

Docket Item #s 3 & 4
BAR CASE#s 2005-00050 & 0051

BAR Meeting
April 27, 2005

ISSUE: After-the-fact approval of a rooftop HVAC unit & alterations
Waiver of rooftop HVAC screening

APPLICANT: Patrice Smith

LOCATION: 1212 Queen Street

ZONE: CRMU-M/Commercial

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application with the condition that the PVC pipe on the roof be painted to blend in with the brick wall beyond.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for an after-the-fact rooftop HVAC unit, a new hanging sign and alterations to the doorway. In addition, the applicant is requesting a waiver of the zoning requirement that rooftop HVAC equipment be screened. The building, which has been unused for some time is to be a barbershop and beauty salon.

HVAC - Approximately two months ago, a 22 ½" wide, 22 ½" deep, 23 ½" high HVAC unit was installed on the roof of the one story building at 1212 Queen Street toward the back left corner. The unit is minimally visible from the sidewalk on the other side of Queen Street. It is not visible from Payne Street. As part of the HVAC installation, a PVC pipe was installed toward the front of the roof on the left side. The white pipe projects approximately 1' above the roof surface and is visible from the sidewalk on the other side of Queen Street. The other pipes and projections from the roof have been in place for some time and are not part of the present application.

The applicant is requesting both approval of the HVAC unit and a waiver of the requirement to screen the HVAC unit.

Sign - The applicant is proposing to install a hanging sign. The double sided sign will be located over the door and at least 8' above the sidewalk. The sign will be constructed of MDO (Wood composite) board and will hang from a black metal scroll bracket. The sign will be 18" high and 24" wide. It will read "It's All About U" and "Beauty & Barber Salon." The business name on the first line will be in white lettering bracketed by a green background. The second and third lines will be in tan lettering. They will be centered below the first and will have green scrolls on either side.

Doorway - The current front door is not wide enough to satisfy handicapped access requirements. It must be widened by 6". The applicant will install a new wood four-panel door in place of the existing non historic door. The door surround will be replaced with a similar surround of painted wood.

II. HISTORY:

The one story frame warehouse was constructed between 1902 and 1907 according to historic mapping. Most likely it was built in 1904 under a building permit issued to William H. Peck for a building on Queen Street between Fayette and Payne (3/30/1904). The building was part of a complex of buildings including the two story commercial building on the southeast corner of Queen and Payne streets, constructed in 1898, and the brick warehouse at 1210 Queen Street, constructed five years later in 1909. The complex operated for a number of years as W.H. Peck Coal & Wood Yard. Peck also constructed many houses in the immediate neighborhood.

The frame building is currently wrapped in aluminum siding. Staff has not located records for other alterations, but believes the openings in the front are likely to have been altered. The original wood cornice remains intact.

III. ANALYSIS:

The HVAC, alterations and waiver of rooftop screening comply with the zoning ordinance requirements. Section 6-403(B)(3) of the zoning ordinance permits the BAR to waive the rooftop screening requirement if the Board finds such requirement to be architecturally inappropriate. The sign ordinance permits the total sign area on a building to be 1 square foot of signage for every 1 linear foot of building frontage. The proposed sign is 3 square feet while the building frontage is 36 foot long. The subject property is zoned CRMU-M, commercial residential mixed use medium. The personal service use category, which includes barber shop, beauty salon and nail salon, is permitted in this location. Personal Service Use located in the Central Business District (CBD) is not required to provide off-street parking. The subject property is located in the CBD.

An interested citizen raised a number of questions regarding whether proper procedures and reviews had been carried out with respect to the licensing of the business and the business owner and whether the ventilation system was adequate for the proposed use. Staff is satisfied that all those reviews and approvals that are necessary prior to the Board of Architectural Review action have been performed and that the project and applicant are in compliance. Further inspections will be undertaken by Code Enforcement and Health Department before the Certificate of Occupancy is issued and the Business Permit obtained.

Staff believes the after-the-fact and proposed work is acceptable and in accordance with the *Design Guidelines*. While Staff finds any after-the-fact application unfortunate, Staff believes the HVAC is not objectionable. The Board and the *Design Guidelines* recognize the need to update buildings with modern conveniences such as air conditioning, but ask that they be located in such a way as to be as unobtrusive as possible. The after-the-fact HVAC unit is barely visible from the public right of way. It is located as far toward the rear of the roof as is allowed by Code. Moreover, Staff believes that screening would not be appropriate and therefore recommends approval of the waiver of rooftop screening. Staff believes that screening, typically a wood fence or panels of latticework, would be more obvious than the HVAC unit alone and appear out of place. The Board recently approved after-the-fact HVAC equipment and a waiver of rooftop screening at 417 North Fayette Street (BAR Case #BAR 2004-002276 & 227, 10/27/2004). The Board is reminded that the Board's purview is over that which is visible from a public right-of-way.

Staff believes the vent pipe is a fairly minor addition to the rooftop and will be barely noticed if painted to match the brick of the adjacent building. The applicant has already agreed to do this. The sign is modest in size and compatible with the building and surrounding neighborhood. The alteration to the doorway is required by Code and will constitute a barely perceptible change in the appearance of the building. Staff suspects the locations and sizes of the openings on the

building have been previously altered. The proposed four-panel wood door is more appropriate for the period of the building than the present door. To conclude, Staff recommends approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application with the condition that the PVC pipe on the roof be painted to blend in with the brick wall beyond.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

- C-1 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-2 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-3 Construction permits are required for this project. Plans shall accompany the permit application that fully detail the construction as well as layouts and schematics of the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems.
- C-4 Structural calculations are required to verify the ability of the existing roof to support the additional weight of the A/C unit.

Historic Alexandria:

“Insufficient material provided. No ability to visualize where this will be placed.”