

Docket Item # 2
BAR CASE #2011-0103

BAR Meeting
June 1, 2011

ISSUE: Signage

APPLICANT: Wells Fargo Bank by Gary Brent

LOCATION: 330 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, 703-746-4200 for further information.



I. ISSUE

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the installation of multiple signs for Wells Fargo Bank, at 330 North Washington Street. Wells Fargo Bank has recently acquired the previous bank tenant, Wachovia.

The following proposed signs will replace the existing Wachovia signs installed with previous BAR approval. The applicant is also proposing to remove certain existing signs and not replace them.

- The hanging sign (36"x36") to the left of the front entrance on North Washington Street will be replaced in kind. The existing scroll bracket will be reused. The new sign will be double-faced HDU with a yellow lettering on a red background.
- The hanging sign (36"x36") to the left of the side entrance on Princess Street will be replaced in kind. The existing scroll bracket will be reused. The new sign will be double-faced HDU with a yellow lettering on a red background.
- A wall sign above the drive-through window will be replaced in kind ("Welcome to Wells Fargo" and measuring 12"x124").
- A directional sign on the property in a planting bed by the side entrance will be replaced and will be slightly smaller than the existing (existing: 20"x30" and proposed: 20"x20"). The sign will direct customers to the "Drive Up ATM" and "Drive Up Teller." It will be architectural aluminum with vinyl lettering.
- A directional sign on the property in a planting bed in the parking lot will be slightly smaller than the existing (existing: 20"x30" and proposed: 20"x20"). The sign will direct customers to the "Columbus Street" and "Washington Street." It will be architectural aluminum with vinyl lettering.
- An informational sign at the drive-through teller will be replaced in-kind ("Clearance: 9'10"" and measuring 48"x8").
- The two existing freestanding "Drive-In Window" signs on Princess Street will remain.
- The wall sign to the right of the front entrance (36"x44") will be removed and will not be replaced.
- Two wall signs attached to the drive-through teller piers will be removed and will not be replaced.
- A freestanding sign regarding drive-through services will be removed and will not be replaced.

Alterations to the ATMs, including replacement signage, are not part of this submission. Staff has spoken with a bank representative and they are aware that the existing ATM signage has not been approved, and that any new or replacement ATM signage must be approved by the Board but the ATM signs are handled by a different contractor and will be submitted separately.

II. HISTORY

This Colonial Revival building was constructed circa **1961** for Alexandria National Bank. The three and one-half story brick building and the adjacent parking lot comprise approximately half of this block.

The Board has reviewed applications for signage and alterations several times for this building.

- In 1963, the Board approved signage, including two black-on-white freestanding signs (10/23/1963, 11/13/1963, 12/4/1963).
- In 1964, the Board denied signage (1/8/1964, 10/14/1964).
- In 1973, the Board approved replacement signage (9/19/1973).
- In 1981, the Board approved an application for a money machine on the Princess Street elevation and signage with the condition that “the overall size of the machine is to be the exact size of the opening” in reference to a window opening (11/5/1981).
- In 1993, the Board approved signage for First Union Bank (BAR Case #93-177, 10/20/1993).
- In 1997, the Board approved the drive-through canopy, with an ATM, and piers as well as a brick perimeter wall.
- In 2003, the Board approved replacement signage for Wachovia (replacing First Union signage) but noted that their approval did not include approval of freestanding signs on North Washington Street and on Princess Street (BAR Case #2003-0140, 9/3/2003).
- In 2004, the Board approved two hanging wood signs with metal scroll brackets (BAR Case #2004-0020, 4/21/2004).

III. ANALYSIS

The proposed signage complies with Zoning Ordinance requirements. The existing ATMs are not in compliance with Zoning Ordinance requirements. The existing ATMs do not comply with the original approval nor are they in compliance with Sec. 7-1800 of the Zoning Ordinance (adopted 11/16/2002) which regulates ATMs and similar machines on the exterior of buildings in the historic districts. Therefore, the applicant must bring the ATMs into zoning compliance or will be subject to violation proceedings. The applicant has received approval of a special use permit for a change of ownership.

