

Docket Item # 2  
BAR CASE # 2010-0063

BAR Meeting  
May 5, 2010

**ISSUE:** Signage and Awning Replacement  
**APPLICANT:** Bittersweet (Robert Blumel, Agent)  
**LOCATION:** 821 King Street  
**ZONE:** KR / King Street Retail Zone

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

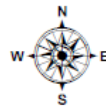
**\*\*EXPIRATION OF APPROVALS NOTE:** In accordance with Sections 10-106(B) and 10-206(B) of the Zoning Ordinance, any official Board of Architectural Review approval will expire 12 months from the date of final approval if the work is not commenced and diligently and substantially pursued by the end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



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Update:

At the April 21, 2010 BAR hearing, the Board removed this item from the Consent Calendar. Although there were no stated concerns about the design of the requested awnings, Board members expressed concern about the amount of existing signage on the windows of the business, and asked the applicant to study their overall signage plan. The applicant has evaluated their signage and has revised the submitted proposal as follows:

1. Remove of the round, 35” diameter, anniversary decals on the two, Alfred Street windows.
2. Remove the 2003, 2006 Award Decals on the upper, front, right window.
3. Remove the signs hanging from the “clothesline” from the lower, front, left, window.

**I. ISSUE:**

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness to remove the seven (7) existing, stationary shed-style awnings with seven (7) new, shed-style, retractable awnings on the commercial building located at 821 King Street. The widths of the awnings vary from 10’-14’ with a 12” valance. The operable awning will be fabricated of a steel, frame wrapped with Sunbrella fabric. The proposed color scheme for the awnings are a black background, with white lettering identifying the restaurant’s name “Bittersweet” and the restaurant type “Catering \* Café \* Bakery”.

The applicant proposes to mount the awning above the existing, first floor fenestration, 8’ above-grade, as measured from the bottom of the awning to sidewalk.

**II. HISTORY:**

The restaurant “Bittersweet” located at 821 King Street, occupies the first floor of the two story brick commercial building constructed between 1921 and 1941 according to the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps.

The current masonry façade is detailed with a crenellated parapet fashioning a recessed panel flanked by paterae (round medallions). The 1/1 windows on the second floor are detailed with keystone, jack arches.

*Previous Decisions:*

In June of 1997, the Board approved stationary awnings across this storefront for the restaurant, Bittersweet in 1997(BAR Case #97-0130).

In 1998, the Board approved a window sign for another tenant in the building. The window sign, DIVERSITIES CRAFTS, GIFTS, JEWELRY & OTHER WONDERFUL GOTTAHAVS was approved under BAR Case #98-0025.

### III. ANALYSIS:

The subject awnings comply with the zoning ordinance requirements outlined in Section 9-201(A)(15).

The *Design Guidelines* state that “Awnings should be appropriate and sympathetic to the historical style of the building to which they are attached;” “Awnings should be made of a canvas type fabric;” “For historic buildings, appropriate shed awnings (both retractable and non-retractable) are preferred in the historic districts;” “Single color awnings are usually appropriate for buildings with extensive façade ornamentation;” “Awnings should not overwhelm or obscure the architecture and decorative features of historic buildings;” and “On masonry buildings, awnings should be anchored through the mortar joints rather than directly into the masonry unit itself.”

The proposed awning’s widths vary from 10’-14’ with a 12” valance and are fabricated of a metal frame sheathed with Sunbrella fabric. These specifications meet the requirements outlined in the *Design Guidelines* for size, design, mounting specifications and materials. Additionally, the proposed awnings do not detract from the current style of the building and are similar to retractable awnings the Board has approved on other establishments within the historic district (see photo below of retractable awnings approved at 1025 King Street, Catholic Book Store.)



The proposed awnings at Bittersweet are very simple and elegant black with white lettering and have greatly reduced the bulk and signage of the present awnings. The applicant is proposing to mount the awning to the building by utilizing bolts installed into the frieze of the trim above the windows or in the masonry’s mortar joints. As requested by the Board, the area of the window signs will be reduced by over 50%. The remainder of the small white vinyl signs are tasteful, are similar to window signs previously approved by the Board, and comply with the Zoning Ordinance.

