ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

County Board Agenda Item
Meeting of March 13, 2010

DATE: March 3, 2010

SUBJECT: SP #193 SITE PLAN AMENDMENT to permit a rooftop sign for AvalonBay Communities, located at 671 N. Glebe Road (RPC# 14-059-037)

Applicant:
AvalonBay Communities, Inc.

By:
Nan E. Walsh
Walsh, Colucci, Lubeley, Emrich, & Walsh
2200 Clarendon Blvd. Suite 1300
Arlington, Virginia 22201

C. M. RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the site plan amendment for one (1) rooftop sign for AvalonBay Communities at 671 N. Glebe Road, subject to all previously approved conditions, and an amended condition #39 as set forth in the staff report.

ISSUES: This is a site plan amendment request for one (1) rooftop sign and no issues have been identified.

SUMMARY: AvalonBay Communities is requesting a site plan amendment for one (1) 56 square foot rooftop sign located at the 6th floor level on the Glebe Road façade of the Ballston Tower office building. The sign would read "AvalonBay" and be lighted. The proposed sign area and design of the sign are consistent with the *Sign Guidelines for the Site Plan Buildings*. The applicant agrees to the requirement for a rheostat, and the sign would be turned off nightly at midnight. Therefore, staff recommends that the site plan amendment for one (1) rooftop sign on the Ballston Tower office building be approved, subject to all previously approved conditions and an amended condition #39.

BACKGROUND: The Ballston Tower building is part of the Ballston Common Mall multi-building site plan (SP#193). The County Board approved rooftop signs for Ballston Tower in

County Manager: BMD/GA

County Attorney: CWM SAM

Staff: Peter Schulz, DCPHD, Planning

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2000, and again in 2001, but currently there are no rooftop signs on the building. The applicant, AvalonBay Communities, would be occupying about 50,000 square feet of space in the building. The current *Sign Guidelines* allows rooftop sign requests to be evaluated individually without regard to how much space a tenant occupies.

Site: The building is located at 671 N. Glebe Road, contiguous to and above part of the Ballston Common Mall, and is bound as follows:

To the north:	Ballston Common Mall, zoned "C-O-2.5" (SP #193)
To the west:	The Macy's Department Store, part of SP #193 and zoned "C-O-2.5". Across South Glebe Road, properties zoned "C-2" including a service station. Behind the commercial properties, townhouses zoned "R-C".
To the east:	The Ballston Parking Garage and Ice Rink, zoned "C-O-2.5" (SP #193).
To the south:	South Glebe Road and a Goodyear tire shop, zoned "R-C".

Zoning: The site is zoned "C-O-2.5" Commercial Office Building, Hotel and Apartment Districts.

Land Use: The site is designated on the General Land Use Plan (GLUP) as "Medium Office-Apartment-Hotel" (*2.5 F.A.R. office density, apartment density up to 115 units/acre, hotel density up to 110 units/acre*).

Neighborhood: The site is located within the Ashton Heights Civic Association, and borders Ballston-Virginia Square Civic Association and Bluemont Civic Association. In addition, the town house communities across Glebe Road have been notified. There have been no comments at the time of this writing.

DISCUSSION: The following table sets forth the details for the proposed rooftop sign:

Sign Type (Quantity)	Sign Dimensions	Area (Sq. ft)	Text	Location	Materials	Lit? Y/N
Rooftop Tenant Sign (1)	3.5' height x 16 ft length	56	"AvalonBay"	West (Glebe Road) façade, at 6th floor level	Blue LED channel letters, plastic, aluminum	Y, back lit, with white halo
Total rooftop sign area permitted, based on linear frontage (s.f.)		259				
Total rooftop sign area proposed		56				

The *Sign Guidelines for Site Plan Buildings* classifies a rooftop sign as a sign which is located above thirty-five (35) feet. The *Sign Guidelines* further state that any building may have a maximum of two (2) rooftop signs, and that the signs should be compatible with the building architecture. Individual letter size should be no more than six (6) feet in height.

