



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

**County Board Agenda Item
Meeting of April 25, 2009**

DATE: April 2, 2009

SUBJECT: U-3079-04-1 Use Permit Amendment to modify the required first floor clear height requirement from 15 feet to approximately 12.5 feet under Section 20. "CP-FBC" – Columbia Pike Form Based Code Districts, Subsection E.3. of the Arlington County Zoning Ordinance, in order to accommodate the inclusion of an existing historic facade. Property is approximately 68,654 SF, located at 1028 Walter Reed Drive and is identified as RPC: #32-006-028.

Applicant:

Mr. Greg Whelan, Owner
P. Brennan's LLC
312 Ladson Road
Silver Spring, Maryland 20901

C.M. RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the amendment to modify the required first floor clear height requirement from 15 feet to 12.5 feet.

ISSUE: The proposed design of the mezzanine in the historic building is not consistent with the Form Based Code regulation for first floor clear heights adjacent to the Required Building Line (RBL); therefore, the applicant must request a use permit amendment. The County Board may grant a modification as per the Columbia Pike Form Based Code (FBC) regulations, as this design element is related to the inclusion of an existing historic facade. There are no issues with the request.

SUMMARY: The applicant is requesting a modification of the first floor clear height requirement under the Building Envelope Standards for Main Street sites, which is allowable under the Columbia Pike FBC, in order to accommodate a mezzanine in a restaurant (P. Brennan's) proposed in the space behind the historic Arlington Hardware facade incorporated into the Halstead project. With this modification, the mezzanine would be 12.5 feet from the first floor rather than the prescribed 15 feet, in order to remain compatible with the historic facade's second story windows and original second story floor location. The proposed mezzanine location would provide active uses behind the second story windows that can be seen from the adjacent street and sidewalk along Columbia Pike (see Attachment A and B).

County Manager: _____

County Attorney: _____

Staff: Matt Mattauszek and Jennifer Smith, DCPHD, Planning Division

PLA-5235

BACKGROUND: In March 2002, the *Columbia Pike Initiative-A Revitalization Plan* was adopted by the County Board. A major recommendation of the plan was to develop a new review process to evaluate redevelopment proposals in the corridor, which became the Form Based Code (the Code). In February 2003, the County Board adopted the FBC, which made development sites within the “Columbia Pike Special Revitalization District,” designated on the General Land Use Plan, eligible for development following the Code.

The Columbia Station (Halstead) project was approved as the first Columbia Pike Form Based Code project in June 2004. During the community review process, the applicant worked with the Historical Affairs and Landmarks Review Board (HALRB) to refine the architectural details of the project to better incorporate the façade of the Arlington Hardware building; which is identified in the Code as an historic facade. As part of that ongoing review by the HALRB, it was determined that an “Art Deco” style building would best complement the surrounding context, which includes the Arlington Theater and the Elkins Building located across Columbia Pike. At the time of the Halstead’s approval by the County Board, specific details on future tenants that would occupy the Arlington Hardware building were unknown.

In 2006, staff prepared a FBC Interpretation on mezzanines in order to provide more clarity in the way in which mezzanines can occur. The interpretation established the following 5 criteria that would be required for mezzanines on Main Street sites:

- The mezzanines correspond with the permitted “retail” uses;
- The floor area of mezzanine level is less than 2/3 of the floor area below (the first floor area);
- The floor-to-floor story height for the first floor in total does not exceed 24 feet;
- The minimum height distance between first floor and mezzanine slab will be 15 feet for at least the first 1/3 of retail depth starting at the Required Building Line (RBL); and
- The mezzanine shall be physically connected to the first floor.

The use permit amendment is seeking to modify only one of these criteria as the remaining 4 will be satisfied by the proposed design (see Attachment C).