**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 and building permit for the proposed sign and/ or wall lettering.
- C-1 Awnings must comply with all applicable requirements of USBC 3105.3 and 3202.3.1 Retractable and fixed awnings must have a minimum 7 foot clearance from a sidewalk to the lowest part of the framework or any fixed portion of any retractable awning is required. Retractable awnings must be securely fastened to the building and can not extend closer than 24 inches in from the curb line (USBC 3202.3.1).
- C-2 Fixed awnings must be designed and constructed to withstand wind or other lateral loads and live loads required by the USBC. Structural members must be protected to prevent deterioration (USBC 3105.3).

Historic Alexandria:

No Comments.

Transportation and Environmental Services:

No Comments

**VI. IMAGES**



Figure 1. Existing signage on Alfred and King Street Elevations



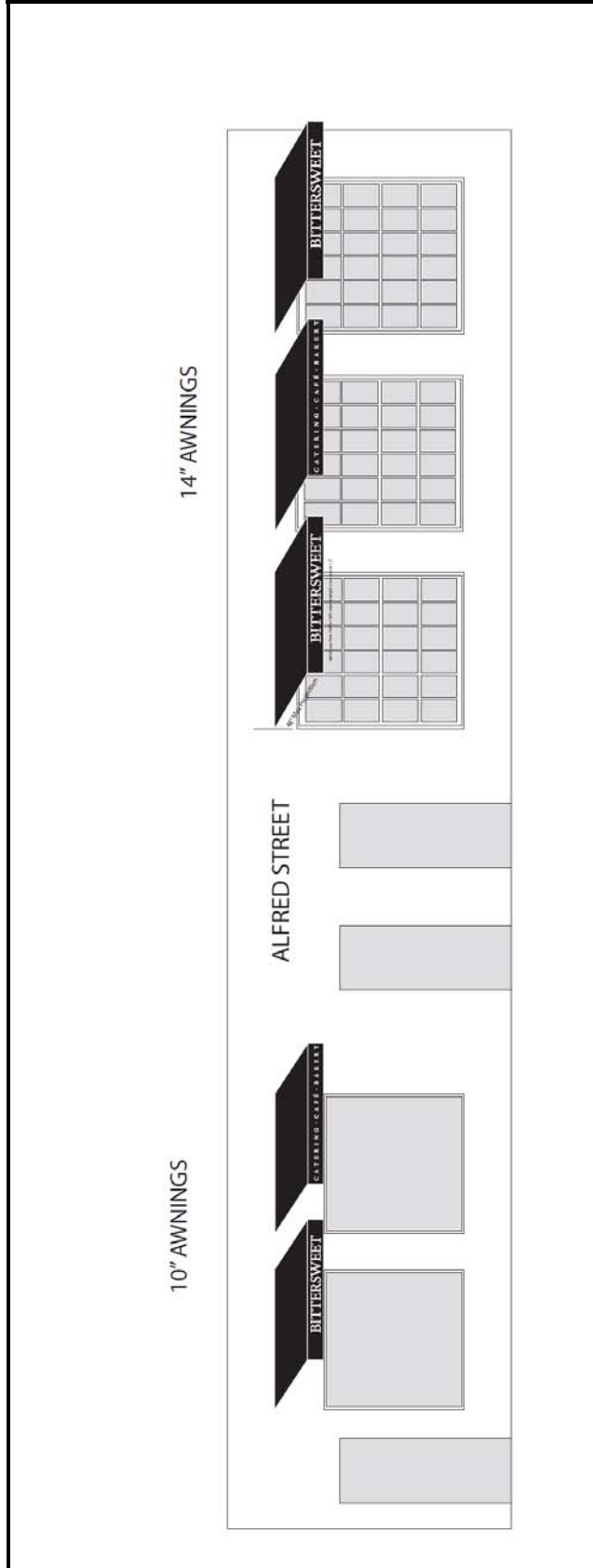


Figure 2. Alfred Street Elevation Proposed



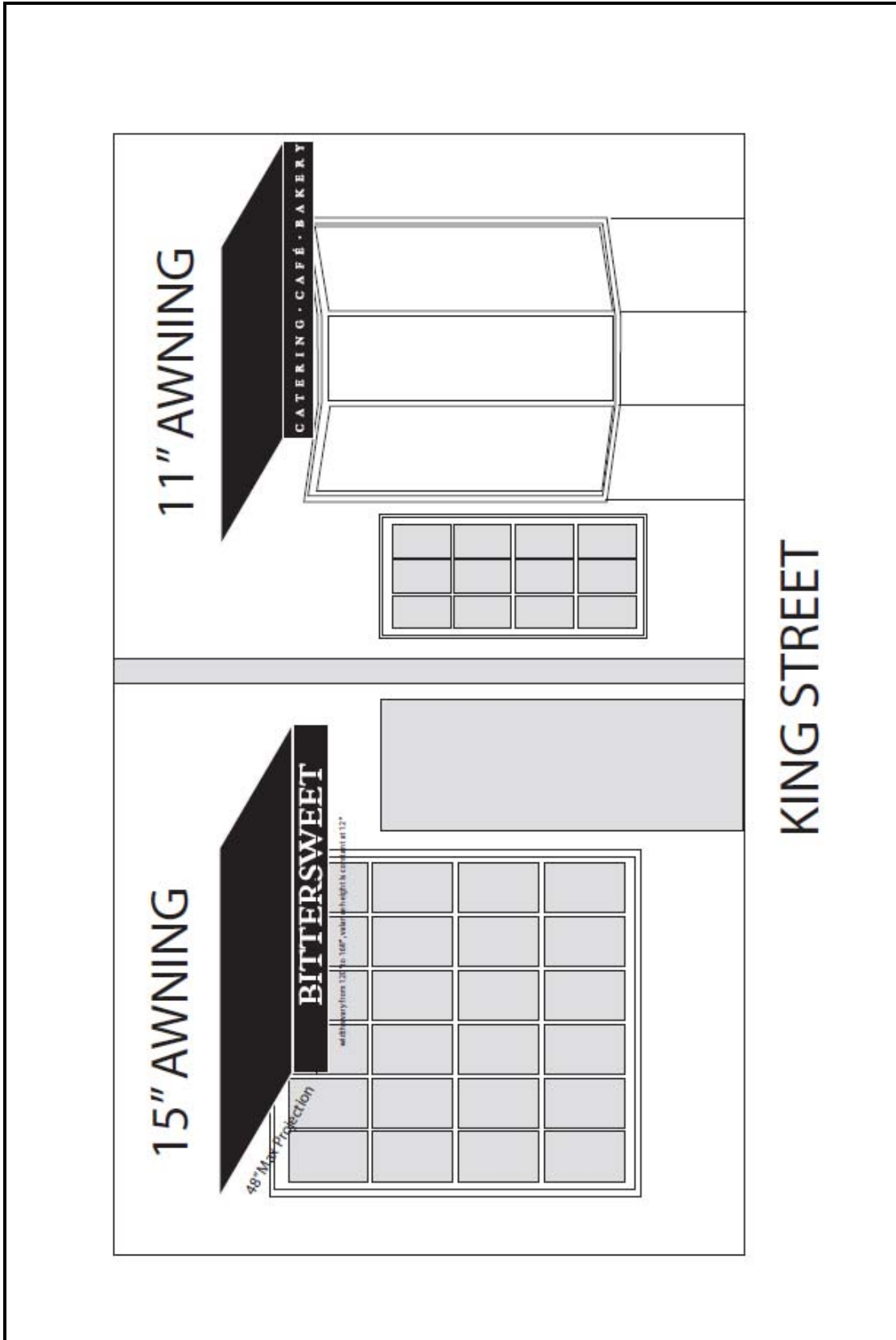


Figure 3. King Street Elevation Proposed





Figure 4. Photos of type of proposed awnings installed

