



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts
Department of Planning & Community Development
730 Massachusetts Avenue, Arlington, Massachusetts 02476

Public Hearing Memorandum

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the Arlington Redevelopment Board and public with technical information and a planning analysis to assist with the regulatory decision-making process.

To: Arlington Redevelopment Board

From: Jennifer Raitt, Secretary Ex Officio

Subject: Environmental Design Review, 478 Massachusetts Ave, Arlington, MA
Docket #3552

Date: December 12, 2017

I. Docket Summary

This is an application by Joseph Marcus and David Spinney, for Food For Thought, LLC to replace a sign on the Massachusetts Avenue façade. The project needs a Special Permit to allow Signs (Section 7) in the B-5 zone and under 11.06 Environmental Design Review (EDR) because of its location on Massachusetts Avenue.

Materials submitted for consideration of this application:
Application for EDR Special Permit (cover sheet only), letter from Lafuente Group, LLC (DBA Lafuente Sign & Awning), and Signage details dated November 22, 2017.

II. Application of Special Permit Criteria (Arlington Zoning Bylaw, Section 10.11)

1. Section 10.11a-1

The uses requested are listed in the Table of Use Regulations as a Special Permit in the district for which application is made or is so designated elsewhere in this Bylaw.

The commercial use is allowed in the B-5 zone. The Board can find that this condition is met.

2. Section 10.11a-2

The requested use is essential or desirable to the public convenience or welfare.

The Board can find that this condition is met.

3. Section 10.11a-3

The requested use will not create undue traffic congestion, or unduly impair pedestrian safety.

The Board can find that this condition is met.

4. Section 10.11a-4

The requested use will not overload any public water, drainage or sewer system or any other municipal system to such an extent that the requested use or any developed use in the immediate area or in any other area of the Town will be unduly subjected to hazards affecting health, safety, or the general welfare.

The Board can find that this condition is met.

5. Section 10.11a-5

Any special regulations for the use, set forth in Article 11.

All such regulations are fulfilled.

6. Section 10.11a-6

The requested use will not impair the integrity or character of the district or adjoining districts, nor be detrimental to the health, morals, or welfare.

The Board can find that this condition is met.

7. Section 10.11a-7

The requested use will not, by its addition to a neighborhood, cause an excess of that particular use that could be detrimental to the character of said neighborhood.

The Board can find that this condition is met.

III. Application of Environmental Design Review Standards (Arlington Zoning Bylaw, Section 11.06)

1. EDR-1 Preservation of Landscape

The landscape shall be preserved in its natural state insofar as practicable, by minimizing tree and soil removal and any grade changes shall be in keeping with the general appearance of neighboring developed areas.

The Board can find that this condition is met.

2. EDR-2 Relation of the Building to the Environment

Proposed development shall be related harmoniously to the terrain and to the use, scale and architecture of the existing buildings in the vicinity that have functional or visible relationship to the proposed buildings. The Arlington Redevelopment Board may require a modification in massing so as to reduce the effect of shadows on the abutting property in an R-1 or R-2 district or on public open space.

The Board can find that this condition is met.

3. EDR-3 Open Space

All open space (landscaped and usable) shall be so designed as to add to the visual amenities of the vicinity by maximizing its visibility for persons passing by the site or overlooking it from nearby properties. The location and configuration of usable open space shall be so designed as to encourage social interaction, maximize its utility and facilitate maintenance.

The Board can find that this condition is met.

4. EDR-4 Circulation

With respect to vehicular and pedestrian and bicycle circulation, including entrances, ramps, walkways, drives, and parking, special attention shall be given to location and number of access points to the public streets (especially in relation to existing traffic controls and mass transit facilities), width of interior drives and access points, general interior circulation, separation of pedestrian and vehicular traffic, access to community facilities, and arrangement of vehicle parking and bicycle parking areas, including bicycle parking spaces required by Section 8.13 that are safe and convenient and, insofar as practicable, do not detract from the use and enjoyment of proposed buildings and structures and the neighboring properties.

The Board can find that this condition is met.

5. EDR-5 Surface Water Drainage

Special attention shall be given to proper site surface drainage so that removal of surface waters will not adversely affect neighboring properties or the public storm drainage system. Available Best Management Practices for the site should be

employed, and include site planning to minimize impervious surface and reduce clearing and re-grading. Best Management Practices may include erosion control and stormwater treatment by means of swales, filters, plantings, roof gardens, native vegetation, and leaching catchbasins. Stormwater should be treated at least minimally on the development site; that which cannot be handled on site shall be removed from all roofs, canopies, paved and pooling areas and carried away in an underground drainage system. Surface water in all paved areas shall be collected in intervals so that it will not obstruct the flow of vehicular or pedestrian traffic and will not create puddles in the paved areas.

In accordance with Section 10.11,b, the Board may require from any applicant, after consultation with the Director of Public Works, security satisfactory to the Board to insure the maintenance of all stormwater facilities such as catch basins, leaching catch basins, detention basins, swales, etc. within the site. The Board may use funds provided by such security to conduct maintenance that the applicant fails to do.

