

ISSUE: Appeal of a decision of the Board of Architectural Review approving a Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations in the Old and Historic District (OHAD) with conditions

APPLICANT: 910 King Street, LLC

APPELLANT: 910 King Street, LLC

LOCATION: Old and Historic Alexandria District
910 King Street

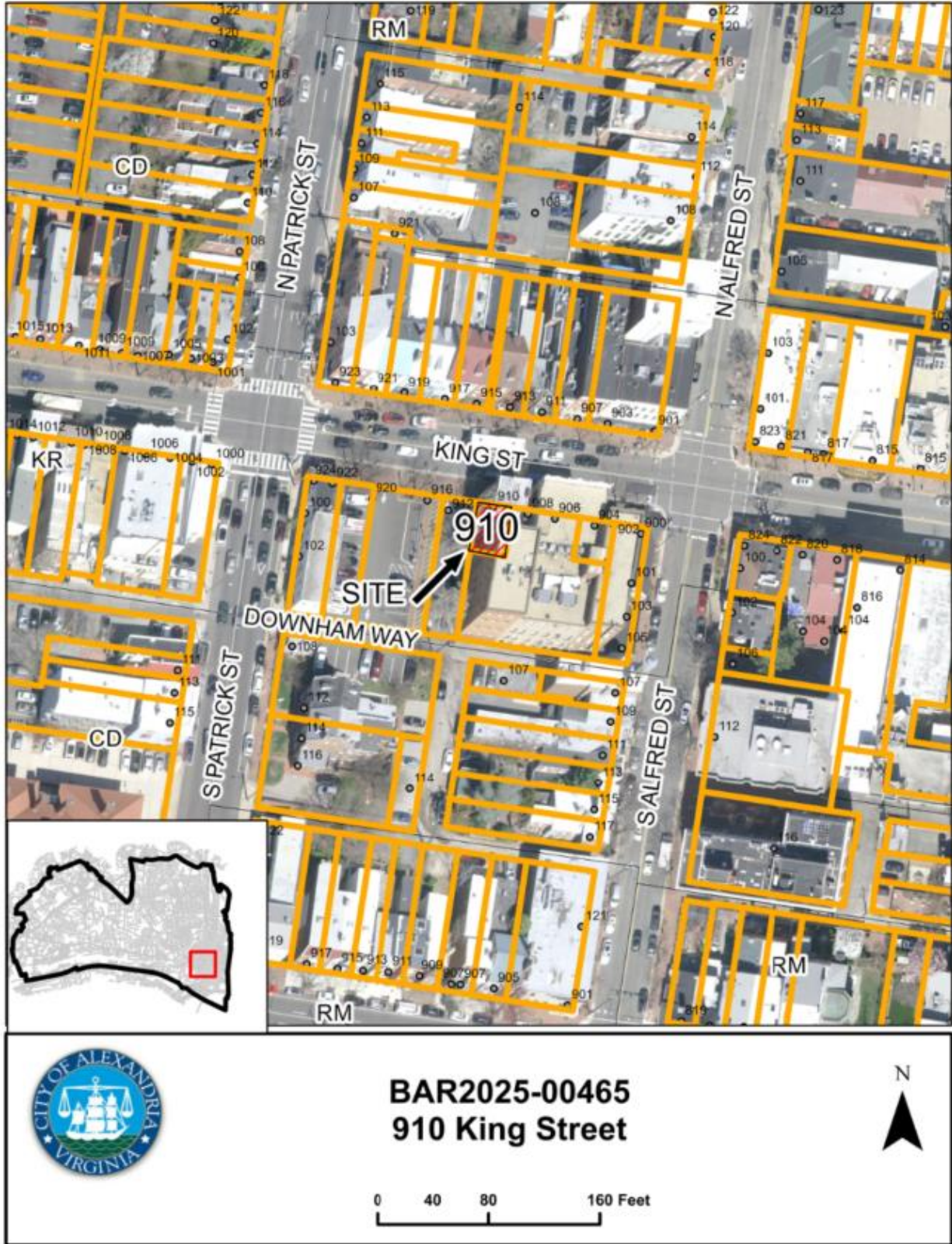
ZONE: KR (King Street Urban Retail Zone)

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends Council affirm the BAR’s decision to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness and modify the conditions of approval from December 3, 2025. The table below details staff’s recommended modifications. The full staff analysis of the proposal relative to the historic preservation standards found in Section 10-105(A)(2) of the Zoning Ordinance is on pages 9 through 14 of this report.

