



## ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

**County Board Agenda Item  
Meeting of December 13, 2008**

**DATE:** December 2, 2008

**SUBJECT:** SP #231 SITE PLAN AMENDMENT: Arlington Hotel Assoc., LLC, comprehensive sign plan including rooftop signs; 1401 N. Adams St, 2100, 2150, 2250, 2300 Clarendon Blvd. (RPC #18-005-041, -042, -043, -044 part 18-005-053, 18-004-065, -066, -067, -068, 18-086-025, -026)

**Applicant:**

Arlington Hotel Assoc. LLC

**By:**

Martin Walsh  
Walsh, Colucci, Lubeley, Emrich & Walsh P.C.  
2200 Clarendon Boulevard, 13<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Arlington, Virginia 22201

**C. M. RECOMMENDATION:**

Approve the site plan amendment for a comprehensive sign plan with the exception of the proposed freestanding sign and a lighted 84-square-foot sign on the west facade, subject to the conditions of the staff report.

**ISSUE:** This is a use permit for a comprehensive sign plan including one (1) rooftop sign. Staff does not support the proposed freestanding monument sign or the lighted 84-square-foot sign on the west facade, but supports the remainder of the proposed sign package. The applicant does not agree to the denial of either the proposed freestanding sign or lighted 84-square-foot west façade sign, but the applicant agrees to all conditions.

**SUMMARY:** The applicant requests approval of a comprehensive sign plan including one (1) rooftop sign for the Residence Inn by Marriott hotel under construction at 1401 North Adams Street. The sign package with the exception of a proposed freestanding monument sign generally meets the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance and the *Sign Guidelines for Site Plan Buildings*. Staff does not generally support freestanding signs in the Rosslyn-Ballston Corridor. The applicant has withdrawn the original request for a rooftop sign on the west elevation, facing North Adams Street, and proposes to substitute a hotel logo sign between the second and third stories, below 35 feet. Staff, however, does not support this sign, because it is lighted and it will

County Manager: \_\_\_\_\_

County Attorney: \_\_\_\_\_

Staff: Peter Schulz, CPHD, Planning Division

PLA-5133

face the Charleston Condominiums. Staff might support an unlit sign at this location, but the applicant has not accepted that option.

**BACKGROUND:** The overall conceptual development plan for the Courthouse Plaza was approved by the County Board in 1985, and most of the buildings were constructed in the late 1980s. A hotel had long been planned for the site, and the current hotel site plan was approved by the County Board on February 25, 2006. The standard site plan conditions included a requirement for a comprehensive sign plan, and that rooftop signs needed County Board approval.

Site: The site is just less than one (1) acre, and is bounded by Clarendon Boulevard on the north, North Adams Street on the west, 14<sup>th</sup> Street North on the South, and the remainder of the Courthouse Plaza on the east.

Zoning: The subject site is zoned “C-O”, Commercial Office Building, Hotel, And Multiple-Family Dwelling Districts. The Zoning Ordinance Section 34 and the *Sign Guidelines for Site Plan Buildings* regulates signs in this zoning district.

The type and total area for the proposed signs are consistent with the Zoning Ordinance and the *Sign Guidelines*, with the exception of the proposed large sign facing Adams Street being lit, and the monument sign, a type of sign staff does not support in the R-B Corridor.

Land Use: The subject site is designated on the General Land Use Plan (GLUP) as one-half “High” Residential (4.8 F.A.R. Residential, 3.8 F.A.R. Hotel) and one-half “High” Office-Apartment-Hotel (3.8 F.A.R. office density, up to 4.8 F.A.R. apartment density, and up to 3.8 F.A.R. hotel density).

Neighborhood: The subject site is located in the Clarendon-Courthouse Civic Association. Staff has requested comments from the association, but to date has not received any. The applicant also submitted plans to the Charleston Condominium. Staff has attempted to contact the Charleston Condominium Association for comment.

**DISCUSSION:** The following table provides detail on the signs proposed. All quantities are one sign of each type, except where noted.

