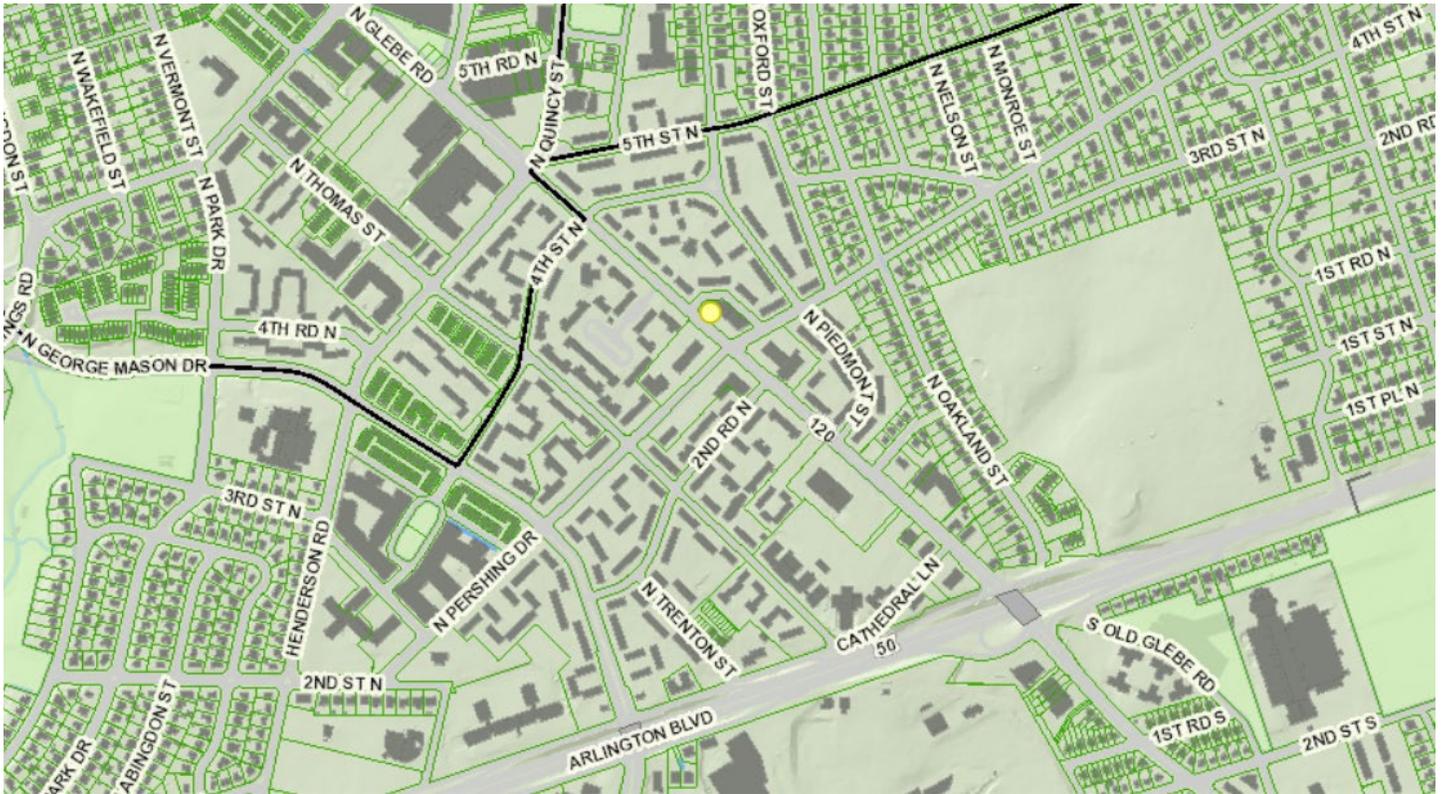


Historical Affairs and Landmark Review Board

Arlington County, Virginia



HALRB meeting January 19, 2022, Case 21-33 (HPCA21-00079)

315 North Glebe Road: Request to install new signs in the commercial district.



CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS STAFF REPORT

TO: HALRB
FROM: Serena Bolliger, Historic Preservation Planner
DATE: January 12, 2022
SUBJECT: 315 North Glebe Road, CoA 21-33, Buckingham Village Historic District

Background Information

Designed by Henry Wright, Allan Kamstra, and Albert Lueders, Buckingham Shopping Center was built as a component of the planned Buckingham residential community between 1937 and 1946. The complex consists of numerous commercial buildings at the intersection of North Glebe Road and North Pershing Drive. The commercial complex, evoking the idea of a traditional village center, was one of the final examples in the Washington, D.C., area of separating stores by a street, which was a popular design among planners in the 1920s. The Buckingham commercial area became a Local Historic District (LHD) in 1993 and the properties also are contributing resources to the Buckingham Village National Register Historic District.

Proposal

The applicant proposes to modify two existing neon signs which conform with the *Buckingham Design Guidelines* on the existing black light boxes for the now-vacant Cassianna Spa.

The first sign, 34'10" long on the south façade (side A per the drawings), has been presented with four possible options:

1. Replicating the 8'4" length of the green neon horizontal tubing with "Burn Boot Camp" spaced evenly in the middle.
2. Extending the green neon tubing to allow "Burn Boot Camp" to replicate the narrower spacing on the southwest façade.
3. Retaining the 8'4" length of the green neon tubing with the addition of four graphic geometric white shapes on either side of the text to fill the remaining space.
4. Retaining the 8'4" length of the green neon tubing with the addition of a graphic white line on either side of the text to fill the remaining space.

The second sign on the southwest façade (Side B per the drawings) is currently 16'6" long and the applicants are proposing the following three options:

1. Removing the sign entirely and leaving only the awning.
2. Retaining the existing light box and adding a conforming sign reading "Burn Boot Camp" in white neon with the typical green neon decorative element.
3. Retaining the existing light box but removing all neon and leaving the sign box blank.

DRC Review

The Design Review Committee (DRC) considered this application at its January 5, 2022, virtual meeting. Mr. Dudka voiced a concern about the kerning and spacing of the smaller sign and asked for it to be evenly spaced. The commissioners also had some concerns about the wide spacing of the second, longer sign and asked the applicant to present additional options for improving the layout of the text, offering suggestions such as adding decorative graphic elements. The applicant since submitted three additional options for the longer sign, based on the DRC recommendations. The DRC placed this item on the Discussion Agenda for the January 19, 2022, virtual HALRB public hearing as the business intends to open in the next few weeks.

Discussion and Recommendation

The Historic Preservation Program staff recommends either Option 1 or 2 for the longer sign on the south façade (Side A) as the proposed graphic images on the light boxes in Options 3 and 4 have not been used in the commercial district previously. Option 1 or 2 is a simpler, cleaner design more in keeping with the existing commercial signage throughout the district.

On the southwest façade (Side B), staff recommends Option 2 with retention of the existing sign box and installation of new sign tubing as this option maintains the character of the existing signage. The removal of the sign entirely (Option 1) would interfere with the symmetry of the existing signs on the building and installation of a new sign box in the future might require additional hardware which could damage the brick. Further, a blank sign box (Option 3) would be atypical for the district.

The materials, colors, and overall design of the proposed signs are all consistent with the other signs in the LHD. Further, staff finds that the proposal meets the intent of Chapter 11: Guidelines for Commercial Areas: Signage of the *Buckingham Design Guidelines*.