

To: HALRB
From: John Liebertz, Historic Preservation Planner
Date: December 14, 2016
Subject: 2900 Columbia Pike, CoA 15-06C, Form Based Code Project

Background Information

The commercial building located at 2900 Columbia Pike, formerly known as Blanca's Restaurant, is the oldest commercial building on Columbia Pike, constructed circa 1920 (new information discovered since the last CoA case). Built in the Renaissance Revival style, this brick building is characterized by a hipped metal tile roof, pedimented entryway, and large rounded arch windows on the side elevation. Originally a bank, the building has been modified on the interior and in certain areas on the exterior to accommodate a restaurant use for at least the last forty years. The building at 2900 Columbia Pike is called out for Full Building Preservation under the Columbia Pike Revitalization Plan and Form Based Code (2005). The property was certified as a Form Based Code project in 2015; therefore all subsequent alterations to the building require CoA review and approval by the HALRB.

In September 2014, the HALRB heard the changes proposed by the new restaurant tenant as a courtesy review. At that time, the HALRB was supportive of the overall project, with minor changes. A final CoA for a number of exterior alterations was previously approved by the HALRB in June 2015. Since that time, a new tenant has been renovating the interior spaces and is ready for permit approvals associated with the new restaurant. The HALRB approved four exterior speakers and two signs in September 2016 and a trash enclosure and rooftop scrubber in October 2016..

Proposal

The current proposal includes the installation of two HVAC units on the roof. The dimensions of the units are approximately 33"-high x 45'-wide x 83'-long. The units would require the installation of 14"-high roof curbs. The units would extend approximately 1'6" above the parapet wall.

DRC Review

At the DRC meeting, the applicant requested to place the units on steel beams resting on the parapet wall and to install screening. The committee requested that the applicant omit any screening and lower the units below the parapet to the greatest extent possible (by means of installing a standard roof curb or manufacturing a u-shaped steel beam). The DRC recommended that this application be placed on the consent agenda for the December 21, 2016, HALRB meeting, pending requested revisions.

Staff Review

As this is not a local historic district, there are no design guidelines to inform a decision. In lieu of design guidelines, the Arlington County Zoning Ordinance Section 15.7 directs the HALRB to use the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards* to evaluate applications. The mechanical units would be partially visible from the public rights-of-way, as shown in the submitted sightline drawings, but less visually intrusive than screening. Staff recommends approval and finds that the application meets Standards 2 & 9, as follows:

2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.

No historic building materials, spaces, or fabric will be removed or altered by this proposal.

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property.

No historic building materials, spaces, or fabric will be destroyed, obscured, or altered by this proposal.