The proposed rooftop sign complies with the *Sign Guidelines* for size, letter height, placement, materials and lighting. The permissible area for rooftop signs for any building are computed on the basis of one (1) square foot of sign area for each one (1) linear foot of building wall width measured along the public right-of-way. The linear frontage for Ballston Tower is 259 feet. The proposed sign, at 56 square feet, is therefore within the permitted sign area for rooftop signs.

The proposed sign would read "AvalonBay" and would be blue with back-lit LED and a white halo. It would be placed approximately 66 feet from the street level, placed at the sixth floor level above the main door to the Ballston Tower office building. The applicant has agreed to the standard condition for a rheostat to adjust brightness and to shut off the sign at midnight daily.

CONCLUSION: The proposed sign area and design are consistent with the *Sign Guidelines for Site Plan Buildings*. Therefore, staff recommends that the site plan amendment for one (1) rooftop sign for AvalonBay Communities on the Ballston Tower office building be approved, subject to all previously approved conditions, and the amended condition #39.

Amended Condition #39:

The developer agrees that all signs shall be consistent with the adopted comprehensive sign plan approved by the County Board on March 9 and 23, 1996, and as amended by the County Board in their approval of the site plan amendment on August 2, 1997.

a) The developer agrees that the rooftop sign located at 671 North Glebe Road shall be of the size, placement, color, lighting and materials as shown on the sheet dated February 16, 2010 and entitled "AvalonBay Communities, Inc. Exterior Sign Specifications". The Avalon Bay rooftop sign shall not exceed 56 square feet. The sign shall not be illuminated between the hours of midnight to 8 a.m. seven (7) days a week.

b) The developer agrees that minor changes to the approved signs 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 a sign to meet field conditions (less than 1 foot in any direction); or (ii) a minor change in the area of an individual sign (less than 5%).

c) The developer agrees to install a rheostat or other appropriate variable resistor that will allow the developer to adjust (decrease) the rooftop signs' lighting intensity. The developer further agrees that if the County Manager finds that the intensity of the rooftop signs' 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, 1982	Approved a site plan amendment (Z-2224-82-2) for the redevelopment of Parkington Shopping Center, for three office buildings, for the remodeling of an existing department store and shops and an addition to the existing parking garage plus a new parking structure.
July 9, 1983	Approved a site plan amendment (new site plan) (Z-2224-82-2 and Z-2238-83-2) SP#193 to modify the approved site plan to incorporate new site area into the redevelopment and to revise the approved site plan. Total density approved 1,450,285 s.f. [(850,000 s.f. of office g.f.a. in 3 bldgs., 25,000 s.f. of retail/office g.f.a. and 662,660 s.f. of commercial g.f.a. excluding mall area (76,475 s.f. and cinema 10,900 s.f.)]
April 4, 1987	Approved a site plan amendment to permit an outdoor cafe (Ecco Cafe) with a review in one (1) year.
July 11, 1987	Approved a site plan amendment to modify condition #2 to allow the word "Ecco" to be used in conjunction with the logo on the panel demarcating the outdoor cafe area.
April 16, 1988	Continued a site plan amendment to the operation of an outdoor cafe (Ecco Cafe) with a review in two (2) years.
August 12, 1989	Deferred site plan amendment request for a comprehensive sign and lighting plan to the October 7, 1989 County Board meeting.
September 12, 1989	Approved site plan amendment request to permit conversion of 408 s.f. of retail space to office use for five years subject to one (1) condition.
October 7, 1989	Deferred site plan amendment request for a comprehensive sign and lighting plan to the January 6, 1990 County Board meeting.
January 9, 1990	Deferred site plan amendment request for a comprehensive sign and lighting plan to the