DISCUSSION: The applicant is proposing to locate a restaurant behind the Arlington Hardware historic façade in the Halsted Project. The applicant is requesting relief from a FBC clear height requirement for the first floor space involving a mezzanine. No other modifications are requested or needed. With the proposed design, the slab placement for the mezzanine is consistent with the original location of the second floor in the Hardware building, just underneath the existing windows of the historic façade. This would allow the mezzanine to serve the restaurant’s patrons and offer a space overlooking the street (see Attachment D). If the required 15-foot clearance were to be used, this would place the mezzanine slab within the second story windows (see Attachment E).

First floor mezzanine regulations for Main Street sites in the Form Based Code, per an interpretation completed in 2006, specifically require a minimum 15-foot clearance between the top of the first floor building slab and the bottom of the mezzanine level building slab to be

measured for at least one-third of the floor area contiguous with the RBL frontage. Reducing this height to 12.5 feet would allow the slab to be placed below the height of the windows, where it would accurately reflect the plans of the building as originally constructed. The applicant has worked with staff and the HALRB to develop an overall design for the P. Brennan's restaurant that is in keeping with the overall purpose and intent of the Form Based Code and the architectural style for the area, which includes several historically significant buildings. Staff concludes that the reduced clear height adjacent to the RBL along Columbia Pike to accommodate a mezzanine space is appropriate to accommodate the design of the existing, preserved façade and, with this design, the overall project will be improved.

Community Process: HALRB unanimously voted to endorse plans for the interior at its March 18, 2009 meeting, determining that the mezzanine would not detract from the building's historic authenticity and in fact, only improve its exterior appearance. In addition, the Douglas Park Civic Association has also expressed support for the proposed mezzanine design noting it would improve the internal appearance and atmosphere of the dining area and improve the exterior by engaging the façade with the street.

CONCLUSION: Staff concludes that the modification is appropriate and will not impact the intent of the FBC. Staff also finds that the design will not adversely affect the health or safety of persons residing or working in the neighborhood of the proposed use; nor be detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to property or improvements in the neighborhood; nor be in conflict with the purposes of the Columbia Pike Initiative and the Form Based Code. Therefore, staff recommends that the County Board approve the use permit amendment, modifying the Form Based Code regulations to allow a 12.5-foot height clearance for the proposed mezzanine restaurant that will occupy space behind the historic Arlington Hardware facade.

Previous County Board Actions:

August 1961	Designated as “Undetermined Uses” on the General Land Use Plan
December 1983	Designated “General Commercial” on the General Land Use Plan
November 15, 1986	General Land Use Plan amended to include the Columbia Pike Special Revitalization District. Designated as “Service Commercial”.
December 17, 2002	Columbia Pike Special Revitalization District boundaries amended on the General Land Use Plan
February 25, 2003	Columbia Pike Form Based Code (Section 20 of the Zoning Ordinance) adopted
February 10, 2004	Columbia Pike Street Space Plan adopted and Form Based Code amended to include new Required Building lines.
June 12, 2004	U-3079-04-1 Use Permit (Form Based Code) approved for Columbia Station project.
September 13, 2008	U-3079-04-1 Use Permit Amendment (Form Based Code) approved for Columbia Station project.

