

EXHIBIT NO. 1

18
12-15-07

Docket Item #
BAR CASE # 2007-0097

City Council
December 15, 2007

ISSUE: Appeal of a decision of the Board of Architectural Review, Old and Historic Alexandria, denying a Permit to Demolish and Capsulate

**APPLICANT
AND APPELLANT:** Laurie Lowe and Carl Gudenius by Robert Bentley Adams & Associates

LOCATION: 323 North St. Asaph Street

ZONE: RM/Residential

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Issue:

- The applicant is appealing a Board of Architectural Review decision to deny a Permit to Demolish and Capsulate portions of the residential rowhouse at 323 North St. Asaph Street. The decision of the Old & Historic Alexandria District Board of Architectural Review was appealed on October 16, 2007 by the applicant, in accordance with Section 10-107 of the Zoning Ordinance. The applicant believes that the Permit to Demolish and Capsulate should be granted so that an addition can be constructed at the rear of the building.
- The decision before the Council is whether the denial of the proposed demolition and encapsulation meets the Criteria for Demolition and Capsulation as set forth in the Zoning Ordinance.
- The Old and Historic Alexandria Board of Architectural Review denied the application on October 3, 2007 by a roll call vote of 5-1.
- The Board of Architectural Review found the proposed demolition and encapsulation of portions of the building represented a loss of portions of a historic building that was significant in the historic district.

Recommendation: That the Council support the decision of the BAR and deny the Permit to Demolish and Capsulate.

II. BACKGROUND

The proposal before the Board in October consisted of two applications to allow demolition and encapsulation and construction of an addition to rear of the rowhouse at 323 North St. Asaph Street. The first application involved a request for approval of demolition and encapsulation of portions of the rear elevation that would be necessary for the construction of the addition. The second application was for the approval of the design of the addition. The Board considered the applications separately.

The Board denied the application for demolition and encapsulation of portions of the rear of the house because it believed that the demolition and encapsulation would result in the loss of the historic form of this rowhouse as well as this row along North St. Asaph Street. It was the conclusion of the Board that the demolition and encapsulation of portions of important historic buildings should be avoided. The Board believed that it was important to retain the largely unaltered configuration of this row of townhouses.



Figure 1 - Site Aerial

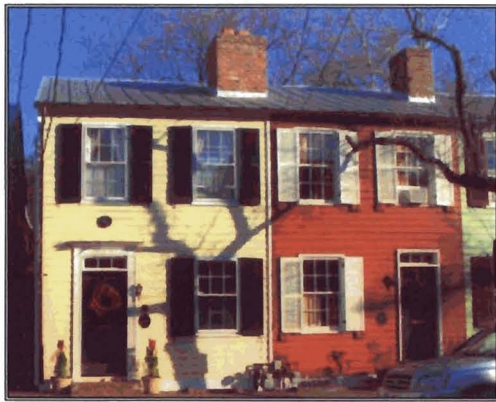


Figure 2 - 323 North St. Asaph Street façade (on left, 321 on right)

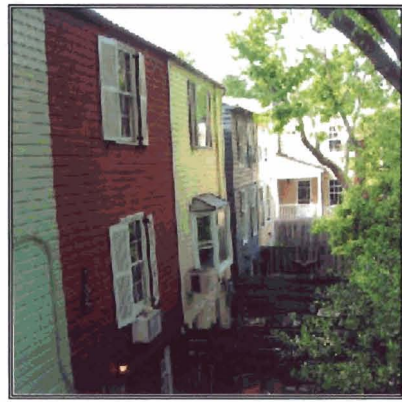


Figure 3 - Rear elevations of 321-327 North St. Asaph Street

Because the Board denied the Permit to Demolish and Capsulate, it did not consider the companion application for a Certificate of Appropriateness to construct an addition, since the addition could not be constructed without the requisite demolition and encapsulation of the rear of the building.

At the October 3rd public hearing, the Board denied the Permit to Demolish and Capsulate on a roll call vote of 5-1.



Figure 4 - Rear elevation
323 North St. Asaph Street

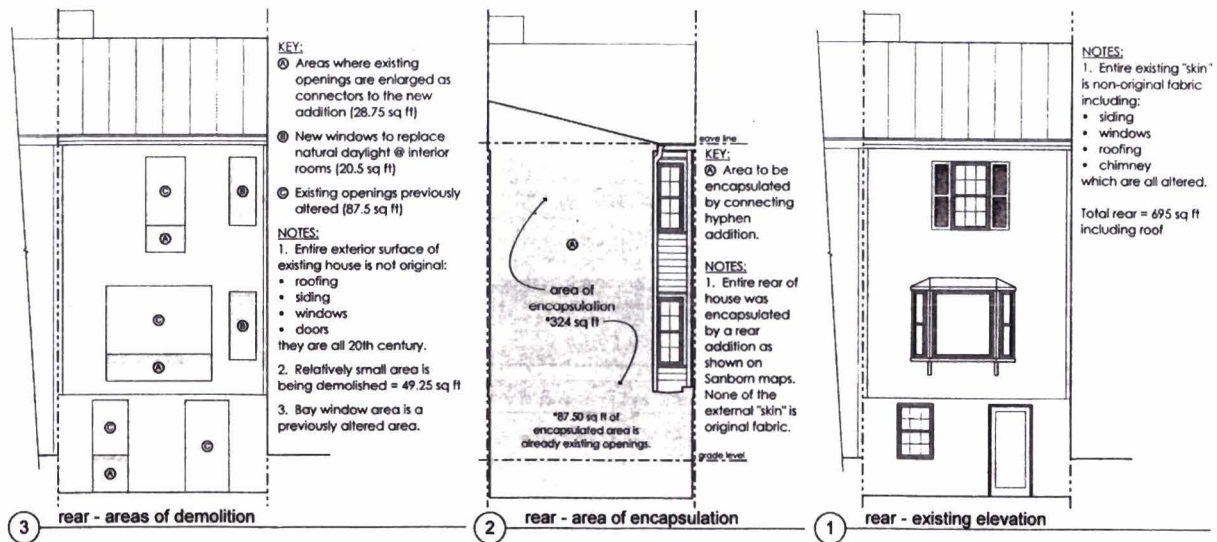


Figure 5 – Areas of proposed demolition and capsulation at rear (east) elevation

III. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The Decision on the Permit to Demolish/Capsulate

In considering a Permit to Demolish/Capsulate, the Council must consider the following criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance, Section 10-105(B):

- (1) Is the building or structure of such architectural or historical interest that its moving, removing, capsulating or razing would be to the detriment of the public interest?
- (2) Is the building or structure of such interest that it could be made into a historic house?
- (3) Is the building or structure of such old and unusual or uncommon design, texture and material that it could not be reproduced or be reproduced only with great difficulty?
- (4) Would retention of the building or structure help preserve the memorial character of the George Washington Memorial Parkway?
- (5) Would retention of the building or structure help preserve and protect an historic place or area of historic interest in the city?
- (6) Would retention of the building or structure promote the general welfare by maintaining and increasing real estate values, generating business, creating new positions, attracting tourists, students, writers, historians, artists and artisans, attracting new residents, encouraging study and interest in American history, stimulating interest and study in architecture and design, educating citizens in American culture and heritage, and making the city a more attractive and desirable place in which to live?

The decision of the Board and the City Council must be based on a finding that these criteria have been met. It was the conclusion of the Board of Architectural Review that Criteria 1, 2, 5 and 6 applied to this request and that, therefore, the Permit to Demolish and Capsulate should be denied. The Board found that the proposed demolition and encapsulation would result in a significant loss of architectural fabric of this rowhouse and would be detrimental to the integrity of the building and the historic district.

In addition, the Board found that the building because of its largely unaltered historic configuration provided a direct and tangible link to the immediate post-Civil War period in the City and should be preserved.

In considering the appeal, City Council must base its decision on the criteria set forth in Zoning Ordinance Section 10-105(B). Based on the findings, City Council may:

1. Uphold the Board's denial of the Permit to Demolish and Capsulate;
2. Approve the request with modifications or amendments;
3. Remand the application to the Board; or
4. Approve the Permit to Demolish and Capsulate.

IV. RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Council support the decision of the Board of Architectural Review and deny the Permit to Demolish and Capsulate.

Attachment 1: BAR Staff report, October 3, 2007

Attachment 2: BAR application plan set and associated materials for the public hearing of October 3, 2007

STAFF: Faroll Hamer, Director, Department of Planning and Zoning
Stephen Milone, Division Chief, Zoning and Land Use Services
Lee A. Webb, Manager, Boards of Architectural Review Staff
Peter H. Smith, Staff, Boards of Architectural Review

Docket Item # 22
BAR CASE # 2007-0097

BAR Meeting
October 3, 2007

ISSUE: Permit to Demolish
APPLICANT: Laurie Lowe and Carl Gudenus by Robert Bentley Adams & Associates
LOCATION: 323 North St. Asaph Street
ZONE: RM/Residential

BOARD ACTION, OCTOBER 3, 2007: On a motion by Mr. Smeallie, seconded by Mr. Keleher the Board approved the staff recommendation which was: denial of the application. The roll call vote on the motion was 5-1 (Mr. Neale was opposed)

REASON: A majority of the Board agreed with the staff analysis. Mr. Neale did not agree and believed that houses in the historic district were entitled to expansion and that it was unjust to deny the application.

SPEAKERS: Robert Bentley Adams, Robert Bentley Adams & Associates, project architect, spoke in support
John Hynan, representing the Historic Alexandria Foundation, spoke in opposition
Jaime Steve, 325 North St. Asaph Street, spoke in opposition
Laura Teresinski, 319 North St. Asaph Street, spoke in opposition
Mary Theresa Vasquez, 317 North St. Asaph Street, spoke in opposition
Judge Juan Vasquez, 317 North St. Asaph Street, spoke in opposition
Billie Schaffer, 327 North St. Asaph Street, spoke in opposition
John Williams, 327 North St. Asaph Street, spoke in opposition
John Kester, 313 North St. Asaph Street, spoke in opposition
Nancy Hayden, 321 North St. Asaph Street, spoke concerning the proposal
Thor Ronay, 328 North Pitt Street, spoke in opposition
Kristin Crabtree read a letter from Elaine LaMontagne, owner of 321 North St. Asaph Street, opposition
Ronald and Hazel Rigby, 330 North Pitt Street, spoke in opposition
Dale Bosely, 370 North St. Asaph Street, spoke in support
Duncan Blair, attorney representing Laurie Lowe and Carl Gudenus, spoke in support

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends denial of the application.



PRINCESS ST

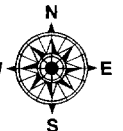
SITE

323

N ST ASAPH ST

BAR CASE #2007-0097

10/03/07



Note: This docket item requires a roll call vote.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Permit to Demolish and Capasulate the bulk of the rear (east) wall as well as portions of the roof of the residential rowhouse at 323 North St. Asaph Street in order to construct a rear addition.

II. HISTORY:

323 North St. Asaph Street is a two story, two bay frame vernacular residential rowhouse that was constructed as a rental property by John A. Dixon, a prosperous landowner, sometime between 1858 and 1867. It was constructed together with the adjacent rowhouses at 321 and 319 and the properties share common chimneys structures.

The house was substantially remodeled in the late 1960s and early 1970. In 1966 the Board approved shutters and a new stoop (4/13/1966) and in 1970 alterations to the windows (9/2/1970). The change out in windows was the replacement of single double hung window on the second level with new paired double hung windows and a new matching sized window on the first level. This remodeling created a much more "Colonial" caste to the house than had heretofore existed and was part of a number of such residential remodelings in these decades that sought to cement the impression of the historic district as a cornerstone of colonial architecture.

The bay window that is a prominent visual feature of the rear of the house was installed by a previous homeowner in the late 1970s is apparently a direct and conscious violation of the requirements of the historic district ordinance.

III. ANALYSIS:

In considering a Permit to Demolish/Capsulate, the Board must consider the following criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance, §10-105(B):

- (1) Is the building or structure of such architectural or historical interest that its moving, removing, capsulating or razing would be to the detriment of the public interest?
- (2) Is the building or structure of such interest that it could be made into a historic house?
- (3) Is the building or structure of such old and unusual or uncommon design, texture and material that it could not be reproduced or be reproduced only with great difficulty?
- (4) Would retention of the building or structure help preserve the memorial character of the George Washington Memorial Parkway?
- (5) Would retention of the building or structure help preserve and protect an historic place or area of historic interest in the city?
- (6) Would retention of the building or structure promote the general welfare by maintaining and increasing real estate values, generating business, creating new positions, attracting tourists, students, writers, historians, artists and artisans, attracting new residents, encouraging study and interest in American history, stimulating interest and study in architecture and design, educating citizens in American culture and heritage, and making the city a more attractive and desirable place in which to live?

The basic historic physical form of these three rowhouses has remained remarkably unaltered since they were constructed in the latter part of the 19th century. However, there has been

considerable change in the physical environment surrounding their location. The rear yards have certainly changed since the houses were constructed and secondary structures such as outhouses, storage shed, stables and similar outbuildings have disappeared and been replaced by passive open space. Similarly, the roadway in front of these rowhouses has changed considerably during the last century and a half as have the surrounding land uses. To some extent, the exterior architectural appearance of the rowhouse has also changed. What has remained a constant, however, is the essential volumetric configuration of these houses and, as such, they provide a direct and tangible link to the immediate post Civil War period in the City.

The expressed skin of the house has been changed with replacement siding. Additionally, because of the alterations and changes to the fenestration on both the front and rear of the house the framing has likely been modified and altered. What has not changed, however, is the spatial relationship of the house to the street and its neighbors.

Staff notes that previously we had recommended denial of a similar request for a Permit to Demolish the rear wall of the house at the south end of this row at 319 N St Asaph Street (BAR Case #95-00150, 10/14/95). In considering the case in 1995, the Board was also concerned about the extent of the demolition of the rear wall and asked for additional information. However, the case was withdrawn before the Board made a decision.

Staff finds the proposed demolition of the east (rear) elevation of this 19th century vernacular frame rowhouse an unacceptable loss of historic architectural fabric and form.

In the opinion of Staff, the proposed demolition of the rear façade meets criteria #'s 1, 2, 5 & 6 and the Permit to Demolish should not be approved.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends denial of the application.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

Legend: C - code requirement R - recommendation S - suggestion F- finding

Code Enforcement:

C-1 Prior to the issuance of a demolition permit or land disturbance permit, a rodent abatement plan shall be submitted to Code Enforcement that will outline the steps that will taken to prevent the spread of rodents from the construction site to the surrounding community and sewers.

Historic Alexandria:

S-1 Approve with wood clapboards.

Alexandria Archaeology:

F-1 According to Ethelyn Cox's *Historic Alexandria, Street by Street, A Survey of Existing Early Buildings*, the house on this lot dates to the mid-nineteenth century. Tax records from 1850 indicate that there was a free African American household on this street face, but the exact address is not known. The property therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources, perhaps relating to African Americans, that could provide insight into residential life in nineteenth-century Alexandria..

R-1 Call Alexandria Archaeology immediately (703-838-4399) if any buried structural remains (wall foundations, wells, privies, cisterns, etc.) or concentrations of artifacts are discovered during development. Work must cease in the area of the discovery until a City archaeologist comes to the site and records the finds.

R-2 The above statement must appear in the General Notes of all site plans and on all site plan sheets that involve demolition or ground disturbance (including sheeting and shoring and grading) so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement. above must appear in the General Notes of the site plan so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement.

Transportation & Environmental Services:

F-1 An approved Plot Plan must be attached to the building permit application. This determination is based on the change in grade of 12-inches or greater, changes to existing drainage patterns and the existence of current drainage problems in the vicinity. (TES)

R-1 The building permit plans shall comply with requirements of City Code Section 8-1-22 regarding the location of downspouts, foundation drains and sump pumps. Refer to Memorandum to Industry dated June 18, 2004. [Memorandum is available online at the City web site under Transportation\Engineering and Design\Memos to Industry.]. (TES)

R-2 Applicant shall be responsible for repairs to the adjacent city right-of-way if damaged during construction activity. (TES)

- R-3 All improvements to the city right-of-way such as curbing, sidewalk, driveway aprons, etc. must be city standard design. (TES)
- R-4 No permanent structure may be constructed over any existing private and/or public utility easements. It is the responsibility of the applicant to identify any and all existing easements on the plan. (TES)
- R-5 Compliance with the provisions of Article XIII of the City's zoning ordinance for stormwater quality control is required for any land disturbing activity greater than 2,500 square feet. (TES)

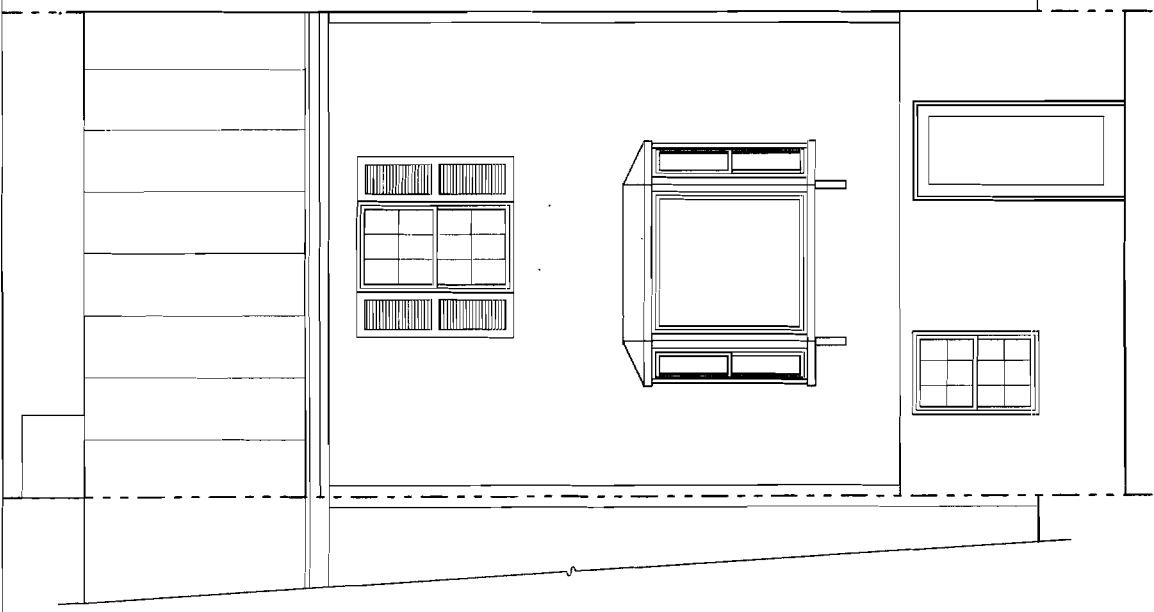
NOTES:

1. Entire existing "skin" is non-original fabric including:

- siding
- windows
- roofing
- chimney

which are all altered.

