



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

**County Board Agenda Item
Meeting of December 9, 2006**

DATE: November 20, 2006

SUBJECT: SP #167 SITE PLAN AMENDMENT for a rooftop sign located at 2011 Crystal Drive – Crystal Park I Office Building (RPC # 34-020-243).

Applicant:

First Crystal Park Associates, LP
% Vornado Realty Trust
210 Rt. 4 East
Paramus, NY 07652

By:

Chris Stone
3131 Pennsy Drive
Landover, MD 20785

C.M. RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the site plan amendment to permit installation of one new rooftop tenant identification sign on the south elevation of the building, subject to all previous conditions and one new condition.

ISSUES: One element of the sign is above the six-foot height limit for letters and logos as provided in the *Sign Guidelines for Site Plan Buildings*.

SUMMARY: This is a comprehensive sign plan amendment to permit an illuminated rooftop sign for National Cooperative Bank (NCB) located on the upper left corner of the south elevation of the Crystal Park I office building. The design is generally consistent with the *Sign Guidelines for Site Plan Buildings* and with other rooftop signs that were previously approved in the area. However, one element, the upper part of the lowercase “b” would be above the six-foot height limit for letters and logos provided in the *Sign Guidelines for Site Plan Buildings*. The

County Manager: _____

County Attorney: _____

Staff: Jill Griffin, DPCHD, Planning Division

PLA-4569

remainder of the letters and logo would be under the six-foot limit. The sign would not directly face any residential uses and the additional height of part of the lowercase “b” would not be detrimental to the community. Therefore, it is recommended that the site plan amendment be approved, subject to all previous conditions and one (1) new condition.

BACKGROUND: The Crystal Park I office building is a part of the 18-acre Crystal Park Site Plan that includes 2,211,000 square feet of office gross floor area (GFA) and 77,917 square feet of commercial GFA. The site plan consists of four residential buildings and five office buildings, all of which front on Crystal Drive. On August 12, 1989, the County Board approved the coordinated sign plan for permanent signs for the Crystal City Complex with conditions. At that time, the applicant submitted an updated comprehensive sign plan for the entire Crystal City complex to address the identification and directional needs of the area. Since then, the area has changed substantially and the 12-story Crystal Park I office is occupied by new tenants - National Cooperative Bank (NCB) as a major tenant.

Site: The Crystal Park I office building is bounded by Crystal Drive to the west and George Washington Parkway to the east. Circulation drives bound the building to the north and south. The site is otherwise surrounded by high-rise mixed-use development.

Zoning: The site is zoned “C-O-1.5” Commercial Office Building, Hotel, and Apartment Districts.

Land Use: The site is designated on the General Land Use Plan two-thirds "Low" Office-Apartment-Hotel (Office Density 1.5 F.A.R. allowed, Apartment Density up to 72 units per acre allowed, Hotel Density up to 110 units per acre allowed) and one-third "Medium" Residential (37-72 units per acre).

Neighborhood: Crystal City. The parcel is located outside any civic association boundary, but is in proximity to the Aurora Highlands Civic Association boundary.

The applicant requests a site plan amendment to permit a rooftop tenant identification sign measuring a total of 253.5 square feet for NCB, a major tenant in the building. The sign “ncb” with a logo would be located on the south elevation at the upper left corner. The sign letters will be colored slate gray with a tangerine accent on the logo. Both elements will be internally illuminated.

DISCUSSION: *The Sign Guidelines for Site Plan Buildings* classifies a rooftop sign as a sign which is located above 35 feet and states that such signs require a site plan amendment. The original *Sign Guidelines* specified that signage is permitted only for the major tenant; the guidelines were changed in 2001 to permit two separate tenants to possess one rooftop sign each.

The proposed site plan amendment is to permit a new rooftop tenant identification sign at the 2011 Crystal Drive (Crystal Park I) office building which would be installed above the twelfth floor on the southern parapet façade. The sign would face onto a plaza/driveway also fronted by the Crystal Park II and Crystal Park III office buildings directly south of the Crystal Park I office building site. The sign is designed with painted aluminum channel letters and logo. The letters are 7” deep and measure a total of 253.5 square feet in sign area. The proposed sign complies with maximum six-foot letter height regulations for rooftop signs with the exception of the lowercase “b” letter.