In general, Staff is supportive of the proposed replacement signage for this site, finding the scale and number of signs to be appropriate to this size building with drive-through services. In addition, the applicant is not replacing all of the existing signage and will be removing some of the redundant signage. The two hanging signs for the two entrances are appropriate for a building of this size. The remaining signs are generally directional/informational signs related to parking and the drive-through teller. Most of these will not be visible from Washington Street but are visible from Princess and North Columbus streets through the large parking lot.

The Old and Historic Alexandria District Board of Architectural Review is particularly concerned with the maintenance and memorial character of the George Washington Memorial Parkway, which passes through Alexandria as Washington Street. The Parkway is independently listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and is monitored by the National Park Service. Staff has some reservations about the existing freestanding signs on Princess Street. In reviewing previous approvals and permits, a prior sign permit (SGN2003-00070) based on BAR Case #2003-0140 indicated that this freestanding sign was to be removed as part of the approval however the related staff report indicated that the signs were grandfathered. A 1929 agreement between the City and the U.S. Government, banned “within a distance of two hundred (200) feet on each side thereof, all

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billboards or other advertising signs or devices facing in the direction of Washington Street, except where attached to the building...” Previously, it was determined that these freestanding signs were grandfathered since they were installed prior to the revision to the Zoning Ordinance. In addition, these signs do not actually state the name of the bank, rather they are informational, indicating the presence of the “Drive-In Window.” Therefore, the signs are allowed to remain exactly as is. The National Park Service reviewed the application and had no objection to the overall proposal finding it essentially an in-kind sign replacement with no additional or enlarged signage or lighting. From a practical standpoint, these freestanding signs are not particularly effective, as a drive-through window is now standard at most banks and the drive-through area is clearly visible from multiple streets. However, these freestanding signs represent a rather kitschy interpretation of the Colonial Revival style as expressed in the 1960s and in a few years may achieve historical significance in their own right. While Staff would not support the installation of these signs today, Staff supports keeping them as they currently exist.

The existing ATMs are not in compliance with the Zoning Ordinance. A separate application will be submitted for the ATMs.

STAFF

Catherine Miliaras, 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 majority of this work involves a “face” change to existing signage previously approved, (from a “building code” point of view) installed and supported by either direct connection for wall signs or frames for the projecting signs. The rest of the project involves the removal of certain existing signs.

A building permit will be required to document the removal of signage and anchorage details (type, number, size) will be required to be submitted for review for all new sign faces installed into existing sign frames.

Transportation & Environmental Services:**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- R1. The building permit plans shall comply with requirements of City Code Section 5-6-224 regarding the location of downspouts, foundation drains and sump pumps. Refer to Memorandum to Industry dated June 18, 2004. [Memorandum is available online at the City web site under Transportation\Engineering and Design\Memos to Industry.]. (T&ES)
- R2. Applicant shall be responsible for repairs to the adjacent city right-of-way if damaged during construction activity. (T&ES)
- R3. All improvements to the city right-of-way such as curbing, sidewalk, driveway aprons, etc. must be city standard design. (T&ES)
- R4. No permanent structure may be constructed over any existing private and/or public utility easements. It is the responsibility of the applicant to identify any and all existing easements on all plans submitted for approvals. (T&ES)
- R5. The building permit must be approved and issued prior to the issuance of any permit for demolition. (T&ES)

CODE REQUIREMENTS

- C-1 Any work within the right-of-way requires a separate permit from T&ES. (Sec. 5-2) (T&ES)
- C-2 A sign may be erected or displayed flat against a building wall or at an angle thereto, so long as the sign does not project more than four feet from the building wall or within one foot of an established curb line and the bottom of the sign is at least eight feet above a sidewalk or parking area and at least 14.5 feet above any alley. (Sec. 5-2-29(c)) (T&ES)