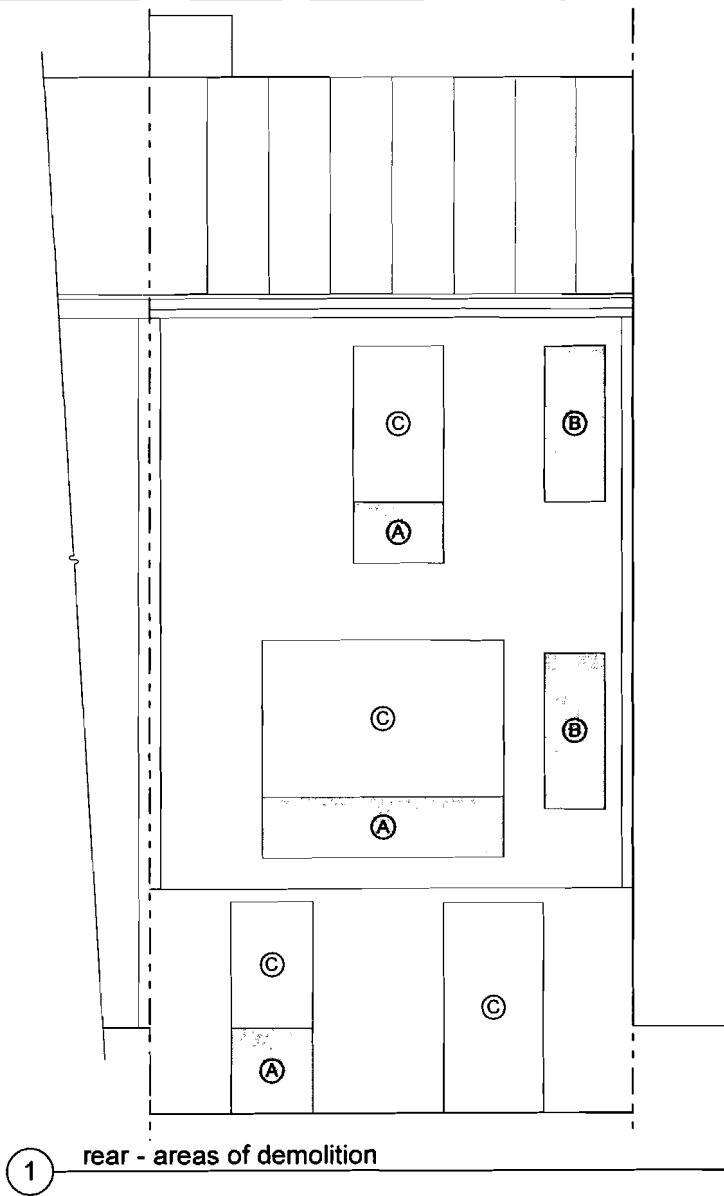
Total rear = 695 sq ft including roof



1 rear - existing elevation
 SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

The drawings, plans, specifications and other data contained on this contract are the property of the architect. No reproduction, use of the drawings or the material contained is permitted without written consent of the architect.

10/23/07 10:00 AM, when specifications apply, unless otherwise indicated on this drawing (see drawing) for the area to be demolished. © The owner. No reproduction, use of the drawings or their substantial content is allowed without written consent of the architect.



KEY:

- Ⓐ Areas where existing openings are enlarged as connectors to the new addition (28.75 sq ft)
- Ⓑ New windows to replace natural daylight @ interior rooms (20.5 sq ft)
- Ⓒ Existing openings previously altered (87.5 sq ft)

NOTES:

1. Entire exterior surface of existing house is not original:
 - roofing
 - siding
 - windows
 - doors
 they are all 20th century.
2. Relatively small area is being demolished = 49.25 sq ft
3. Bay window area is a previously altered area.

ROBERT BENTLEY ADAMS & ASSOCIATES PC
 405 South Washington Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314
 Tel. 703.549.0600 Fax. 703.549.3125

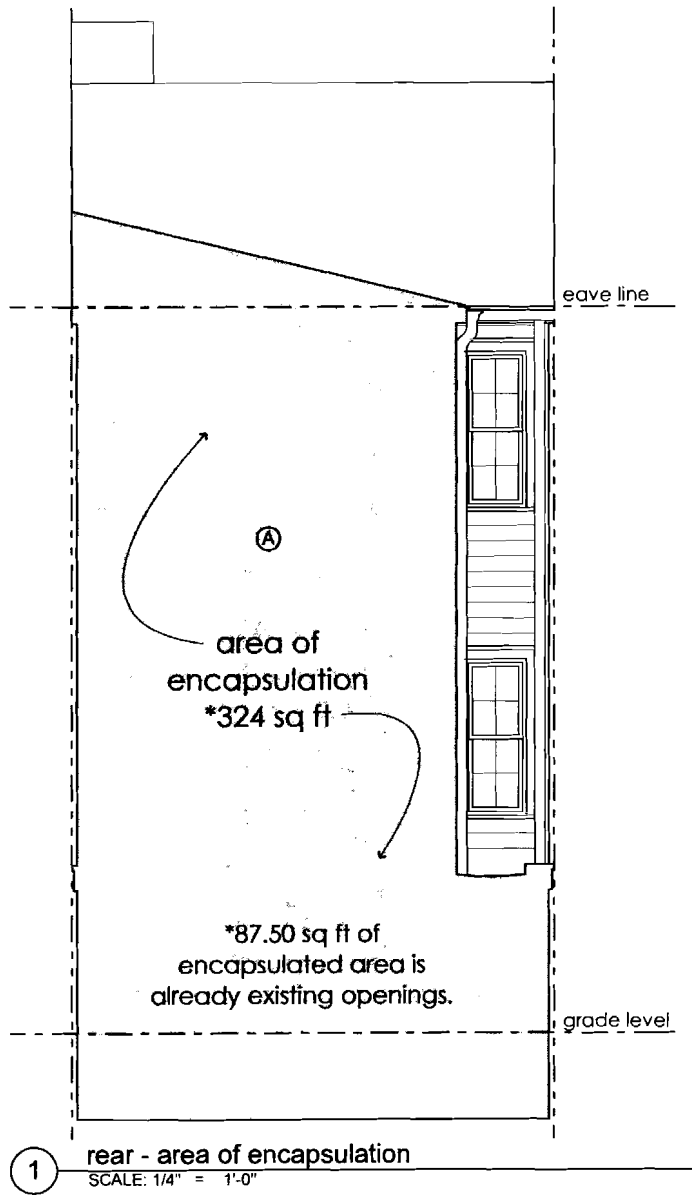


LOWE-GUDENIUS RESIDENCE
 322 Norfolk St. Asaph Street
 Alexandria, Virginia

Phase / Date
 P.A.R. 10.9.07

Sheet
 3

The drawings, plans, specifications and/or details contained on this document are the property of Robert Bentley Adams & Associates, P.C. (the "owner"). No reproduction, use, or other disclosure of these drawings or specifications is permitted without the express written consent of the owner.



KEY:

Ⓐ Area to be encapsulated by connecting hyphen addition.

NOTES:

1. Entire rear of house was encapsulated by a rear addition as shown on Sanborn maps. None of the external "skin" is original fabric.

ROBERT BENTLEY ADAMS & ASSOCIATES P.C.
405 South Washington Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314
Tel: 703-549-1650 Fax: 703-549-1125



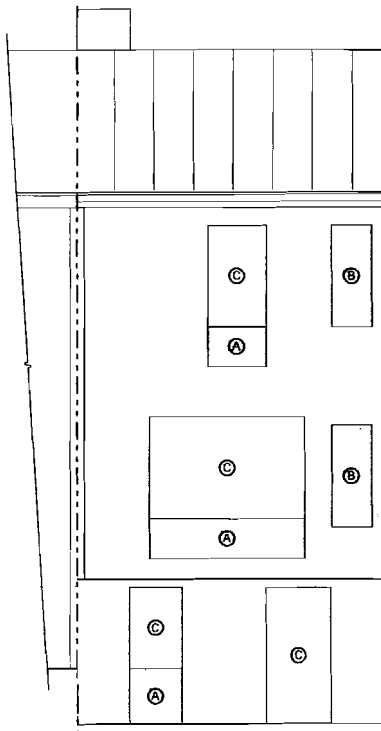
LOWE-GUDENUS RESIDENCE
323 North St. Asaph Street
Alexandria, Virginia

Phase / Date
B.A.R. 10.3.07

Sheet

2

1973 survey, plan, then modifications and/or changes to the exterior (the changes are the creation and sole property of Robert Bentley Adams & Associates, P.C. The owner, by registration, waives the design or their intellectual property in architectural without expressed written consent of the architect)



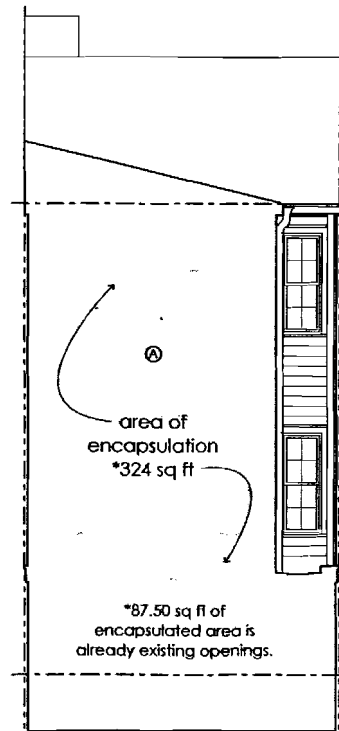
3 rear - areas of demolition

KEY:

- Ⓐ Areas where existing openings are enlarged as connectors to the new addition (28.75 sq ft)
- Ⓑ New windows to replace natural daylight @ interior rooms (20.5 sq ft)
- Ⓒ Existing openings previously altered (87.5 sq ft)

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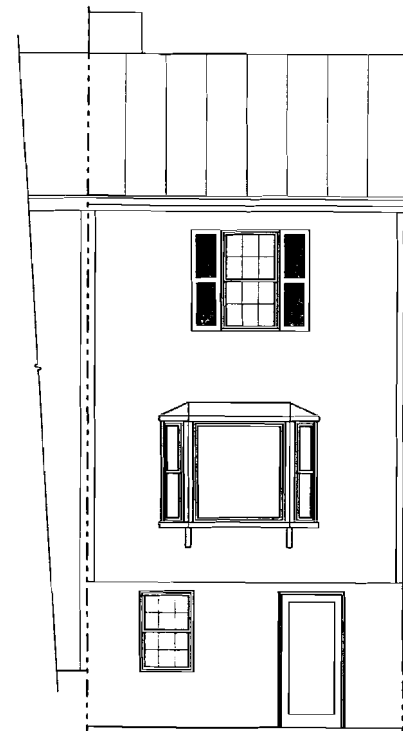
2 rear - area of encapsulation

KEY:

- Ⓐ Area to be encapsulated by connecting hyphen addition.

NOTES:

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1 rear - existing elevation

NOTES:

1. Entire existing "skin" is non-original fabric including:
 - siding
 - windows
 - roofing
 - chimney
 which are all altered.

Total rear = 695 sq ft including roof

EXCERPTS FROM
REPORT SUBMITTED
BY APPLICANT TO
THE BAR

**Proposed Addition
to the
Lowe-Gudenus Residence
at
323 North St. Asaph Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314**

**Board of Architectural Review Hearing
October 3, 2007**

Prepared by:

Laurie Lowe and Carl Gudenus

And

**Robert Bentley Adams & Associates
405 South Washington Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314**

**Proposed Addition
to the
Lowe-Gudenus Residence
at
323 North St. Asaph Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314**

**Board of Architectural Review Hearing
October 3, 2007**

Prepared by:

Laurie Lowe and Carl Gudenus

And

**Robert Bentley Adams & Associates
405 South Washington Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314**

The evidence and the picture exhibits show that located in this block are frame houses in a rather dilapidated and substandard condition. There are house on the Queen Street of brick construction which appear to be well maintained and substantial. The map exhibits indicate that the block is poorly laid out, being a hodgepodge of lot lines and alley ways, containing landlocked lots, lots fronting (*944) on an alley, and also containing lots measuring 7 ½ feet by 48 feet, and in one instance an 3 feet alley.

Board of Zoning Appeals of City of Alexandria Virginia, et al,

vs.

Trudy H. Fowler

Supreme Court of Virginia

June 13, 1960

Table of Contents

I. Historical Research – 323 North St. Asaph Street.

- Sanborn Maps from 1885 – 1958
- Report submitted by EHT Tracerics Inc.

II. Open Space

- Existing and Proposed Block Plan submitted by Robert Bentley Adams & Associates, Architects.
- Aerial Photograph
- F.A.R. Calculation Worksheet

III. Vegetation

- Arborist report prepared by TreesPlease, Inc.

IV. Water/Drainage

- Soils report prepared by Soil Tech Inc.
- Stormwater runoff report submitted by RC Fields Inc.

V. Structural Effects

- Structural Review prepared by Mesen Associates, P.C.

VI. Shadow Study

- Sun-shade Study prepared by Robert Bentley Adams & Associates, Architects

VII. Letters of Support

I.

Historical Research

The project's architectural team led by Bud Adams, AIA, a principal of Robert Bentley Adams & Associates, Architects (the "Firm"), has worked closely with Laurie Lowe and Carl Gudenius for a year to design a sensitive and historically appropriate addition to the rear of 323 North Saint Asaph Street. Prior to starting to design the proposed addition, the Firm studied the existing structure, researched the building's history and evaluated the context of the immediate surroundings to develop a design approach for the addition that would be consistent with the Old and Historic District Design Guidelines.

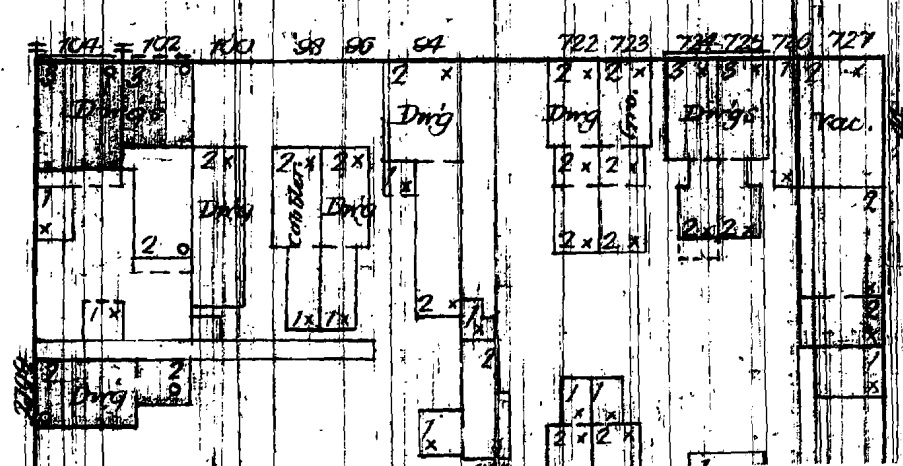
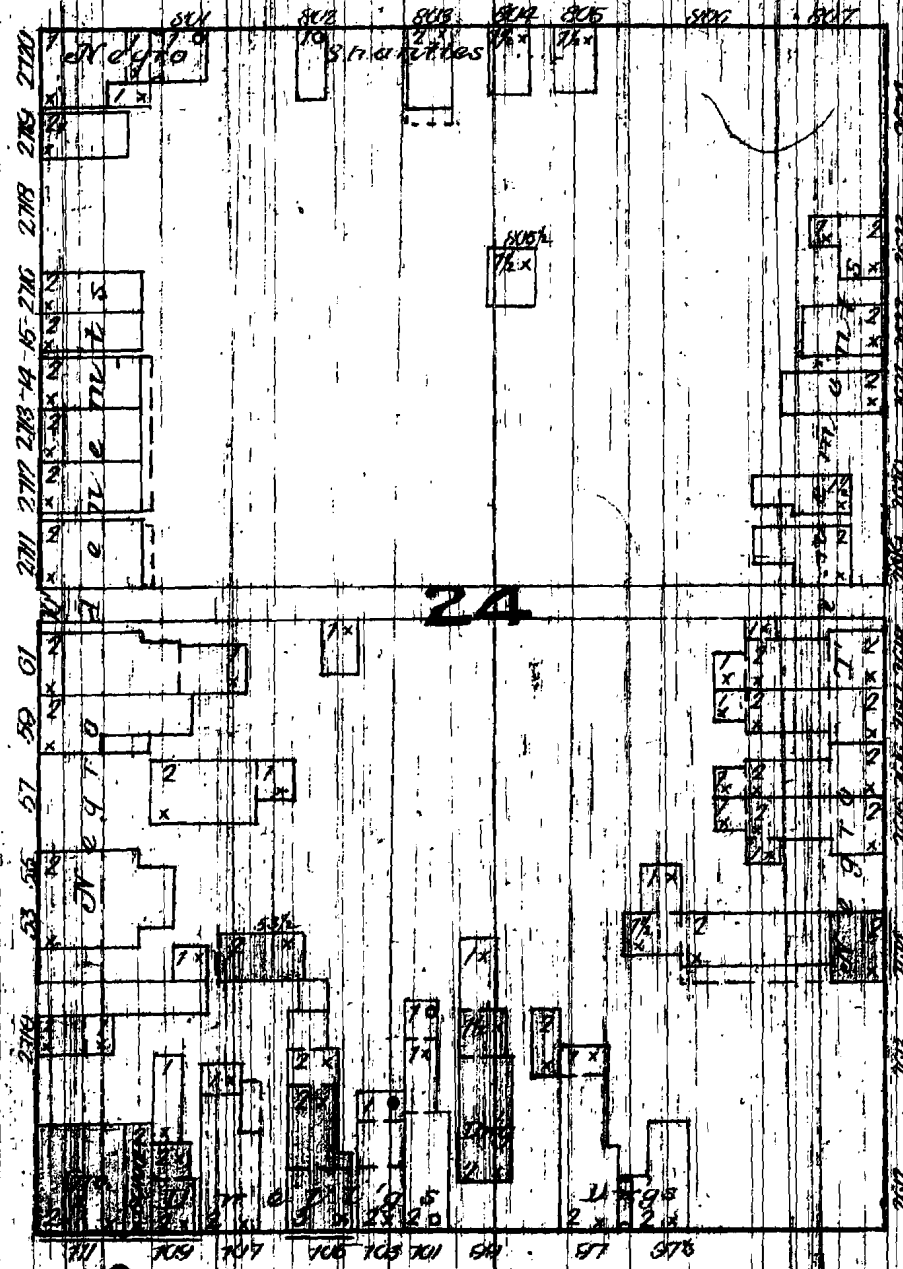
Observations:

- 1885- The row of three townhouses at 319, 321 and 323 N. St. Asaph Street were extant with a rear porches extending beyond the eastern building wall.
- 1896- Rear additions to 317 and 329 N. St. Asaph were constructed 1885 and 1896.
- 1902- Rear porches are shown at 325, 327 and 329 N. St. Asaph Street. Additionally, a second rear addition, as well as an outbuilding and front porch has been added to 317 N. St. Asaph Street.
- 1907- The front porch at 317 has been removed.
- 1941- Rear detached garages were constructed on 317, 319, and 323 N. St. Asaph Street.
- 1958- The garage and rear porch are shown.
- 1965- 319, 321 and 323 N. St. Asaph Street were renovated by Marissa Smith of Seaport Development (See: EHT Traceries Report) and 321 and 323 were subdivided into two separate lots of land. Prior to 1965 321 and 323 were a "Duplex" on a single lot of land under single ownership.
- 1970s- Renovations include complete interior demolition and update and installation of rear bay window. Original rear porch may have been demolished at this time.