Attachment A



W O R K S H O P
ARCHITECTURE | DESIGN | INTERIORS

156 11th Street NE
[T] 202.546.0428

WDC 20002
[F] 202.546.2428

P. Brennan's Public House

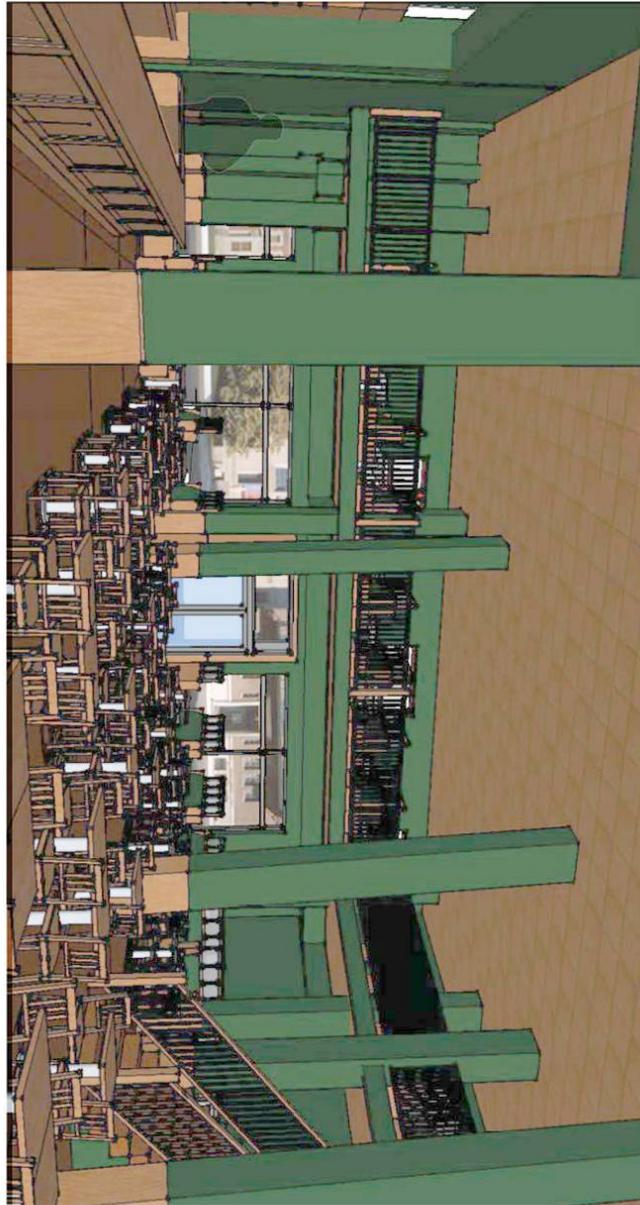


1028 South Walter Reed Drive
Arlington, VA 22204

Proposed Exterior View

Scale: N.T.S.
Date: 24 March 2009
File: pbrennans_032409.indd

Attachment B



W O R K S H O P
ARCHITECTURE | DESIGN | INTERIORS

156 11th Street NE
[T] 202.546.0428