BAR Conditions of Approval	Staff Recommendation on Appeal
1. Any staining of masonry elements on the north elevation be of a color to match the existing and only where necessary due to damage to the existing material.	<u>Affirm</u> – Maintaining the original building color is important for preserving the historic integrity of the building per Section 10-105(A)(2)(b)
2. Staining the stones at the building entry should match the existing and be done only where necessary due to damage to the existing stones.	<u>Affirm</u> – Maintaining the original building color is important for preserving the historic integrity of the building per Section 10-105(A)(2)(b)
3. The applicant will work with staff to simplify the design of the metal scrollwork at the entry door and transom and the existing transom be retained and any metal work applied to the transom be easily removable.	<u>Modify</u> – Replace “simplify the design” to “match the Victorian style of the building”, per Section 10-105(A)(2)(a)

4. The applicant will work with staff to simplify the design of the railings at the building entry to be consistent with the style of the building.	<u>Modify</u> – Replace “simplify the design” to “match the Victorian style of the building”, per Section 10-105(A)(2)(a)
5. The applicant will work with staff on the design of the rooftop metalwork embellishment so that it is of a size and complexity similar to the one on the roof of 913 King Street.	<u>Affirm</u> – The proposed metalwork at the top of the knee wall is incompatible with the design of the building, per Section 10-105(A)(2)(a)
6. The proposed rooftop signage and lights be denied.	<u>Affirm</u> – Prominent signage at this location is incompatible with the design of the building and will detract from the architectural character, per Section 10-105(A)(2)(b)
7. The applicant will work with staff on the installation, color temperature, and intensity of the proposed lights so that they are of a single color in the warm color range and mounted so as not to damage the existing building.	<u>Affirm</u> – The installation of lights can damage the existing fabric and lights of varied color or a cool color temperature can detract from the architectural character of the building, per Section 10-105(A)(2)(b).
8. The applicant will work with staff to specify carriage light fixtures in a style that is compatible with the building.	<u>Affirm</u> – The style of the proposed light fixture is not compatible with the Victorian style of the building, per Section 10-105(A)(2)(b).
9. Deny the request to paint the east, south, and west sides of the building.	<u>Reverse in part</u> – The Design Guidelines discourage the painting of unpainted masonry; however, in this case the west and south walls were never intended to be exterior walls and are therefore not of a finished quality and the east wall is only visible at an oblique angle, per Section 10-105(A)(2)(b).



I. STANDARD OF REVIEW ON APPEAL TO CITY COUNCIL

Upon appeal, City Council must determine whether to affirm, reverse or modify, in whole or in part, the unanimous decision of the BAR to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness with conditions. The City Council's review is not a determination regarding whether the BAR's decision was correct or incorrect but whether the Certificate of Appropriateness should be granted based upon City Council's review of the standards in Zoning Ordinance Section 10-105. While City Council may review and consider the BAR's previous actions, City Council must make its own decision based on its evaluation of the material presented.

II. ISSUE

The Board of Architectural Review has held several hearings to consider partial demolition and alterations to the property at 910 King Street. The initial submission included all aspects of the proposed modifications, following the deferral of that proposal the applicant broke the project up into smaller applications to accommodate the construction timeline.

On May 7, 2025, the BAR first considered the proposed partial demolition and modifications to the building at 910 King Street (BAR 2025-00114 & 2025-00154). This application included the construction of a new roof deck with decorative metalwork, painting all elevations, decorative metalwork and railings at the building entrance, window infill at the west elevation, new signage, and new lighting. The Board accepted a request for deferral from the applicant to address comments from the Board regarding the Certificate of Appropriateness.