Attached: Sanborn Maps
EHT Traceries Report

ASAPH

No. 5



PITT

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27

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SEE SHEET No 2

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29

65'

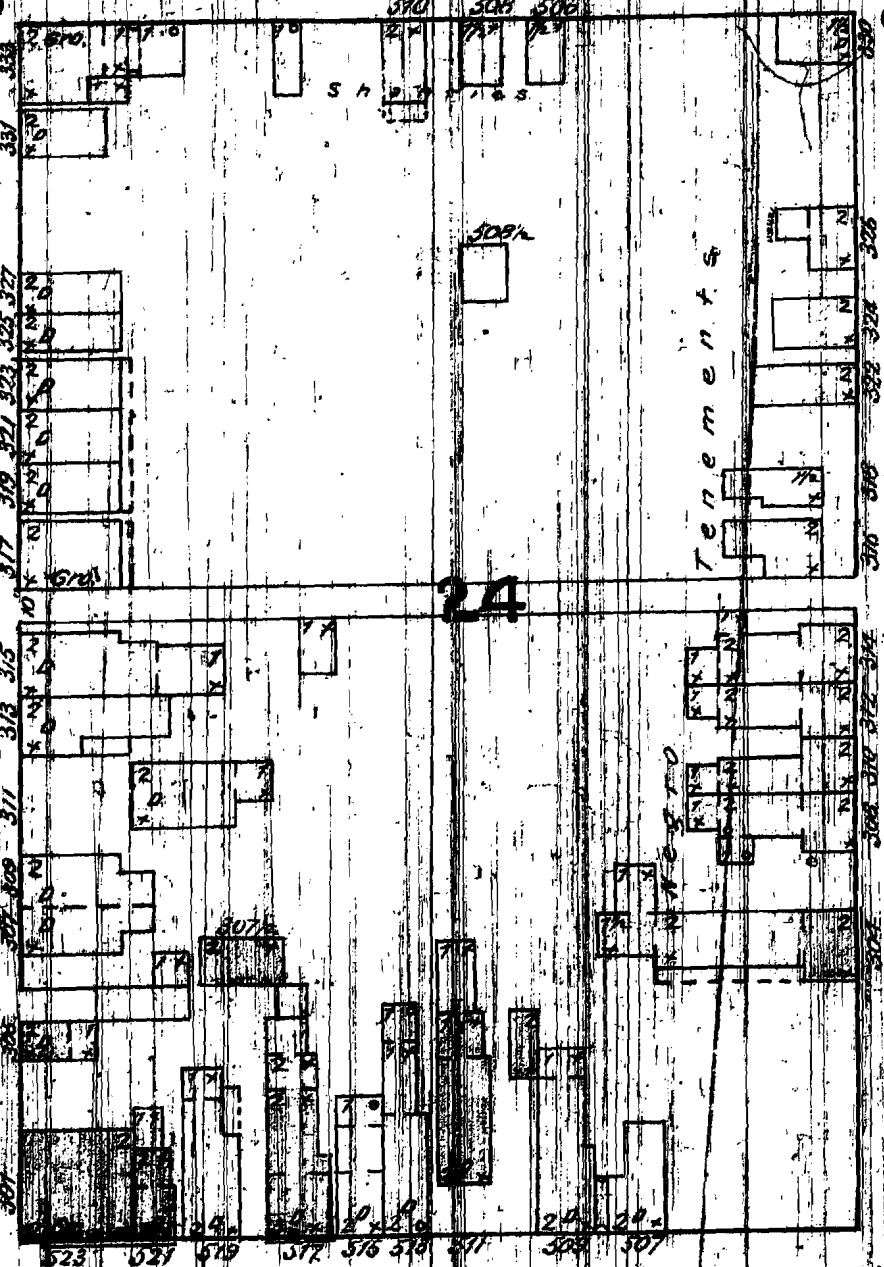
66'

18' 1/2"

No 4

2' W.P.

2' W.P.

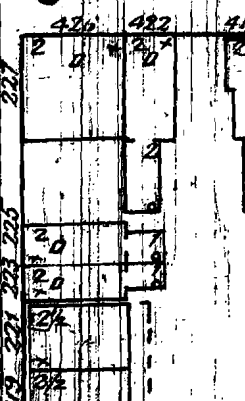
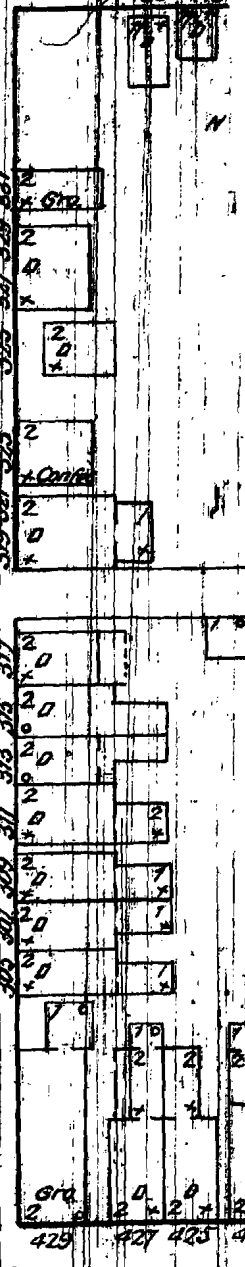
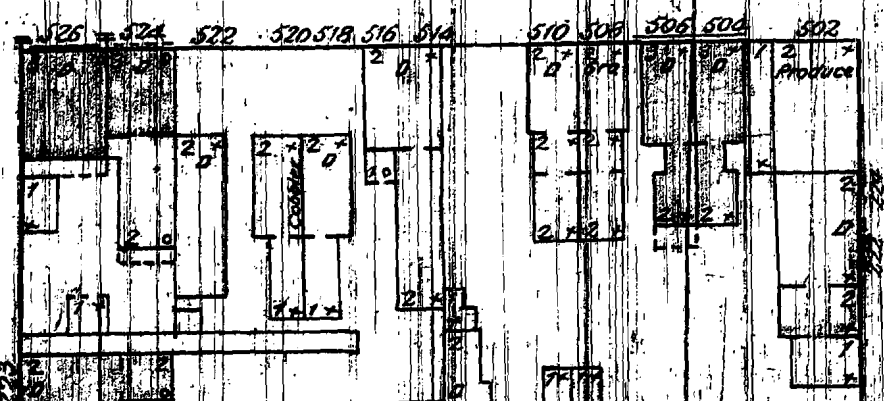


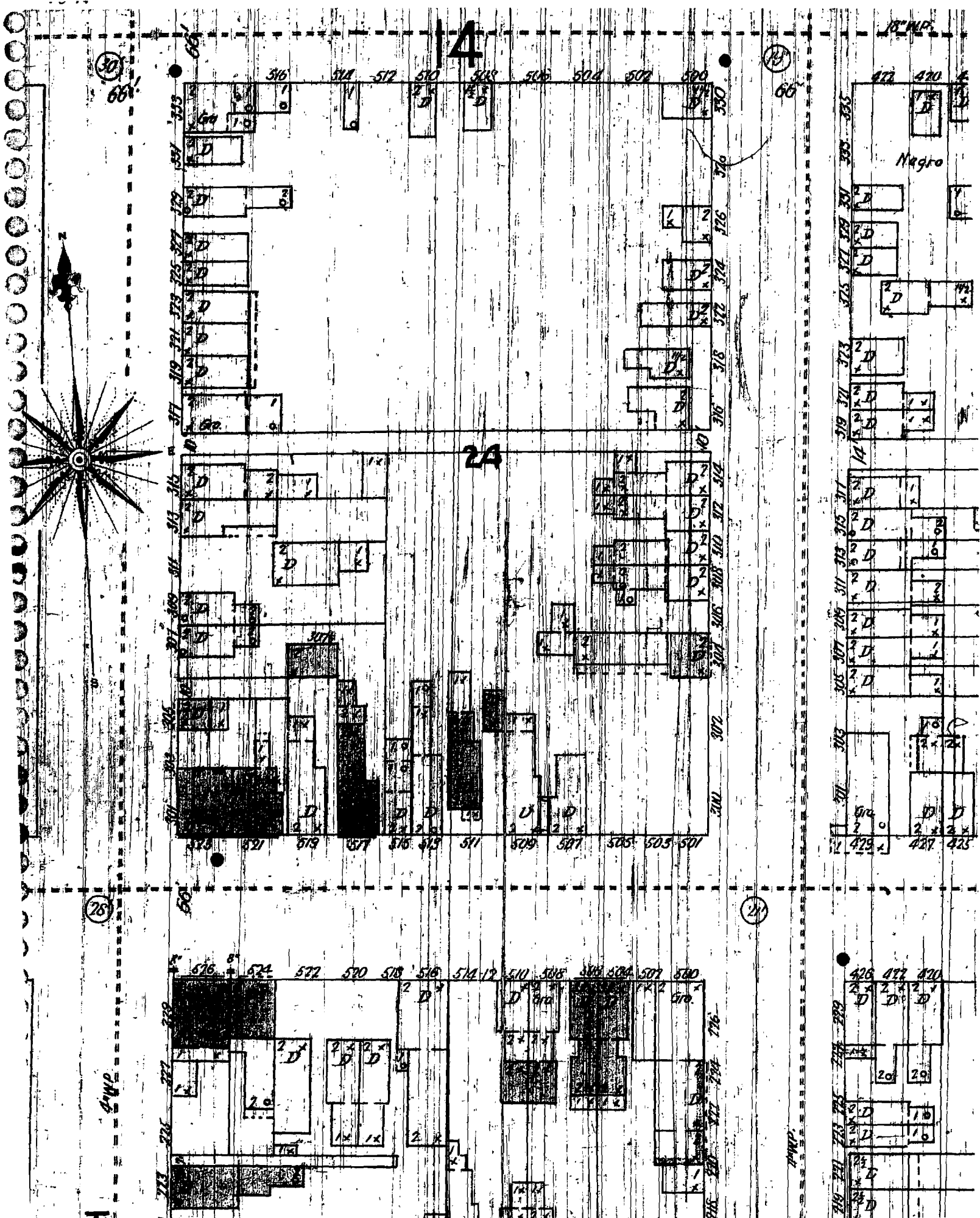
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Tenements

28

27





14

2A

2B

Negro

30
66'

30
66'

26

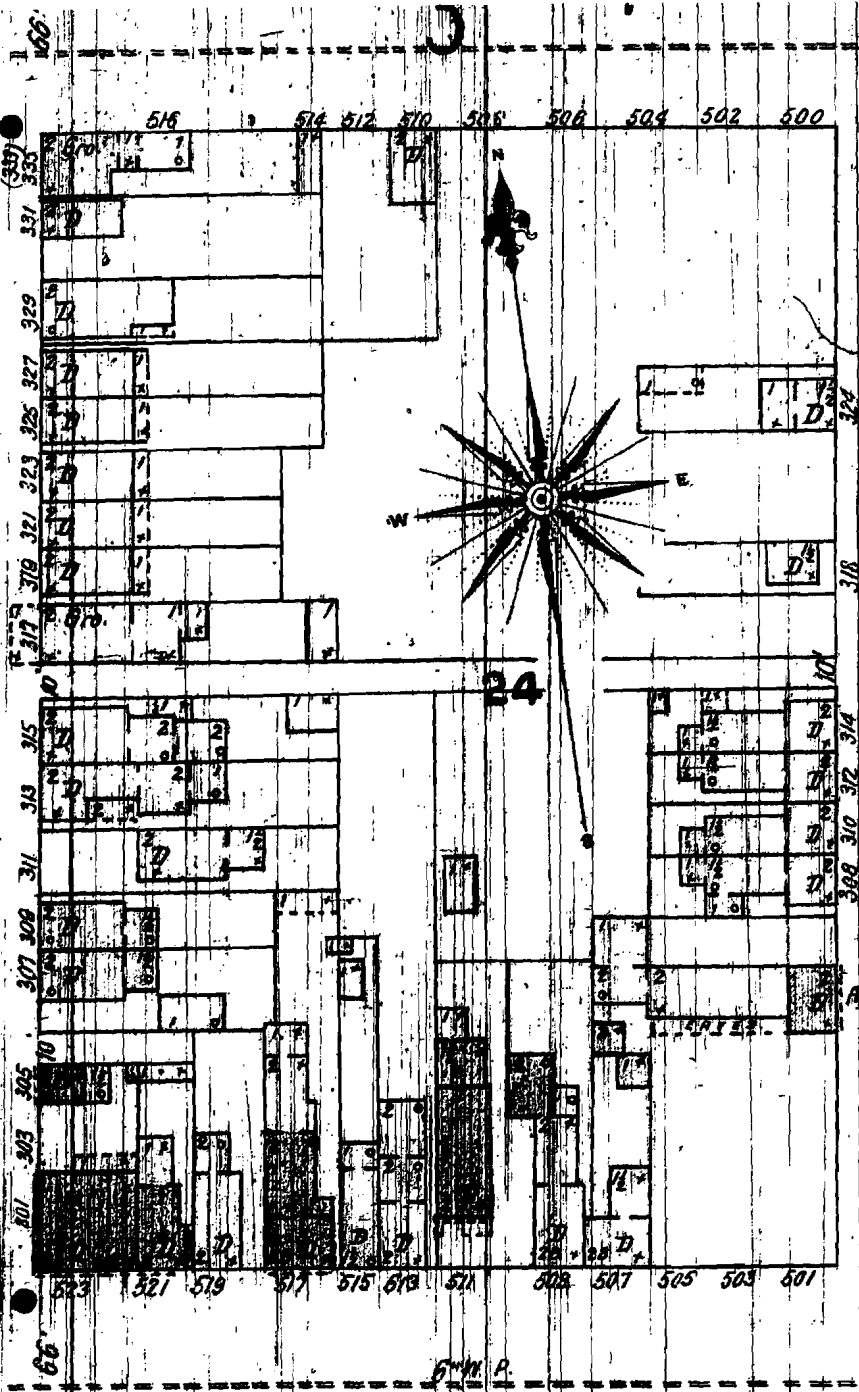
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4-W.P.

4-W.P.

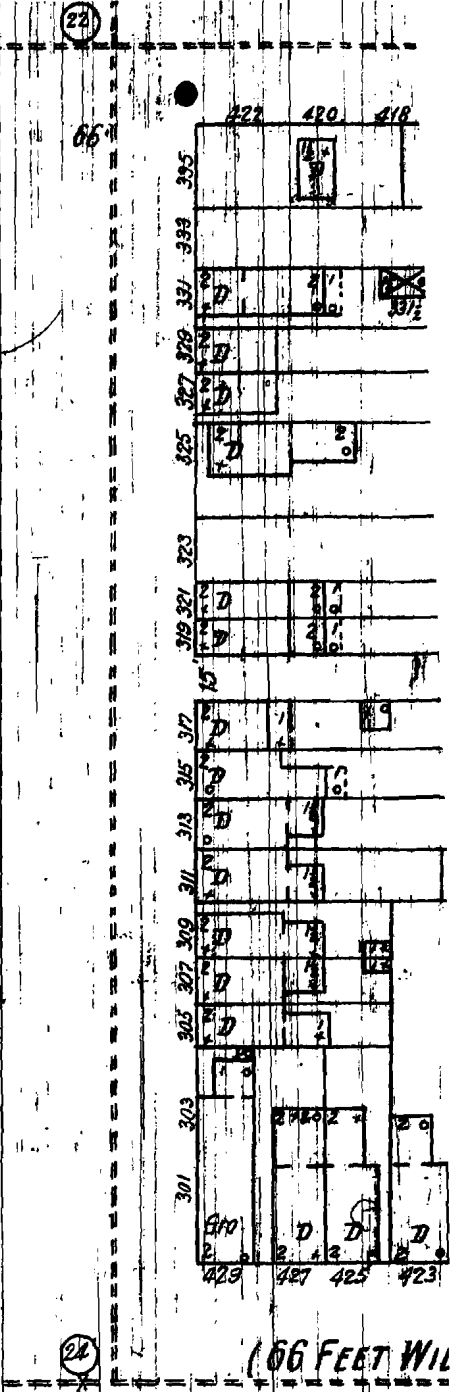
ST. ASAPH

A.W.P.