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P. Brennan's Public House

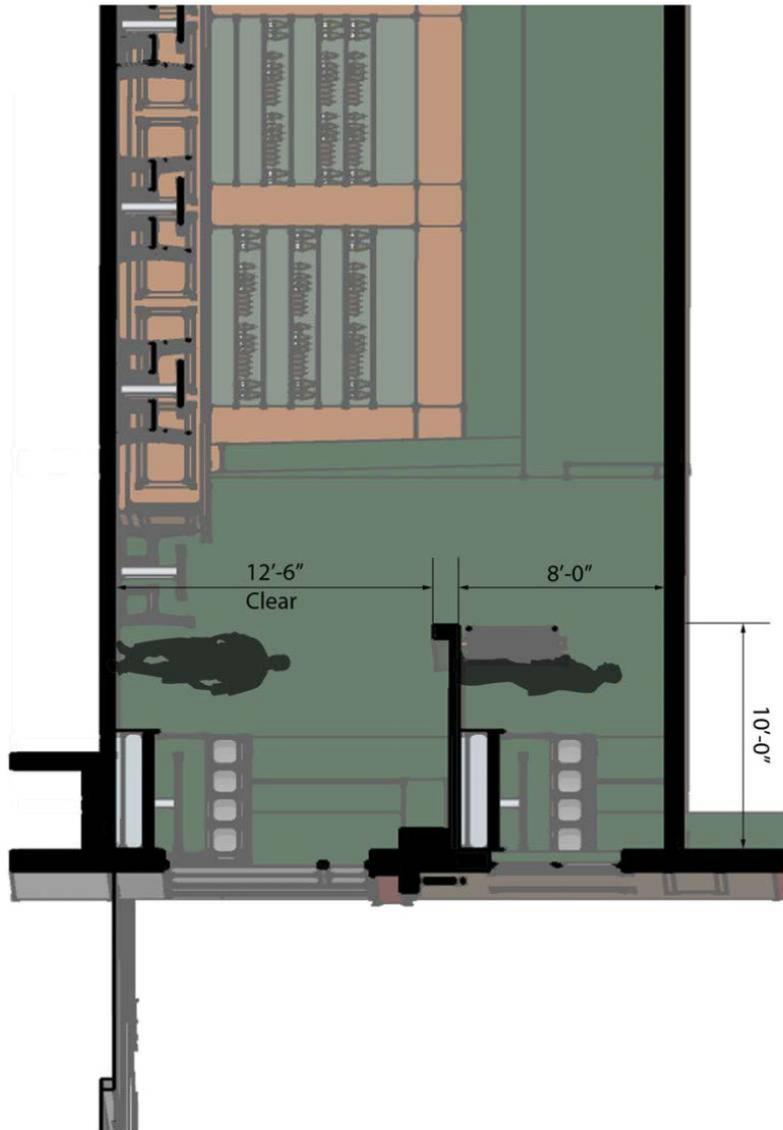


1028 South Walter Reed Drive
Arlington, VA 22204

Proposed View to Front

Scale: N.T.S.
Date: 24 March 2009
File: pbrennans_032409.indd

Attachment C



W O R K S H O P		
ARCHITECTURE	DESIGN	INTERIORS
156 11th Street NE [T] 202.546.0428		
WDC 20002 [F] 202.546.2428		

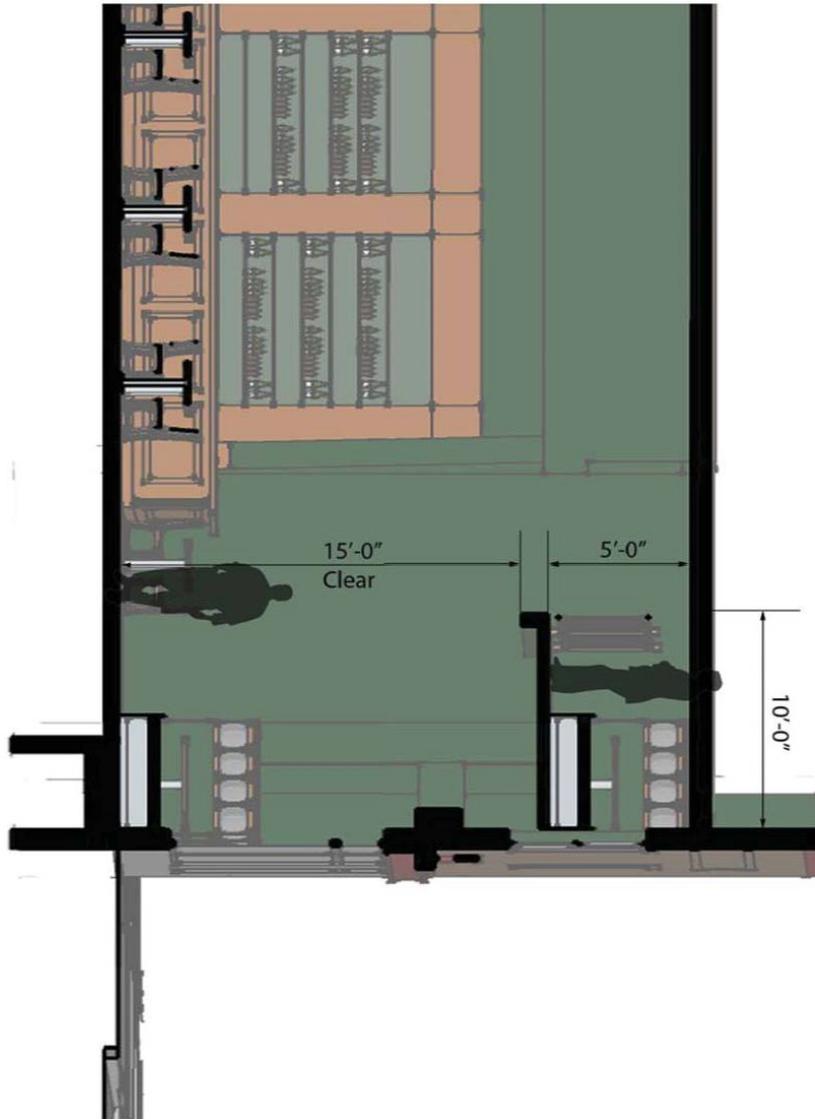
