, HAF, testified that the Foundation supports the staff recommendation.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION, OCTOBER 7, 2009:** Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. That the menu boxes be reduced in size such that they can be mounted between the historic brick quoining on the building corner and the south side of the restaurant's entrance; and,
2. That the final design and location of the menu boxes be subject to Staff approval.

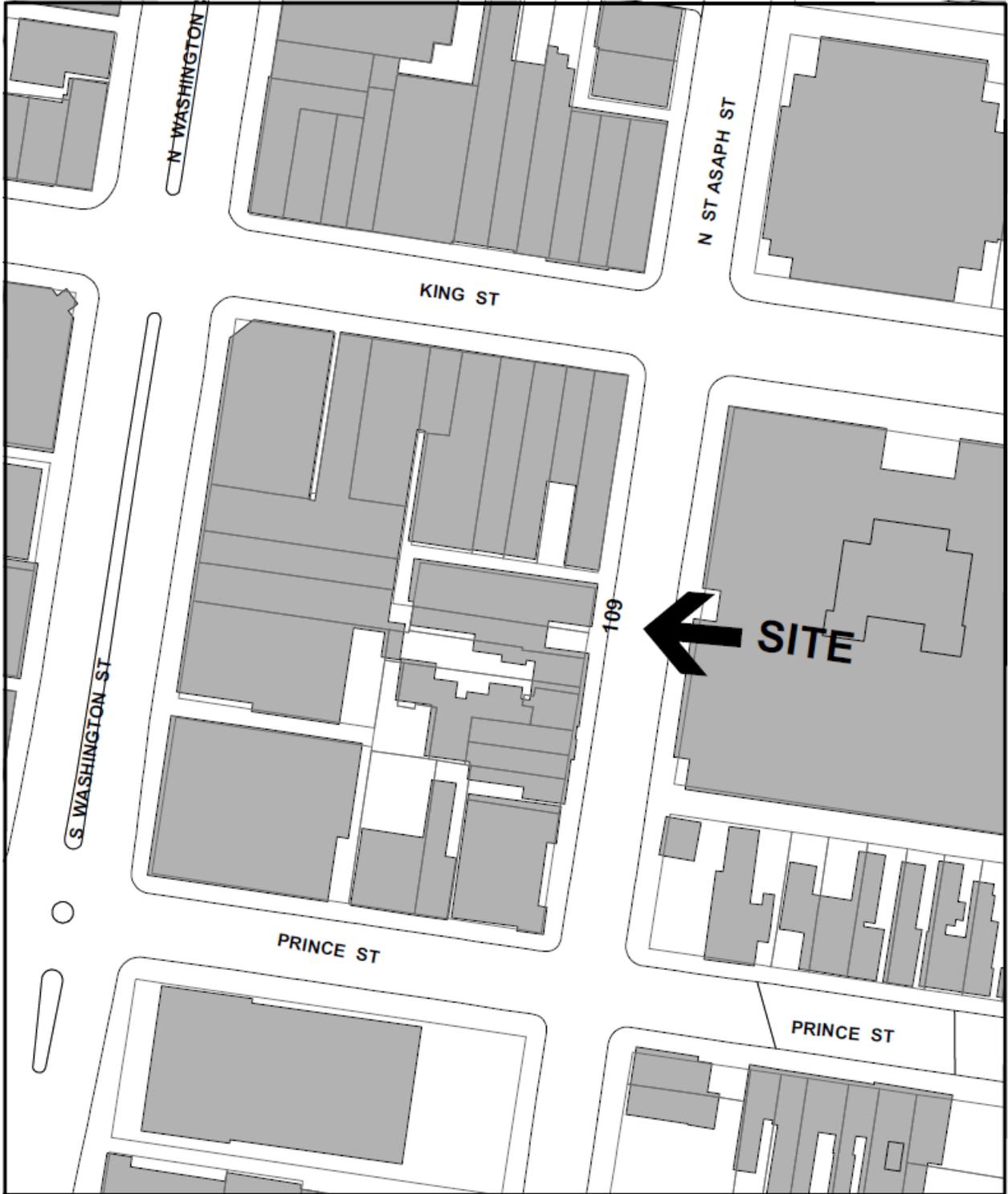
STAFF RECOMMENDATION, SEPTEMBER 16, 2009: Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. That the menu boxes be sized such that they can be installed without obscuring the historic brick quoining around the restaurant's window and door;
2. That the menu boxes be painted black to match the building's trim;
3. That the menu boxes not be illuminated;
4. That the design and location of the menu boxes be subject to Staff approval;
5. That the text considered "special advertising" on the restaurant's front window be deleted; and,
6. That only the restaurant's logo be permitted on the front window.

