

Docket Item # 8  
BAR CASE # 2010-0064

BAR Meeting  
April 21, 2010

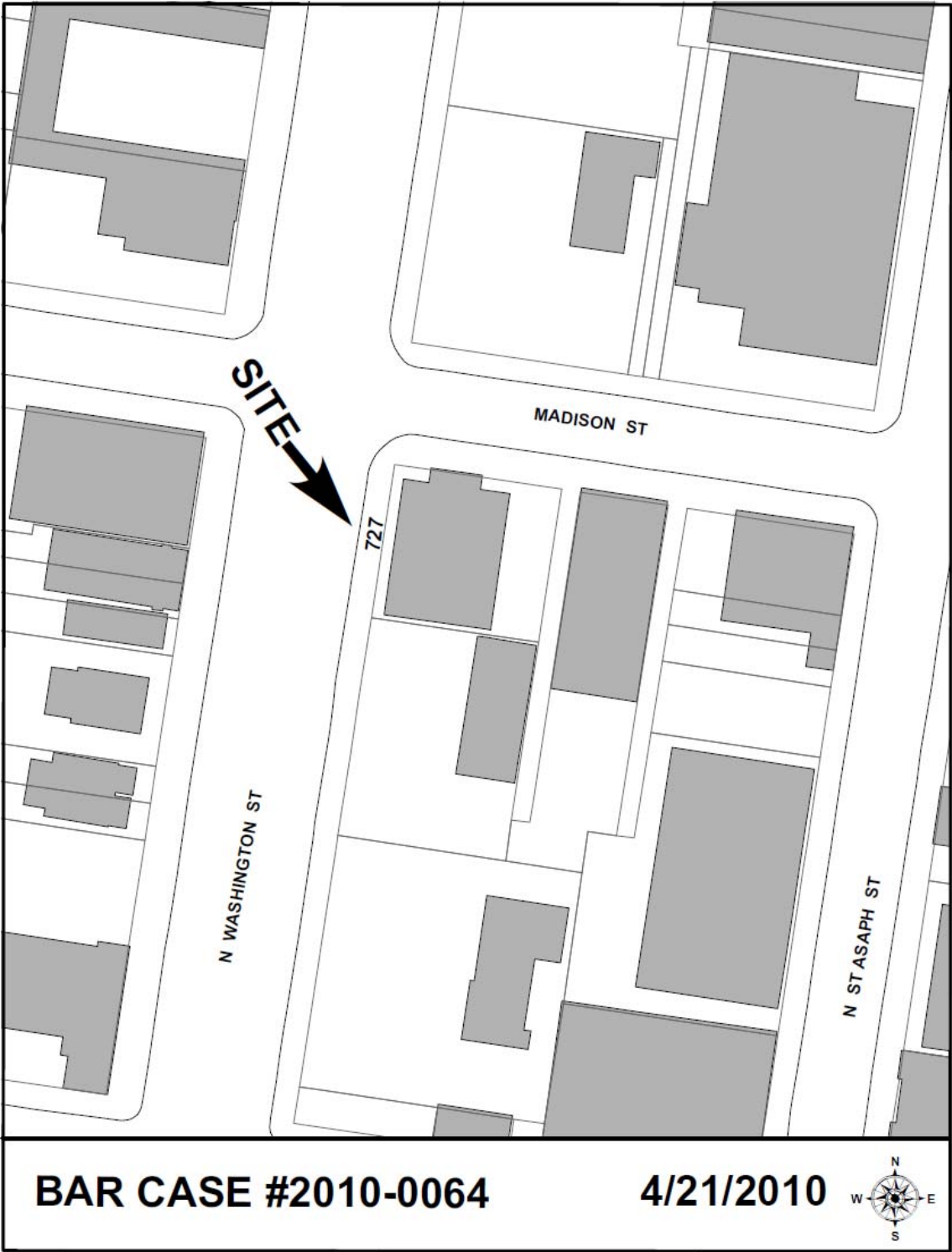
**ISSUE:** Signage  
**APPLICANT:** Red Peg Marketing  
**LOCATION:** 727 N. Washington Street  
**ZONE:** CDX / Commercial Downtown Zone

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends approval of the application with the condition that the current white metal balustrades flanking the handicapped ramp on the ground level are removed and replaced with a single black metal open handrail.

**\*\*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 final approval 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.



