

Docket Item #5
BAR CASE# 2005-00092

BAR Meeting
May 25, 2005

ISSUE: Lighting

APPLICANT: DGS/City of Alexandria

LOCATION: 1605 Cameron Street

ZONE: RB/Residential

****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 condition that the lighting be no more than 1.0 foot candles and that prior to installation the applicant will provide lighting calculations for review by Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES) to verify that the lighting meets City Standards.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for exterior lighting for the Durant Center at 1605 Cameron Street. The City's Department of General Services is proposing the additional lighting due to complaints from evening visitors about the lack of lighting at the front of the building and on the steps.

The lights are model #1330 Metro Series by Sternberg lighting. The lights are comprised of a round white acrylic globe measuring 16" in diameter. The globes sit in a metal basket with curved ribs. The overall dimensions of the globe within the basket is 18" diameter and 17" in height. The basket will have a black finish.

Three wall lamps are proposed to replace the existing wall fixtures. The wall mounted fixtures will be attached to a simple decorative arm that is approximately 12" in height and extends approximately 12" from the face of the building (#80WB). In addition, two lights will be mounted on top of the brick piers flanking the main entrance. The pier mounted fixtures will be attached to a 10 ½" long by 10 ½" wide x 7" high base (#450PB).

II. HISTORY:

1605 Cameron Street was constructed by the United States Army in the spring of 1942 as a USO Center. The United Service Organization was established to provide morale, welfare and recreation-type services to servicemen and women in uniform. This was one of the first USO buildings constructed in the United States. The gable roofed brick building is characterized by a modest Colonial Revival design vocabulary. The Federal government sold the property to the City in 1947 (See, "Cameron St. USO to Close February 14," *Alexandria Gazette*, 12/4/1946, p.1 and "USO Building is Occupied by Recreation," *Alexandria Gazette*, 1/16/1947, p.1).

The Durant Center has recently completed an addition and renovations that were first approved by the Board in 2001 (BAR Case#2000-301/302, 5/23/01, BAR Case #2001-230, 9/26/01, and BAR Case #2002-0261/262, 10/23/02).

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed alterations comply with zoning ordinance requirements.

Staff generally prefers to see lights that more closely replicate fixtures typical of the period and style of the building. The proposed fixture is a clearly modern interpretation of a type of fixture that could have been used on a 1940s Colonial Revival style building. A variant of the same fixture can be seen directly across the street at 1600 Cameron Street. This 1988 building is not located in either historic district.

On the other hand, Staff notes that the historic USO building is itself is a rather stripped down version of the Colonial Revival style, perhaps reflecting the influence of modern design as well as a need to economize. In addition, a prominent feature of the recent renovation was the addition of the front porch, which features a metal railing that is a modern interpretation of a traditional railing type. In this context, Staff is able to find the design of the proposed fixtures appropriate. Staff notes that the original proposal for the addition and renovations approved in 2001 showed round globe lights on the piers, but did not provide any details for their design. The subsequent approvals did not include any light fixtures.

While sympathetic to the need for safe lighting levels, the Boards are particularly concerned with the intensity of exterior lighting within the historic districts and adjacent to residential areas. Overly bright light detracts from the architectural appearance of buildings within the districts and from the quality of life of neighboring properties. Due to the open design of the proposed fixtures, Staff is concerned that a more intense light will produce unnecessary light pollution. Therefore, Staff recommends that the lighting at the front be maintained at a minimum of 1.0 foot candles. Prior to installation of the fixtures, the applicant should provide lighting calculations for review by Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES) to verify that the lighting meets City Standards.

To conclude, Staff believes that the proposed light fixtures are acceptable and that they comply with the recommendations of the *Design Guidelines* for Exterior Lighting with the proposed restriction on the level of lighting.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application with the condition that the lighting be no more than 1.0 foot candles and that prior to installation the applicant will provide lighting calculations for review by Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES) to verify that the lighting meets City Standards.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

C-1 A construction permit is required for the proposed project.

Historic Alexandria:

“Not exactly a Colonial Revival style. Something more complementary to the style of the building might be more suitable.”