- C-3 The owner shall obtain and maintain a policy of general liability insurance in the amount of \$1,000,000 which will indemnify the owner (and all successors in interest); and the city as an additional named insured, against claims, demands, suits and related costs, including attorneys' fees, arising from any bodily injury or property damage which may occur as a result of the encroachment. (Sec. 5-29 (h)(1)) (T&ES)C-5 The applicant shall comply with the City of Alexandria's Solid Waste Control, Title 5, Chapter 1, which sets forth the requirements for the recycling of materials (Sec. 5-1-99). (T&ES)
- C-4 The applicant shall comply with the City of Alexandria's Noise Control Code, Title 11, Chapter 5, which sets the maximum permissible noise level as measured at the property line. (T&ES)
- C-5 Roof, surface and sub-surface drains be connected to the public storm sewer system, if available, by continuous underground pipe. Where storm sewer is not available applicant must provide a design to mitigate impact of stormwater drainage onto adjacent properties and to the satisfaction of the Director of Transportation & Environmental Services. (Sec.5-6-224) (T&ES)
- C-6 All secondary utilities serving this site shall be placed underground. (Sec. 5-3-3) (T&ES)

National Park Service:

See attached letter.

V. IMAGES

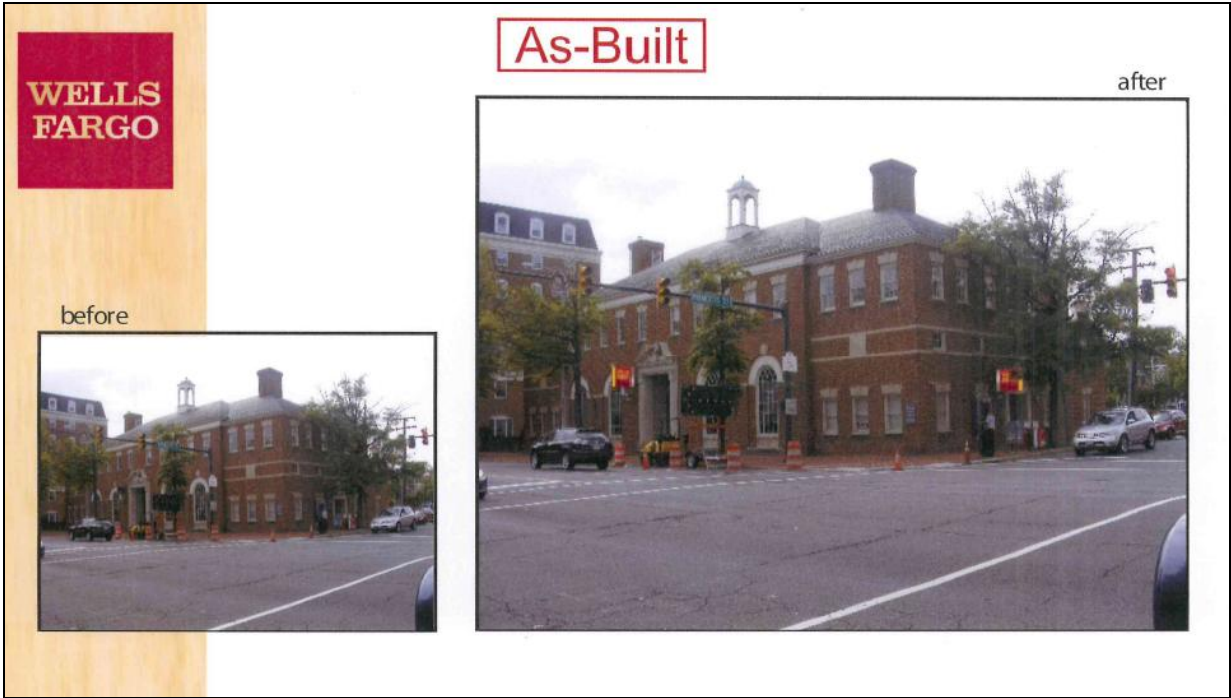


Figure 1. Existing and proposed signage scheme from Washington Street.