**BAR CASE #2010-0064**

**4/21/2010**



**I. ISSUE:**

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for signage to be mounted on an existing business located at 727 N. Washington Street. The applicant is proposing to install a new, flat metal sign on the Madison Street elevation to complement the existing sign on N. Washington Street. The proposed sign, "REDPEG Marketing," measures 2.6 ft by 10 ft and includes an abstract business logo. The sign will be mounted on the north side elevation fronting Madison Street in the wall area between the third and fourth stories. The colors of the metal sign's lettering and logo are black, red, and white. The sign will not be lit, as originally proposed in the other two applications which were denied by the Board (BAR Case #2008-0103 and #2009-00186). The proposed sign complements the original sign approved by the Board in 2005 for the N. Washington Street elevation, yet will be fabricated of painted metal and will not be halo lit.

**II. HISTORY:**

727 North Washington Street is a four story freestanding brick office building with a large metal mansard roof and imbedded surface parking that was constructed in 1979, according to information on the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps.

*Previous Decisions:*

The Board approved new window openings on the second, third and fourth floors of the south wall of the building (BAR Case #2003-0030, 3/5/03, BAR CASE #2003-0274 12/17/03). The Board also approved signage for Momentum Marketing (BAR Case #2003-0086, 6/4/03). In 2005, the Board approved the current signage for Red Peg Marketing (BAR Case #2005-0007, 3/16/05). For BAR Case #2005-0007, the applicant had originally proposed red colored LED lighting and a larger square footage. The Board deferred the application for restudy and to allow additional time to discuss the design with the applicant. The applicant revised the design to eliminate the LED lighting and to reduce the overall square footage. The revised sign was approved for the west façade by the Board on March 16, 2005. On September 3, 2008, the Board denied an application for a second sign on the side (north) elevation which was similar in design to the approved west façade's sign (BAR Case #2008-0103).

On September 17, 2009, the Board denied the reconsideration of the sign application for a second sign to be installed on the side (north) elevation of the building (BAR Case #2009-00186). The Board disagreed with the Staff analysis and found it was inappropriate to install an illuminated sign on the north elevation of the building. The Board voiced concern that the sign was excessive for the building, as the building has existing signage on the North Washington Street elevation and that the location of the proposed sign was not located near a door. In addition, the Board noted that they were discouraging any additional illuminated signage on Washington Street.

**III. ANALYSIS:**

Proposed signage complies with zoning ordinance requirements.

This building is located on Washington Street and thus the proposed signage must be compatible with the Washington Street Guidelines. This modern commercial building is located in an area

of Washington Street with large modern commercial buildings. The proposed signage maintains the character and scale of this area.

The *Design Guidelines* recommend generally only one sign per business. On corner buildings, the Board has often approved two signs, one on each frontage of the building. Additionally, for the *Guidelines* specify that “signs should be designed in styles, materials, type faces, colors and lettering appropriate and sympathetic to the historic style of the building.” Consistent with the *Guidelines’* general direction and with the Board’s practice on corner buildings, Staff recommends that two signs are appropriate for this location. The proposed sign’s design is compatible in size, color and materials with this modern office building and appropriate for a corner location.

The Board has previously determined that one halo-lit sign mounted on the N. Washington Street facade was acceptable for this building. At the September 3, 2008 hearing, the Board determined that an additional halo-lit sign to be mounted on the Madison Street elevation was inappropriate and denied the application. The Board expressed concern regarding the size of the sign and that the sign was proposed to be mounted on the north elevation. The Board suggested that they may be able to support a smaller, second sign that is mounted above or near the pedestrian entrance toward the northwest corner of the building. On September 17, 2009, the Board denied the reconsideration of the September 3, 2009 sign application for a second, halo-lit sign to be installed on the side (north) elevation of the building (BAR Case #2009-00186). The Board continued to express that it was inappropriate to install an illuminated sign on the north elevation of the building. The Board voiced concern that the sign was excessive for the building, as the building has existing signage on the North Washington Street elevation and that the location of the proposed sign was not located near a door. In addition, the Board noted that they are discouraging any additional illuminated signage on Washington Street.

Due to the building’s size, the size of the signage, and the proposed location facing a gas and service station, Staff maintains that a second, unlit metal flat sign located above the third story windows is appropriate and compatible for the Madison Street elevation. However, Staff is concerned with the prominent appearance of the existing white metal railings installed flanking the handicap ramp on the first level. Staff has not been able to document a BAR approval for the installation of this incompatible guardrail style balustrade and is recommending that it be removed and replaced with visually minimal, black metal handrails. Balusters are not needed in this application and draw far too much attention to the ramp.