PITT

A.W.P.

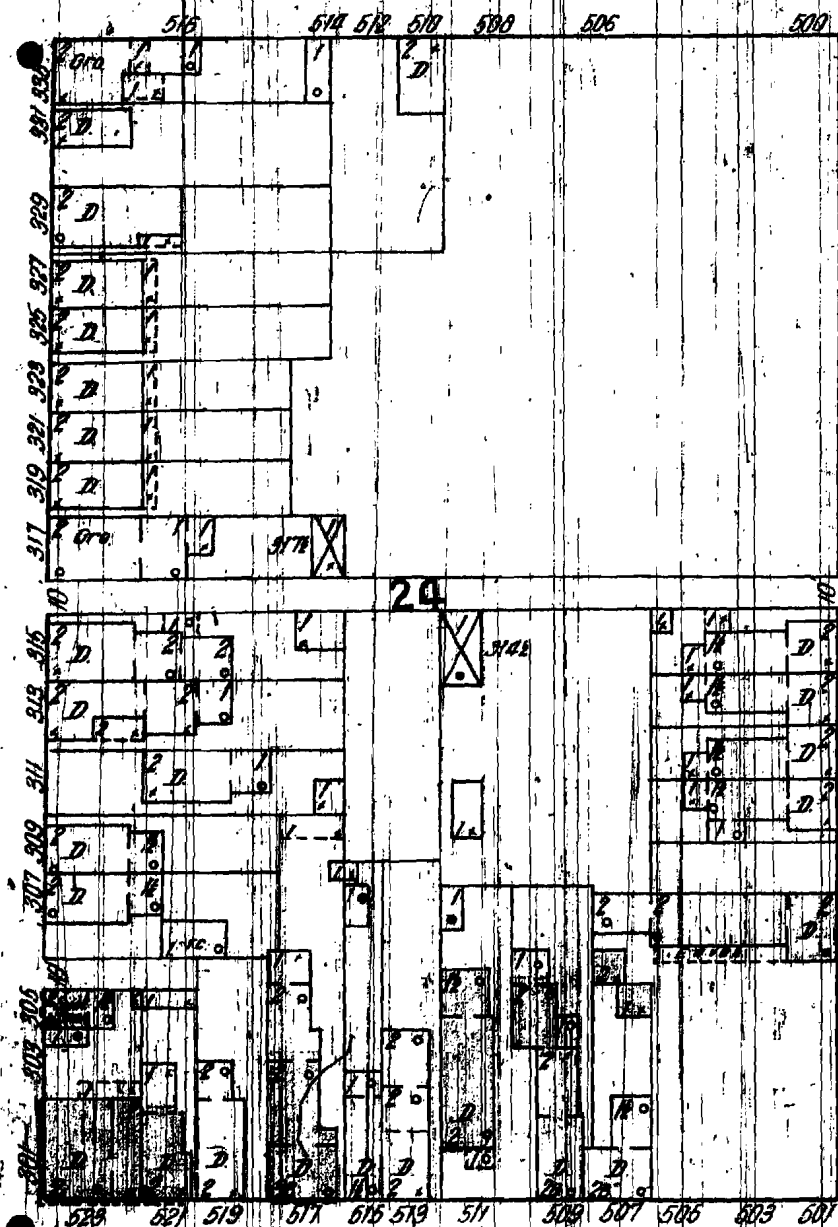


3

1" W. PIPE

8" W. PIPE

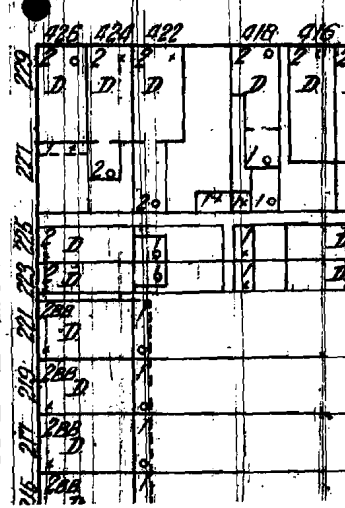
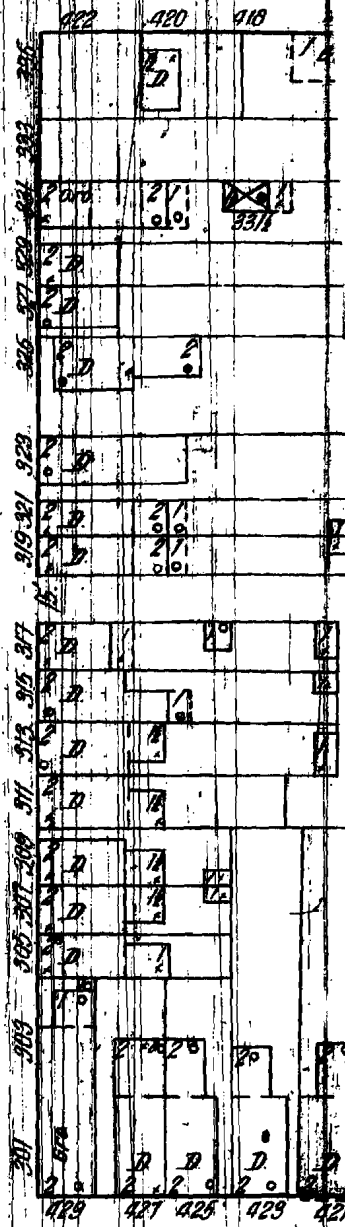
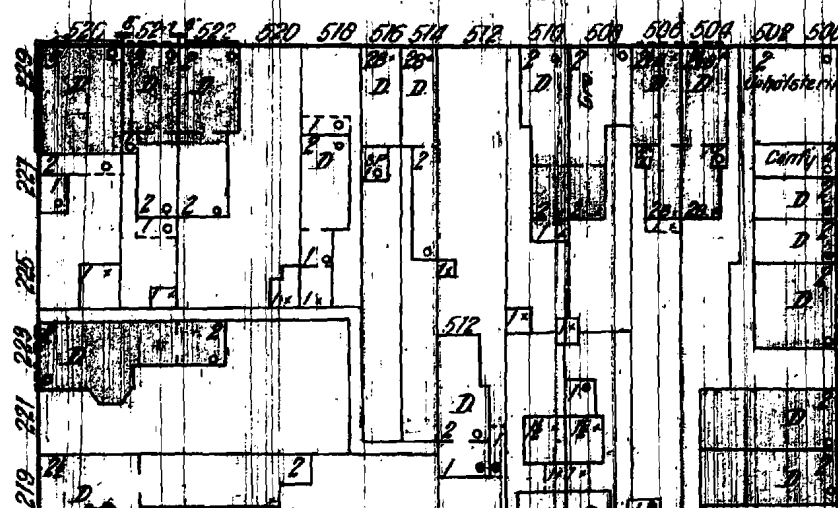
1" W. PIPE



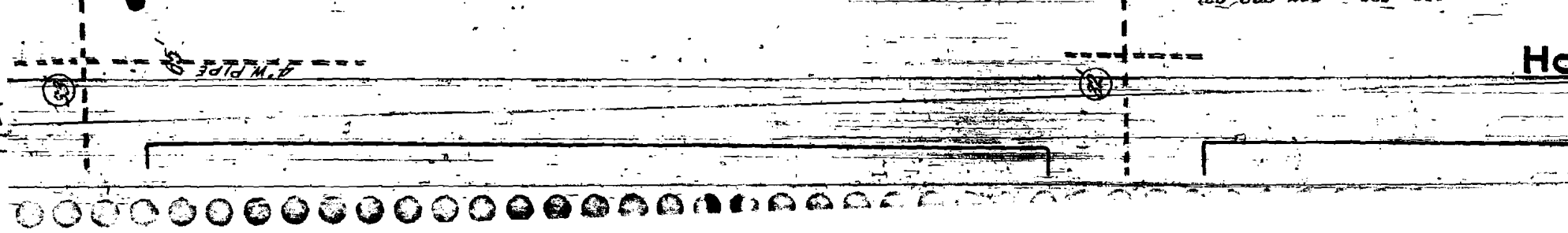
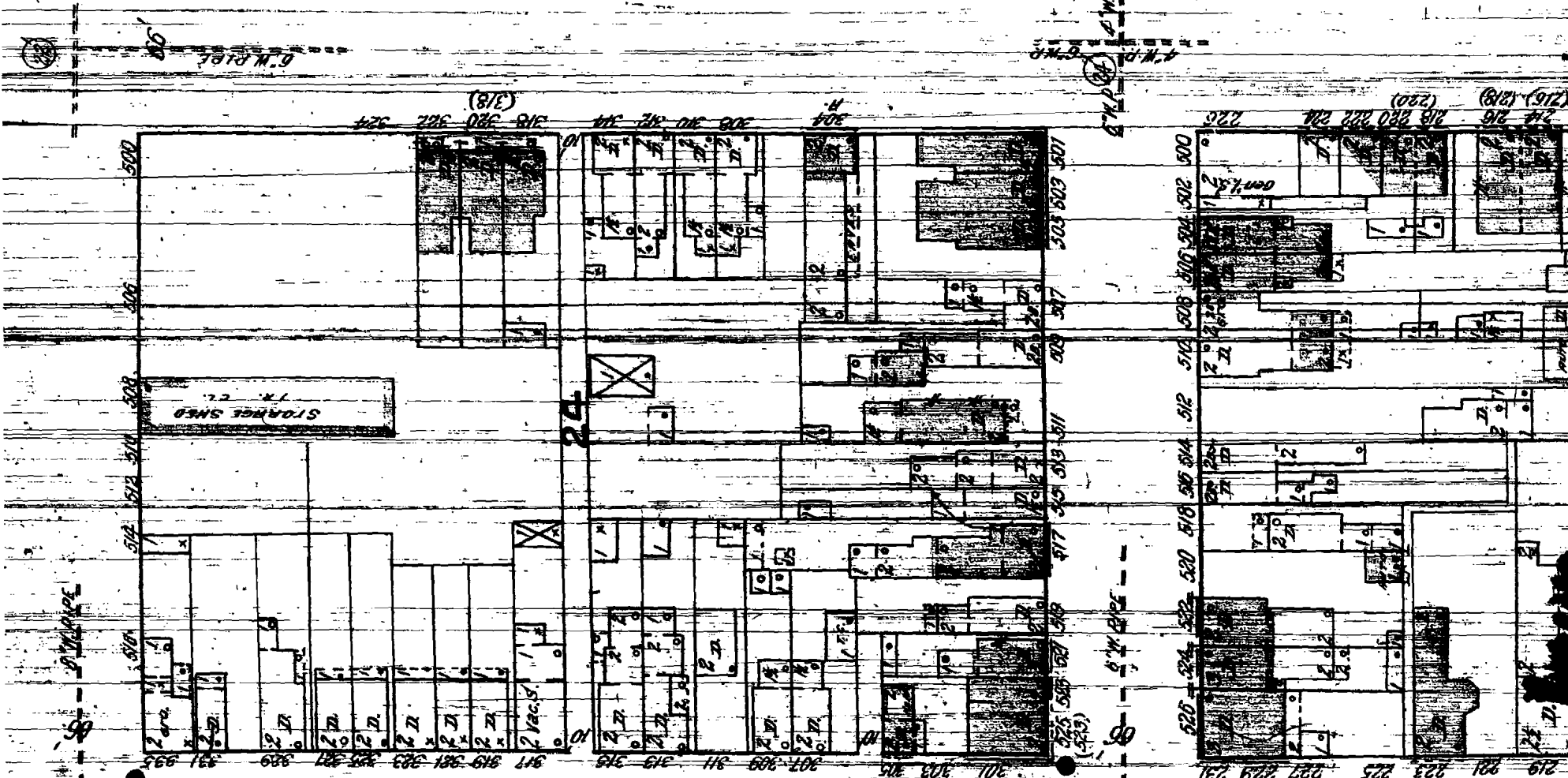
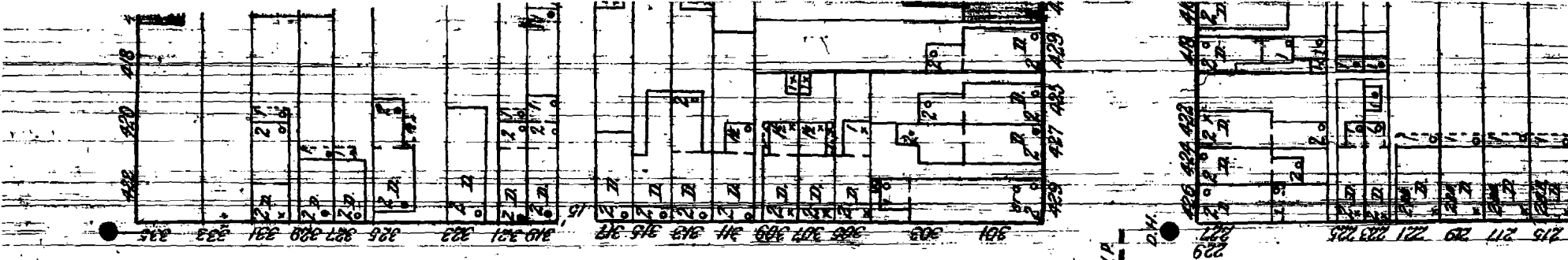
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6" W. PIPE

6" W. PIPE



PH



6" W. PIPE

6" W. PIPE

6" W. PIPE

6" W. PIPE

STORAGE SMOG

PH

**323 NORTH SAINT ASAPH STREET
ALEXANDRIA, VA**



323 N. Saint Asaph Street; Alexandria, VA

COMPILED FOR CARL GUDENIUS AND LAURIE LOWE
EHT TRACERIES, INC.
AUGUST 2007

Summary:

The structure located at 323 North Saint Asaph Street is a semi-detached row house built between 1858-1867 by prosperous landowner, John A. Dixon. Although the current real estate assessment for the property dates the building to the early nineteenth century, deed and city water records show that it was not constructed until much later. In addition, Ethelyn Cox, a local historian, identifies 323 N. Saint Asaph as a mid-nineteenth century structure in her book, *Historic Alexandria Virginia Street by Street: A Survey of Existing Early Buildings*.

323 North Saint Asaph Street is a typical example of speculative row house construction from the mid-nineteenth century. This two-story, two bay, double pile row house shares a party wall with the structure to the south. The frame building is clad in weather board and its side gabled roof is covered with a metal seam roof.



Figure 1: This 1959 Photograph shows 323 N. Saint Asaph (far left) along with 321 and 319. These structures were most likely constructed at the same time. Notice that the three structures share two chimney flutes.



Figure 2: This photograph, taken in 2007, shows how 323 N. Saint Asaph Street appears today. The chimneys have been reconstructed.

Early Site History:

The city of Alexandria, located on the west bank of the Potomac River, was founded in 1749. The incorporated area of the town did not include the tract of land containing 323 N. Saint Asaph Street. The original town border was Pitt Street, located just one block east of the research site; however the streets of Saint Asaph and others directly west were planned. Saint Asaph Street was named in honor of Dr. Jonathan Shipley, who was the active Bishop of St. Asaph and supporter of the American colonies during the revolution.

The first known owner of the land encompassing 323 N. Saint Asaph Street was Thomas Nelson Reid. He owned the entire block, numbered 73, which consisted of lots A, B, and C. It appears that Reid did not build any structures on this block, as there are no surviving records of any buildings being insured through the Mutual Assurance Fire Company. Reid broke the property in smaller lots, and deed records show that between 1804-1815 he started to sell these plots of land. No direct record of Reid selling the lot on which 323 N. Saint Asaph Street is located was found. However, these early deeds outline the location of an alleyway that still exists today.

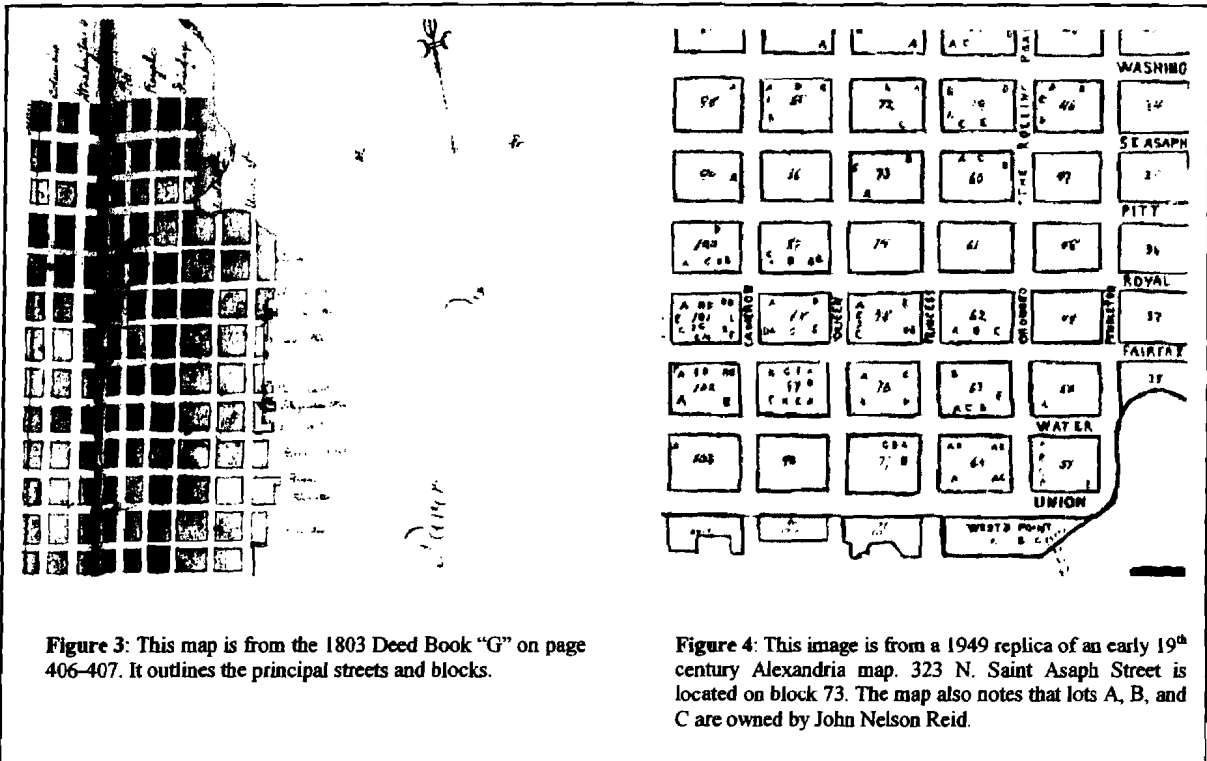


Figure 3: This map is from the 1803 Deed Book "G" on page 406-407. It outlines the principal streets and blocks.