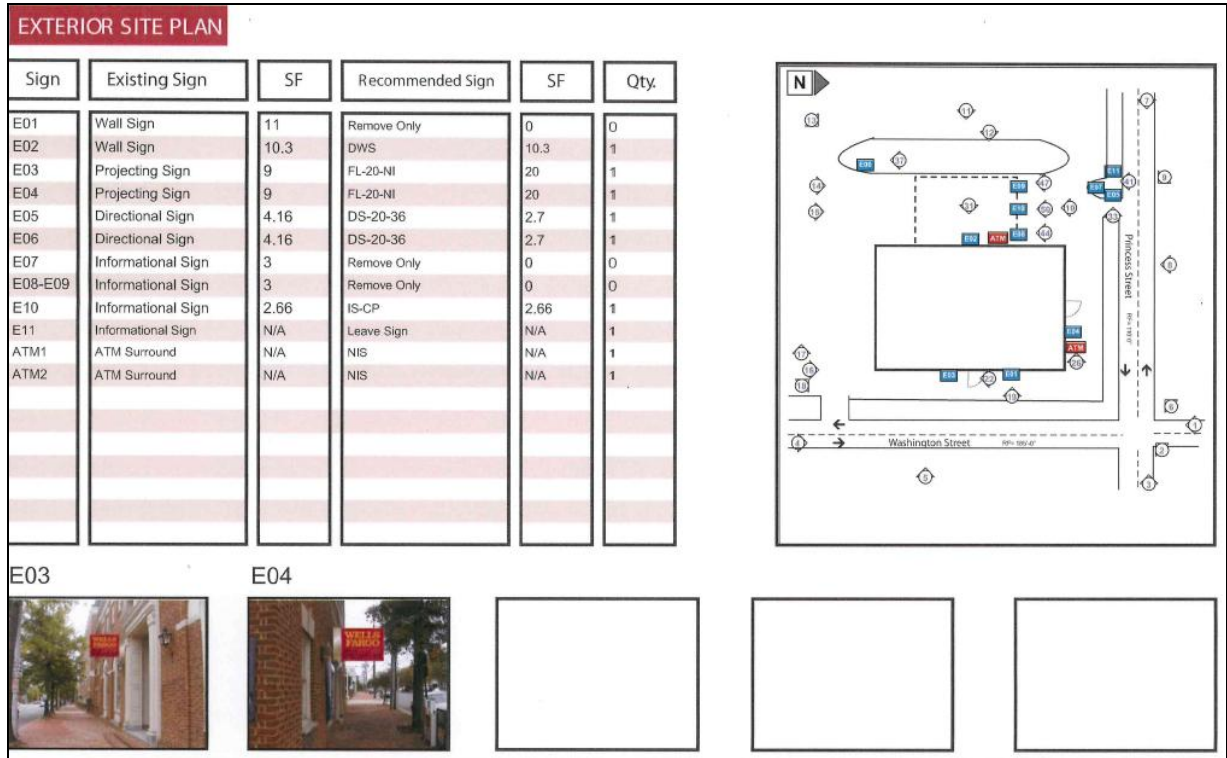


Figure 2. Site plan and proposed hanging signs.