The *Sign Guidelines for Site Plan Buildings* prescribes that allowable rooftop sign area is a maximum of one square foot of sign area per linear foot of building frontage along a public right-of-way. The building has approximately 300 feet of building frontage. This proposed 253.5 square foot illuminated rooftop sign is within the limit established by the *Sign Guidelines for Site Plan Buildings*; however, the size of the sign effectively eliminates any potential second rooftop sign for this building.

There are a number of office rooftop signs in the vicinity of the office building site. The proposed sign is similar in size and character to several other signs in the vicinity. The proposed rooftop sign will face other office uses. There is no limit on hours of illumination for this sign; the existing rooftop signs in the area do not have limitations on hours of illumination.

The Aurora Civic Association was contacted by staff and the applicant. To date, staff has not heard from the association. However, in the past the association has requested that signs be on the sides of buildings that do not face the neighborhood. The sign illumination will not adversely impact residences because it does not face any residential uses.

The requirements for rooftop signs and compliance of the proposed sign are summarized in the table below:

Requirement	Complies?
Maximum 2 rooftop signs per building	Yes, this is the first sign
Signage for primary tenants	Yes, tenant is the largest
Restrained, compatible design	Yes, font is simple
Subdued colors	Slate blue with a tangerine accent, but does not face any residential neighborhoods. The sign is painted aluminum with halo illumination.
Does not directly face a residential neighborhood	Yes, sign faces office and mixed uses
Letter height not to exceed 6 feet	No, the letter and logo height is under 6 feet for all but the lowercase “b” letter which is 8.5 feet
Size is no greater than 1 linear foot of frontage to 1 square foot of sign	Yes, total frontage is approximately 300 linear feet; the proposed sign is 253.5 square feet.

The lowercase “b” letter height is a departure from the *Sign Guidelines for Site Plan Buildings*. However, other signs have been permitted when only a small portion of the sign (one letter or a logo) exceeded the six-foot height limit in order to accommodate appropriately sized and visible letters for the remainder of the sign. For example, both the “Boeing” logo on Crystal Park V and the “A” in the “Anteon” sign on Crystal Park III measure 10 feet tall. If the lowercase “b” in the proposed sign was limited to six-feet, then the remaining letters would have a height of approximately three feet thus making the sign difficult to read at the proposed location. In addition, because the rooftop sign faces a commercial area, it will not have a significant impact on any residential neighborhoods.

CONCLUSION: Staff concludes that the proposed rooftop sign generally follows the *Sign Guidelines for Site Plan Buildings*, and it will not adversely impact residential neighborhoods. Therefore, it is recommended that the site plan amendment be approved to permit one new illuminated rooftop sign located on the northwest elevation of the building, subject to all previous conditions and one (1) new condition.

1. The applicant agrees to limit the rooftop signage on the Crystal Park I (2011 Crystal Drive) building to the 253.5 square foot tenant identification sign on the upper left corner of the south elevation at the location and in the design shown on the drawings submitted to the County from Jack Stone Sign Co. dated October 5, 2006 and revised November 22, 2006, and presented to the County Board on December 9, 2006. The total area for the second rooftop sign shall be limited to no more than 253.5 square feet, and the sign shall be illuminated only as shown on the drawings dated October 5, 2006 and revised November 22, 2006.