	April 7, 1990 County Board meeting.
April 7, 1990	Continued site plan amendments for the operation of an outdoor cafe (American Cafe) with a review in two (2) years.
April 7, 1990	Deferred site plan amendment request for a comprehensive sign and lighting plan to the July 7, 1990 County Board meeting.
April 3, 1993	Continued a site plan amendment (SP #193) for operation of an outdoor café in conjunction with an existing restaurant.
July 13, 1993	Approved a site plan amendment for operation of a summer day camp for up to 40 children, ages 5 to 12 years, weekdays, from 7:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. from June through September on the 3rd level of the Mall.
September 11, 1993	Took no action on site plan amendment (SP #193) to permit six tables of an outdoor café in the public right-of-way.
March 9, 1996	Adopted an ordinance stating that the amount and type of signage proposed for the Ballston Common Mall is consistent with the County Board's adopted policy establishing this site area as a major focal point for the Ballston area, and that the approved sign plan will reinforce the retail component and unity of this focal point project consistent with the "Sign Guidelines for Site Plan Buildings"
March 23, 1996	Approved a site plan amendment (SP #193) for a comprehensive sign plan (banners, retail tenant signs, mall identification signs, directional signs, and pylon and free-standing signs) including three Ballston Common Mall identification signs.
August 2, 1997	Approved a site plan amendment (SP #193) for a new office building including 230,361 square feet of office gross floor area, 29,334 square feet of restaurant/retail gross floor area including 7,005 square feet of mall area and 80,014 square feet of theater space, including a comprehensive sign plan subject to conditions.

November 1, 1997	Approved a site plan amendment (SP #193) for construction of a partial sixth floor with approximately 40.000 square feet of gross floor area on the existing building for administrative offices and a corresponding reduction of approximately 40,000 square feet from the approved but unbuilt "Point Office Building".
December 16, 1997	Ratified and approved the lease agreement between the Arlington County Board and Ballston Common Associates, L.P. for the subject County-owned property at a rent of $350 per month and adopted an ordinance to permit temporary a temporary construction staging area, partially on-site and partially off-site.
March 13, 1999	Approved a site plan amendment (SP #193) to permit an outdoor café with a maximum seating area of 60 and live entertainment between the hours of 11:00 a.m. and 1:30 a.m., Mondays through Sundays, for Rock Bottom Brewery Restaurants.
July 10, 1999	Approved a site plan amendment (SP #193) and amended conditions of the approved site plan continue to permit a temporary construction staging area, partially on-site and partially off-site for a period of two (2) years from June 13, 1999 to June 13, 2001). Ratified and approved the lease agreement attached to the County Manager's June 23, 1999 report between the Arlington County Board and Ballston Common Associates, L.P. for the subject County-owned property at a rent of $350 per month.
November 13, 1999	Approved a site plan amendment (SP #193) to permit an outdoor café within the public right-of-way and to permit a comprehensive sign plan.
January 29, 2000	Approved site plan amendment (SP #193) for two rooftop signs (one on an alternative location) at the Ballston Tower building for parcels of real property located at 627 - 701 North Glebe Road (east side) and 4100 through 4128 Wilson Boulevard and 504

	through 708 North Randolph Street subject to three new conditions.
June 24, 2000	Approved an agreement with May Department Store Company and amendments to Ballston Public Parking Garage Bond documents.
	Approved a site plan amendment (SP #193) for Parcel D-1, Ballston Common Point site and modification of use regulations for tandem parking and a comprehensive sign plan subject to conditions.
August 5, 2000	Approved site plan amendment (SP #193) to enclose the exterior arcade to accommodate year round restaurant seating, additional outdoor seating and modifications to exterior facade for Chicken Out Rotisserie.
October 13, 2001	Approved site plan amendment (SP #193) to replace the previously approved 8-inch caliper trees with 6.5-inch caliper trees.
	Approved site plan amendment (SP #193) to convert interior retail space to office space, and amend the comprehensive sign plan subject to all previous conditions and new conditions.
February 9, 2002	Approved major site plan amendment (SP #193) for the development of the 8th level of the Ballston Common parking garage including parking, a two-story ice skating facility with ancillary uses and a training facility, with a second story including office use and a mezzanine to the ice rinks subject to conditions.
November 16, 2002	Approved a site plan amendment for a comprehensive sign plan for the Ballston Point building, subject to all previous conditions and new conditions.
	Approved a site plan amendment for a comprehensive sign plan for the Ballston Common Mall, subject to all previous conditions and new conditions.