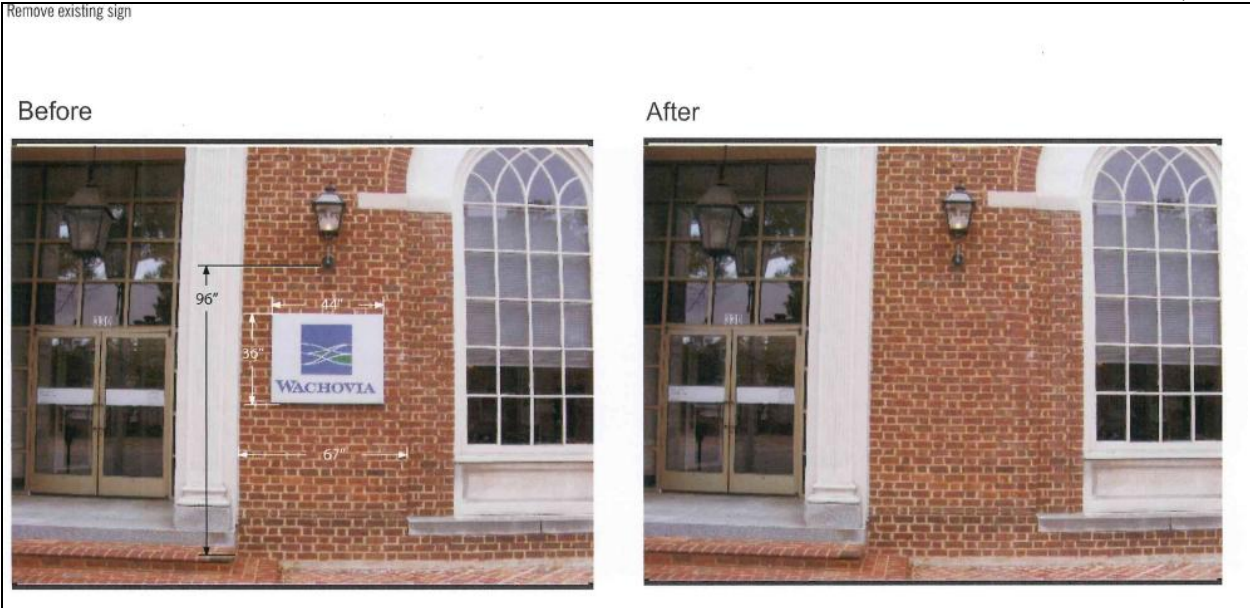


Figure 3. Wall sign on North Washington Street elevation to be removed.

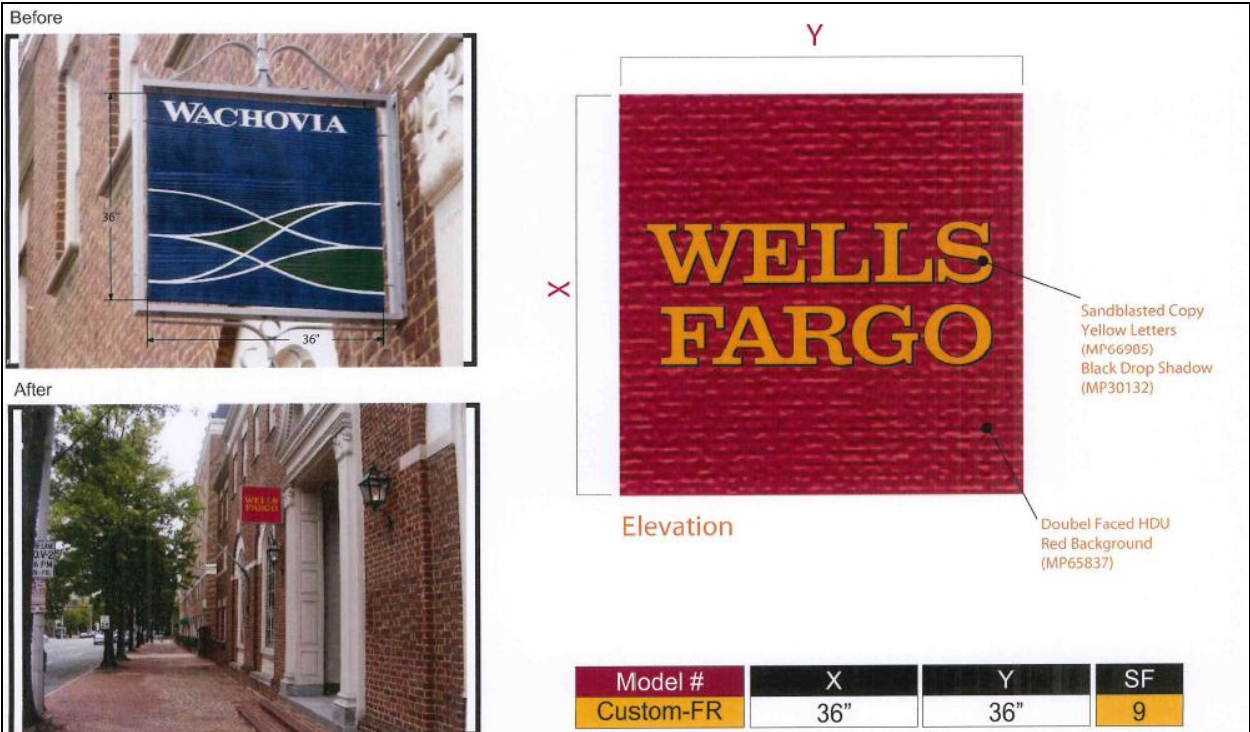
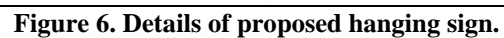