P. Brennan's Public House

1028 South Walter Reed Drive
Arlington, VA 22204

Proposed Section [12'-6" clear height]

Scale: N.T.S.
Date: 24 March 2009
File: pbrennans_032409.indd

Attachment D



W O R K S H O P		
ARCHITECTURE	DESIGN	INTERIORS
156 11th Street NE		
[T] 202.546.0428		
WDC 20002		
[F] 202.546.2428		

P. Brennan's Public House

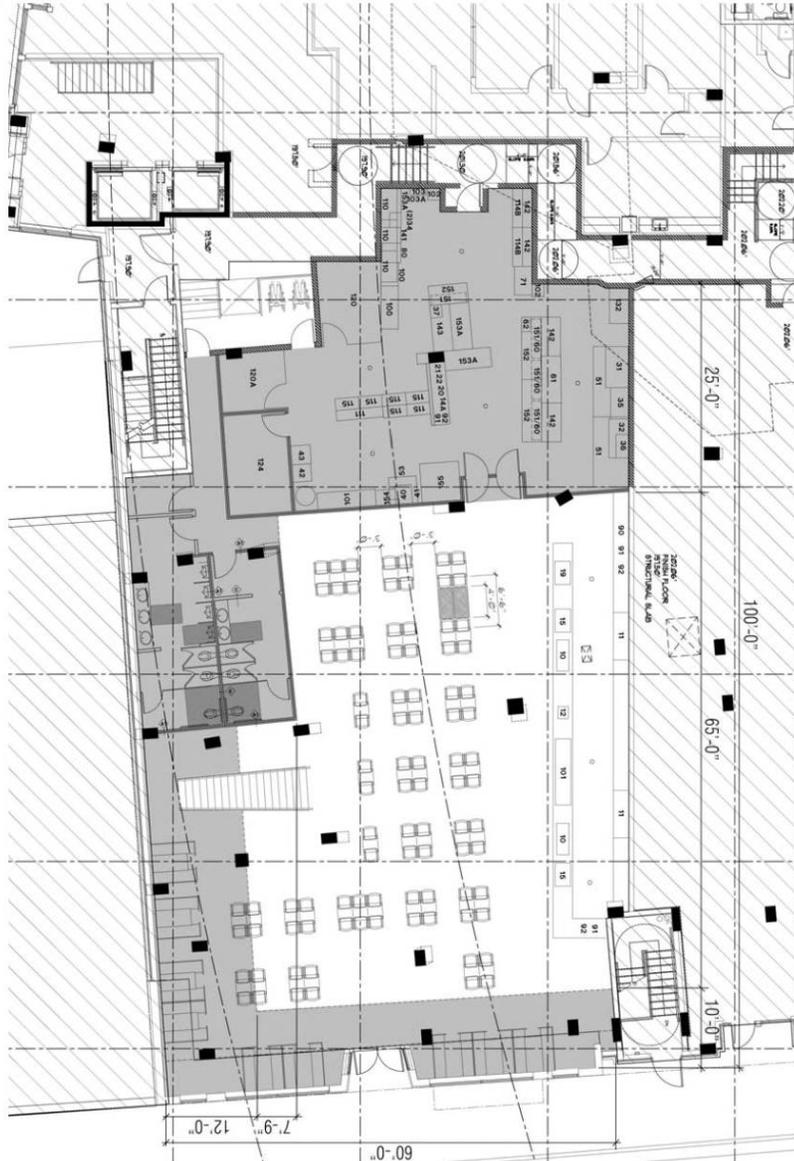
1028 South Walter Reed Drive
Arlington, VA 22204

