



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

County Board Agenda Item
Meeting of December 15, 2007

DATE: November 26, 2007

SUBJECT: SP #92 SITE PLAN AMENDMENT to amend a comprehensive sign plan at 1325 Wilson Blvd. (RPC #16-036-005)

Applicant:

RP/HH Rosslyn Hotel Owner LLC

By:

Tara Wiedeman, Attorney/Agent,
2200 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 1300
Arlington, Virginia 22201

C.M. RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the subject comprehensive sign plan amendment request subject to all previous conditions, amended condition #28, and new condition #29.

ISSUES: None.

SUMMARY: The applicant proposes to amend their existing comprehensive sign plan to replace existing signs, which include two (2) new rooftop building identification signs, and one new building sign for the Hyatt Hotel. Rosslyn Renaissance has submitted a letter in support of the site plan amendment request. The proposed new signs are consistent with the *Sign Guidelines for Site Plan Buildings* and with the recently approved site plan amendment to re clad the building facades and upgrade site details. Therefore, staff recommends approval of the site plan amendment request subject to all previous conditions, amended condition #28, and new condition #29.

BACKGROUND: The subject site plan was approved in April 14, 1973 for a Rodeway Inn hotel use. The existing hotel building was constructed in 1976. In May 1976, the County Board approved a site plan amendment to install HYATT signs on the north, south, and east facades of this building. The County Board approved a site plan amendment to re clad the existing building facades with a more durable building material and modify site details on July 7, 2007.

County Manager: _____

County Attorney: _____

Staff: Rasheda DuPree McKinney, DCPHD, Planning Division

PLA-4839

Site: The subject property is the site of the Hyatt Arlington Hotel. The site is bound by Wilson Boulevard to the south, Fort Myer Drive to the east, and North Nash Street to the west. The hotel is addressed as 1325 Wilson Boulevard but has its main entrance on North Nash Street. The site fronts directly across from the Commonwealth Building at 1300 Wilson Boulevard. The Hyatt features 319 rooms, several restaurants and conference facilities, and 284 parking spaces.

Zoning: The site is zoned “C-O” Commercial Office Building, Hotel and Multiple Family Dwelling Districts.

Land Use: The site is designated on the General Land Use Plan (GLUP) as “High” Office-Apartment-Hotel (Office Density 3.8 F.A.R., Apartment Density up to 4.8 F.A.R., Hotel Density up to 3.8 F.A.R.).

Neighborhood: The site is located in the North Rosslyn Civic Association and is adjacent to The Radnor/Fort Myer Heights Civic Association boundary. Both civic associations and the Rosslyn Renaissance were notified of this request. To date, staff has not received a response from the North Rosslyn or Radnor/Fort Myer Heights Civic Associations. The sign plan request was presented to the Rosslyn Renaissance, and a letter of support from the Rosslyn Renaissance is attached.

DISCUSSION: The allowed building sign area under the *Sign Guidelines for Site Plan Buildings* is one (1) square foot for each one (1) linear foot of building frontage as measured along the public right-of-way. The subject building measures 409 linear feet along public right-of-ways, and is therefore allowed a total of 409 square feet of sign area.

Building Length @ Street Frontage/Public Right-of-Way	409 ft.
Maximum Sign Area Allowance Based on Building Length at Street Frontage on Public Right-of-Ways (excluding rooftop signs)	409 sq ft.
Proposed Building Sign Area (excluding rooftop signs)	175.2 sq ft.

The proposed comprehensive sign plan will decrease the building sign area from 213.2 square feet to 175.2 square feet, excluding rooftop signs. The following chart summarizes the proposed building signs requested (excluding rooftop signs):

Sign No. (See Table of Contents Page G-01.00)	Type	Area Sq. Ft	Text	Location	Action
A	Building Identification	30.6	"HYATT"	North Elevation	New sign to replace existing
C	Building Tenant	50	"Cityhouse"	South Elevation	New sign to replace existing
D	Parking Sign	32	"MetroPark M P"	South Elevation	Existing sign to remain
E	Building Identification	30.6	"HYATT"	West Elevation	New sign
F	Address Sign	n/a	"1325"	West Elevation	New sign not counted toward sign area (9.3 sq ft.)
G	Parking Sign	18	"MetroPark M P"	West Elevation	Existing sign to remain
H	Information Sign	n/a	"Clearance 7'0"	West Elevation	Existing sign to remain, not counted toward sign area (8 sq ft)
I	Window Lobby Sign	n/a	"HYATT"	Lobby Entrance Transom	To Be Removed
J	Freestanding Parking Entrance	6	"HYATT Enter"	West entrance	Existing to remain
K	Freestanding Parking Exit	6	"HYATT Exit"	West exit	Existing to remain
L	Building Identification	1	"HYATT"	West Elevation	Existing to remain
M	Building Identification	1	"HYATT"	West Elevation	Existing to remain
N	Directional Sign	n/a	"Hotel Parking..."	West Elevation	Existing to remain (3 sq. ft.)
P	Canopy Sign	n/a	"HYATT"	South Elevation	To Be Removed
Total Building Sign area (excluding rooftop signs)		175.2			

