



Historic Landmarks and Preservation Districts Commission

Report to the Committee

To: Clifton Architectural Review Committee
Thru: Savannah Darr, Historic Preservation Officer
From: Drake Watson, Planner I – Urban Design
Date: August 7, 2026 *S Darr*

Case No: 26-COA-0134
Classification: Committee Review

GENERAL INFORMATION

Address: 2132 New Main St

Applicant: Rachel Harman
1621 Windsor Pl
Louisville, KY 40204

Owner: Jackie Green and Cindy Baker
1645 Stevens Ave
Louisville, KY 40205

Project Cost: \$1,000

Description of proposed exterior alterations:

The applicant requests approval to paint unpainted masonry for a business sign. The masonry on the front and side facades is proposed to be painted grey. Signage is proposed to be painted on the front façade. The signage will feature the words “Gallant Fox” in white font with orange borders, as well as the Gallant Fox logo in black, orange, and white paint.

Communications with Applicant, Completion of Application

The application was received on June 10, 2026 and assigned to a case manager on June 15, 2026. Staff visited the site on June 24, 2026 at which time the application was considered complete and requiring committee level review. Staff reached out to the applicant about possible alternate methods for the sign.

The case is scheduled to be heard by the Clifton Architectural Review Committee (ARC) on August 12, 2026 at 5:30 p.m. in Room 101, of the Metro Development Building located at 444 S. 5th Street, Louisville, KY.

FINDINGS

Guidelines

The following design review guidelines, approved for the Clifton Preservation District, are applicable to the proposed exterior alterations: **Masonry** and **Sign**. The report of the Commission Staff's findings of fact and conclusions with respect to these guidelines is attached to this report. The following additional findings are incorporated in this report:

Site Context/ Background

The property is located on the south side of the intersection of New Main Street, Frankfort Avenue, and the railroad. A public alley runs behind the building on the south property line. Immediately adjacent to the site are residential one-story, frame shotgun houses.

Constructed in 1959, the existing building on site was originally built and used as a neighborhood post office. It has since been renovated over the years for a variety of commercial uses. The structure is a one-story frame building with a flat roof capped with a concrete parapet and clad in brick veneer. The storefront has a contrasting permastone covering framed with a poured concrete border. The simple modern design is typical of post office buildings of the era.

Conclusions

The proposal to paint the mid-century building does not comply with the guidelines for **Masonry**, specifically **M.1**, because the brick has not been previously painted. Although the brick and mortar may be of a modern mixture and is not as porous as older bricks and mortar, painting the brick will still create a maintenance issue in the long-run of the building. The proposed signage also dominates the façade of the building, covering up its character defining masonry, and being only slightly shorter than the building itself. Thus, it does not meet guidelines **SG2** or **SG4**. The signage is not scaled to the pedestrian since it is very large and is more scaled to vehicular use along Frankfort Avenue, not meeting **SG5**.

The proposed signage does use a limited color pallet, being comprised only of orange, black, and white, meeting guideline **SG3**. The signs are proposed to be painted wall signs and only two are proposed, meeting guidelines **SG7** and **SG11**.

RECOMMENDATION

On the basis of the information furnished by the applicant and the applicable design guidelines, Staff recommends the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness be **denied**, and the applicant find alternative ways to attach the proposed signage to the building that will not create long-term maintenance issues.

However, if the Clifton ARC finds that the application meets the applicable Design Guidelines, staff recommends the following conditions:

1. **This COA only approves the ability to paint on previously unpainted masonry. A separate sign permit shall be obtained prior to painting of the signage.**

2. Prior to painting, the applicant shall confirm that all masonry joints are in good condition, and if not they shall be repaired using the masonry design guidelines below.
3. The applicant shall submit evidence that a breathable paint will be used prior to work taking place.
4. The applicant shall submit final paint samples to staff for the case file prior to work taking place.
5. If the design, materials, color, or scope of work should change, the applicant shall contact staff for review and approval before work takes place.

Drake Watson

Drake Watson
Planner I – Urban Design

08/07/2026

Date

Masonry

Clifton Design Guideline Checklist

+	Meets Guidelines	NA	Not Applicable
-	Does Not Meet Guidelines	NSI	Not Sufficient Information
+/-	Meets Guidelines with Conditions		