Figure 4. Hanging sign on North Washington Street elevation to be replaced.



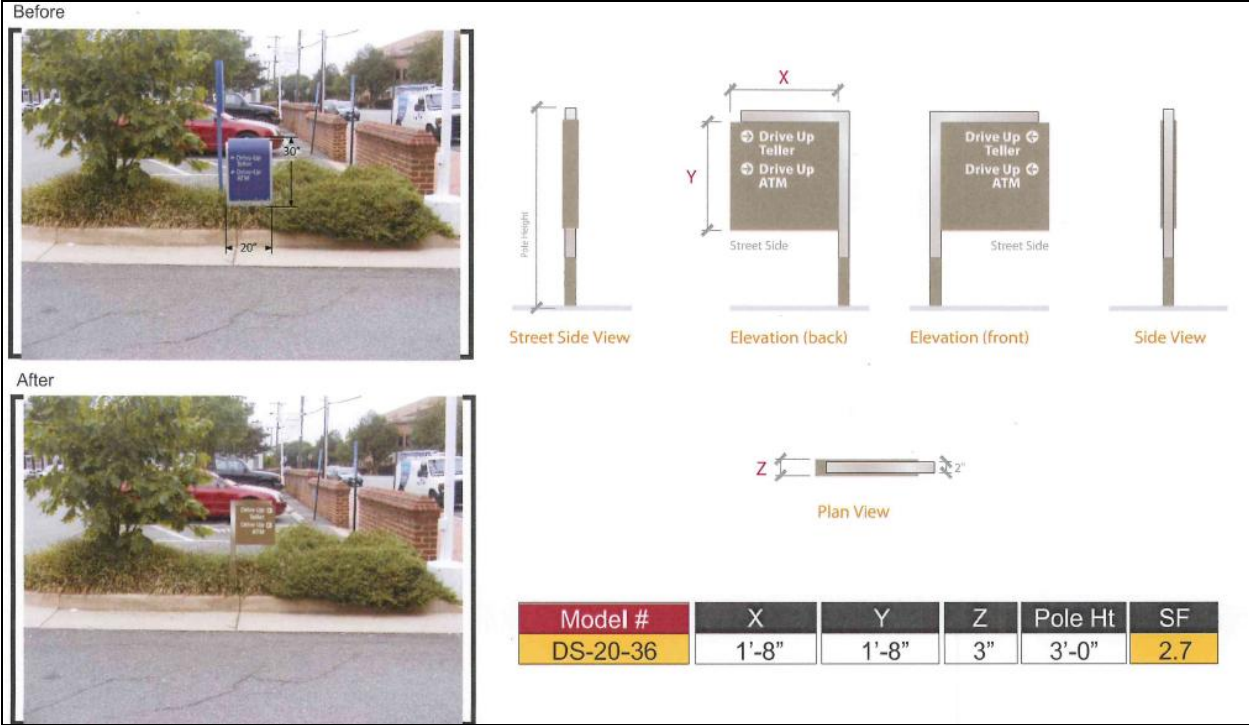


Figure 7. Directional sign to be replaced.