**Table 1**

<b>SIGNS COUNTING TOWARD OVERALL SIGN AREA:</b>					
<b>Sign Number</b>	<b>Type &amp; Abbreviation in Sign Plan</b>	<b>Locations</b>	<b>Sign Area (Sq. ft)</b>	<b>Text</b>	<b>Material</b>
A1	Directional Sign	North plaza elevation above elevator no. 3 door	4	<i>Parking Garage</i>	Illuminated channel letters, white on black/acrysteel face

A2	Directional sign	S Elevation above east garage door entrance	13.3	Hotel Guest Parking	Channel letters (burgundy w/ aluminum returns)
B1	Building address sign	West elev., main entrance above door	5	1401 N. Adams Street	Cast Metal letters, stainless steel brushed finish
C1	Building name sign	West elev., on canopy	8	Residence Inn Marriott	Illuminated channel letters
C2	Building name sign	North elev., on canopy	8	Residence Inn Marriott	Illuminated channel letters
C3	Building name sign	West elev., left side of main entrance	16.3	Residence Inn Marriott	Painted aluminum, not illuminated
C4	Building name sign	East elev., plaza entrance below canopy	25.4	Residence Inn Marriott	Cast Metal letters, stainless steel brushed finish
C5	Building name sign	East plaza, on canopy	8	Residence Inn Marriott	Illuminated channel letters
D1, D2, D3	Tenant Canopy sign (3x)	West elev. On canopy	20 s.f. x 3	TBD	TBD
D4, D5	Tenant Canopy sign (2x)	North elev. On canopy	16.8 s.f. x 2	TBD	TBD
E1	Restaurant Tenant	West elev., below canopy	24	TBD	TBD, illuminated
E2	Restaurant Tenant	North elev. courtyard	24	TBD	TBD, illuminated
E3	Restaurant Tenant	West elev., on canopy	13.5	TBD	TBD, illuminated
E4	Restaurant Tenant	North elev., on canopy	13.5	TBD	TBD, illuminated
E5, E6	Retail Tenant Sign (2x)	North Plaza elev., centered over door	28.5 s.f. x 2	TBD	TBD, illuminated
G1	Monument sign	West side, at corner of Adams and 14 <sup>th</sup>	20.5	Residence Inn Marriott	Aluminum filler, brick base, illuminated letters in burgundy and red with gold returns <i>NOTE: Staff does not support this type of sign in the R-B Corridor</i>
Unnumbered	Building Name sign	West façade, between second and third floors	84	Residence Inn Marriott	Acrysteel face, metal sheet background, illuminated letters in burgundy and red with gold returns

					<i>NOTE: Staff does not support this sign</i>
<b>Total Signage Proposed</b>			<b>417.82</b>		
<b>Total Building Frontage</b>			<b>479.33</b>		

**Table 2**

<b>OTHER PROPOSED SIGNS (NOT COUNTED TOWARDS SIGN AREA):</b>					
<b>Sign Number</b>	<b>Type &amp; Abbreviation in Sign Plan</b>	<b>Locations</b>	<b>Sign Area (Sq. ft)</b>	<b>Text</b>	<b>Material</b>
A3	Directional Sign	S Elevation above east garage door entrance	2.1	Entrance— Van accessible	White bg., raised lettering (brown w/ aluminum returns)
A4	Directional Sign	S Elevation above west garage door entrance	1.5	Exit	White bg., raised lettering (brown w/ aluminum returns)
F1	Rooftop sign	<del>West elevation centered above pier</del>	90.1	<del>Residence Inn by Marriott</del>	<del>Acrysteel face, metal sheet background, illuminated letters in burgundy and red with gold returns-Note: Applicant has withdrawn request</del>
F2	Rooftop sign	East elevation centered above brick pattern	83.9	Residence Inn by Marriott	Acrysteel face, metal sheet background, illuminated letters in burgundy and red with gold returns

By reference to the *Sign Guidelines for Site Plan Buildings*, the project is allowed one (1) square foot of total project sign area (including directional signs, retail and commercial tenant signs and building, project, or major tenant identification) for every one (1) square foot of street frontage. The building has a total frontage of 479.33 linear feet on the three public streets, and the applicant is proposing 417.82 total square feet of sign area, including the signs staff does not support, and excluding the rooftop sign. Excluding the signs staff does not support, the total is 313.32 square feet.