	Guideline	Finding	Comment
M1	Do not paint masonry, stucco, limestone walls, and masonry retaining walls that have never been painted. Painting unpainted surfaces creates an on-going maintenance issue. Paint is difficult to remove, accumulated layers will obscure decorative detail, and paint coatings (even "breathable" paints) will affect the wall's vapor transmission performance.	-	The proposed paint will be used on unpainted masonry.
M2	New masonry features shall not be constructed that are either falsely historical (characteristic of periods prior to the building's actual construction), or are incompatible with the building or historic district in terms of size, scale, material, or color.	NA	
M3	New openings shall not be cut into exterior walls that constitute the building's street-address or street-facing façade. (For example, do not create an opening in an exterior wall for the installation of an air conditioning unit on a street-address or street-facing façade including structures on a corner lot or sited diagonally.) For these purposes, an alley is not a street-facing façade.	NA	
M4	Architectural features that are proposed for reconstruction or replacement must be photographically documented by the property owner as part of the application submitted to Landmarks for approval of any exterior modification. Historic elements cannot be removed until after approval has been obtained.	NA	
M5	The existing bonding pattern, coursing, color, size, and strength of masonry should be matched when repairing a section of brick wall. Bricks should be toothed-in to historic brickwork to strengthen the joint between new and old, except where new construction (e.g., a room addition) meets old construction.	NA	

	Guideline	Finding	Comment
M6	Substantial portions of exterior walls should not be removed or rebuilt if such an action would adversely impact a structure's historic integrity.	NA	
M7	Exterior replacement bricks should be suited for exterior use. Do not replace sections of historic brick with brick that is substantially stronger. New brick is stronger than old brick.	NA	
M8	Re-point only those joints that are no longer sound. Do not remove all joints, sound and unsound, in an effort to achieve a uniform appearance when re-pointing. Large-scale removal of mortar joints often results in damage to historic masonry. Old mortar is softer than new mortar.	NA	
M9	Unsound mortar joints should be carefully removed with hand tools that are narrower than the mortar joint. Power tools should not be used because they have the potential to scar adjacent masonry.	NA	
M10	Unsound mortar should be removed to a depth of two-and one-half the times the width of the joint or to sound mortar, whichever is greater.	NA	
M11	Historic mortar joints should be matched in color, texture, joint size, and tooling when repairing or re-pointing.	NA	
M12	The mortar mix used for re-pointing should be compatible with the historic masonry. The re-pointing mortar should be equivalent to or softer than the original mortar. (When re-pointing mortar is harder than the surrounding masonry, as is the case with many modern mixtures, moisture cannot escape through the joints. Trapped moisture will freeze within the walls and fracture surrounding masonry.)	NA	
M13	The mortar should be analyzed to determine the chemical composition of the mortar mix for the specific application at the historic structure. If possible, send a sample of the original mortar to a lab for analysis. If this is not feasible, a high lime and low Portland cement content mortar mix (1 part cement, 1 part lime, 6 parts sand) is often acceptable.	NA	
M14	Joints that have been re-pointed using a very hard mortar – or in an un-workmanlike manner – should not be removed until natural weathering has begun to weaken and crack them. Removal prior to that time would likely damage the adjoining brick, block, or stone.	NA	
M15	Synthetic caulking should not be used to re-point historic masonry.	NA	
M16	Masonry surfaces should not be cleaned with harsh chemicals, abrasive brushes or high pressure power tools. It is better to under clean than over clean. A "like new" appearance is rarely desirable.	NA	
M17	The physical and chemical properties of the masonry should be known before proposing or testing any chemical cleaning treatments. If improperly applied, chemical treatments may cause permanent damage that significantly outweighs any benefits of cleaning. Contractors and homeowners may wish to consult the Landmarks staff for the best practices and techniques for cleaning masonry surfaces.	NA	
M18	Cleaning treatments should be tested in an inconspicuous area of the building to evaluate potential adverse effects to the masonry. Observation over a complete seasonal cycle is preferred so any long-term effects may be ascertained. For any proven acceptable chemical cleaning treatments, be sure to follow all manufacturer's instructions.	NA	
M19	Sandblasting or high-pressure water treatments should not be used to clean historic masonry. Both sandblasting and high-pressure water (greater than 300 psi) remove the tough, outer-protective surface of the brick and loosen mortar joints, accelerating deterioration.	NA	

	Guideline	Finding	Comment
M20	The masonry on buildings with deteriorated mortar joints should not be cleaned. Such masonry should be properly re-pointed prior to cleaning to ensure water does not penetrate the wall during the cleaning process.	NA	
M21	Water- or chemical-based cleaning systems should not be used when there is a chance of freezing temperatures. Masonry cleaning should not commence until the temperature will remain above 50 degrees for 72 hours after cleaning.	NA	
M22	Graffiti should be removed as soon as possible, beginning with the gentlest means possible and taking care not to inadvertently etch an outline of the graffiti onto the wall.	NA	
M23	When removing paint from previously-painted masonry, use gentle treatments that have been tested in an inconspicuous location. Do not sandblast, pressure wash or use acid-based cleaners (consult with Landmarks for recommended products). Solvent-based chemical strippers are preferred over sandblasting or pressure washing the masonry surface.	NA	
M24	When painting is applicable, a "breathable" masonry coating that is compatible with – and can create a strong bond with – existing paint should be used.	NSI	See conditions of approval.
M25	Repaired or patched stucco areas should match the strength, composition, color, and texture of the original to the greatest degree possible.	NA	
M26	When patching stucco, cut back the successive layers to provide a key for the new layers to prevent new cracking.	NA	
M27	Stucco repairs should result in the same or unchanged dimension between the surface of the stucco and adjacent finishes.	NA	
M28	Stucco, any synthetic stucco treatment, or a permastone-type cladding should not be installed over historic masonry or wood siding.	NA	
M29	Do not resurface historic masonry with exterior insulation.	NA	
M30	Masonry and terra cotta chimney caps proposed for reconstruction or replacement should be replaced only after approval is obtained with caps of similar material and design whenever possible. Otherwise, a metal cap historically appropriate to the roof's design and materials is acceptable. Salvaged or historical reproductions are locally available.	NA	