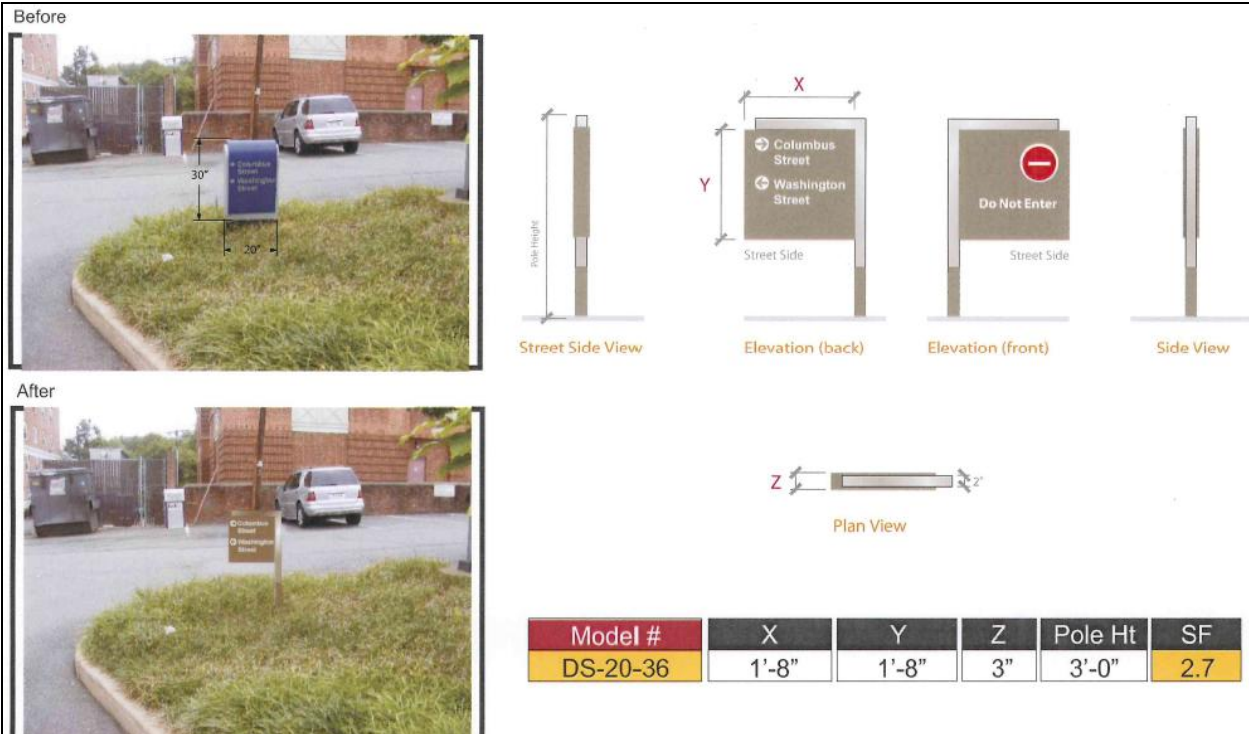


Figure 8. Directional sign to be replaced.



Figure 9. Remove existing freestanding sign.

