

Docket Item # 4
BAR CASE # 2010-0081

BAR Meeting
May 5, 2010

ISSUE: Directory sign

APPLICANT: National Association of Professional Insurance Agents

LOCATION: 400 and 414 North Washington Street

ZONE: CD/Commercial

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

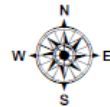
****EXPIRATION OF APPROVALS NOTE:** In accordance with Sections 10-106(B) and 10-206(B) of the Zoning Ordinance, any official Board of Architectural Review approval will expire 12 months from the date of final approval if the work is not commenced and diligently and substantially pursued by the end of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



BAR CASE #2010-0081

5/5/2010



I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for two directory signs, one at the south building entrance (400 North Washington Street) and the other at the north building entrance (414 North Washington Street). The building is owned by the National Association of Professional Insurance Agents.

The directory sign at the 400 North Washington Street entrance will measure 1.75 feet by 1.71 feet, while the sign at 414 North Washington Street will be slightly smaller, measuring 1.72 feet by 1.48 feet. Together, the proposed directory signs will add approximately 5.5 square feet of signage to the existing 88 square foot of signage currently on the building. The top plate of each sign will have the address number, followed by individual silver plaques with black lettering for each tenant in the building. The plaques will be removable so that the sign can be updated as individual tenants come and go. The signs will be mounted into the brick next to each entrance in the recessed area perpendicular to North Washington Street.

The signs will not be illuminated.

II. HISTORY:

The three-story, brick-faced office building at 400 North Washington Street was constructed in 1960-1961. The addition to 400 North Washington Street (known as 414 North Washington Street) was approved by the Board on February 6, 1980. The addition has a modernist design which uses traditional building materials in historicist building forms.

In recent years, the Board has approved a number of alterations and signage for the building, including:

- Two signs for Prudential Real Estate (BAR Case #1995-0019, 2/15/1995).
- Security light poles (BAR Case #1998-0179, 10/21/98).
- Two signs for Century 21 (BAR Case #2001-0217, 10/1/92001).
- Alterations to the window soffits (BAR Case #2007-0164).

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed directory signs comply with the zoning ordinance. The linear frontage of the building on North Washington Street is 175 feet. The addition of the directory signs will bring the total square footage on the building to 93.5 square feet.

Although the *Design Guidelines* do not specifically address directory signs, they do discuss the need for a coordinated sign program for buildings with multiple tenants. Staff finds directory signs, such as the ones proposed, a more subtle and appropriate form of tenant identification.

The *Design Guidelines* specifically state that “The Board is particularly concerned with the maintenance and 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.” Staff finds the two proposed directory signs in keeping with the memorial character of the Parkway and compatible with the building at 400/414 North Washington Street.

In accordance with Board guidance, the sign application cannot be approved under the *Administrative Approval of Signs in the Historic District* program because directory signs are not permitted under this program. Given the relatively straightforward and modest design of directory signs, including the signs proposed by the applicant, Staff will recommend that the BAR amend the Criteria & Standards for Administrative approval of signs within the Historic Districts in order to allow for Staff approval of directory signs.

STAFF:

Stephanie Sample, Historic Preservation Planner, Planning & Zoning
Al Cox, FAIA, Historic Preservation Manager, Planning & Zoning

IV. 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 received.

V. IMAGES



Figure 2. Photo of 400 & 414 North Washington Street.



Figure 3. Photo of 400 North Washington Street entrance.

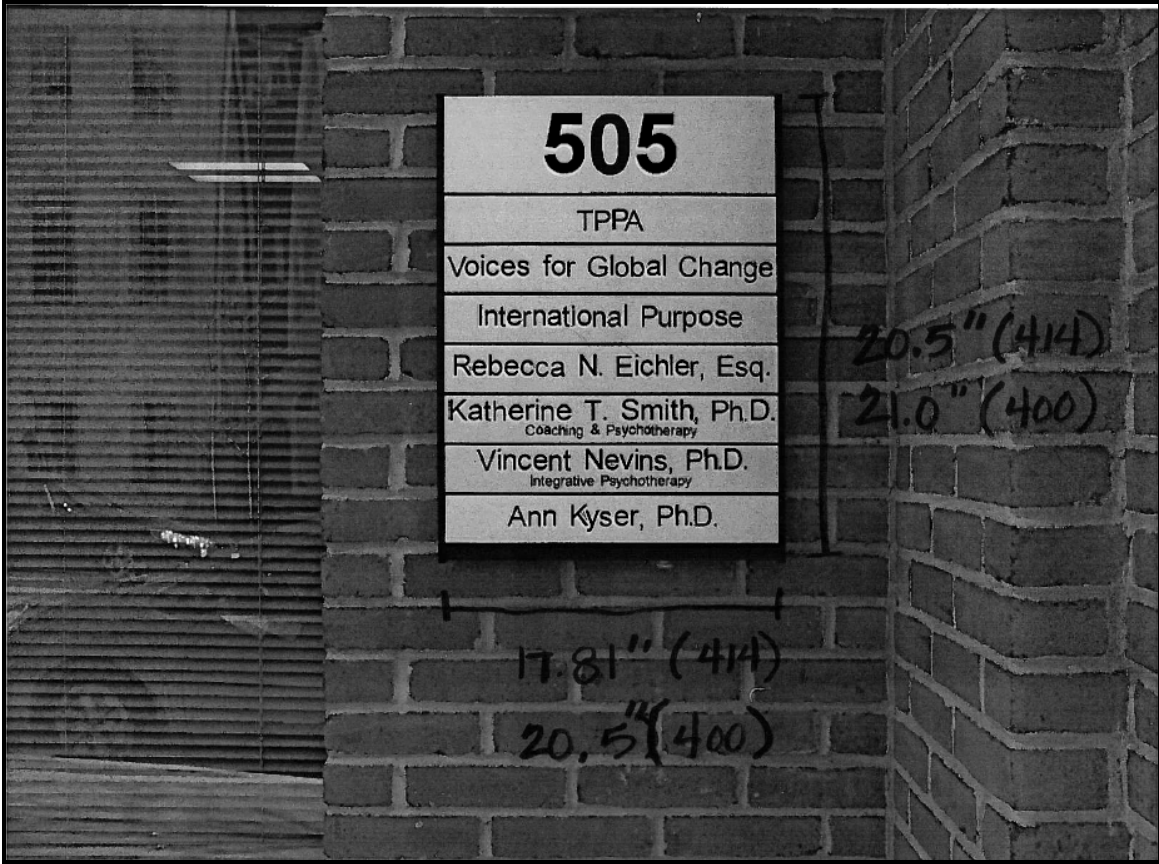


Figure 4. Photo of directory sign similar to the one proposed for 400 & 414 North Washington Street.