



HISTORICAL AFFAIRS AND LANDMARK REVIEW BOARD
ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS STAFF REPORT

TO: Historical Affairs and Landmark Review Board (HALRB)
FROM: Mical Tawney, Historic Preservation Associate Planner
DATE: March 12, 2024
SUBJECT: CoA 24-08, 3110 Washington Blvd., Arlington Post Office Local Historic District (LHD)

Background Information

The Arlington County Board designated the Arlington Post Office (the John L. Fisher U.S. Post Office) as a LHD in 1984. Constructed in 1937, the Arlington Post Office was constructed in the modern interpretation of the Georgian revival style and designed by Louis A. Simon. Located just to the southeast of the main entrance of the Arlington Post Office is the Dan Kain Building, another LHD. The Dan Kain Building was constructed in 1946 in the Streamline Moderne architectural style and designed by Donald H. Drayer. Originally Sheff's Appliances, the long-time occupant of the commercial space was Dan Kain Trophies which operated from 1961 to 2004. Today, the space is occupied by the Lyon Hall restaurant. The Dan Kain Building was designated a LHD in 1988.

In 2003, the U.S. Postal Service along with Keating Development Company applied for a site plan project to upgrade and expand the Arlington Post Office and construct an office addition over top and at the rear of the Dan Kain Building and Arlington Post Office buildings. As part of this site plan project, the Dan Kain Building and Arlington Post Office were connected via an infill commercial space at 3110 Washington Boulevard, the subject of this report. Although this commercial space is closer to the Dan Kain Building, it is technically within the boundary of the Arlington Post Office LHD. Between May 2003 and November 2004, the HALRB reviewed and approved Certificate of Appropriateness (CoA) 03-02 which outlined the details of this site plan development.

In April 2008, the occupants of the commercial space at 3110 Washington Boulevard were found not in compliance with the Arlington County Zoning Ordinance because they had installed a sign for the business Clarendon Valet without a CoA. The circumstances at the time surrounding the project were determined unusual by both the Historic Preservation Program (HPP) staff and HALRB; the new commercial space between the Arlington Post Office and the Dan Kain Building had not been properly tagged in the County's permitting system as a LHD. Therefore, the permit for the sign had been issued without review by either the HPP staff or HALRB. Additionally, the developers of the commercial space did not inform the buyer, nor were they required to by state law, that the building was situated in the LHD; had they known, the occupant would have understood that exterior changes to the property required HALRB approval. Initially, the HALRB issued CoA 08-14 for the sign, conditional upon certain design changes. A renewal of CoA 08-14 (issued in April 2008) was processed via Administrative CoA 09-05 in March 2009. However, those changes were ultimately not possible for the applicant to implement. It was

due to these circumstances that the HALRB retroactively approved the sign as installed in July 2009 instead.

In August 2008, the HALRB approved CoA 07-11A for the installation of an awning, light fixtures, and new door pulls/hardware at 3110 Washington Boulevard; it is unclear in the record when CoA 07-11 was initially brought forward in 2007. In November 2008, the HALRB approved CoA 07-11B for amendments to the front entrance of 3110 Washington Boulevard and 3118 Washington Boulevard.

Finally, it should be noted that between 2021 and part of 2023, there was a new occupant of the building, Effective Wellness. This business installed a sign without a CoA or a signage permit from the County per the records available to the HPP staff. The installation of the sign also was not noted during the HPP's inspections. With the recent change of occupancy, the sign has been removed; however, the HPP staff felt it was important to note as part of this current application.

Proposal

The applicant is proposing to install a new sign on the façade of the business, The Beauty Clarendon, located at 3110 Washington Boulevard. The sign would have channel lettering and would not be illuminated. The sign, which would be centered above the entryway, would measure 75" wide by 30" tall; individual lettering would measure between 5" and 12" in height. The all-white sign would be installed with 1/4" anchor masonry screws (roughly 2 to 3 anchors per letter) into the façade; neither pre-existing holes nor masonry joints would be used due to needing to position the sign correctly.

Design Review Committee (DRC) Review

The DRC considered this application at its March 6, 2024, hybrid meeting. Mr. Davis expressed that he felt the sign was not intrusive or flashy, but asked for more information about how it would be installed. Since the applicant was unable to attend the meeting, questions about the sign's installation could not be answered. Mr. Wenchel stated that a metal finish would be stylistically more appropriate for the casing of the sign; Mr. Davis agreed that a silver casing rather than a black one around the white front of the letters would be preferable. Both DRC members felt this treatment would better complement the sign for Lyon Hall, the neighboring restaurant (the Dan Kain LHD). The DRC said that if this change was made, the item could be placed on the Consent Agenda for the March 20, 2024, hybrid HALRB public hearing.

Following the DRC meeting, the HPP staff spoke with the applicant. The applicant noted that the entire proposed sign (casing and the front) would be white; the casing around the sign was not black as assumed by both the DRC and HPP staff at the DRC meeting. He stated a desire to bring the application forward as presented rather than changing the casing to silver as requested by the DRC. Thus, this item instead was placed on the Discussion Agenda for the March 20, 2024, hybrid HALRB public hearing.

Recommendation

The HPP staff recommends approval of the subject application. The size and lettering of the proposed signage would not overwhelm the façade of the building, nor would it detract from the historic nature of the LHD. Additionally, the individual lettering would not exceed 12" in height as recommended by the *Guidelines for Signage in the Arlington Post Office and Dan Kain Building Historic Districts*. The wording of the sign will be limited to the business name, which also is appropriate per the guidelines. Since the sign would not be electric, no additional or new openings would be made for electric connections; however, new openings would be made to anchor the sign per the current proposal. The HPP staff understands that the proper positioning of the sign necessitates new anchor points. Given that the



HISTORICAL AFFAIRS AND LANDMARK REVIEW BOARD
ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

façade is not historic, the HPP staff is less concerned about the creation of new, minor penetrations on the façade, but still encourages the applicant to use mortar joints or pre-existing openings from previous signage when possible.

Finally, the proposed project is an alteration which could easily be removed without an adverse effect to the property, which conforms with Standard #10 of *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*:

#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.