

Docket Item #4
BAR CASE #2004-0075

BAR Meeting
July 28, 2004

ISSUE: Sign lighting
APPLICANT: Jamil Ayouch
LOCATION: 809 Pendleton Street
ZONE: CL/Commercial

BOARD ACTION, May 26, 2004: Approved portion, deferred portion for restudy, 6-0.

On a motion by Mr. Lloyd, seconded by Mr. Meick, the Board voted to approve the Staff recommendation, which was:

1. To approve the sign with the individual letters to be blind mounted and anchored through the mortar joints rather than directly through the brick; and,
2. To defer the light fixtures for restudy, with the applicant to provide the Board with additional information on the design of the fixtures, number of lumens emitted, and hours of illumination.

The vote on the motion was 6-0.

REASON: The Board agreed with Staff analysis and further agreed that there should be no more than two lights, that they should point in toward the sign and that the lights should be turned off when the store closes in the evening. The Board suggested that the applicant obtain a cut sheet showing the proposed light fixture and work with Staff to ensure that it would be acceptable.

SPEAKERS: Jamil Ayouch, applicant, spoke in support. Mr. Ayouch confirmed that he wanted to light the sign only and would turn the lights off at closing. John Hammond, resident at 624 North Columbus Street, expressed concern that the sign be appropriate in design and suggested that the lighting was unnecessary. Janine Pennell, Code Enforcement, confirmed that Code Enforcement does not review levels of light, but that Transportation and Environmental Services may. Ms. Pennell reminded the applicant that a permit would be necessary for the installation of the sign and for the installation of new exterior electrical fixtures.

****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:

1. Staff recommends approval of the two new light fixtures with the following conditions:
 1. That the new tubing and boxes be located at the rear of the parapet wall so as not to be visible and,
 2. That the lights be turned off at closing.

Should the Board approve the lighting as submitted, with the new tubing and boxes located on the front of the parapet, Staff recommends that these elements be painted to match the wall.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant received Board approval for a sign at the front of the single story commercial building at 809 Pendleton Street on May 26, 2004. The sign, consisting of individual plastic letters reading “Casablanca Dollar +”, has been installed. At the May 26 hearing, the Board deferred approval of lighting for the sign pending additional information.

The proposed lighting consists of two gooseneck fixtures located 5' apart from each other and centered over the sign. The light fixtures will have a white finish and will have 10" long heads directed down onto the sign. Each fixture will hold a single 100 watt bulb. The fixtures will be mounted on external fixture boxes and will have ½" round electrical tubing running between them and down to an existing circuit box and new weatherproof extension box located at the center of the sign.

II. HISTORY:

As previously discussed, the one story concrete block and brick store at 809 Pendleton Street was approved by the BAR on December 21, 1950 (Permit #4957, 12/11/1950). The adjacent one story concrete block and brick building at 807 Pendleton Street was constructed as an addition to 809 Pendleton Street in 1953 (Permit #10689, 2/21/53). The existing signage was approved by the Board on May 26, 2004 (BAR Case #2004-0075).

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed alteration complies with the zoning ordinance requirements.

Staff believes the proposed gooseneck fixtures are acceptable. The white finished fixtures are simple and relatively small and will not be highly visible on the white painted wall of the store. In addition, Staff believes the light level is appropriate for the largely residential neighborhood. Staff notes that the applicant complied with the direction given by the Board at the May 26, 2004 meeting by proposing only two lights and by having the lights point down onto the sign.

On the other hand, Staff finds the electrical tubing and boxes that will be mounted on the front of the building to accommodate the new lighting to be unfortunate. According to the applicant, it will not be possible to mount these elements on the back side of the parapet as this would require penetrating the roof, which the landlord has forbidden. Staff notes that there is little space between the letters and that the tubing will run between the letters. The applicant maintains that the tubing will fit between the letters and has made a sample of the tubing available for the Board's inspection. The applicant has stated that he is willing to paint the tubing to match the

brick wall. Even when painted, Staff believes the tubing will be distracting if not unsightly. Staff is not convinced that the lighting is necessary for the business and believes that if it can not be accomplished in a less visually obtrusive way, it should be omitted.

At the May 26 meeting, the applicant was instructed to provide the Board with the hours of illumination. The applicant has not provided this information, but previously indicated that the hours of illumination would be the same as the hours of business. The store hours are from 10am to 9 pm.. Staff believes these hours are acceptable.

III. STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

Staff recommends approval of the two new light fixtures with the following conditions:

1. That the new tubing and boxes be located at the rear of the parapet wall; and,
2. That the lights be turned off at closing.

However, should the Board approve the lighting as submitted, with the new tubing and boxes located on the front of the parapet, Staff recommends that these elements be painted to match the wall.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

C-1 Wall sign must comply with USBC [H103-H111] for type of materials, maximum projection, vertical clearance below all parts of the sign, and additional loads.

C-2 A construction permit is required for the proposed project.

Historic Alexandria:

“Would prefer the use of wood.”