Figure 4: This image is from a 1949 replica of an early 19th century Alexandria map. 323 N. Saint Asaph Street is located on block 73. The map also notes that lots A, B, and C are owned by John Nelson Reid.

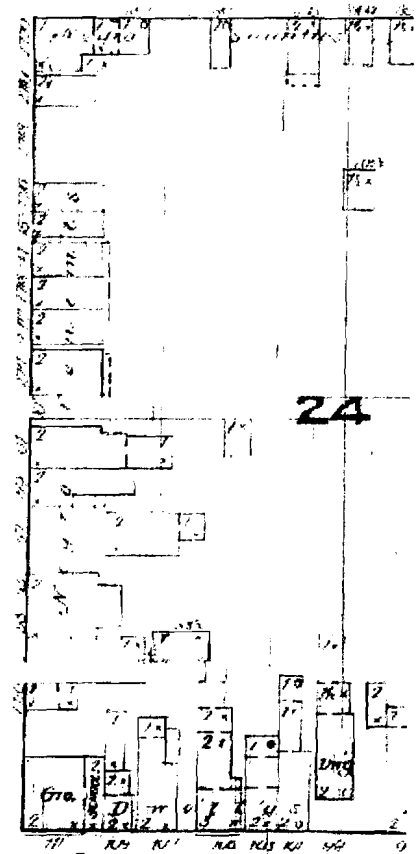
Site History:

Although building permits are not available, deed records indicate that in 1858 John A. Dixon purchased the property from Sarah W. Griffith for \$200. According to the deed, the property transaction did not include any buildings, demonstrating that 323 N. Saint Asaph Street was not constructed until after that time. The next available record is from Alexandria Water Company record books that list John A. Dixon as the owner of 319, 321, and 323 N. Saint Asaph Street in 1867. These two documents narrow the construction date that is between 1858 and 1867.

It is likely that John A Dixon built 319, 321, and 323 N. Saint Asaph Street as rental properties. Dixon never lived in these buildings, and his ownership of many properties throughout Alexandria indicates that these sites were purchased as investments. Little is known about the tenants who lived in these properties.

Identifying early residents of this property is difficult since city directories were not indexed by address until 1924. During that year, Robert L. Robinson, a fireman, was living at the site. A 1932, city directory shows that Robinson was still residing in the building.

Gradual changes in the community can be seen through insurance maps. An 1885 Sanborn Map, shown in Figure 5, identifies this part of N. Saint Asaph Street as an African American community. On the map the whole east side of the block is noted as "Negro Tenements." Nearby is a grocery store and schoolhouse on Queen Street. The map also shows shanties along Princess Street and more "Negro Tenements" on N. Pitt Street. By 1921 the shanties on Princess Street were torn down, with a large, single storage shed taking their place. This change can be viewed in Figure 6. The 1941 Sanborn Map, Figure 7, shows that the school and store on Queen Street had been converted into dwellings. However, the most notable change on the block is the appearance of the Alexandria Milk Products Inc. The facility is located on the corner of Princess and N. Pitt Streets. Also noteworthy from the 1941 map is the first appearance of a garage behind 321 N. Saint Asaph Street.



that identify many of the buildings along the east side of N. Saint Asaph Street, including 323, as "Negro Tenements."

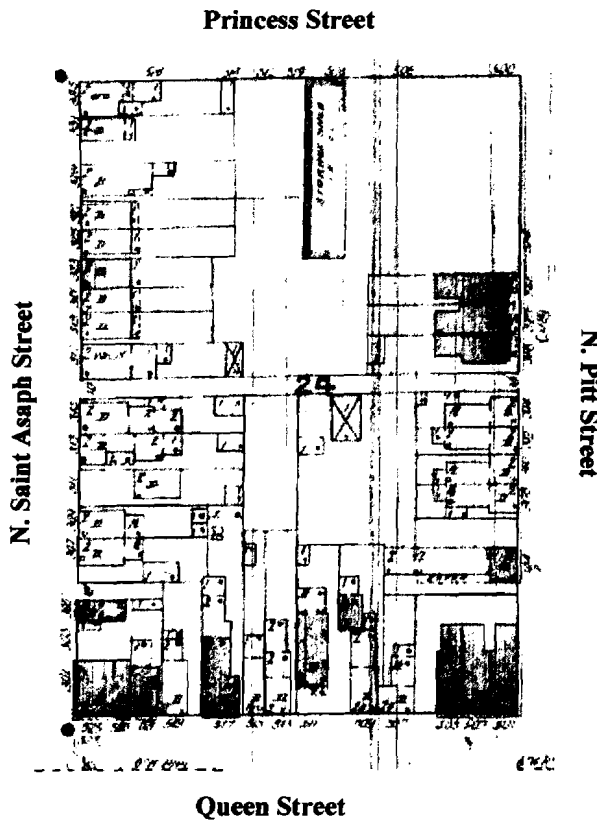


Figure 6: A 1921 Sanborn Map shows that 323 N. Saint Asaph does not have a garage. The shanties on Princess Street are gone and are replaced by a large shed.

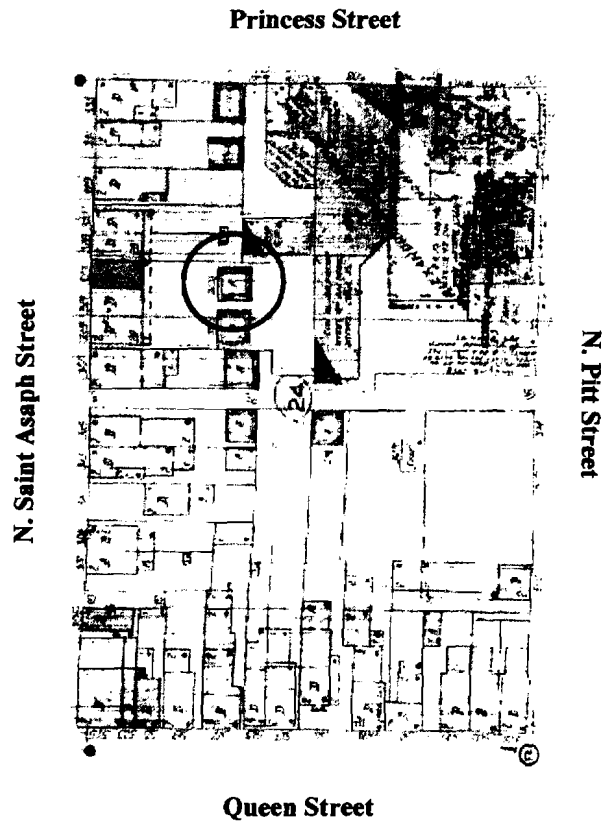


Figure 7: This 1941 Sanborn Map shows that 323 N. Saint Asaph Street has a garage (circled). The Alexandria Milk Products Inc. is a prominent fixture on Princess Street.

A record of recent owners of the 323 N. Saint Asaph Street is available online through the city of Alexandria's Real Estate Assessments. The following chart identifies owners from 1991 to present.

Figure 8:

Owner	Years
Bailey Anne Saeger	1991-1992
Jonathan and Laurie Talcott	1993
Anne Hagemann Doerr-	1994-1996
Susan Pentecost	1997-1998
Carl Gudenius and Laurie Lowe	1999- Present

Building Evolution:

It is likely that 323 N. Saint Asaph Street was built at the same time as 321 and 319 since the buildings share common building elements such as chimney flutes and foundation. During its approximate 150-year life the building has been altered, but retains its original footprint. Although permit records for Alexandria are not complete, it appears that 323 North St. Asaph Street changed very little during its first 100 years.

By the mid-twentieth century the neighborhood surrounding 323 N. Saint Asaph was deteriorating. In 1965, the Seaport Development Corporation made major alterations within 323 N. Saint Asaph's interior. The location of a bathroom was moved, a new ½ bath was installed, and a kitchen was constructed on the basement level. At this time the building's framing was also repaired.

In 1970, the fenestration of the east (rear) elevation was altered. Originally, the first and second floor had a single, centrally placed window, while the basement level had two windows. The single, double hung, 6/6 window on the first floor was replaced with a paired, double hung 6/6 window by the owner, Euginia L. Luckman. This change can be seen in Figures 11 & 12, which were submitted to Alexandria's Architectural Review Board as part of the application for repairs and alterations.

Photographic records indicate that the casing and decorative molding around the front door has been changed, as seen in Figures 13 & 14; however, the transom may be original to the house. Figures 15 & 16 illustrate that the original windows have been replaced.

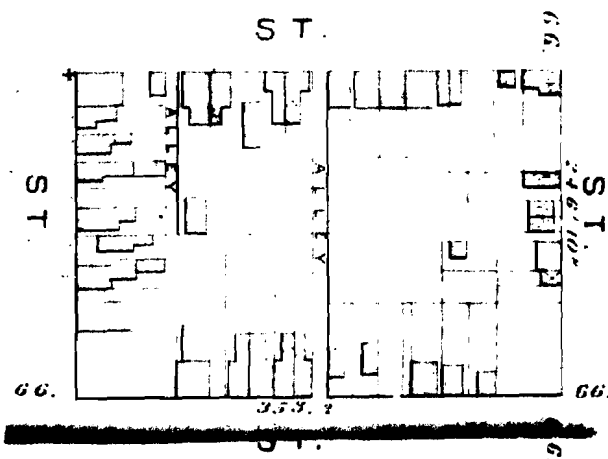


Figure 9: The 1877 Hopkins Map (Plate F) is the earliest insurance map to include 323 N. Saint Asaph Street.

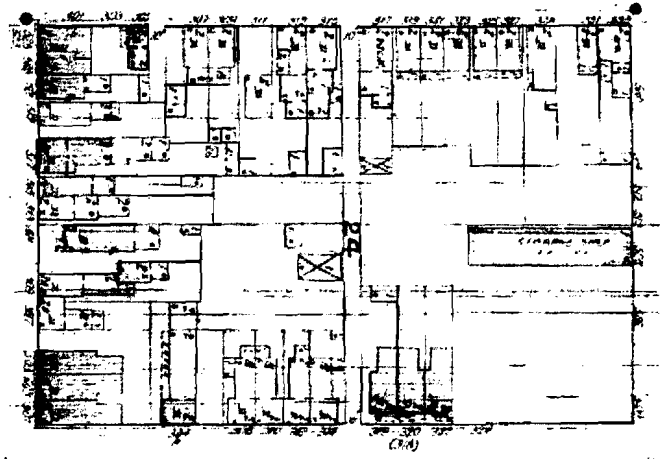


Figure 10: The 1921 Sanborn map for Alexandria, Virginia shows that the footprint of 323 N. Saint Asaph Street has not changed.



Figure 11: Rear façade showing arrangement of windows before alteration.



Figure 12: Rear façade showing arrangement of windows before alteration.

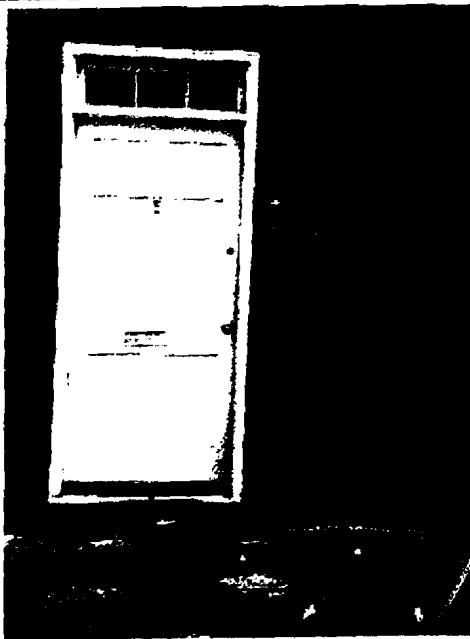


Figure 13: Undated photograph of the front door of 323 N. Saint Asaph Street.



Figure 14: 2007 photograph of how the front entrance appears today. The casement around the door has been changed although the transom window remains.

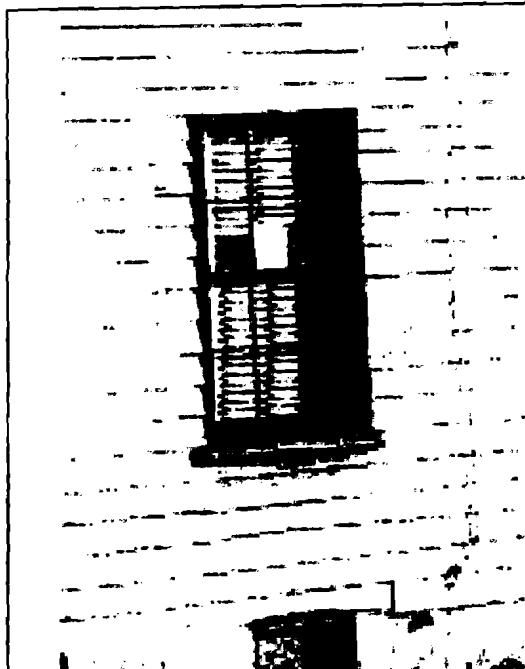


Figure 15: Photograph of first story window on the west (front) façade in 1959



Figure 16: 2007 photograph of the same window. Notice the replaced window sill and thin sash.

Resources Consulted

Repositories Consulted

Alexandria Archives & Records Center; Alexandria, VA

Kate Waller Barrett Branch Library; Alexandria, VA

Alexandria Courthouse: The Record Room; Alexandria, VA

Maps and Directories Consulted

A Full Directory, for Washington City, Georgetown, and Alexandria.
Washington, DC: E.A. Cohen and Company, 1834.

G.M. Hopkins. Real Estate Atlas Plat-Book of Alexandria, VA, 1887.

Sanborn Map Company. *Insurance Maps, Washington, DC*. New York: Sanborn Map Company.

People Consulted

Marissa Smith, former owner of 323 North Saint Asaph Street

II. Open Space

323 North St. Asaph Street is a lot of ground with 16 feet in width, a depth of 123 feet and comprises approximately 1980 square feet of land. The rear 8 feet of the lot forms a private alley that runs from the northern boundary of 323 North St. Asaph Street across the rears of the lot 321 North St. Asaph Street and intersect with a mid block alley perpendicular to the North Pitt Street right-of-way. Currently, the distance between the east building wall and east property line of 323 North St. Asaph Street is approximately 93 feet of rear yard. Of the existing rear yard, an area of approximately 16 feet in width and 38 feet deep is improved by a brick patio and landscaped area. The remaining rear yard, and area approximately 16 feet by 55 feet, inclusive of the 8 foot alley, is occupied by a storage shed on a gravel surface.

As part of the project, Laurie Lowe and Carl Gudenius are planning to create a new formal garden in the rear yard of the property and a 16 foot by 12 foot service/parking area. The new rear yard, inclusive of the 8 foot alley, will be 16 feet wide and 71 feet deep.

The Alexandria Zoning Ordinance open space requirement for the property is 35% of the lot area, or 693 square feet of land. The existing open space is approximately 56% of the lot area or 1107 square feet of land. After the completion of the project, the proposed open space will be approximately 48% of the lot area, or 941 square feet of land. The character of all of the open space will be converted to be more consistent with the character of rear yards in the Old and historic District.

Attachment:

- Existing Block Plan
- Proposed Block Plan
- F.A.R. Calculation Worksheet

III. **Vegetation**

A large non-specimen sycamore tree is located in the rear yard of 325 N. St. Asaph Street, close to the common northern boundary line between that property and 323 N. St. Asaph Street. Limbs of the tree and its root system extend beyond the common property line into the rear yard of 323 N. St. Asaph Street. The Construction of the proposed addition will impact the tree's roots that encroach onto the 323 N. St. Asaph Street lot.

To evaluate the condition of the sycamore and the impact of construction of the proposed addition Laurie Lowe and Carl Gudenius hired Edward Milhous of the firm of TreesPlease Inc., to examine the tree and make a recommendation regarding the feasibility of preserving it during and after construction of the addition. Mr. Milhous determined that the tree is "declining and must be considered an immediate risk." As such the removal of the encroaching roots and limbs to allow the construction of the proposed addition will most likely result in the acceleration of the tree's demise.

To mitigate the loss of the tree Laurie Lowe and Carl Gudenius are prepared to pay for the removal of the sycamore tree and the planting of a new tree on 325 N. St. Asaph Street property. The species to be decided on by the owner of 325 N. St. Asaph Street and a size and caliper consistent with the City of Alexandria's Landscape Guidelines.

Attachment:

- Arborist's Report.

