

Docket Item #9  
BAR CASE #2003-0221

BAR Meeting  
September 24, 2003

**ISSUE:** Sign  
**APPLICANT:** Wilson Thompson  
**LOCATION:** 1201 Queen Street  
**ZONE:** CL Commercial

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**\*\*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.

**\*\*BUILDING PERMIT NOTE:** Most projects approved by the Board of Architectural Review require the issuance of one or more construction permits by the Code Enforcement Bureau (including signs). The applicant is responsible for obtaining all necessary construction permits after receiving Board of Architectural Review approval. Contact Code Enforcement, Room 4200, City Hall, 703-838-4360 for further information.

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

- 1) that the existing sign over the doorway on the Queen Street side of the building be removed as soon as the new window sign is installed; and,
- 2) that the telephone number be removed from the sign.

### DISCUSSION:

#### Applicant s Description of Undertaking:

We would like to put lettering on window (79 ½" width & 46 ½ height). The lettering would advertise the services offered by Calhoun Tax & Financial Services.

#### Issue:

The applicant is requesting a certificate of appropriateness to install a sign in the window of the business located at 1201 Queen Street. The large plate glass window measures 79.5" in width and 46.5" in height. The sign will consist of white lettering reading, Calhoun Tax & Financial Services, Tax Preparation, All Types Personal & Business, Electronic Filing, Bookkeeping, Life & Health Insurance, Long Term Care, Business Owners, Notary. The lettering will be centered in the window and will cover an area approximately 23.5" by 30," or just under 20% of the window. There is an existing flat sign on the Queen Street side of the building over the door also advertising Calhoun Tax and Financial Services. According to the applicant, that sign was installed by the previous owner and will be removed. There is presently one sign on the Fayette Street side of the building for Jimmy s Wear, a retail business located in that portion of the building.

#### History and Analysis:

The two-story, frame, Italianate commercial building at the northwest corner of Queen and Fayette streets was probably constructed shortly before 1895. At that time the property was occupied by the saloon of George Baier, a German immigrant and former employee of the Robert Portner Brewing Company. By 1903, Benjamin Lucas, an African American barber, had his shop there. Since 1939 the building has been clad in a succession of non-wood siding materials.

On May 27, 1998 the Board approved a wall-mounted sign for Jimmy s Wear, located in the Fayette Street side of the building (BAR Case #98-0078). On January 13, 1999, the Board approved a window sign for Infopage, another business in the same location as Jimmy s Wear (BAR Case #98-00211). In this case, the Board approved one phone number in the sign but did not allow the second. This sign is no longer present. More recently, Staff administratively approved the replacement of a deteriorating multi-light wood window with a new fully glazed wood window on the Queen Street side of the building. There is no record of BAR approval for the sign over the door on the Queen Street side of the building

The proposed sign complies with the zoning ordinance requirements, which require that window signs cover no more than 20% of the window area. At 79.5" by 46.5", the window area is 25.7 square feet of area, allowing a sign with 5.13 square feet in area. The proposed sign is 4.9 square

feet in area.

Except for the inclusion of the telephone number in the sign, Staff believes the proposed sign conforms with the *Design Guidelines* and is compatible with the much modernized late 19<sup>th</sup> century building. The *Design Guidelines* state that telephone numbers on signs are strongly discouraged. (Signs - page 5) In practice, the Parker-Gray Board has been more flexible on this subject. At the previous hearing, on August 27, 2003, the Board did require the telephone numbers to be removed from two signs for Goody's Carry Out at 1104 Queen Street (BAR Case #2003-0183). At that time, Board members noted that they were not universally opposed to telephone numbers on signs, but felt that in this particular location the telephone numbers were ineffective and thus should be removed. On the other hand, in 1999 the Board approved a window sign which included one telephone number for a business located in the same building as the present application, around the corner at 300 North Fayette Street (BAR Case #98-00211, 1/13/1999). The *Design Guidelines* also state that, generally, one sign per business is sufficient. (Signs - page 3) The existing sign over the Queen Street door would be redundant if the window sign is installed. This sign appears to have been installed without Board approval and the applicant has indicated that he is willing to remove it.

Thus, in accordance with the *Design Guidelines*, Staff recommends approval of the application with the condition that the telephone number be removed from the window sign and the flat sign over the door be removed prior to the installation of the window sign.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

Legend: C - code requirement R - recommendation S - suggestion F - finding

Code Enforcement:

No comments.

Historic Alexandria:

Would prefer not to use telephone number.