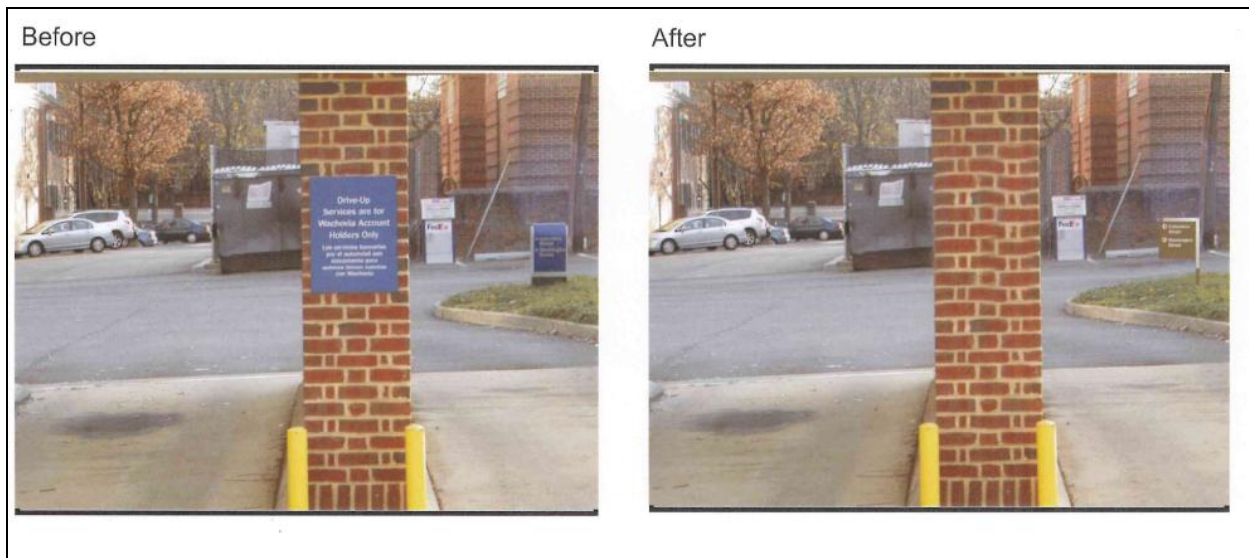


Figure 10. Removed existing wall sign on drive-through pier.

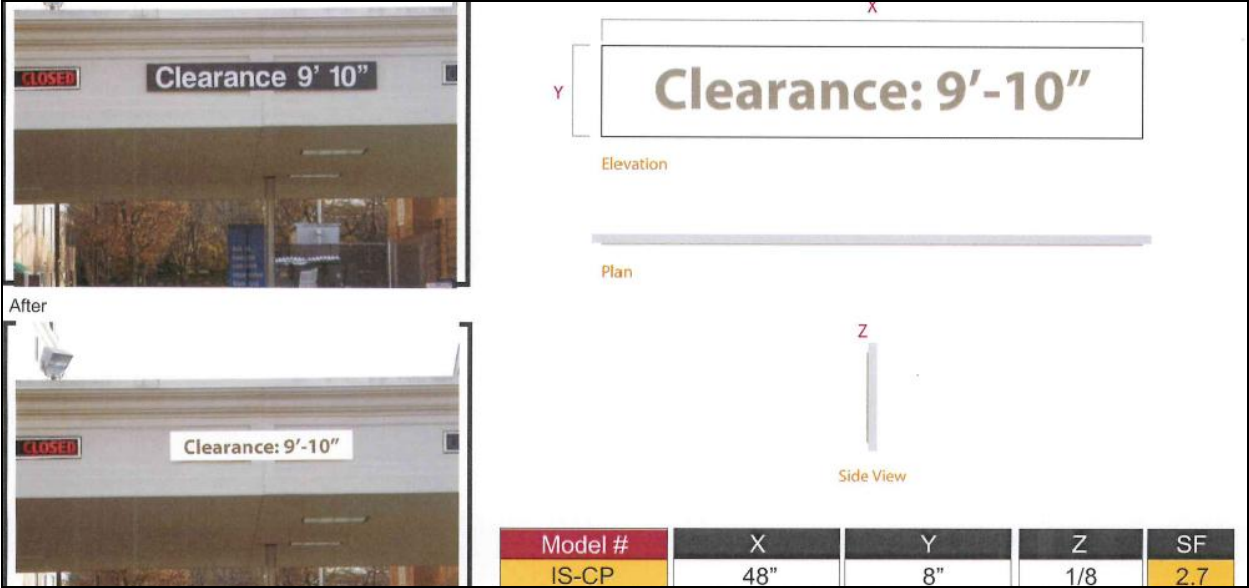


Figure 11. Informational sign at drive-through.



Figure 12. Existing freestanding signs to be retained.



Figure 13. Existing ATM machine (not in compliance with Zoning Ordinance requirements).