December 7, 2002	Approved a site plan amendment for a weekly live comedy show within the Ballston Common Mall, subject to the following condition and review in one (1) year (December 2003).
December 6, 2003	Continued a site plan amendment for a weekly live comedy show within the Ballston Common Mall, subject to all previous conditions and review by the County Board in three (3) years (December 2006).
June 14, 2003	Approved a site plan amendment for the ice skating facility to amend condition #60 and permit minor building modifications, subject to all previous conditions and three revised conditions.
July 19, 2003	Discontinued a site plan amendment for relocation of office use at 4238 Wilson Boulevard.
October 18, 2003	Approved a site plan amendment for conversion of retail use to office (within the Ballston Common Mall) until January 2006.
July 10, 2004	Approved a site plan amendment to expand the theater for a weekly live comedy show within the Ballston Mall, subject to the previous condition #1 of this site plan amendment and condition #2 below, with a County Board review in two (2) years and six months (December 2006) along with the original site plan amendment.
December 14, 2004	Approved a site plan amendment for the ice skating facility to remove the mesh from the façade of the parking garage structure, subject to all previous conditions and two revised conditions (#1 and #30).
October 14, 2006	Approved a site plan amendment for the ice skating facility for a comprehensive sign plan, including rooftop signs, subject to all previous conditions with two amended conditions (Condition #30 and #44) and one deleted condition (Condition #62). Carried over discussion pertaining to the illumination of the rooftop signs to the November 14, 2006 meeting.

December 9, 2006	Renewed the site plan amendment for an expanded theater, subject to all previous conditions, and with a County Board review in three (3) years (December 2009).
January 27, 2007	Approved a site plan amendment to illuminate the two approved rooftop signs for the ice skating facility.
September 13, 2008	Approved a site plan amendment to permit live entertainment and dancing at Union Jack's, subject to conditions and renewal in one (1) year (September 2009).
July 14, 2009	Accepted withdrawal of a site plan amendment for outdoor seating in the public right-of-way at Union Jack's.
September 26, 2009	Renewed a site plan amendment for live entertainment and dancing at Union Jack's, subject to all previous conditions and new and revised conditions and review in one (1) year (September 2010).
December 12, 2009	Renewed a site plan amendment for an expanded theater and live entertainment at ComedySportz subject to all previous conditions, one (1) new conditions, and review by the County Board in five (5) years (December 2014).

AvalonBay Communities, Inc.
Exterior Sign Specifications

RECEIVED
FEB 16 2010
By

Main ID sign for new Corporate Office

Description:
One set of 42"H x 192"W x 5 ½" thick face lit/back lit, low voltage, LED channel letters. Letters are composed of baked enamel aluminum sides and blue acrylic faces. The back of letters are Lexan allowing the lights to create a white halo glow from the back as well as lighting through the blue acrylic faces.

Colors:

Face: Avalon Midnight Blue
Sides: Avalon Midnight Blue

Installation:
On exterior face of building above 6th floor.