The signs generally conform to Zoning Ordinance Section 34 with regard to placement, size, and lighting, except for the signs on the west and south façade, as Zoning Ordinance Section 34.D.2 forbids signs within 100 feet of an “R” or “RA” zone. However, the main entrance for the hotel and much of the restaurant is on the North Adams Street frontage, and the garage entrances are on 14<sup>th</sup> Street North. These two facades are where signs are arguably most necessary. Along with much smaller illuminated building and tenant identification signs, the applicant proposes an 84-square-foot illuminated sign on the west façade (facing North Adams Street). The applicant asserts this larger sign is necessary to attract vehicles traveling along Clarendon Boulevard. Staff, however, does not support this large illuminated sign because it directly faces the Charleston Condominium. Staff might support an unlighted sign at this location, but the applicant has rejected that option.

The *Sign Guidelines for Site Plan Buildings* allow a maximum of two (2) rooftop signs with a total area of “one (1) square foot of sign area for every one (1) foot of building wall width along a street frontage.” This is additional square footage to what is allowed for project and tenant signs. Although the original proposal requested approval of two (2) rooftop signs, the applicant is now proposing only one (1) rooftop sign totaling 83.9 square feet, well under the maximum allowed. The sign on the east façade (facing Courthouse Plaza) generally corresponds to the *Sign Guidelines for Site Plan Buildings*. The intent of this rooftop sign is to attract pedestrians coming from the Metro via the Plaza escalator, and while it faces an apartment building (zoned “C-O”), the orientation of the majority of the apartment building’s windows are north-to-south while the sign will face east.

The rooftop sign deviates from the sign guidelines where the *Sign Guidelines* “strongly encourage subdued colors”. The proposed rooftop sign will be burgundy and red LED lights. However, there are other hotels in the County (including the Hilton Garden Inn) where the County has deviated from this guideline. Furthermore the applicant agrees to the standard condition for a dimmer switch on the proposed rooftop sign on the east (Courthouse Plaza) façade, where staff supports a rooftop sign. The County Manager’s ability to require the sign to be dimmed should somewhat ameliorate the effect of the bright colors.

The final sign of special note is an illuminated proposed monument-style identification sign at the corner of 14<sup>th</sup> Street and North Adams Street. In the past, staff has not supported freestanding signs in the Rosslyn-Ballston Corridor. The Courthouse Plaza project at large has several freestanding project identification signs scattered around the complex, which were approved in the mid-1980s before this policy was in place. Staff suggests the applicant could attach a sign for the hotel to one of these existing signs, but no new pylon freestanding signs are supported by staff.

**CONCLUSION:** The proposed signs, except where noted above, are largely consistent with the Zoning Ordinance and the *Sign Guidelines for Site Plan Buildings*. Staff supports the comprehensive sign plan with the exception of the proposed freestanding sign (since staff does not support freestanding signs in the Rosslyn-Ballston Corridor), and the large lighted logo sign on the west façade (since this sign faces a residential building). The applicant does not agree to eliminate the freestanding sign or the large west façade sign from its proposal. Therefore, staff

recommends approval of the comprehensive sign plan, with the exception of sign F1 (which was withdrawn), G1, and the unnumbered 84 square foot sign on the west facade, subject to the following conditions:

1. The applicant agrees to limit all signs to the size, design, location, and color of the proposed signs and the one (1) rooftop sign on the east facade on the drawings prepared by Leo A Daly and the Donohoe Companies, Inc., and entitled “Residence Inn by Marriott-Arlington Courthouse,” and dated October 9, 2008 and the revised “Sheet 4” which eliminates the proposed rooftop sign on the west façade also dated October 9, 2008, as attached to the staff report and approved by the County Board on December 13, 2008, except that neither the freestanding monument sign nor the 84 square foot illuminated logo sign between the second and third floors on the west façade as shown on the revised Sheet 4 may be erected. The applicant further agrees that the rooftop sign facing the plaza (designated Sign F2) may be illuminated daily only from dusk to Midnight.
2. The applicant agrees that the total sign area allowed excluding rooftop signs will be no more than 314 square feet. The one (1) roof top sign on the east façade, facing the plaza, shall be limited to 84 square feet.
3. Minor changes to the approved comprehensive sign may be approved administratively by the Zoning Administrator. For the purposes of the preceding sentence, minor changes shall include only the following: (i) a minor adjustment in the location of the sign to meet field conditions (less than 1 foot in any direction); or (ii) a minor change in the area of the sign (less than 5%). All other changes to the comprehensive sign plan will require site plan approval or amendment.
4. The developer agrees to install a rheostat or other appropriate variable resister that will allow the developer to adjust the rooftop sign’s lighting intensity from a level of 0 LUX to 500 LUX. The developer further agrees that if the County Manager finds that the intensity of the rooftop sign’s lighting has an adverse effect on the surrounding area, the developer will, within 24 hours notice from the County Manager, reduce the intensity of the lights to a level that, in the County Manager’s reasonable judgment, will no longer have such an adverse effect.

PREVIOUS COUNTY BOARD ACTIONS:

- May 18, 1985                      Approved a rezoning from “P-S” to “C-O” and site plan (Z-2280-85-4) for a mixed use office/residential/hotel/retail project.
- December 2, 1986                Approved a site plan amendment to increase retail gross floor area by 18,439 square feet, subject to the condition requiring to provide 19 additional parking spaces are provided.
- May 2, 1987                        Approved a site plan amendment to permit the subdivision of the property containing 242,260 square feet into four lots; Lot 1 having a site area of 72,615 square feet; Lot 2 having a site area of 19,447 square feet; Lot 3 having a site area of 45,322 square feet; and Parcel "A" having a site area of 104,876 square feet, subject to all previous conditions and two new conditions.
- November 18, 1989               Deferred a site plan amendment request for approval of a comprehensive sign plan.
- January 6, 1990                   Deferred a site plan amendment request for approval of a comprehensive sign plan.
- March 10, 1990                   Deferred a site plan amendment request for approval of a comprehensive sign plan.
- April 7, 1990                      Approved a site plan amendment request for a comprehensive sign plan, subject to all previous conditions and five (5) new Conditions #51, #52, #53, #54, and #55.
- June 2, 1990                      Deferred the remainder of the signs not approved at the April 7, 1990 County Board meeting until July 7, 1990.
- July 10, 1990                     Approved a site plan amendment for a freestanding cinema sign on Clarendon Boulevard, subject to all previous conditions and new Condition #56.
- September 8, 1990               Approved a site plan amendment for the remainder of the comprehensive sign plan, subject to all previous conditions and the revised Condition #54 and new Condition #57.
- April 6, 1991                      Deferred a site plan amendment request for a conversion of 3,500 square feet of first floor retail space to office use at 2250 Clarendon Boulevard.

June 4, 1991	Deferred a site plan amendment request for a conversion of 3,500 square feet of first floor retail space to office use at 2250 Clarendon Boulevard to the July 13, 1991 County Board meeting.
July 13, 1991	Deferred a site plan amendment for a conversion of 3,500 square feet of first floor retail space to office use at 2250 Clarendon Boulevard to the August 10, 1991 County Board meeting.
August 10, 1991	Accepted withdrawal of a site plan amendment for a conversion of 3,500 square feet of first floor retail space to office use at 2250 Clarendon Boulevard.
February 8, 1992	Approved a site plan amendment for a conversion of 2,625 square feet of area designated for community meeting space to retail use.
July 11, 1992	Deferred a site plan amendment for a special exception to amend Conditions #42, #43, and #44, to increase the ratio of compact car parking spaces to the August 8, 1992 County Board meeting.
August 8, 1992	Deferred a site plan amendment for a special exception to amend Conditions#42, #43, and #44, to increase the ratio of compact car parking spaces to the September 12, 1992 County Board meeting.
September 12, 1992	Deferred a site plan amendment for a special exception to amend Conditions #42, #43, and #44, to increase the ratio of compact car parking spaces to the November 14, 1992 County Board meeting.
November 14, 1992	Deferred a site plan amendment for a special exception to amend Conditions #42, #43, and #44, to increase the ratio of compact car parking spaces to the December 12, 1992 County Board meeting.
December 12, 1992	Deferred a site plan amendment for a special exception to amend Conditions #42, #43, and #44, to increase the ratio of compact car parking spaces to the February 6, 1993 County Board meeting.
February 6, 1993	Approved a site plan amendment for a special exception to amend Conditions #42, #43, and #44, to increase the ratio