PREVIOUS COUNTY BOARD ACTIONS:

May 17, 1980	Approved a rezoning from "M-1" to "C-O-1.5" and approved a site plan for a mixed-use development.
February 5, 1983	Approved a site plan amendment (SP #11, 56, 90, 135 and 167) for identification and directional signage for Crystal City and the Crystal Plaza Shops.
April 9, 1983	Deferred a site plan amendment for a comprehensive sign program.
May 21, 1983	Accepted a withdrawal of a site plan amendment to add 120 residential units.
January 7, 1984	Approved a site plan amendment to add 120 residential units, increase garage parking and revise loading dock area.
May 12, 1984	Deferred a site plan amendment to adjust boundaries to July 7, 1984.
July 7, 1984	Approved a site plan amendment to adjust the boundary of the Crystal Park project by removing 23,866 square feet of land from the south end and adding a like amount to the north end.
May 18, 1985	Deferred a site plan amendment to amend Condition #29 to increase office gross parking area to 1,600,700 square feet.
July 13, 1985	Approved a site plan amendment to increase office gross parking area to 1,584,100 square feet and increase retail commercial from 50,000 square feet to 77,917 square feet.
December 7, 1985	Approved a site plan amendment to permit subdivision into parcels with each building being on a separate parcel of land.

August 13, 1988	Deferred a site plan amendment to amend Condition #34 to permit rooftop signs on east and west elevations, 234 square feet each (2341 Crystal Drive).
September 10, 1988	Denied a site plan amendment to amend Condition #34 to permit rooftop signs on the east and west elevations, 234 square feet each (2341 Crystal Drive).
July 8, 1989	Deferred a site plan amendment (SP #11, 56, 90, 135 and 167) for a coordinated sign plan consisting of 60 new signs and retention of 13 existing signs to the August 12, 1989 County Board meeting.
August 12, 1989	Approved a site plan amendment (SP #11, 56, 90, 135 and 167) for a coordinated sign plan consisting of 60 new signs and retention of 13 existing signs including Metro Station and Buchanan House signage.
February 2, 1991	Approved a site plan amendment to amend the coordinated sign plan to permit two temporary office leasing beamers on two office buildings.
February 9, 1991	Approved a site plan amendment (SP #11, 56, 90, 135 and 167) to amend the coordinated sign plan to permit two temporary office leasing banners, at heights below 35 feet, on two office buildings until November 27, 1991, at 1225 and 2211 Jefferson Davis Highway.
March 2, 1991	Approved a site plan amendment with amended Conditions #37 and #41 and the approved comprehensive sign plan to permit construction and operation of Virginia Railway Express commuter rail platform.
July 13, 1993	Approved a site plan amendment for conversion of approximately 2,450 square feet of retail gross floor area to office use for the parcel of real property known as 2231 Crystal Drive with the condition

that the space being occupied is secondary retail uses.

March 18, 1995

Approved a site plan amendment for an amendment to the Crystal City Comprehensive Sign Plan to permit a rooftop sign of 531, revised to 426, square feet on the east building elevation for the parcel of real property known as 2121 Crystal Drive with one new condition.

November 21, 1995

Approved a site plan amendment for conversion of 1,650 square feet of gross floor area to conference facilities for the Patent and Trademark Office for the parcel of real property known as 2121 Crystal Drive with one new condition.

April 26, 2003

Approved a site plan for installation of an internally illuminated rooftop building identification sign, containing a logo and lettering, with a total sign area of 206.2 square feet on the southwest elevation of the Crystal Park V Office Building subject to one new condition.

September 18, 2004

Approved a site plan amendment for rooftop signage on the Crystal Park III building to one tenant identification sign on the southwest elevation. The total area for the rooftop sign shall be limited to no more than 200 square feet, and the sign shall be illuminated only as shown on the drawings dated February 25, 2004.

April 22, 2006

Approved a site plan amendment for a comprehensive sign plan for 2345 Crystal Drive to permit signs at the garage entrance. The size, design, location and color of the proposed garage entrance signs at 2345 Crystal Drive shall be as shown on the drawings prepared by Art Display Co. and dated October 27, 2005, except that the size of the circular portion of the sign structure shall be reduced in size and shall not exceed 33 square feet.

May 20, 2006

Deferred consideration of a site plan amendment to

convert approximately 11,000 square feet of first floor office for daycare use located at 2451 Crystal Dr. to the June 10, 2006 County Board meeting.

June 10, 2006

Deferred consideration of a site plan amendment to convert approximately 11,000 square feet of first floor office for daycare use located at 2451 Crystal Dr. to the July 8, 2006 County Board meeting.