The applicant returned to the Board on June 18, 2025, with modifications to the proposed scope of work based on feedback from the Board at the previous hearing. Board members were not supportive of the revisions, and the Board again accepted a request for deferral from the applicant to address comments from the Board regarding the Certificate of Appropriateness.

At the July 16, 2025 BAR hearing, the applicant returned with a revised scope of work for the proposed partial demolition and modifications to the building. This application included a revised design for the roof deck and infilling the windows on the west elevation with masonry. The Board approved this application with staff recommendations.

On September 3, 2025, the Board considered a new application for modifications to the building (BAR 2025-00304). The modifications in this application included infilling windows on the east elevation, replacing the stone sill block at the entrance door, and installing a security camera on the King Street elevation. The Board approved this application with staff recommendations.

On December 3, 2025, the Board considered an application for modifications similar to that which was considered at the June 18, 2025 BAR hearing (BAR 2025-00465), with the exception of the roof deck, window infill, and sill block replacement which had been previously approved under other applications. The Board approved this application with staff recommendations and the additional conditions that none of the exterior brick be painted, the metalwork should be designed to be consistent with the style of the building, and any new signage should be installed through mortar joints and not into the face of bricks.

On December 15, 2025, a Record of Appeal was received from the applicant. The appeal states in part “At the BAR hearing held on December 3, 2025, exceptions are taken to the staff recommendations and three additional conditions. Most of the recommendations are subjective in nature. The presented designs and improvements will enhance the design of the existing building and are consistent with numerous examples of similar design elements on King Street and the surrounding area.”

III. HISTORY

Ethelyn Cox’s *Historic Alexandria Virginia Street by Street*, lists the property at 910 King Street as “brick, 3 stories, mid false front, originally 2 stories, shed roof, originally gable roof, probably early 19th century”.

According to the research of Ruth Lincoln Kaye, the building originally dates from 1854-1855 with significant revisions to the building since that time. The building was originally a 2 story, Greek Revival style building with a gable roof. In 1871, the building was purchased by the Methodist Church on Washington Street and served as the parsonage for nearly 40 years. During this time, in 1892, the building was modified to its current configuration. A story was added and a new front façade was constructed, turning it into the 3 story, Victorian building with a shed roof that is seen today.

A rear ell was once attached to the south side of the property that likely pre-dated the construction of the front portion, it was constructed in 1835. This rear ell was approved for demolition by the BAR in 1984 and demolition commenced within weeks of the approval. The demolition was completed to make room for the 1980’s era building that currently sits to the south of the subject property.

The Hopkins Fire Map of 1877 shows a building at 912 King Street adjacent to the building at 910 King Street. This building remained in place until the 1951 Sanborn Insurance Map which shows the property at 912, 918, and 920 as the surface parking lot that exists today. On April 6, 2022, the BAR approved the construction of a multi-unit residential building on the site of the parking lot. The approved building features a public access alley between the new building and the existing building at 910 King Street.

IV. DISCUSSION

A Certificate of Appropriateness is required in the Old and Historic Alexandria District (OHAD) under Section 10-103(A) of the Zoning Ordinance which states that: “No building or structure shall be erected, reconstructed, altered or restored within the Old and Historic Alexandria District unless and until an application for a certificate of appropriateness shall have been approved by the board of architectural review or the city council on appeal as to exterior architectural features, including signs (see Article IX), which are subject to public view from a public street, way or place. Evidence of such required approval shall be a certificate of appropriateness issued by the board of architectural review or the city council on appeal.”

The requested Certificate of Appropriateness is for modifications to the property at 910 King Street. As noted above, the Board of Architectural Review has considered a variety of revisions

to the property over the last year. Many of these revisions have been approved essentially as submitted, however staff and the Board have stated that the items included in this application require additional revisions in order to make them compatible with the historic building. The Board approval allows these revisions to be coordinated with historic preservation staff. The proposed modifications to the building include the following:

Painting and staining masonry

Per the submission materials, the applicant is proposing to repair and repaint the exterior masonry on east, west, and south sides. Originally, the applicant proposed to paint all sides of the existing building, however the north elevation was eliminated from this plan in response to comments from staff and the Board. As noted above, until the mid-twentieth century an adjoining building was attached to the west side of the current building. At the south side of the building was originally located an ell which predated the construction of the portion of the building remaining today. At the east side of the building, a narrow alley allows for limited view of this elevation.