TreesPlease[®]

P. O. Box 1025 Haymarket, Virginia 20168 703-927-2048
<http://www.TreesPlease.com> e-mail: Ed@TreesPlease.com

28 June, 2007

Mr. Carl Gudenius
323 N. St. Asaph Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Re: sycamore along your northern property line

Dear Mr. Gudenius:

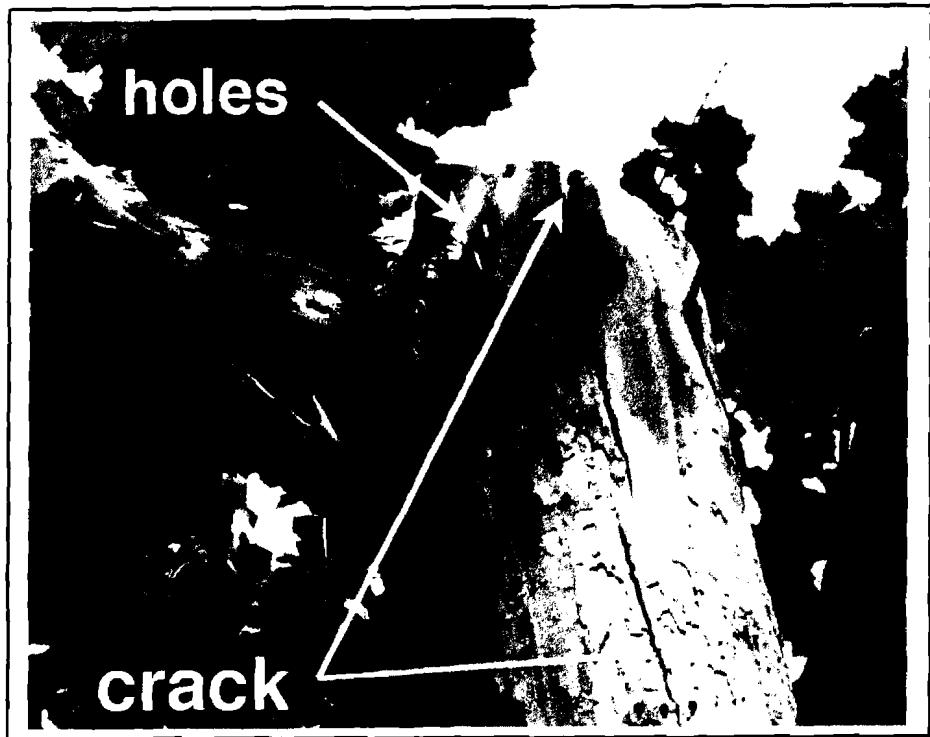
At your request, on June 26th, I visited your home to make observations about a sycamore (*Platanus* spp.¹) growing along the north property line of your lot. You asked me to assess the health and stability of this tree. You also asked if there was a way to preserve this tree if an addition were built to the rear of your house.

The tree is on the other side of a board fence from your lot, as can be seen in this picture, and I made all observations without going onto the neighbor's land. There is substantial dieback and dead tissue in the tree, and seams are evident along the trunk in several places. When a tree dies back, it usually indicates decline in health due to root damage, drought, or disease. Seams occur where a tree grows extra tissue to cover over an injury. Usually there is decay behind a seam.

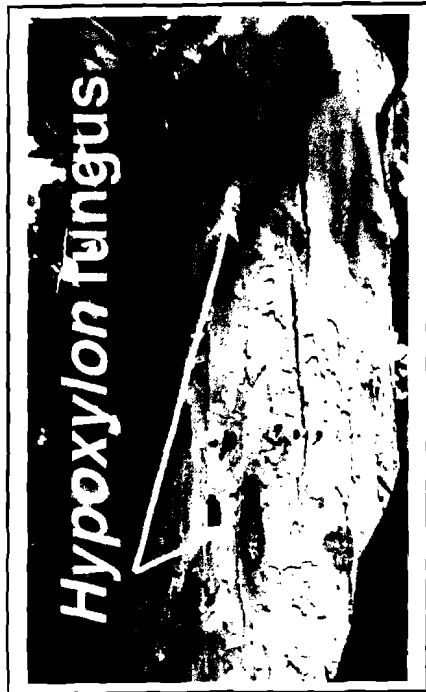


¹ This could be a London planetree (*Platanus x acerifolia*).

The tree had its top cut off years ago. Tissue below the topping cut has died, and an open crack has formed running down the stem from the tree's top. Daylight is visible through holes in the tree's trunk. The holes



and crack indicate presence of substantial decay². The branch growing out toward the left in the photograph above hangs over your patio. While not a huge limb, it is

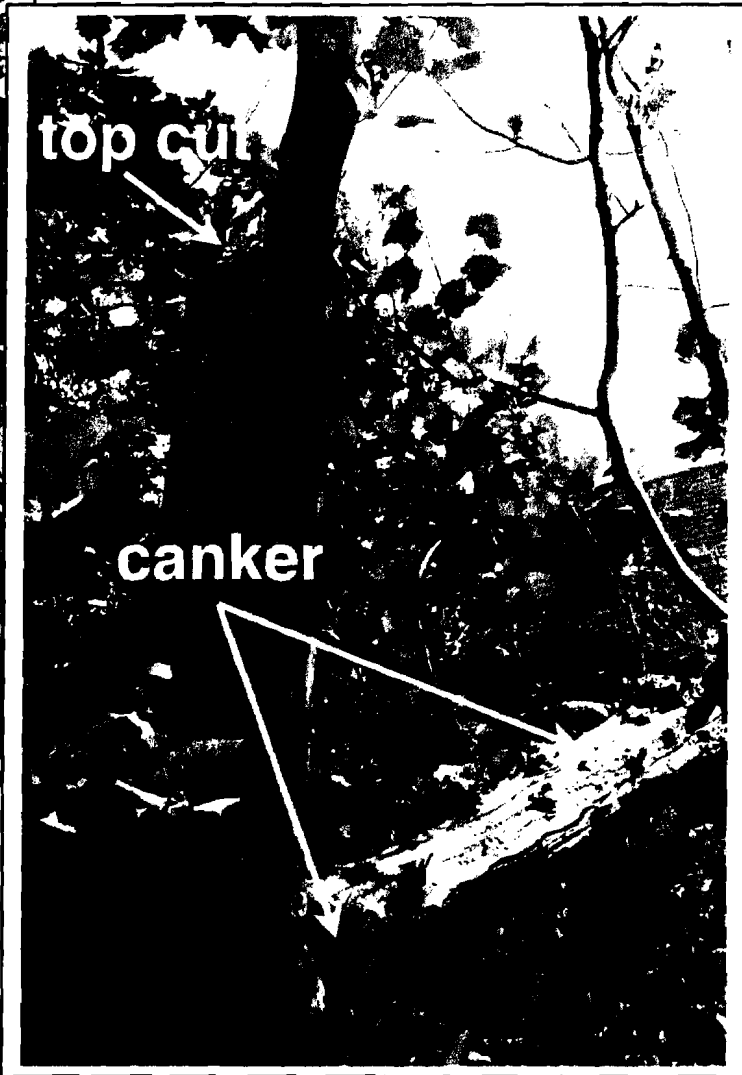


weakly attached to the tree's trunk, and is an immediate risk to fall. It is large enough that it would cause damage to breakables, or if it were to hit a child, it could cause serious injury. The dead tissue is what arborists would call a canker. A canker is a dead area of bark that is typically caused by fungi. One fungus that causes cankers is *Hypoxyylon* spp.; it can be seen in the picture to the left as dark spots on the trunk. This fungus is almost always a harbinger of death in trees; once it is seen on a tree's main stem, the tree usually dies within a few years.

² Decay is the process by which wood fiber becomes digested by fungi (usually); discoloration is the beginning of the process of decay ... discolored wood will eventually decay.



The same canker, as seen in these two photographs, extends down the tree trunk several



feet, and runs out a branch growing toward the rear of the property. This branch also is weakly attached to the tree and could fall at any time. However, it would likely hit the fence rather than falling into space occupied by people.

By any measure, this tree is declining and must be considered an immediate risk to fall apart. There is no practical way to mitigate this risk short of removing the tree or cutting its top off several more feet, leaving nothing but a short pole.

As to whether an addition to the rear of your house could be built and preserve the tree, the more pertinent question would be, *should* the tree be preserved. While it might well be possible to build some sort of addition and keep the tree, it is in such poor condition that designing an addition around this tree would not make sense. I am of the opinion that the tree should be removed as soon as possible, whether an addition is built or not.

If you have any questions, please give me a call.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ed Milhous". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Ed Milhous

Registered Consulting Arborist #350

Certification

I, Edward P. Milhous, certify that the foregoing is true to the best of my knowledge at the time produced; that I have no past, present, or contemplated future interest in the property; that I received no material assistance in reaching my conclusions; that neither employment nor compensation was contingent on my conclusions; and that I was not influenced in my judgment by anybody.

Edward P. Milhous, Inc.
dba TreesPlease®



Edward P. Milhous, President
ASCA Registered Consulting Arborist #350
ISA Certified Arborist MA-0004
Maryland Tree Expert #458

Date: 28 June, 2007

VI.
Light and Air

After meeting with the adjacent owners, and in response to the concern over the loss of light, the proposed addition was reduced in height 2 feet to help mitigate their shade concerns.

In order to assess and evaluate concerns expressed by adjacent property owners at 325 N. St. Asaph Street that the construction of the proposed addition would block sunlight to their backyard, Laurie Lowe and Carl Gudenius had the project architects prepare a Sun-Shade study to illustrate the loss of sun light resulting from the construction of the proposed addition on the adjacent property. The Sun-shade study provides hourly views from 8am to 2pm (after which time the existing structures block sunlight for the rest of the day) at annual quarters. Due to the east-west orientation of the townhouses, any new construction will alter the level of sun light in the rear yards to the north. The study demonstrates; however that the proposed construction will not unreasonably alter the sun-shade characteristics of the rear yard of 325 N. St. Asaph Street.

Attachment:

Sun-Shade study

IV.
Water and Drainage Design and Control

As part of the City approval of the proposed addition, Laurie Lowe and Carl Gudenius will be required to submit to the City of Alexandria for review and approval an engineered plot plan. The plot plan among other matters will address issues related to storm water and drainage management, as well as compliance all applicable laws, ordinances and regulations governing redevelopment of property.

Aware that buildings on the 300 block of N. St. Asaph Street drain their rainwater runoff through downspouts to splash blocks or daylight in the rear and that this storm water after heavy rains has caused flooding the English basements of the line of connected townhouses (319-327 N. St. Asaph Street), Paul Wilder, a certified land surveyor of RC Fields, Jr. and Associates Inc., was retained to provide a stormwater drainage analysis and to prepare recommendations on how to manage storm water. Paul Wilder, Erin May of Adams Architects *and* Mitch Bernstein, of City of Alexandria Transportation & Environmental Services Department, met at the site to review discuss Mr. Wilder's recommendations. Both professionals agreed that pumping the storm water runoff from the addition and patio to the gutter and storm sewer at the front of the property would be the best solution. This would remove about 500 square feet of surface water from the back area entirely, leaving the proposed site conditions better than its current condition.

Mark Walters, a certified geotechnical engineer with the firm of Soil Tech Inc., was also retained to provide a soils report. The report indicates that the soil consists of mostly silty and clayey sand and recommends installing a typical foundation drainage system and pump to prevent the retention of storm water.

Attachments:

Soils Tech Inc. Report.

R C Fields, Jr., and Assoc. Storm water Drainage Report.

SOIL TECH INC.

14630-F FLINT LEE ROAD
CHANTILLY, VIRGINIA 20151
(703) 631-9647
(703) 631-2156: FAX

April 18, 2007

Erin May
Robert Bentley Adams & Associates
405 South Washington Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

RE: 323 Saint Asaph Street

Dear Ms. May,

At your request Soil Tech, Inc. performed a soil study at the above referenced residence. The purpose of the study was to determine the soil conditions affecting the construction of a proposed basement addition. Hand auger borings were made at each rear corner of the addition to a maximum depth of 6.0 feet. Grain size analysis and Atterberg limits were performed in accordance with ASTM D-422 and ASTM D-4318, respectively.

The soil consists of 4.0 feet of moist to very moist, loose, silty SAND (SM) and clayey SAND (SC) fill, underlain by slightly moist, medium dense, SILT (ML) natural ground. No expansive marine clay was present in the borings. The borings were dry upon completion.

An allowable soil bearing capacity of 2,000 PSF can be used for foundations bearing on the SILT (ML) natural ground. The fill material shall be removed prior to footing and slab construction. The excavated material is suitable for use as basement wall backfill, and has an equivalent fluid pressure of 45 PSF.

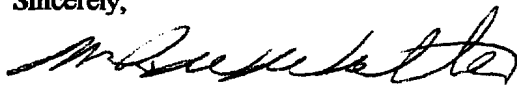
It is recommended that a foundation drainage system be installed in accordance with the attached Typical Foundation Drain detail. The discharge for the sump pump should be a minimum of 5.0 feet from the foundation walls.

A geotechnical engineer or his representative shall inspect the footing excavation, prior to pouring concrete, in order to confirm soil type and bearing capacity values.

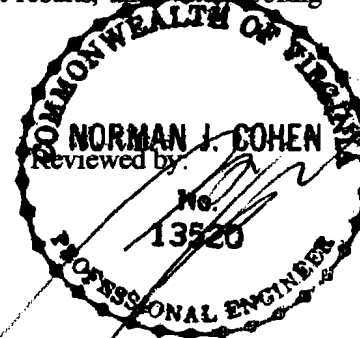
Please refer to the attached soil boring descriptions, classification test results, and waterproofing detail.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call.

Sincerely,



Mark W. Walters
Geotechnical Engineering Representative



Norman J. Cohen, P.E.
C-Corp

SOIL TECH INC.

Project: 323 North Asaph Street	HOLE No. B-1 Sheet 1 of 1
Location: Alexandria, Virginia	
Location:	

Azimuth: _____	Angle from Horizontal: 90	Surface Elevation: _____	Station: _____
Drilling Equipment: AMS Hand Auger	Drilling Method: AB ASTM D1452		
Core Boxes: _____	Samples: _____	Overburden: _____	Rock: _____
Logged By: MWW			Total Depth: 6.0
Date Logged: 4/11/07			

VERTICAL DEPTH	GRAPHIC LOG	SAMPLE NO.	RECOVERY %	BLOW COUNT	MATERIAL DESCRIPTION	ELEVATION (feet)	STANDARD PENETRATION TEST DATA (blows/ft)						N VALUE	
							5	10	20	40	60	80		
1	[Cross-hatched pattern]				<u>FILL</u> loose silty SAND (SM) with Brick and oyster shell inclusions, dark yellowish brown, black, yellowish brown, moist.									
2														
3						<u>FILL</u> loose silty SAND (SM), yellowish brown, pale brown, very moist.								
4														
5	[Vertical lines pattern]				<u>SILT</u> medium dense, pale brown, strong brown, reddish brown, slightly moist. ML									
6					Boring terminated at 6.0 feet. <u>WATER LEVEL DATA</u> Encountered Dry Completion Dry									

SPT 10192.GPJ 4/18/07

SAMPLER TYPE SS - Split Spoon ST - Shelby Tube NQ - Rock Core, 1-7/8" NX - Rock Core, 2-1/8" DCP Dynamic Cone - Penetrometer	DRILLING METHOD HSA - Hollow Stem Auger CFA - Continuous Flight Augers AB - Auger Boring TP - Test Pit RC - Rock Core	Hole No. <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 1.2em;">B-1</p>
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SOIL TECH INC.

Project: 323 North Asaph Street	HOLE No. B-2
Location: Alexandria, Virginia	Sheet 1 of 1
Location:	

Azimuth: _____	Angle from Horizontal: 90	Surface Elevation: _____	Station: _____
Drilling Equipment: AMS Hand Auger	Drilling Method: AB ASTM D1452		
Core Boxes: _____	Samples: _____	Overburden: _____	Rock: _____
			Total Depth: 6.0
Logged By: MWW		Date Logged: 4/11/07	

VERTICAL DEPTH	GRAPHIC LOG	SAMPLE NO.	RECOVERY %	BLOW COUNT	MATERIAL DESCRIPTION	ELEVATION (feet)	STANDARD PENETRATION TEST DATA (blows/ft)						N VALUE
							5	10	20	40	60	80	
1	[Cross-hatched pattern]				<u>FILL</u> loose silty SAND (SM) with Brick and oyster shell inclusions, dark yellowish brown, black, moist.								
2	[Cross-hatched pattern]												
3	[Cross-hatched pattern]				<u>FILL</u> loose clayey SAND (SC), strong brown, yellowish brown, light yellowish brown, moist.								
4	[Vertical lines pattern]				<u>SILT</u> medium dense, pale brown, reddish brown, brownish yellow, slightly moist. ML								
5	[Vertical lines pattern]												
6	[Vertical lines pattern]				Boring terminated at 6.0 feet.								
					<u>WATER LEVEL DATA</u> Encountered Dry Completion Dry								

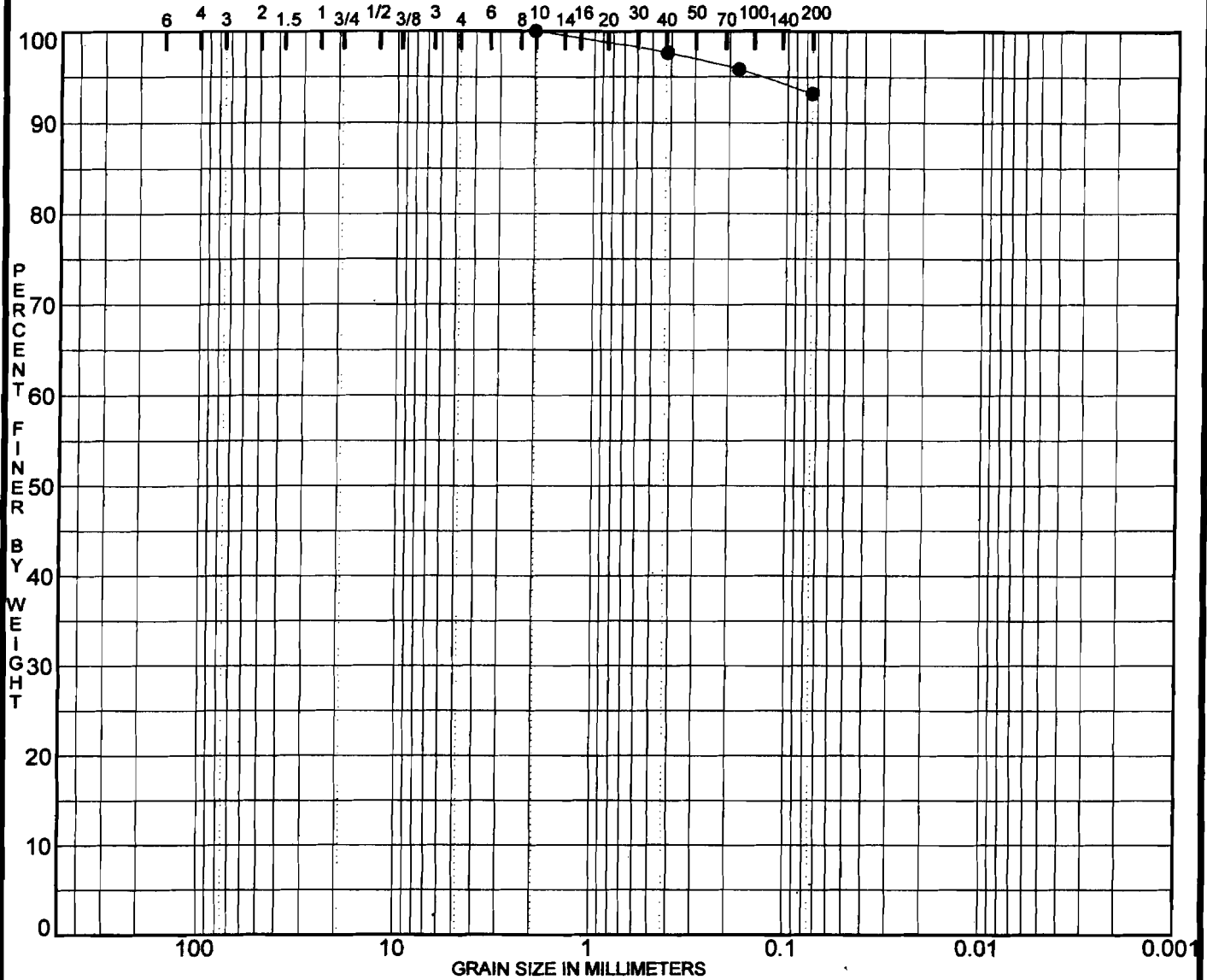
SAMPLER TYPE SS - Split Spoon ST - Shelby Tube NQ - Rock Core, 1-7/8"	NX - Rock Core, 2-1/8" DCP Dynamic Cone - Penetrometer	DRILLING METHOD HSA - Hollow Stem Auger CFA - Continuous Flight Augers AB - Auger Boring	TP - Test Pit RC - Rock Core	Hole No. <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 1.2em;">B-2</p>
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SPT I0192.GPJ 4/18/07