Photo of existing white metal balustrade



Photo of an open metal handrail

**IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of the application with the condition that the current white metal balustrades flanking the handicapped ramp on the ground level are removed and replaced with a single black metal open handrail.

**STAFF:**

Michele Oaks, Historic Preservation Planner, Planning & Zoning  
Al Cox, FAIA, Historic Preservation Manager, Planning & Zoning

**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.

Historic Alexandria:

No Comments.

Transportation and Environmental Services:

No Comments.

VI. IMAGES



Figure 1. Existing signage on N. Washington elevation.



Figure 2. Current view taken from intersection of N. Washington and Madison Streets.



Figure 3. Madison Street elevation showing proposed signage location and unapproved balustrade



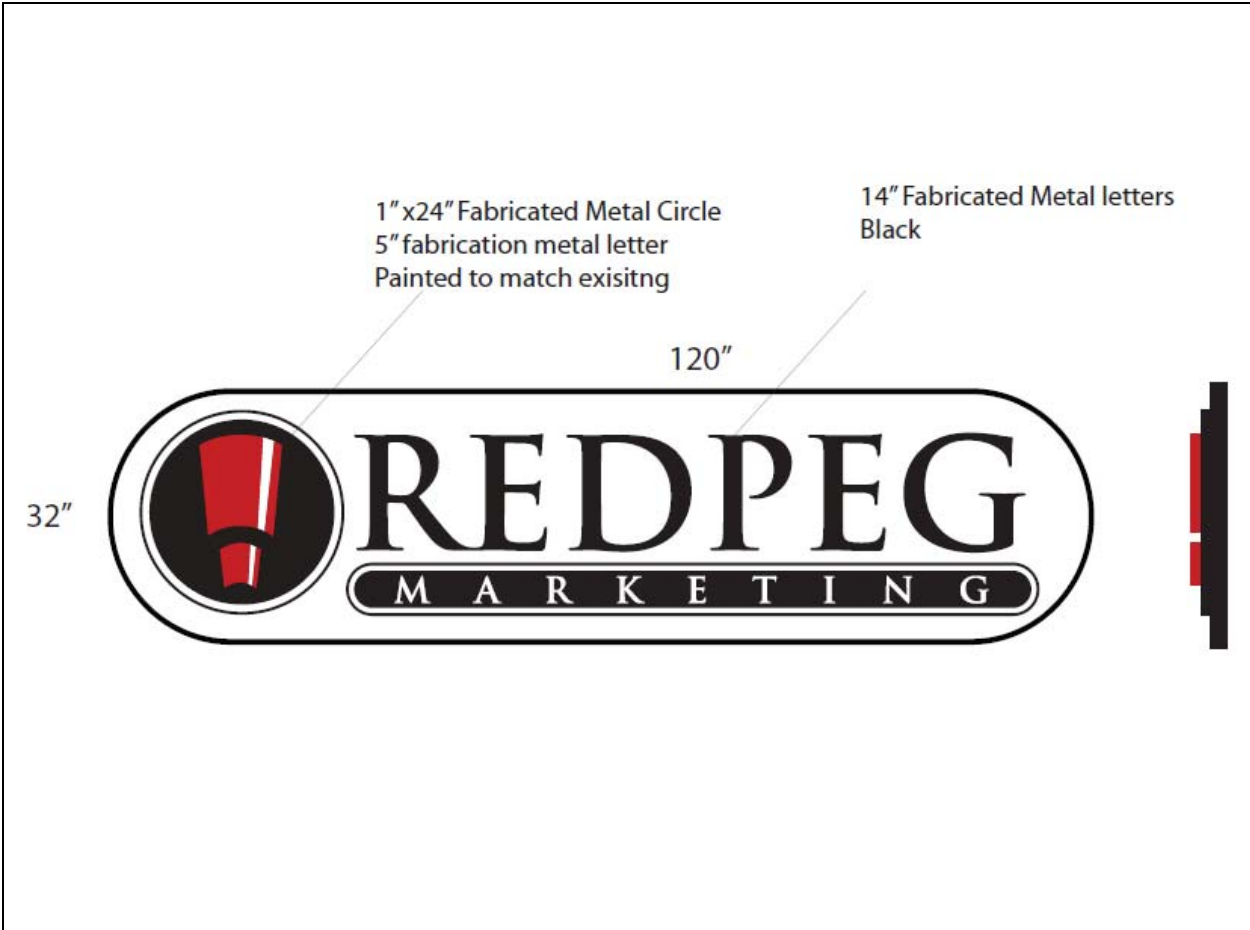


Figure 4. Proposal