

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
August 26, 2014 Meeting**

12. **CAR No. 14-091** (121 W Broad LLC)

**123 W. Broad Street
Broad Street Old and Historic District**

Project Description:

Replace existing projecting wall sign

Staff Contact:

W. Palmquist

The applicant requests approval to replace the existing projecting wall sign with an internally illuminated wall sign. The existing sign is for the former Popkin's Tavern which has neon-lit lettering. The proposed replacement sign is for the new Graffiato's restaurant. The proposed sign is 10'L x 1'-6"W x 8"D and would be mounted in the same location as the existing projecting wall sign. The proposed sign would be constructed of 1/8" fabricated aluminum with translucent white acrylic faces, bordered by 1½" aluminum molding painted to match the cabinet. The sign would be lit with internal LED illumination.

Staff recommends denial of the project. The *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* states that, "Projecting wall signs may be made of wood or metal and may be hung from brackets or otherwise mounted on buildings in order to hang perpendicular. These signs are intended to be viewed from a moderate distance and close at hand by pedestrians" (pg. 64). The *Guidelines* also states that, "Signs should not be internally illuminated," and that, "Internally illuminated plastic signs may be appropriate in newer commercial corridors but are not appropriate for use in Old and Historic Districts" (pg. 65 #7 & #11).

It is the assessment of staff that the application is not consistent with the Standards for Signage outlined in Section 114-930.7(f) of the City Code, as well as with the *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines*, specifically the page cited above, adopted by the Commission for review of Certificates of Appropriateness under the same section of the code.

(Please note: With the exception of the internal lighting, the design and mounting of the sign appears to meet the guidelines for administrative review and approval of signage. CAR staff has previously approved the installation of the sign with opaque acrylic faces and no internal lighting.)