The applicant is also proposing to stain the north elevation including masonry detail elements at the north elevation such as inset panels and keystones a different color than the current color in order to accentuate them. The north elevation of the building is monochromatic, the color being a dark red for all masonry elements (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Monochromatic dark red masonry at north elevation

Modifications to the building entry

The applicant is proposing to install a new wood and glass door with decorative metal work at the exterior face of the building and to install new handrails on either side of the stone steps (Figure 2). From a site inspection, it appears that the glazing in the existing transom appears to be cylinder glass that may be original to this elevation, the existing door is not historic. Under the existing configuration, the entry door is recessed from the front elevation but under the proposal, the entry door will be in line with the existing transom at the face of the building.

The applicant is proposing to install decorative railings on either side of the main entry steps (Figure 3). While railings were not originally installed on many historic buildings, the Board has often allowed their installation to address safety concerns when designed to be compatible with the style of the existing building.



Figure 2B: Proposed entry door and railings



Figure 3: Proposed railings on either side of the entry steps

Metalwork at top of building

The applicant is proposing to install decorative metalwork attached to the top of the knee wall located above the projecting bay extending above the roof (Figure 4). In previous reviews of this proposal, Board members expressed concern with the size and design of this metalwork.

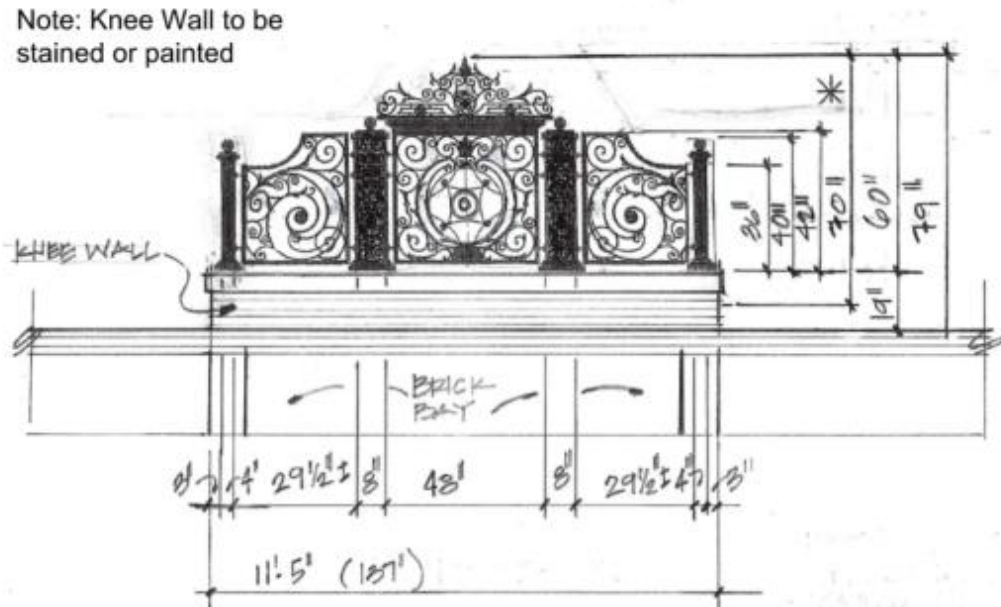


Figure 4: Decorative metalwork on top of knee wall above projecting bay

Signage

The applicant is proposing signage in three locations. A blade sign will be located in place of the existing sign bracket. A second sign will be installed in a track located on top of the brick cornice over the entry door. The third sign will be pin mounted letters attached to the knee wall above the projecting bay. This sign is in place of the previously proposed sign attached to the fascia of the roof deck.

The applicant is proposing a building sign that is mounted to the face of the knee wall above the projecting bay (Figure 5). The letters on this sign will be approximately 2' tall.