of compact car parking spaces, subject to all previous conditions, revised Conditions #9, #42, and #44, and a new Condition #58.

- August 14, 1993                      Approved a site plan amendment (SP #231) for live entertainment from 7:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. on Thursdays, (Capitol Grille) 2300 Clarendon Boulevard, from 9:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. on Fridays and Saturdays, and from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., and 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. on Sundays, subject to conditions and an administrative review in one (1) year.
- September 11, 1993                      Approved a site plan amendment (SP #231) to permit a dentist office (2250 Courthouse Plaza) on the plaza level in designated retail space, subject to all previous conditions and an additional condition.
- February 4, 1995                      Deferred a site plan amendment (SP #231) to March 4, 1995 to extend the term of decoration building banners and approve an alternative design depicting seasonal themes. (2100 - 2400 Clarendon Blvd.)
- March 4, 1995                      Approved a site plan amendment (SP #231) to extend the term of decorative banners and approve an alternative design depicting seasonal themes (2100 - 2400 Clarendon Blvd.) for a period of five (5) years, subject to all previous conditions and conditions #51 and #53 amended.
- January 20, 1996                      Approved site plan amendment (SP #231) to convert 4,290 square feet of retail space under 2250 Clarendon Boulevard to secondary retail and medical office and law office uses for the parcels of real property known as 2100 through 2400 Clarendon Boulevard, for a period of five (5) years until January 2001.
- January 27, 2001                      Continued site plan amendment (SP #231) to convert 4,290 square feet of retail space under 2250 Clarendon Boulevard to secondary retail and medical office and law office uses for the parcels of real property known as 2100 through 2400 Clarendon Boulevard, subject to all previous conditions, with a review in two (2) years (January 2003).
- March 13, 2003                      Continued site plan amendment (SP #231) to convert retail space under 2250 Clarendon Boulevard to secondary retail and medical office and law office, subject to all previous conditions, with a review in two (2) years (March 2005).

March 12, 2005	Continued site plan amendment (SP #231) to convert retail space under 2250 Clarendon Boulevard to secondary retail and medical office and law office, subject to all previous conditions, with a review in three (3) years (March 2008).
April 16, 2005	Approved site plan amendment (SP #231) for live entertainment and dancing (The Music Box), with administrative review in three (3) months (July 2005) and County Board review in one (1) year (April 2006).
December 14, 2005	Deferred a major site plan amendment (SP #231) for hotel development to January 21, 2006.
January 21, 2006	Deferred a major site plan amendment (SP #231) for hotel development to February 25, 2006.
February 25, 2006	Approved a major site plan amendment (SP #231) for a 176-room extended-stay hotel, 5,510 square feet of restaurant space and 3,945 square feet of retail/food service space.
April 22, 2006	Deferred a review of a site plan amendment (SP #231) for live entertainment and dancing (The Music Box) to the October 14, 2006 county board meeting.
October 14, 2006	Did not renew a site plan amendment (SP #231) for live entertainment and dancing (The Music Box).
May 5, 2007	Renewed a site plan amendment (SP #231) for a flea market, subject to all previous conditions, with a county board review in three (3) years (May 2010).
June 19, 2007	Approved a major site plan amendment (SP #231) to the hotel site plan for a new garage entrance and amended condition #38.
March 18, 2008	Deferred a review of a site plan amendment for conversion of a retail space to dentist office to the April 2008
April 22, 2008	Renewed a site plan amendment for conversion of a retail space to dentist office, subject to all previous conditions and new conditions #3-6, not to extend past December 2014 with an administrative review in five (5) years (January 2013).