U.S. SIEVE OPENING IN INCHES

U.S. SIEVE NUMBERS

HYDROMETER



COBBLES	GRAVEL		SAND			SILT OR CLAY
	coarse	fine	coarse	medium	fine	

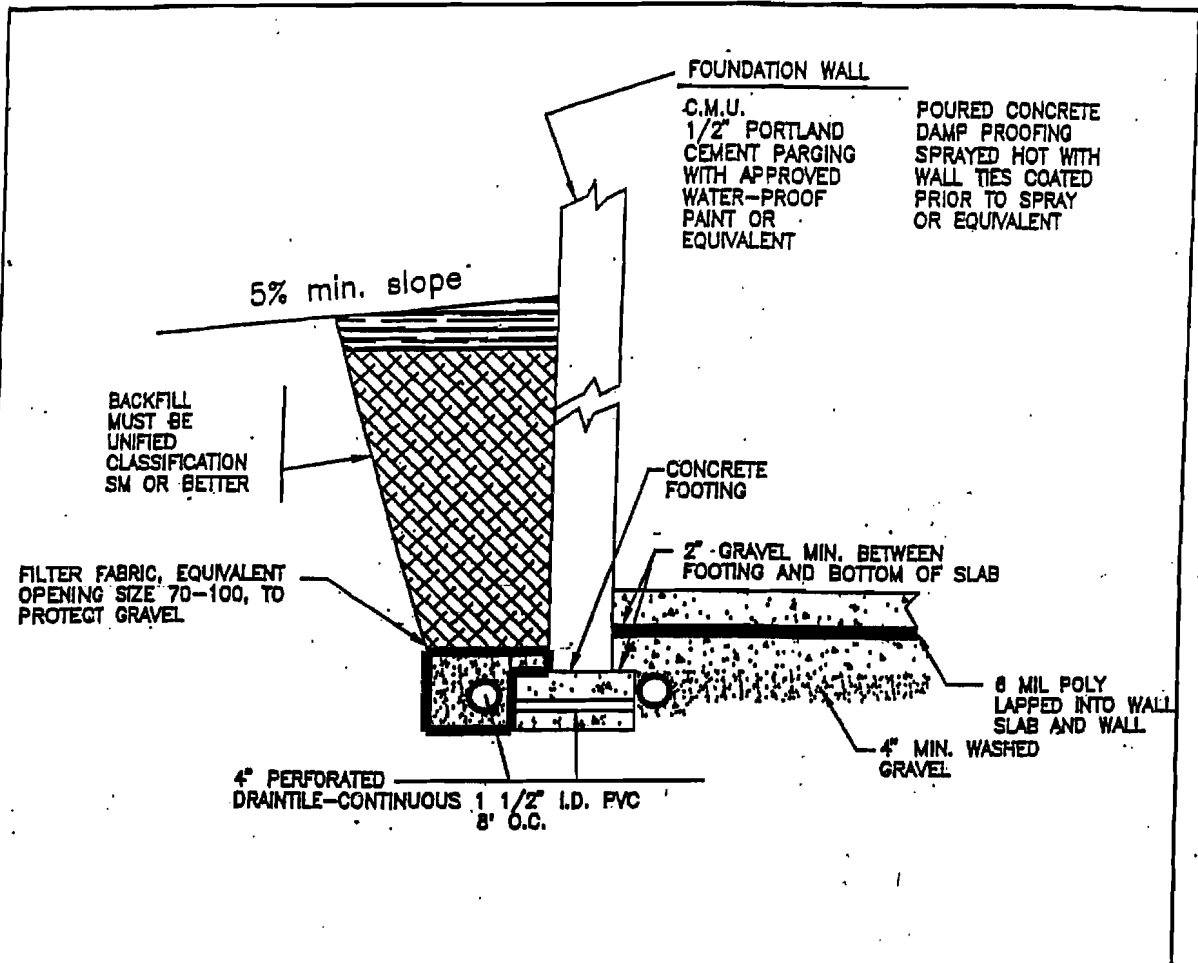
Boring No.	Depth (ft.)	Classification	MC%	LL	PL	PI	Cc	Cu
● B-1	4.5	SILT ML		34	24	11		

Boring No.	Depth (ft.)	D100	D60	D30	D10	%Gravel	%Sand	%Silt	%Clay
● B-1	4.5	2.00				0.0	6.9	93.1	

PROJECT 323 North Asaph Street - Alexandria, Virginia

JOB NO. 07-10192
DATE 4/18/07

GRADATION CURVES



NOTE: SPECIFIC INDIVIDUAL DESIGN REQUIRED IN SOIL WITH SEVERE GROUND WATER CONDITIONS AND CRETACEOUS AGE DELTAIC SILTS AND CLAYS (MARINE CLAY)

Objective: To reduce the risk of wet basements and relieve pressure from subsurface water on the foundation.

Method of Discharge: Discharge for foundation drains will be to daylight by gravity. Where the foundation drain is connected to a storm sewer structure the hydraulic gradient for the 10 yr. storm must be below the lowest floor elevation at the point of connection to preclude basement flooding from the storm sewer system. Discharge by mechanical means is acceptable only when gravity discharge is not possible.

House grading plans shall show the foundation drains and the location of the foundation drain discharge.

Roof drains must discharge beyond limits of excavation for foundation walls.

TYPICAL FOUNDATION DRAIN

August 17, 2007

Ms. Laurie Lowe and Mr. Carl Gudenius
323 N. St. Asaph Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

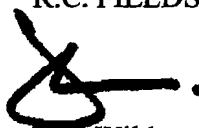
RE: Drainage Concerns related to
323 N. St. Asaph Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Ms. Lowe and Mr. Gudenius,

I am writing this letter in reference to you and your neighbors concern related to the stormwater runoff issues associated with the building addition on the above referenced property. Recently I met on site with Ms. Erin May, Robert Bentley Adams & Associates P.C. and Mr. Mitchell Bernstein, City of Alexandria, T&ES to discuss the possible solutions to minimize the impacts of stormwater on adjacent or downstream properties. After review the preliminary drawings and visiting the site, it is my opinion that the stormwater from the roof area and new sunken patio should be pumped to the gutter located along St. Asaph Street through the existing downspout system located on the north side of your home. Because there is no storm sewer located within 100 ft. of your property this idea would allow for the stormwater to be placed in the gutter where it will flow to a City storm inlet effectively conveying the water to an adequate outfall. This is an acceptable practice in the City of Alexandria for conveying stormwater runoff. In addition, this will reduce the amount of stormwater runoff in the rear of the site which will decrease the impact on adjacent properties. The neighbors will see a reduction in runoff equal to the amount of surface area of the addition and patio thus easing their minds related to stormwater and the building addition.

If you have any questions or require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact this office at your convenience.

Respectfully Submitted,
R.C. FIELDS, JR. & ASSOC., P.C.



Paul Wilder
Senior Project Manager

CC: Ms. Erin May, Bentley Adams & Assoc. P.C.

V.
Structural Effects

In order to assess and evaluate concerns expressed by some surrounding property owners that the aspects of the construction of the proposed addition, in particular the excavation, would damage adjacent structures, Urhan Mesen, a professional structural engineer with the firm of Mesen Associates, P.C., was retained to review the proposed plans, evaluate and inspect the existing structure. Mr. Mesen has worked on other historic structures in Old Town, including several homes in the historic Captain's Row in the 200 block of Prince Street.

The Mesen report states that the proposed addition and its excavation will not have a negative impact on the structural integrity on adjacent buildings. The excavation is limited to an isolated area, not connected to neighboring structures. Likewise, demolition is limited only to the removal of existing windows and doors on the rear of the building and will have no impact on adjacent structures.

Mr. Mesen's contact information was sent to neighbors who requested it in order for them to discuss further questions or concerns.

Attachment:
Mesen Structural Review

MESEN ASSOCIATES, P.C.

CONSULTING STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS

August 15, 2007

Robert Bentley Adams & Associates, PC
405 South Washington Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Attn: Erin May

Re: **Structural Review**
Lowe-Gudenius Residence
323 North Saint Asaph Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

I understand proposed additions and renovations to the above referenced residence is under consideration by Alexandria Board of Architectural Review

In accordance with your request we reviewed drawings prepared by your office dated May 7, 2007. Our review focused on the structural impact of the proposed improvements on the adjacent properties.

There is nothing in the referenced architectural package that should have a negative impact on the structural integrity of the neighboring dwellings. Proposed renovations, and additions to existing residences are not unusual, and quite common in Old Town Alexandria.

We will be happy to address any specific structural concerns related to the well being of the neighboring properties. While I understand the neighbors might prefer to retain their own consultant, I know that owners of the Lowe-Gudenius property have volunteered our name to their neighbors for any specific questions they might have.

Please feel free to let me know if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

Urhan A. Mesen, P.E.
Principal



April 20, 2007

Board of Architectural Review:

This is a letter of support for the possible addition on the rear of 323 North Saint Asaph Street. I have studied the architect's drawings and the design seems like a reasonable expansion providing the space they require without any change in the historic "curb" look of the property. My house, 329 N. St. Asaph St., already has an extension added (like several other houses on the block) and I can appreciate what their addition will provide them in terms of additional living space.

The owners have been very forthright regarding the plans and have invited me to express any concerns now and in the future about the work with a promise of addressing those concerns as they arise.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Camille Fulp". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and address.

Camille Fulp
329 N. St. Asaph Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

MRS. JOHN LAMONTAGNE
407 SOUTH FAIRFAX STREET
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22314

April 22, 2007

To whom it may concern:

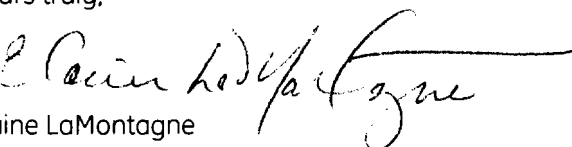
This letter is in strong support of the proposed addition on the rear of 323 North Saint Asaph Street. I am the owner of the adjoining property, 321 North Saint Asaph Street and have been an old town Alexandria resident for over 30 years.

I have followed the development of the neighbor's plans with great attention since the addition will impact my property most directly. Throughout the process, the owners have kept me informed of their plans and have allowed me to provide input into the details. They invited me, as well as other neighbors, to a presentation by their architect of the proposed work. The architect answered all of our questions and assessed our concerns. Throughout the process, the owners, Laurie Lowe and Carl Gudenius, have invited comments and solicited my concerns which were all quickly addressed.

One of my paramount interests was that the addition to this property, which is contiguous to mine, maintains the character of our historic properties. I have carefully inspected the proposed plan and consider it to be a reasonable and attractive design which they should be allowed to pursue.

Please contact me directly if there are additional questions.

Yours truly,


Elaine LaMontagne

May 3, 2007

RE: Opposition to addition to 323 N. St. Asaph

Dear Board of Architectural Review,

We live at 317 N. St. Asaph which is located in the middle of the 300 block of North St. Asaph. Our house is located next to the public walkway. From our back yard, we have an unobstructed view of the open space and beauty of Nature as well as the historical integrity of all of our neighbor's homes at 319, 321, 323, 325, 327, 329 and a partial view of 331.

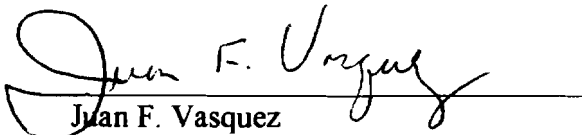
In 1995, we moved from San Antonio, Texas to this area and decided to purchase in this block of Old Town because of the unique, historical footprint and quality of these historic homes as well as the open, green space.

We oppose the addition to 323 N. St. Asaph St. for the following reasons:

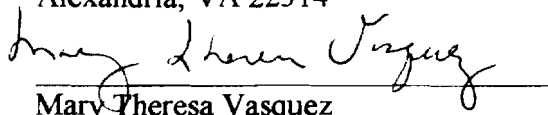
1. The appearance, character and "footprint" of these historical homes on this block would forever be altered.
2. Since most houses in this block have flooding in their basements, including ours, the change could very well increase the flooding and damage our homes.
3. The green space in our neighborhood would forever be altered.
4. There would be detriment and damage to the adjacent trees.

Finally, as Guardians of these historical homes, we want to protect and preserve its "footprint" for future generations and also prevent damage from flooding.

Sincerely,



Juan F. Vasquez
317 N. St. Asaph St.
Alexandria, VA 22314



Mary Theresa Vasquez
317 N. St. Asaph St.
Alexandria, VA 22314

May 4, 2007

To Whom It May Concern:

We are writing as neighbors in the North St. Asaph/Princess Street area of Old Town. We are particularly concerned with proposed additions at 323 North St. Asaph. We feel that these additions will change the historic nature of the area and will likely have a negative environmental impact, i.e. water removal, light for plants and trees, etc. Currently there is a recognizable and historic similarity to all of the houses along that section of North St. Asaph. Changes would do damage to that historic context.

We know the owners of the property and enjoy their friendship, but are against changes which extend the existing house footprint and change the neighborhood's historic status.

Ronald K. Rigby
Hazel Rigby
Ronald K. and Hazel Rigby

May 6, 2007

Re: 323 North Saint Asaph Proposed Addition

Dear Board of Architectural Review:

My name is Cay Critz and I live at 307 North Saint Asaph. I moved from Savannah, Georgia to Alexandria, Virginia in 1990. It was such a delight to find Old Town. The charming old buildings, the preservation, the history, all these elements are so reminiscent of Savannah. I found the five homes from 327 North Saint Asaph to 319 North Saint Asaph to be especially charming. The charm is not only from the front, but also from the back. There is a very nice walkway between 317 and 315 North Saint Asaph. This walkway turns into a fairly expansive alley and connects North Saint Asaph to North Royal. From this very public walkway/alley there is a completely unobstructed view of the back of 327, 325, 323, 321 and 319 North Saint Asaph. Many is the time I have seen tourists photograph the back as well as the front of these charming homes.

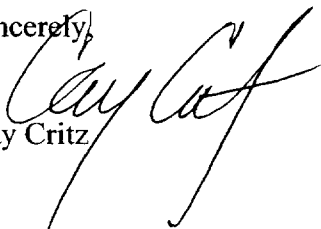
I have seen the plans for the proposed addition to 323 North Saint Asaph and strongly oppose this addition for the following reasons:

1. The addition is completely out of character for the our block.
2. The "footprint" of the home would be forever destroyed.
3. The addition would deprive light from 327 and 325 North Saint Asaph.
4. The addition could cause structural damage to the surrounding homes as well as their foundations.

I live in Old Town not to change, but to preserve. Our time here is brief, we should be the "stewards" of this charming town, not the "destroyers". Please help us in our effort to preserve.

Sincerely,

Cay Critz

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cay Critz', written over the printed name.

*James E. Ballowe, Jr.
311 North Saint Asaph Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314*

May 7, 2007

Board of Architectural Review
Department of Planning and Zoning
City of Alexandria
301 King Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Re: 323 North Saint Asaph Street Proposed Addition

Dear Board of Architectural Review:

I live at 311 North Saint Asaph Street, a flounder that, according to research, dates back to circa 1785-1787. I moved here from South Fairfax Street several years ago, in part because of the historic character of this block as well as because of disappointing and seemingly unmanaged changes occurring in my former block of Old Town.

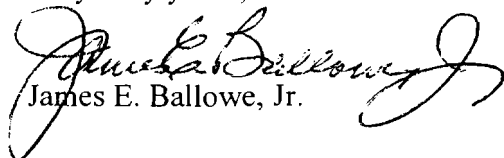
I write now because my neighbors, as well as myself, are concerned about a major addition planned at 323 North Saint Asaph. To be perfectly fair, I will not be able to see the addition from my back courtyard, and I have a sympathetic addition on the rear of my house built, to the best of my knowledge, approximately 25 years ago.

While I generally champion the rights of homeowners to expand and improve their dwellings, my concerns about the proposed addition at 323 (the plans for which I have reviewed) are three-fold:

1. The addition would be out of character for this historic and beautiful block of our neighborhood;
2. The addition would obstruct light and possibly access for my neighbors; and
3. The addition could imperil the integrity of the foundations of neighboring homes.

We chose to live in historic homes—with their attendant costs and limitations—because we want to be careful stewards of the legacy that is Old Town Alexandria. Please help us uphold that stewardship.

Very truly yours,


James E. Ballowe, Jr.