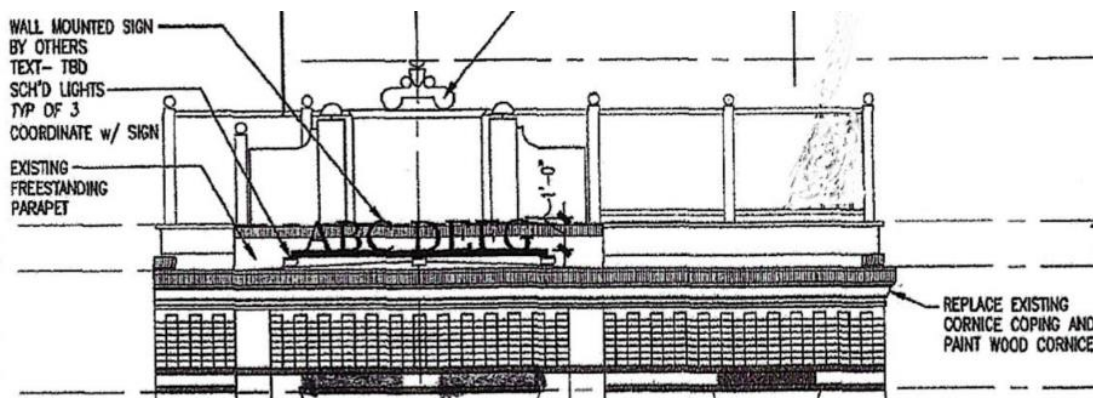


Figure 5: Proposed building sign at top of projecting bay

Lighting

The applicant is showing exterior signage that includes lighting of the signage and flood lights at the north and west elevations along with new carriage lights near the entry door.

The applicant is also proposing to install carriage lights on either side of the entry door. It is not unusual to install carriage lights adjacent to building entries and similar examples can be found throughout the historic district. The proposed light fixtures include decorative metalwork similar to that proposed elsewhere on the building (Figure 6).



Figure 6: Proposed carriage lights at either side of entry door

In considering a Certificate of Appropriateness, the Board, and City Council on appeal, shall consider the following applicable criteria set forth in Zoning Ordinance Section 10-105(A)(2) and set out in **bold** below. It should be noted that the City Council's consideration of the Zoning Ordinance criteria on appeal is independent of the Board's decision. While City Council may review and consider the Board's previous action, City Council will separately make its own decision based on an evaluation of the previously submitted material and any new material presented at the hearing. Following is the staff analysis of each of the Zoning Ordinance criteria.

(a) Overall architectural design, form, style and structure, including, but not limited to, the height, mass and scale of buildings or structures;

Modifications to the building entry

The applicant is proposing to install a new wood and glass door with decorative metal work at the exterior face of the building and to install new handrails on either side of the stone steps. From a site inspection, it appears that the glazing in the existing transom appears to be cylinder glass that may be original to this elevation, the existing door is not historic. Under the existing configuration, the entry door is recessed from the front elevation but under the proposal, the entry door will be in line with the existing transom at the face of the building. Staff has no issue with the relocation of the entry door or the installation of a wood and glass door as this is consistent with other historic building entries in the district. A primary tenet of historic preservation is that any building modifications that are made should not change the historic character of a building or create a combination of styles within the same structure. The design of the proposed metal scrollwork is too decorative and is inconsistent with the style of the building and staff suggests that the applicant work with staff to simplify this design. Staff also recommends that the historic transom be retained and any new metalwork be applied such that it can be removed without damaging the transom.

The applicant is proposing to install railings on either side of the main entry steps. While railings were not originally installed on many historic buildings, the Board has often allowed their installation to address safety concerns. The *Design Guidelines* state that “Stoops, steps, and railings should be appropriate to the historic style of the structure. For example, turned wood balusters and newel posts on entrance steps are a common feature of Victorian architecture. Decorative cast iron steps and railings are also a common feature of Victorian buildings.” As with the design for the scrollwork on the door, the design for the railings is not consistent with the style of the building and detracts from the historic character of the structure. Staff recommends that the applicant work with staff to simplify the design and to determine an appropriate attachment method for new railings that will not damage the existing stone steps.

