



CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS STAFF REPORT

TO: HALRB

FROM: Lorin Farris, Historic Preservation Planner

DATE: April 14, 2023

SUBJECT: CoA 23-05, 2408 Columbia Pike, Columbia Pike Form Base Code Project

Background Information

The commercial building at 2408 Columbia Pike is identified in the Columbia Pike Commercial Form Based Code (FBC) as a “Historic Facade.” Constructed in 1951, the building has been the subject of many conversations over the past decade concerning redevelopment opportunities, as the property currently includes a vacant block corner and two separate commercial buildings sharing a rear parking lot. The Historical Affairs and Landmark Review Board (HALRB) first considered this project in September 2013 for a FBC amendment to adjust the classification of the site from full building preservation to facade preservation. The initial development proposal for this site came before the HALRB in August 2014 and again in September 2015 with updated facades. Although the County Board approved the use permit for the project in June 2016, a subsequent property sale resulted in changes to the development plans, therefore requiring a use permit amendment. In October 2020, the HALRB reviewed proposed modifications to the overall design of the 2400 Columbia Pike redevelopment project to make the property more marketable. There were no changes proposed to the historic facades, located at 2338-2354 and 2406-2408 Columbia Pike, which were being preserved with redevelopment occurring behind the historic facades. As of 2023, the Historic Preservation Program (HPP) staff has not been made aware of any redevelopment projects occurring at this project site. Here is a brief architectural description of the subject commercial building:

The one-story commercial building has a flat roof with metal coping, exterior brick walls, and a north-south orientation. The main facade faces north and consists of a double storefront. Each storefront has an off-centered main entry with full-length glass doors topped by transoms. Next to the entrances are large commercial-style double-pane windows supported by structural framing with fieldstone cladding. The entrance to 2408 Columbia Pike is set at an angle and features a protruding planter area with fieldstone cladding just east of the doorway. The side elevations are brick and lack any fenestration.

Proposal

The applicant is proposing to install a new sign on the historic façade at 2408 Columbia Pike. The main sign will read “Thicker Cloudz” with smaller signs on the side that read “vape” and “smoke.” The horizontal sign, which is 16’ x 33”, will be installed above the building’s canopy directly on the building and consist of internally lighted channel letters with a raceway. There will be 5”-deep aluminum channels

with black returns. The sign's letters will be made of red and white acrylic covered by vinyl, each letter with two drains, and they will have Samsung L.E.D. lights. All hardware will be galvanized, and any penetrations will be sealed.

DRC Review

The DRC considered this application at its April 5, 2023, hybrid meeting. The DRC suggested moving the signage higher for better visibility and to prevent the sign from contacting the canopy. The applicant asked for guidance on the sign placement in relation to the painted green brick located near the roof coping. Staff and the DRC suggested aligning the proposed sign to the neighboring Rappahannock Coffee sign, as that would leave one painted strip of green brick visible. The DRC suggested softening the black background proposed for the signage at the sides of the main sign to a dark gray, and the applicant agreed to this approach. The DRC recommended placing the application on the Discussion Agenda for the April 19, 2023, hybrid HALRB public hearing.

Staff Recommendation

The HPP staff recommends approval of the subject application. The proposed materials and overall design of the sign are consistent with other signage along the Commercial FBC corridor. Additionally, the proposed signage conforms with Standard #10 specified in *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*, as it is an alteration which could easily be reversed without an adverse effect to the property.

Standard #10: New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.