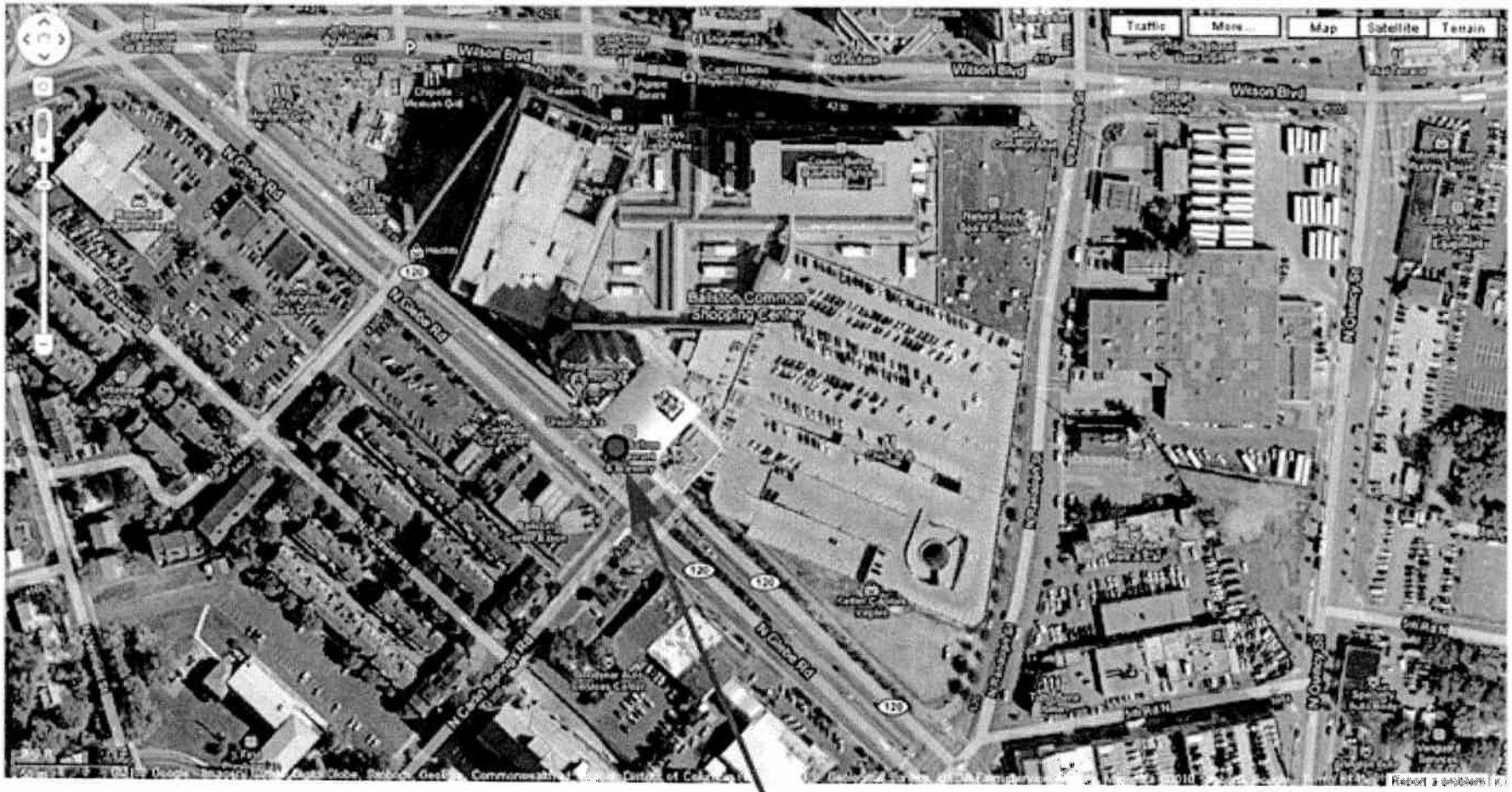
Front View

Side View

* Maximum size of the sign. The sign will be sized to maintain the heighth to width ratio above (42:192).

Exhibit B: Exterior Sign Specifications

Sign Location



Sign Location in Plan View for:

AvalonBay Communities, Inc.
671 North Glebe Road

SP #193
671 North Glebe Road,
RPC: 14-059-037

Not To Scale

Case Location(s)

Note: These maps are for property location assistance only.
They may not represent the latest survey and other information.

Department of Community Planning, Housing and Development

Planning Division