Metalwork at top of building

As noted above, the applicant is proposing to install decorative metalwork attached to the top of the knee wall located above the projecting bay extending above the roof. In previous reviews of this proposal, staff and board members have expressed concern with the size and design of this metalwork.

Staff appreciates that elements of the design have been taken from the decorative brickwork on the front of the building, however the size and complexity of this element overpower the historic building. As noted in the submission material, the building across King Street from the subject property has many of the same historic details and in many ways can be considered a sibling to this building. At the top of the projecting bay on this building is a decorative slate roof with a simple metal embellishment (Figure 7). This section of roof is similar to the masonry knee wall at the top of the bay on 910 King Street. Staff finds that the metalwork proposed for the top of the knee wall is incompatible with the design of the historic building and recommends that the applicant work with staff to design a metal embellishment of approximately the same scale and complexity as the one on 913 King Street as shown in Figure 7.



Figure 7: Metal embellishment at top of bay at 913 King Street

(b) Architectural details including, but not limited to, original materials and methods of construction, the pattern, design and style of fenestration, ornamentation, lighting, signage and like decorative or functional fixtures of buildings or structures; the degree to which the distinguishing original qualities or character of a building, structure or site (including historic materials) are retained;

Painting and staining masonry

Per the submission materials, the applicant is proposing to repair and repaint the exterior masonry on east, west, and south sides. The Board has long discouraged the painting of unpainted masonry as it constitutes a significant change to the architectural character of the building.

As noted above, until the mid-twentieth century an adjoining building was attached to the west side of the current building. At the south side of the building was originally located an ell which predated the construction of the portion of the building remaining today. As these two elevations were not intended to be exterior walls, the masonry in these areas is not of a finished quality. At the east side of the building is a narrow alley allowing for limited access to this portion of the building. Note that the Board recently approved the infill of windows on this elevation. Given that the south and west walls were not intended to be exterior walls and that the visibility of the east wall is limited, staff recommends approval of the painting of these three elevations.

The applicant is also proposing to stain the north elevation including staining the masonry detail elements at the north elevation such as inset panels and keystones a different color than the current color in order to accentuate them. The north elevation of the building is monochromatic, the color being a dark red for all masonry elements. Changing the color of detail elements on this elevation would significantly change the character of the building. After reviewing the condition of the existing masonry, staff finds that while there are areas of damaged masonry, most of the north elevation can be restored by appropriately cleaning the existing wall, a complete staining of this elevation is not necessary and would detract from the historic character of the building. As such staff recommends that any staining of elements on the north elevation be of a color to match the existing and only where necessary due to damage to the existing material.

The applicant is proposing to retain and repair the stone steps at the main building entry and stain them to match the existing color. As with the detail elements noted above, the entry stones should only be stained as necessary in limited areas due to damage to the stone.

Signage

The applicant is proposing signage in three locations. A blade sign will be located in place of the existing sign bracket. A second sign will be installed in a track located on top of the brick cornice over the entry door. The third sign will be pin mounted letters attached to the knee wall above the projecting bay. This sign is in place of the previously proposed sign attached to the fascia of the roof deck.

Staff has no objection to the blade sign as it is in place of an existing bracket. The use of a track to mount the sign above the building entry addresses the concerns expressed by staff at the previous hearing regarding attaching pin mounted letters to the existing masonry.

The applicant is proposing a building sign that is mounted to the face of the knee wall above the projecting bay. The letters on this sign will be approximately 2' tall. Staff finds that the installation of a sign in this location will detract from the architectural character of the building. Signage at the first floor of a retail establishment is expected and is a part of the pedestrian scale of the neighboring structures. Locating a sign at the upper portion of the projecting bay changes the character of the bay and detracts from its historic character. Staff recommends that the proposed rooftop signage and associated lighting be denied.

Lighting

The applicant is showing exterior signage that includes lighting of the signage and flood lights at the north and west elevations along with new carriage lights near the entry door.