The case was deferred from the September 16, 2009 hearing due to improper notice.

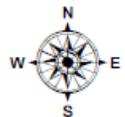
\*EXPIRATION OF APPROVALS NOTE: In accordance with Sections 10-106(B) and 10-206(B) of the Zoning Ordinance, any official Board of Architectural Review approval will expire 12 months from the date of issuance if the work is not commenced and diligently and substantially pursued by the end of that 12-month period. In the case for a certificate or permit for a project that requires a development special use permit or site plan under section 11-400 of the zoning ordinance, the period of validity shall be coincident with the validity of the development special use permit or site plan as determined pursuant to section 11-418 of the ordinance.

\*\*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.



**BAR CASE #2009-0185**

**12/2/2009**



**UPDATE:**

Since the menu box portion of the application was deferred from the October 7, 2009 BAR hearing, the applicant has revised the proposal and submitted additional information as summarized in the revised staff report that follows.

**I. ISSUE:**

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for a menu box for the COLUMBIA FIREHOUSE restaurant at 109 South Saint Asaph Street.

The proposed menu box measures 24 inches wide by 36 inches high and four inches deep (six square feet) and will contain the menus for the first floor barroom and the second floor fine dining restaurant. The box will be bolted to the iron fence south of the building entrance. The steel menu box will be finished in a black-green color to match the fence and the face of the box will be Plexiglass. The menus will be illuminated by LED light strips installed vertically within the frame of the menu box.

The applicant has provided a photo of the menu boxes at 100 King Street, which are similar in size to the proposed menu boxes for Columbia Firehouse.

**II. HISTORY:**

The brick building with an attached glass atrium at 109 South St. Asaph Street is a two story brick structure originally built as a city firehouse in 1885 for the Columbia Steam Engine Fire Company. Since the early 1980s the property has been adaptively reused as a restaurant. The Board first approved the restoration of the building in 1978, and approved the Portner's restaurant signage on July 7, 1982. On October 3, 2007, the BAR deferred for restudy a new awning with signage for Bookbinders restaurant (BAR Case #2007-0193).

Staff approved a temporary grand opening sign for Columbia Firehouse on July 16, 2009.

The Board approved the restaurant's awning and signage on October 7, 2009, deferring the menu box portion of the application. The new awning with signage and the window sign have already been installed.

**III. ANALYSIS:**

The proposed menu box complies with Zoning Ordinance requirements.

The *Design Guidelines* and the Board generally recognize that many restaurants desire menu boxes and in most cases recommend their approval, provided that they are designed such that they fit and do not overwhelm the architectural character and detail of the building and that they will not deteriorate over time. Staff commends the applicant for reducing the number of menu boxes from two to one, and for relocating the menu box to the adjacent non-historic fence, where it will not impact the historic brick quoining around the restaurant's entrance. Staff also has no objection to the illumination of the menu box, which will provide subtle illumination. Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted.

**IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted.

**STAFF:**

Stephanie Sample, Historic Preservation Planner, Planning & Zoning  
Stephen Milone, Division Chief, Land Use Services

**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.

C-2 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.

VI. IMAGES:



Figure 1. Google map image showing previous signage.

**Columbia Firehouse**  
Menu Box Revisions

Submitted by  
Robert Blumel  
SBT Springfield  
Signs By Tomorrow, for Today

New box is 24"x36"x4".  
Box is fully welded 16 ga steel. face is 1" square tube with 1"x1/8" strap steel door surround. Face is 3/16" plexi.

The box is lit from within on either side by 12v micro LED's. The interior light is directed and provides ample illumination without being distracting.

The box will be mounted to the immediate left of the building, flush with the building face.

It will be bolted directly to the fence with stainless hardware.

It will be painted antiqued green to match the fence.

24"  
36"  
fence

Figure 2: Menu box details.



Figure 3: Photo simulation showing menu box.



100 King Street Menu Boxes 24"x40". QTY 2

Figure 4: Photo of existing menu boxes at 100 King Street.