The Board may adjust in its sole discretion the amount and type of financial security such that it is satisfied that the amount is sufficient to provide for any future maintenance needs.

The Board can find that this condition is met.

6. EDR-6 Utilities Service

Electric, telephone, cable, TV, and other such lines of equipment shall be underground. The proposed method of sanitary sewage disposal and solid waste disposal from all buildings shall be indicated.

The Board can find that this condition is met.

7. EDR-7 Advertising Features

The size, location, design, color, texture, lighting and materials of all permanent signs and outdoor advertising structures or features shall not detract from the use and enjoyment of proposed buildings and structures and the surrounding properties.

The previously permitted sign (for Elton's Roast Beef) at this location was 33.75" tall by 174" wide (40.78 sf). The proposed sign is a round bracket sign measuring 4' in diameter and 5" wide which would extend 4.5' from the façade of the building. The previously permitted sign is unlit. Bracket signs are allowed in a B5 zone, however it must meet the following dimensional requirements: a) no less than 8 feet clearance from ground level to bottom of the sign, b) no more than 15 feet high from ground level to top of the sign, c) the square footage of the sign shall be no larger than 12 sf or the number of feet equal to half the façade length of the establishment on which the sign hangs, whichever is less, and d) the sign shall project no more than 50 inches

from the face of the building. While the proposed sign is less than 12 sf in size the proposal includes no measurements of the façade or the exact location where the sign will be attached to the building.

The proposed sign is a significant departure from the previously permitted sign. According to the proponent's sign contractor, the reason for this change is to expose glass windows that are an historic feature of the building occluded by the existing signage.

The design, color and lighting are inappropriate for this historic structure and important location. While the proposed sign is intended to expose an historic feature of the building the proponent has neither depicted where the new signage will be installed on the façade nor provided a detailed a plan for restoring the glass that is purportedly underneath the existing sign.

In summary, the proposed signage should be revised to address the above noted issues. Signs should not be internally lit. Signs should be within the sign band.

8. EDR-8 Special Features

Exposed storage areas, exposed machinery installations, service areas, truck loading areas, utility buildings and structures, and similar accessory areas and structures shall be subject to such setbacks, screen plantings or other screening methods as shall reasonably be required to prevent their being incongruous with the existing or contemplated environment and the surrounding properties.

The Board can find that this condition is met.

9. EDR-9 Safety

With respect to personal safety, all open and enclosed spaces shall be designed to facilitate building evacuation and maximize accessibility by fire, police and other emergency personnel and equipment. Insofar as practicable, all exterior spaces and interior public and semi-public spaces shall be so designed to minimize the fear and probability of personal harm or injury by increasing the potential surveillance by neighboring residents and passersby of any accident or attempted criminal act.

The Board can find that this condition is met.

10. EDR-10 Heritage

With respect to Arlington's heritage, removal or disruption of historic, traditional, or significant uses, structures or architectural elements shall be minimized insofar as practical whether these exist on the site or on adjacent properties.

The location of the new business and its proposed signage is significant. The property is part of the Arlington Center National Register Historic District, and any proposal

approved by this board would need further approval from the Arlington Historical Commission.

11. EDR-11 Microclimate

With respect to the localized climatic characteristics of a given area, any development which proposes new structures, new hard surface, ground coverage or the installation of machinery which emits heat, vapor or fumes shall endeavor to minimize insofar as practicable, any adverse impacts on light, air and water resources or on noise and temperature levels of the immediate environment.

The Board can find that this condition is met.

12. EDR-12 Sustainable Building and Site Design

Projects are encouraged to incorporate best practices related to sustainable sites, water efficiency, energy and atmosphere, materials and resources, and indoor environmental quality. Applicants must submit a current Green Building Council Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) checklist, appropriate to the type of development, annotated with narrative description that indicates how the LEED performance objectives will be incorporated into the project.

The Board can find that this condition is met.

IV. Conditions

A. General

1. The final specifications for signs and exterior lighting shall be subject to the approval of the Arlington Redevelopment Board. Any substantial or material deviation during construction from the approved plans and specifications is subject to the written approval of the Arlington Redevelopment Board.
2. The Board maintains continuing jurisdiction over this permit and may, after a duly advertised public hearing, attach other conditions or modify these conditions as it deems appropriate in order to protect the public interest and welfare.
3. Snow removal from all parts of the site, as well as from any abutting public sidewalks, shall be the responsibility of the owner or occupant and shall be accomplished in accordance with Town Bylaws.
4. Trash shall be picked up only on Monday through Friday between the hours of 7:00 am and 6:00 pm. All exterior trash and storage areas on the property, if any, shall be properly screened and maintained in accordance with Article 30 of Town Bylaws.

B. Special

1. Applicant shall be required to file an application with the Arlington Historical Commission for their review and approval.
2. Upon installation of landscaping materials and other site improvements, the Applicant shall remain responsible for such materials and improvement and shall replace and repair as necessary to remain in compliance with the approved site plan.
3. Upon the issuance of the building permit the Applicant shall file with the Building Inspector and the Arlington Police Department the names and telephone numbers of contact personnel who may be reached 24 hours each day during the construction period.