The *Design Guidelines* state that "Lighting fixtures should be sympathetic to the style of the building and not detract from the architectural character of the building." It is not uncommon for lights to be installed at exterior signage and the proposed lights are consistent with similar examples elsewhere. Regarding the ground mounted flood lights, there is little information regarding how they will be mounted but it should be noted that the sidewalk is a public space and any installation of lights in this area would require the approval of an encroachment. In addition, staff recommends that any exterior light be of a single color with light in the warm spectrum of white light and an adjustable light level. Staff recommends that the applicant work with staff to verify that the installed lights are the right color and level of brightness.

The applicant is also proposing to install carriage lights on either side of the entry door. It is not unusual to install carriage lights adjacent to building entries and similar examples can be found throughout the historic district. The selected light fixtures feature decorative metalwork in a configuration that is not consistent with the style of the building. Staff recommends that the applicant work with staff to find fixtures in a style that is more compatible with the style of the building than the currently proposed lights.

(c) Design and arrangement of buildings and structures on the site; and the impact upon the historic setting, streetscape or environs;

While this proposal does not change the arrangement of the building on the site, the proposed modifications to the building entry will have a significant impact on the streetscape. As noted above, the proposed railings at the entry steps feature a decorative pattern that derives some features from metalwork found throughout the district but in a very dense pattern that is not consistent with the architectural style of the building. While the *Design Guidelines* acknowledge that decorative metal railings are a feature of Victorian architecture, the proposed pattern exceeds the level of complexity that is appropriate for this building. Staff recommends that the applicant work with staff to simplify the design and to determine an appropriate attachment method for new railings that will not damage the existing stone steps.

(d) Texture, material and color, and the extent to which any new architectural features are historically appropriate to the existing structure and adjacent existing structures;

The "new architectural features" being contemplated under this scope of work include the proposed metalwork and signage at the top of the building, the new railings at the building entry,

and the decorative metalwork at the building entry door. The remaining scope of work includes modifications to the existing building. As noted above, staff finds that the proposed building signage at the top of the building is incompatible with the architectural style of the building and along with the associated lighting recommends that these features be denied. Also as noted above, staff supports the installation of railings at the building entrance however the proposed design is not compatible with the style of the building and recommends that the applicant work with staff to simplify the proposed design.

(e) The relation of the features in sections 10-105(A)(2)(a) through (d) to similar features of the preexisting building or structure, if any, and to buildings and structures in the immediate surroundings;

As noted in the submission materials, the design for the metalwork at the top of the building and at the building entrance is derived in part by decorative masonry elements on the north elevation. Staff supports the use of existing building elements in the design of new features however the overall design of these features is not compatible with the style of the building and recommends that the applicant work with staff to simplify their design.

(f) The extent to which the building or structure would be harmonious with or incongruous to the old and historic aspect of the George Washington Memorial Parkway;

Not applicable. The property is not located along Washington Street, the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

(g) The extent to which the building or structure will preserve or protect historic places and areas of historic interest in the city;

As noted above, the existing building was originally a 2-story building with a gable roof but was converted into the three-story Victorian building that exists today in 1892. While many historic buildings on King Street have been modified over time, this building retains much of the original fabric from that 1892 renovation. The submission materials indicate that the front of the building will be repaired and restored as necessary. Staff appreciates the dedication to restoring this important structure in a very prominent location. As noted above, the applicant is proposing to stain the north elevation and include different colors at the masonry accents. Staff is concerned that this will forever modify the historic character of the building and finds this inconsistent with the careful restoration work being done elsewhere. Staff has reviewed the existing masonry and finds that careful cleaning of the brick will restore the original monochromatic design without require a complete staining. As such, staff recommends that any staining of elements on the north elevation be of a color to match the existing and only where necessary due to damage to the existing material.