Sign

Clifton Design Guideline Checklist

+	Meets Guidelines	NA	Not Applicable
-	Does Not Meet Guidelines	NSI	Not Sufficient Information
+/-	Meets Guidelines with Conditions		

	Guideline	Finding	Comment
SG1	Sign design should take into account its size, shape, and materials; where it will be positioned on the building; if and how it will be illuminated; and what style of lettering or typeface will be used.	+/-	The proposed sign will be painted onto the front façade of the building. It will be about the height of the structure, taking up most of the existing brick area on the eastern side of the face. The sign is not illuminated. See conditions of approval.

	Guideline	Finding	Comment
SG2	Sign design should complement its surroundings, be integrated into the architectural design of the building, should not dominate the façade, should not obstruct architectural details, and should not interfere with adjacent buildings or existing trees and shrubs.	-	The proposed sign dominates the façade, is not integrated into the architectural design of the building. It also covers up the brick veneer, which is a character defining feature of this building
SG3	Sign design should be simple and easy to read, use a limited number of lettering styles and colors, and reflect the character of the business and/or the building.	+	The sign will consist of the Gallant Fox logo and the words "Gallant Fox" in a clear typeface.
SG4	Commercial flush-mounted signs should be designed equal to or less than 2.5 feet in height. Lettering should be between 8 and 18 inches high and occupy around 65 percent of the sign board.	-	Although the exact height has not been clarified, the proposed height of the logo sign will exceed 2.5 feet in height.
SG5	Storefront-level signs should be scaled and oriented to pedestrians.	-	The signs will be the size of the building and are not scaled for pedestrians.
SG6	Creative sign design may be accommodated with review and approval through the Clifton ARC review process.	-	The sign does not take into account its proposed scale on the building and its proposed placement in relationship to pedestrians. Staff recommends a more creative approach in terms of ways to advertise the business and to have signage that is pedestrian oriented without painting on the brick.
SG7	Signs should be designed using, but not limited to, the following materials: painted or carved wood signs, painted wall signs, signs applied to canvas awnings, smooth-surface sheet metal signs, wrought iron signs, and lettering applied to glass using gold leaf, paint, or etching.	+	The proposed sign will be a painted wall sign.
SG8	Commercial signs may be designed using neon or neon-like technology, but its use shall be limited in scale and size so as not to divert the attention of motorists.	NA	
SG9	Marquee signs may be used on any building that has been or is currently operating as a theater or hotel.	NA	
SG10	Free-standing or monument signs should be low to the ground and landscaped. Signs attached to a building are preferred in lieu of a free-standing sign.	NA	
SG11	Signs shall be limited to no more than two signs per building or one sign per tenant.	-	Only two signs, the logo and the lettering, are proposed, but they are for the same tenant.
SG12	Billboards shall not be installed within the preservation district and existing billboards shall be removed whenever possible.	NA	
SG13	Commercial attached wall signs should be placed over the unadorned frieze of a cornice or along the top of the storefront below the sill of the second-story windows. For residences, attach signs near existing doorways or on porches.	NA	
SG14	Commercial flush-mounted signs should be placed above the display windows and below the second-story window sills.	NA	
SG15	Commercial hanging signs mounted perpendicular to the building's façade should project no more than 5 feet from the building or half the width of the sidewalk, whichever is less.	NA	

	Guideline	Finding	Comment
SG16	Signs shall not be installed on roof-tops, along the roof ridge line, or above the cornice of buildings in the Frankfort Ave. commercial corridor.	NA	
SG17	Plastic, over-scaled, or internally illuminated fluorescent signs or awnings are prohibited. Individual lettering and small logos may be illuminated within an opaque background. Reader board signs or signs that flash, move, or have inappropriately scaled graphics are prohibited.	NA	
SG18	Concealed lighting is recommended. Internally illuminated plastic box signs, bare spot lights, or high-wattage metal halide lights are prohibited.	NA	