Two freestanding signs were erected without permits and have been in place for some time. The two signs read, "HYATT Enter" and "HYATT Exit" and measure 6 square feet each. The Zoning Ordinance states that freestanding directional signs are permitted by right in all zoning districts without permits if they do not exceed 2 square feet in sign area and 4 feet in height. Because these signs exceed the Zoning Ordinance maximum dimensions for directional signs, they must be counted toward their allowable sign area. Further, the *Sign Guidelines for Site Plan Buildings* state that directional signs with specific tenant names must be submitted as part of a comprehensive sign plan and are subject to site plan amendment review. Staff supports the continuation of the freestanding directional signs with specific tenant names since these signs provide information to facilitate more efficient vehicular circulation given the irregular driveway and garage locations. Condition #28 is revised to include the existing freestanding signs.

In addition, the *Sign Guidelines for Site Plan Buildings* states that rooftop signs installed above 35 feet high are allowed at a maximum ratio of one (1) square foot for each one (1) linear foot of building frontage as measured along the public right-of-way. The *Guidelines* further state that up to two (2) rooftop signs may be approved and that the sign area for rooftop signs is not counted toward the total building sign area. The building currently has one rooftop sign on the east façade which is installed at 44.25 feet above grade. A total of two rooftop signs are

proposed, each to read, "HYATT". These signs replace existing HYATT signs and will be the same size or smaller than the existing building signs, but will be installed slightly higher on the building facades, and each sign will be above 35 feet. The rooftop signs are proposed on the south front and east side building facades at a height of 36.25 feet and 48.75 feet respectively. Both signs will be internally-illuminated LED lights.

Building Length @ Street Frontage/Public Right-of-Way	409 ft.
Maximum Rooftop Sign Area Allowance Based on Building Length at Street Frontage on Public Right-of-Ways	409 sq ft.
Proposed Rooftop Sign Area	183.1 sq ft.

The following chart summarizes the proposed rooftop building signs requested:

Sign No. (See Table of Contents Page G-01.00)	Type	Area Sq. Ft	Text	Location	Action
B	Building Identification	152.5	"HYATT"	South Elevation	New sign to replace existing non-rooftop sign
O	Building Identification	30.6	"HYATT"	East Elevation	New sign to replace existing rooftop sign
Total Rooftop Building Sign Area		183.1			

CONCLUSION: The new signs proposed are consistent in both size and character with the *Sign Guidelines for Site Plan Buildings*. The proposed rooftop signs are not located along the rooflines, but are located along the street frontage and contribute to the streetscape by providing information to both pedestrians and motorists. The rooftop signs are located above 35 feet because of a significant change in grade along Wilson Boulevard and Fort Myer Drive at this site, but are otherwise pedestrian-oriented signs. The proposed heights are consistent with other building signs in this vicinity. The signs do not directly front any residential use and should not constitute an adverse impact to the Rosslyn neighborhood. Therefore, staff recommends approval of the subject comprehensive sign plan amendment request subject to all previous conditions, amended condition #28, and new condition #29.

28. Any signs beyond those permitted in the "~~C-1-O~~ C-O" District Classification shall be subject to future County Board approval. "Sign ~~Standards Guidelines~~ for Site Plan Buildings" adopted by the County Board ~~on July 24, 1965,~~ shall serve as design criteria for such signs, and specifically, no free-standing signs shall be permitted except as shown in the plans prepared by Gensler dated November 26, 2007 submitted as part of the comprehensive sign plan request approved by the County Board on December 15, 2007.
29. The developer agrees that if the County Manager finds that the intensity of the rooftop signs 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.

PREVIOUS COUNTY BOARD ACTIONS:

February 8, 1968	Deferred (Z-1903-68-2) rezoning request for a change land classification from “C-2” to “C-O” to April 27, 1968.
April 27, 1968	Deferred (Z-1903-68-2) to the Regular June, 1968 Zoning Hearings.
June 6, 1968	Deferred (Z-1903-68-2) to the Regular August 1968 Zoning Hearings.
August 10, 1968	Deferred (Z-1903-68-2) to the September 14, 1968 Zoning Hearings.
September 14, 1968	Deferred (Z-1903-68-2) to the November 23, 1968 Zoning Hearings.
November 23, 1968	Approved (Z-1903-68-2) rezoning from “C-2” to “C-O.”
April 14, 1973	Approved site plan (Z-1903-68-2 and Z1948-69-3) permitting a 319 unit hotel subject to conditions.
November 3, 1973	Approved a site plan amendment (Z-1903-68-2 and Z-1948-69-3) to eliminate the sixth floor of the underground parking subject to conditions.
June 5, 1974	Approved site plan amendment (Z-1903-68-2 and Z-1948-69-3) permitting extension of the site plan approval for one year.
May 8, 1976	Approved site plan amendment (Z-1903-68-2) permitting signs reading “HYATT HOUSE” and corporate logos on north, south and east elevations of the building, in accordance with plans dated February 19, 1976.
June 12, 1976	Approved site plan amendment (Z-1903-68-2) to permit dancing and entertainment on the second floor restaurant and entertainment in the first floor lounge subject to conditions.
July 7, 2007	Approved site plan amendment (SP #92) for modification of the existing building façade.

Approved Conditions (SP #92 Hyatt Hotel Facades):

Transportation

1. Construct sidewalk, curb and gutter in accordance with Arlington County plans and specifications.
2. All on-site drainage to be collected and piped to adequate storm sewer outlet.
3. Install Arlington County standard street lights in locations designated by the Department of Transportation.
4. All required easements, including fire lane easements over all parking garage levels, are required to be provided prior to the issuance of a building permit.
5. A final engineering site plan should be submitted and approved prior to the issuance of a building permit.
6. The developer is to construct or pay one-half of the cost under public right-of-way of the approved pedestrian underpass from this site to the Commonwealth Building.
7. Required pedestrian corridors within structure shall be a minimum ten feet in width and shall remain unsecured during the hours of normal occupancy of the building.
8. Any truck or trash loading area shall either be enclosed or screened from public view.
9. A bus pull-out lane shall be required and is subject to the approval of the Department of Transportation.
10. A schematic plan and an easement for the provision of a continuous pedestrian walkway at an elevation of 117 feet through the Ames Center shall be required prior to the issuance of a building permit and shall be subject to the approval of the County Manager.
11. The construction of the above mentioned walkway shall be complete prior to initiation of Metro Service (as-amended).
12. Parking on-site, or on a suitable off-site location, shall be provided for all construction workers without charge. April 14, 1973
13. There shall be no approved alternate use for parking floor area or spaces by this site plan approval. Conversion of parking to any other use shall be subject to approval by the County Board. Conversion of parking floor area or spaces below the minimum required will not be permitted.

Utilities

14. The meter vault for water service shall be located in the island at North Nash Street and Wilson Boulevard. By locating the water service at this point it will not be necessary to make any adjustments when the grade separation structure is constructed at Wilson Boulevard and Fort Myer Drive.
15. The sanitary sewer connection as shown on the plan is satisfactory. The grade change on Wilson Boulevard will involve filling and will, therefore, not affect the sanitary sewer connection in the future.
16. Utility plans showing locations of all existing underground utilities such as water, sewer, gas, electric, telephone cables, etc., both within the property and in adjacent streets and the proposed connections to such utilities are to be approved by the Department of Utilities prior to the issuance of a building permit.
17. The developer shall install all specified utilities on site and on abutting streets including the relocation, replacement or required extensions of such utilities.
18. The support and protection of all utilities passing through or under the building structure shall be subject to the approval of the Department of Utilities.
19. Any on-site relocation of County utilities or storm sewer shall be at the developer's cost.
20. The developer shall install underground wiring for all utilities on and at the periphery of the site.

Landscaping

21. Landscape and deck treatment plans are to be approved by the County Manager prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy for any portion of the structure.
22. The developer shall provide major planting areas, as opposed to planter boxes, as approved by the County Manager.
23. On-site lighting shall be subject to the approval of the County Manager and shall be directed and shielded so as to avoid glare and bare bulb exposure to abutting properties.

Miscellaneous

24. The penthouse floor area shall be used only for mechanical purposes and those specific ancillary uses to the major building use which shall be approved by the County Board.
25. The only alternate use of commercial floor area by this site plan approval shall be parking floor area. Any other alternate use of commercial floor area shall be at the sole discretion and approval of the County Board.
26. The developer shall consider fall-out shelter use of basement-garage areas.
27. The height of structure as proposed will require a letter of approval from the Federal Aviation Administration prior to the issuance of a building permit.
28. Any signs beyond those permitted in the "C-1-0" District Classification shall be subject to future County Board approval. "Sign Standards for Site Plan Buildings" adopted by the County Board on July 24, 1965, shall serve as design criteria for such signs, and specifically, no free-standing signs shall be permitted.
29. Site plan approval expires one year after the date of County Board approval if the approved building is not under construction.