(h) The extent to which the building or structure will preserve the memorial character of the George Washington Memorial Parkway;

Not applicable. The property is not located along Washington Street, the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

(i) The extent to which the building or structure will promote the general welfare of the city and all citizens by the preservation and protection of historic interest in the city and the memorial character of the George Washington Memorial Parkway;

As noted above, the existing building was originally a 2 story building with a gable roof but was converted into the three-story Victorian building that exists today in 1892. While many historic buildings on King Street have been modified over time, this building retains much of the original fabric from that 1892 renovation. The submission materials indicate that the front of the building will be repaired and restored as necessary. Staff appreciates the dedication to restoring this important structure in a very prominent location. As noted above, the applicant is proposing to stain the north elevation and include different colors at the masonry accents. Staff is concerned that this will forever modify the historic character of the building and finds this inconsistent with the careful restoration work being done elsewhere. Staff has reviewed the existing masonry and finds that careful cleaning of the brick will restore the original monochromatic design without require a complete staining. As such, staff recommends that any staining of elements on the north elevation be of a color to match the existing and only where necessary due to damage to the existing material.

(j) The extent to which such preservation and protection will promote the general welfare by maintaining and increasing real estate values, generating business, creating new positions, attracting tourists, students, writers, historians, artists and artisans, attracting new residents, encouraging study and interest in American history, stimulating interest and study in architecture and design, educating citizens in American culture and heritage and making the city a more attractive and desirable place in which to live.

As noted above, the existing building was originally a 2 story building with a gable roof but was converted into the three-story Victorian building that exists today in 1892. While many historic buildings on King Street have been modified over time, this building retains much of the original fabric from that 1892 renovation. The submission materials indicate that the front of the building will be repaired and restored as necessary. Staff appreciates the dedication to restoring this important structure in a very prominent location. As noted above, the applicant is proposing to stain the north elevation and include different colors at the masonry accents. Staff is concerned that this will forever modify the historic character of the building and finds this inconsistent with the careful restoration work being done elsewhere. Staff has reviewed the existing masonry and finds that careful cleaning of the brick will restore the original monochromatic design without require a complete staining. As such, staff recommends that any staining of elements on the north elevation be of a color to match the existing and only where necessary due to damage to the existing material.

Minutes from December 3, 2025, BAR Hearing

BOARD ACTION: On a motion by Mr. Scott, seconded by Vice-Chair del Ninno, the Board of Architectural Review voted to approve BAR#2025-00465 with staff recommendations and the condition to deny the request to paint the east, south, and west sides of the building. The motion carried on a vote of 6-1 with Mr. Spencer voting no.

REASON: The Board agreed with staff recommendations with the exception of allowing painting on the sides and rear of the building.

SPEAKERS:

Kahan Dillon, property owner, presented the project and expressed concern regarding the comments from a previous meeting.

Christine Roberts, HAF, recommended that the Board approve the project with staff recommendations with the exception of noting that the proposed new front entry door should be appropriate for the style of the building.

Steve Milone, OTCA, opposed the proposal noting that some portions of the originally proposed modifications have been approved but the remaining work is not appropriate for this historic building. He specifically mentioned the proposed painting of the rear and sides of the building, noting that once they are painted they could become a location for a mural. He further noted that the existing entry doors should be maintained and that any new railings should be installed so as not to damage the existing stones.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Scott asked the applicant if he agreed with staff recommendations, the applicant stated that he did not agree with all of them.

Ms. Zandian noted that the application has not substantially changed since the first time that it was presented to the Board. The applicant stated that he made changes to the design of the roof deck in response to Board comments.

Ms. Zandian stated that any new exterior railings should be in the Greek Revival style to match the building.

Ms. del Ninno pointed out that as shown in the renderings, the height of the exterior railings appears to be in excess of what is required by Code. The applicant stated that the final design would match Code requirements.

Ms. Zandian stated that any changes to the exterior should be consistent with the style of the existing building.

STAFF

Paul Stoddard, AICP, Director, Department of Planning & Zoning
Tony LaColla, AICP, Land Use Services Division Chief
William Conkey, AIA, Historic Preservation Architect

VII. ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: BAR staff report with BAR actions from December 3, 2025

Attachment 2: Board of Architectural Review Design Guidelines

Attachment 3: Appeal application