Proposed Section [15'-0" clear height]

Scale: N.T.S.
Date: 24 March 2009
File: pbrennans_032409.indd

Attachment E

AREA CALCULATIONS:	
Existing Building First Floor:	46,954 sq. ft.
Allowable Mezzanine:	31,459 sq. ft.
Existing Building Mezzanine:	27,692 sq. ft.
DIFFERENCE:	3,767 sq. ft.
Proposed Mezzanine:	2,100 sq. ft.
DIFFERENCE:	1,667 sq. ft.
GENERAL NOTES:	
Hatched area N.I.C.	
Grey area Mezzanine / Mechanical Room Above	



W O R K S H O P
 ARCHITECTURE | DESIGN | INTERIORS

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P. Brennan's Public House

1028 South Walter Reed Drive
 Arlington, VA 22204

Proposed First Floor Plan

Scale: N.T.S.
 Date: 24 March 2009
 File: pbrennans_032409.indd

March 24, 2009

The Honorable Barbara Favola, Chairman
and Members of the County Board
2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 300
Arlington, Virginia 22201

Dear Ms. Favola and Members of the County Board:

At its regular monthly public hearing on Wednesday, March 18, the Historical Affairs and Landmark Review Board (HALRB) unanimously voted to endorse plans shown to us by Greg Whelan for an interior mezzanine at 2920 Columbia Pike, behind the historic facade of the building that previously housed Arlington Hardware.

It was the opinion of the HALRB that the proposed mezzanine would not detract from the building's historic authenticity and would in fact more accurately reflect the design of the building as originally constructed. A mezzanine will allow passers-by to see active figures in the second-floor windows, which only enhances the liveliness of the interior space as viewed from the street level. In short, the proposed interior alteration would improve the historic authenticity of the building's exterior appearance.

While the HALRB does not have jurisdiction over the interior of the building, we were asked by Mr. Whelan to review the proposed design in an advisory capacity. We did so in our role of helping the county strengthen the local economy by "encouraging new buildings and developments that will be harmonious with the existing historic buildings and squares," as stated in the preamble to Section 31A of the Zoning Ordinance pertaining to Historic Preservation Districts. This recommendation is also being made through our specific authority to make recommendations regarding historic properties as outlined in Section L of said Ordinance.

Thank you for giving the HALRB the opportunity to respond to this proposed project.

Sincerely,



Isabel Kaldenbach-Montemayor
Chairman

cc: Ron Carlee
Susan Bell

March 1, 2009

Jennifer Smith
Arlington County Planning Division
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 700
Arlington, VA 22201

Re: P. Brennan's Pub

Dear Ms. Smith:

I write to express the support of the Douglas Park Civic Association for the internal mezzanine design for P. Brennan's pub (within the Halstead Building) proposed by the restaurant. The design would place the mezzanine in the front of the serving space, tying into the second story of the historic façade of the old Arlington Hardware. This would improve the internal appearance and atmosphere of the dining area, and improve the exterior by engaging the façade with the street. Diners overlooking the street is a more lively appearance than vacant windows. Unfortunately, this step would conflict with the requirement for 15 foot ceilings at the front of the space, as only 12.5 feet would remain clear in the front third of the building. Considering the difficulty in anticipating such needs to accommodate an historic façade, departure from the strictures of the Form Based Code in this instance would do no damage to the intent or application of the code in the future, while providing the best interior and exterior design, and encouraging historic preservation. We whole-heartedly support P. Brennan's efforts to obtain relief from this particular requirement.

I would also like to report that discussion of the design of a new, lively venue drawing customers walking from our neighborhood was a joyful process for our neighborhood and civic association. When we set forth years ago on efforts at Pike revitalization, this business is exactly the kind of thing we envisioned. We are very happy to see the start of this vision coming to fruition.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

John Snyder
President, Douglas Park Civic Association
4122 16th St. South
Arlington VA 22204
703-892-2887