May 8, 20007

Board of Architectural Review
Department of Planning and Zoning
City of Alexandria
301 King Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Re: 323 North Saint Asaph Proposed Addition

Dear Board Members:

For the past 22 years my husband and I have lived at 327 North Saint Asaph. I'm amazed how quickly the time has passed. I can still remember the day we moved in...how exciting, we were Old Town residents and guardians of such a large antique. Were we up to such a responsibility...time would tell. After painting, wallpapering, refinishing floors and replacing appliances, we suddenly realized that our house had become our home. Now it was time to make the yard...our yard. This was my first yard and has been a work in progress....putting in plants....taking out plants....putting in grass...taking out grass. After 22 years I think I finally have it right.

I am writing to you to protest the proposed addition to 323 North Saint Asaph. We live in a unique row of five plagued colonial homes. All of these homes maintain the original footprint. This particular block was restored by Polly Hulfish in the 60's. Polly took great care to maintain our footprint. It's not surprising the Tour Buses refer to this block as "Hulfish Row". Behind our homes was the Alexandria Dairy. Because of the Dairy and it's historic significance, there is now an alley/parking for 323, 321, and 319 North Saint Asaph. We believe this was created to provide access to anyone wishing to view the former site of the Alexandria Dairy. Whatever the reason, this alley provides access and parking for 323, 321, and 319 North Saint Asaph. The access/parking connects to a larger alley/walkway which begins on North Saint Asaph, crosses North Pitt and continues to North Royal. In the 80's, the city along with residents, closed off the the larger alley at North Saint Asaph to make it more "walking friendly". As a result there is a charming walkway between 317 and 315 North Saint Asaph. The backs of our five town homes are totally visible from this walkway/alley. On the former site of the Dairy there now stands a town home development called Carriage Square West. This development consists of 14 three story, plus attic, town homes. At the end of our backyard is the wall of one of these town homes. To put a three story addition on 323 would further close in our homes and take away open space.

We consider ourselves fortunate to have a charming colonial home, but we are indeed fortunate to have a yard which provides us with open space. It is so rare, if not impossible, to find a row of 5 plagued colonial homes with the original footprint and a nice yard. This open space is the most charming surprise one can imagine. It is indeed our sanctuary. We currently enjoy the sunlight all morning and part of the afternoon. A three story addition at 323 would block our sunlight and deprive our back rooms of natural light. Blocking this light would also result in the eventual demise of our Dogwood, Holly trees and several shrubs. These five homes have shared this space for over one hundred and fifty years. During our 22 years we have continued to share this space separated only by neighbor friendly board on board fences. The configuration allows all of our homes equal open space. The proposed three story addition would ruin the open space for all the surrounding yards.

In addition to destroying our historic footprint and our open space, we also have structural and flooding issues. This is largely due to the age of our home, the proximity of our neighbors and our unique "English basements". We feel that any construction would not only damage our walls and ceilings, but would most likely damage our foundations. Flooding has been an ongoing problem for our homes. Over the years we have learned to deal with this problem. We have "French drains" outside our back doors. These drains can't deal with large amounts of rain for an extended period of time. We have all experienced flooding and have learned ways to deal with the problem. In our case....we come home during a bad storm and get the towels. This is part of living in Old Town....we call it charming and make it work. To change the delicate balance of water flow could make our problems even worse, and quite frankly, we don't have that many towels.

I ask you to help us protect our homes and preserve them for future generations.

It's interesting....the most photographed homes are not the new homes or homes with additions, but the smallest homes. Our particular block is photographed all the time, and why not...we are a block of colorful modest plagued colonials. We not only maintain our historic look in the front, but also the back. Obviously, the front of our homes are visible from North Saint Asaph, but the backs of our homes are visible from Princess Street as well as the highly used walkway/alley between 317 and 315 North Saint Asaph.

Any addition would forever destroy our historic significance. We choose to live in Old Town not for the size of our home, but for it's character. If we change the character we no longer live in the area we chose....how ironic.

Sincerely,



Billie Schaeffer
327 N. St. Asaph



John Williams
327 N. St. Asaph

May 11, 2007

RE: Opposition to addition to 323 N. Saint Asaph Street

Dear Members of the Board of Architectural Review,

We own and live at 325 N. Saint Asaph St. – right next to 323 N. Saint Asaph St. – and would be the most directly impacted by the proposed addition. We strongly oppose the proposed addition which would virtually double the size of 323 N. Saint Asaph St. with a 45 percent increase.

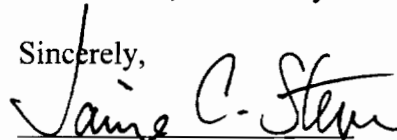
We moved into our house nearly three years ago and want to stay. One of the most important factors in choosing to make the house our home was the open, unobstructed access to light and air in the back yard. We bought our home largely because of this and we actually spend a great deal of time in the yard.

We oppose the addition to 323 N. Saint Asaph St. for the following reasons:

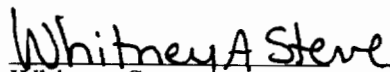
1. Block Sunlight & Destroy Open Space: Building two inches from our property line, the effect of the proposal is to place a two-story wall along our back yard cutting off access to direct sunlight. Our house is located on the North side of 323 N. Saint Asaph St. The addition also would severely break up the unique open space currently existing along the backs of five contiguous plagued homes, all of which maintain their original footprint.
2. Kill Trees: Digging the foundation for expansion would kill a large sycamore tree on our property by destroying its root system. The tree is located right next to the planned addition. Construction also would destroy the roots and cut off light to two other smaller trees on our property.
3. Worsen Flooding: The proposal would increase rainwater runoff to our property which already experiences flooding to our bottom floor during sustained rain storms. This bottom floor contains our kitchen and dining areas.
4. Construction Noise & Disturbance: Removing the fence during construction will bring significant noise, activity and disturbance within inches of an area on which we rely for peace, quite and tranquility. The architect has stated that due to building within only two inches of our property, construction crews will want -- and need -- access to our property.

Finally, as guardians of these historic homes, we want to protect and preserve the existing look and feel of our unique neighborhood for future generations. We ask that you either disapprove the addition, or severely decrease its size and impact on our neighborhood.

Sincerely,



Jaime C. Steve
325 N. Saint Asaph Street
Alexandria, VA 223124
703-683-4385



Whitney A. Steve
325 N. Saint Asaph Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
703-683-4385

SENATE OF VIRGINIA



PATRICIA S. TICER
30th SENATORIAL DISTRICT
PART OF ARLINGTON AND FAIRFAX COUNTIES,
AND PART OF THE CITY OF ALEXANDRIA
CITY HALL, 301 KING STREET
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22314
(703) 549-5770 ALEXANDRIA
(703) 739-6761 FAX
(804) 698-7530 RICHMOND
DISTRICT30@SOV.STATE.VA.US

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS
AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND
NATURAL RESOURCES
LOCAL GOVERNMENT
REHABILITATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES

May 29, 2007

Billie Schaffer
327 N. St. Asaph Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

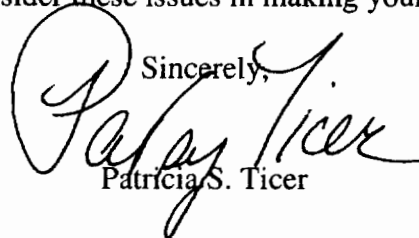
Dear Board Members;

Previously, it has been my practice to stay away from registering my opinion on requests for change made to the BAR. However, I believe we are all (residents of the Old and Historic District) charged with stewardship of our historic character as we inherited it. It is difficult when the perceived need to expand property to make it more livable for the 21st century conflicts with the charge to protect that which is of historic value.

I was asked by neighbors to view the five houses in the 300 block of North St. Asaph Street, which share the same footprint, and are of great historic value. The question is the proposal for a large addition (45% increase) to 323 North St. Asaph St.

My concerns about this request are the loss of light and air and open space to the adjacent properties, the threat of flooding which is increased with additional impervious surface (previous problems with flooding have already required installation of French drains for the English basement homes) and the potential loss of mature trees and bushes due to the construction.

I hope you will consider these issues in making your decision. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Patricia S. Ticer

May 31, 2007

Board of Architectural Review
Old Town, Alexandria, VA

RE: **Opposition to addition to 323 N. St. Asaph**

Dear Board,

As a resident of Hulfish Row, one of the very few remaining blocks of Historical preservation in Old Town, we are **OPPOSED** to the proposed changes to 323 N. St. Asaph St.

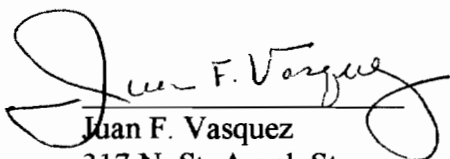
As per our letter dated May 3, 2007, we stated our opposition for the following reasons:

“Footprint” changes, Historical preservation, Flooding problems, Green space alterations, Detriment and damage to the adjacent trees.

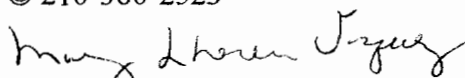
The purpose of this letter is to further emphasize our **OPPOSITION** and to inform the Board, due to our out of town job responsibilities, we will not be able to attend the meeting scheduled on June 6, 2007. We had every intention of attending this important meeting to physically voice our support of our **OPPOSITION** to the proposed addition.

As Guardians of these historical homes, we want to protect and preserve it's historical “footprint” for future generations. **We MUST EMPHASIZE THERE HAVE NOT BEEN ANY CHANGES DONE TO THIS HISTORICAL ROW OF HOUSES SINCE THE LATE 1890'S.**

Sincerely,



Juan F. Vasquez
317 N. St. Asaph St.
Alexandria, VA 22314
(w) 202-521-0788
(h) 703-519-9437
© 210-380-2523



Mary Theresa Vasquez (Terry)
317 N. St. Asaph At.
Alexandria, VA 22314
© 210-380-2523

319 N. Saint Asaph Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

June 11, 2007

Board of Architectural Review
City of Alexandria City Hall,
Alexandria, Virginia

RE: Opposition to Proposed Addition at 323 N. Saint Asaph Street, Old Town Alexandria

Dear Members of the Board and Staff:

We live at 319 N. Saint Asaph Street, a two story Historic home which was built in 1800 in the Historic District of Old Town Alexandria. Our structure is attached to 321 N. Saint Asaph Street (which is a rental property), which in turn is attached to the proposed construction site at 323 N. Saint Asaph Street. These three homes are dedicated historic homes which have been physically attached at their foundations for over two centuries.

We moved to the Washington, D.C. area from Philadelphia, PA in 2006 for tremendous employment opportunities. We had lived in Philadelphia for nearly two decades and always lived in historic homes. When we relocated, this area's expensive real estate prices prompted us to methodically choose a permanent location for our family by extensively researching the areas neighborhoods and schools. We are expecting to adopt a child internationally this year and in light of all the difficulties associated with such an adoption, we wanted to have a home in a neighborhood that was peaceful, stable, safe, charming (with a historic footprint), and an open backyard for our child to enjoy. Old Town Alexandria was the hands down winner.

We settled on Old Town and fell in love with our home at 319 N. Saint Asaph Street in the Historic District because of the neighborhood, and because all three of the attached homes (ours being one) had stood in this location for over 200 years. Given the history of the houses, expected that the beauty, charm, and architectural integrity of our home and its surrounding environs would remain untouched for the foreseeable future. But, no sooner than we had moved in the first boxes of our items on Presidents Day in February 2007, we discovered that our immediate neighbors wanted to put up a three story addition. We looked at each other with amazement and shock. No one ever told us that a proposed addition of this magnitude was imminent. Had we known, we would not have selected this house.

We object to the proposed addition as it may cause irreparable damage to the structural integrity of our home and destroy the historical footprint of our serene neighborhood. The attached three structures – our home at 319, next door at 321, and the proposed construction site at 323 – have been standing attached in this location for over 200 years. The impact of the excavation for the sub-ground level first floor of the addition may lead to structural problems for the attached homes that might not show up for years. The three homes currently stand upright and have no sagging or leaning that is seen in other homes of similar age. We are very concerned that the major disturbance to the foundation and ground of the structures attached to our property will cause our home to move, shift and become unstable in the future.

Such damage might not be apparent in the first year post construction, but no one can give us any guarantee that it would not occur in future years. While structural engineers can provide their "best estimates" as to the impact that such events may have on attached structures, there is no way to know for sure its "actual" impact until the structure is erected. There can be no guarantee that our property would not become permanently damaged. We would be forced to seek restitution from the property owners who constructed the addition, adding further conflict to the neighborhood. Further, it is our understanding that no comprehensive impact study has been done. It is incomprehensible to us that the Board would allow a project of this magnitude on a historic home to go forward without such a study that would demonstrate the impact that the proposed addition – which includes sub-ground level excavation and the raising of ceiling heights – will have on the attached and surrounding historic homes.

Most importantly, these three homes (and those surrounding it) have stood unchanged in this location for over 200 years. I have been told that our homes have a unique front and rear to them, and that they may be considered some of the last few homes in Old Town to maintain this type of structural integrity. Additionally, the light and beauty of our rear yards is idyllic. We truly enjoy relaxing in our backyard, and enjoying our undisturbed views of nature, the light, and the openness of our property. These factors will be eradicated if a three-story addition is added just two doors away.

We also object to the proposed addition because it may cause unnecessary run-off of rain water and flooding, and pose health and environmental dangers that we did not anticipate when we purchased our home, and create chaos for those that will have to live here during the construction period. At the outset, we have been told that with heavy rain in the past, our homes in this row of homes have all flooded. Indeed, the previous owners even put a sump pump in the basement to handle this problem. Aside from the clean-up of such problems (mold, etc.), we simply do not want any additional flooding. There can be no way to predict that this will not happen if the ground is disturbed (in a major way) and a new structure erected just two doors down from our property. We do not want to take that chance – and again – we will be left on our own to rectify the problem if, and when it occurs in the future.

Further, the anticipated noise, moving of construction equipment, and dangers associated with operating a construction site (i.e., to include the dust, dirt, noise level, potential dangerous substances yet undiscovered) two doors from our home will pose an unfair hardship to our family. We note that the proponents of the addition at 323 N. Saint Asaph Street expect that there will be so much noise and chaos for the neighborhood during the construction period that they will buy a condo to live in during the construction period. However, we and all of our neighbors will be left to deal with the environmental and noise pollution associated with this undertaking. This aspect of the proposed construction is especially troubling for us, as we plan to bring home our adopted infant (five-month old is the estimated age) from an orphanage and take family leave at the same time that construction is due to begin at 323 N. Saint Asaph.

Experts of adoptive children agree that new adoptive parents have a very short period of time in which to bond with their adoptive child. The more peaceful, serene, and stress-free that this period of bonding is, the healthier the adjustment of the child will be to our culture. To have a full-fledged construction site two doors down at this critical time in our child's life will be immensely unfair to our child's future physical and emotional well-being. *We ask that this hardship*

be given special consideration by the BAR in your decision-making concerning this proposed addition. Again, had we known that this type of project was imminent, we would have re-thought the purchase of our home and bought elsewhere in Old Town. We only want peace, quiet, and a good life for our new family.

Finally, we object to the proposed addition because it will block sunlight and restrict the quiet enjoyment of our open spaces, our backyard, and those that our neighbors enjoy. Likewise, we are concerned that the property value of our home will significantly decrease if the addition is built. When we purchased our home, we were amazed at the space we had concerning our property. Indeed, our property extends the longest of all the three attached homes referenced, into an area behind our home (our property) where we are able to park our vehicle. We are worried that if the addition at 323 N. Saint Asaph is approved and built, this space and enjoyment of it will be ruined. Aside from the blocking of sunlight that will occur if the proposed addition is approved and built, we will have a further problem. We have been told by the proponents of the addition that if their plans are approved, the owner of 321 N. Saint Asaph Street, who lives elsewhere and uses the property as a rental property, will likely seek to do the same to her property. We will then essentially be sandwiched in between two three-story additions (one at 323 N. Saint Asaph, and then one at 321 N. Saint Asaph), and the one-story addition (grand-fathered) at 317 N. Saint Asaph Street, which will destroy esthetic value that the open space, light, and privacy of our backyard add to our property.

In summary, we oppose the proposed addition for all of reasons stated above. We do not wish any ill-will to the proponents of the addition, but we have been thrust into an untenable situation. The Historic section of Old Town is special. There can be no replacement for a home which is original, unique, and charming, built on the sweat of our forebears and designed from the depths of their hearts. To allow this proposed addition to be built – now or in the future – would be unjust, and it would irreparably damage the historic footprint of our special neighborhood. Life changes fast, often, and with unpredictability: the character and historic quality of our homes should not be subjected to these unpredictable vicissitudes.

We thank you for your consideration.

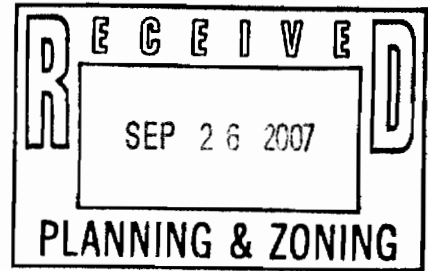
Respectfully submitted,


JEROME J. TERESINSKI


LAURA K. TERESINSKI

June 16, 2007

Senator Patricia Ticer
City Hall
301 King Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314



Senator Ticer,

I wanted to take a moment to express my pleasure at your "immediate attention to our concerns" by meeting with my wife, Laurie Lowe, this past Saturday. She felt you were a careful listener and that you understood that the issues of concern for our neighbors were shared by us. You responded positively to the actions we have taken to help mitigate those concerns. You acknowledged that some of the issues had been overstated when initially presented to you and that no mention was made of the work we were doing to address our neighbors concerns. I also understand that while you are not comfortable retracting your letter of dissent you did promise Laurie that you would contact the board members directly to speak to our efforts to work with our neighbors to address their concerns and our protracted process to develop a fair and appropriate plan.

We remain committed to developing an addition that works for the neighborhood but one that also fulfills our needs to the extent that is appropriate and allowable under the city guidelines and zoning rules. I hope you can help us mediate a reasonable solution to achieve this goal.

Thank you again. We will keep you updated on our progress. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any thoughts or questions. Our door is always open for any discussion.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Carl Gudenius", written over a horizontal line.

Carl Gudenius
Property Owner
323 North Saint Asaph Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
HOUSE OF DELEGATES
RICHMOND

DAVID ENGLIN
CITY HALL
301 KING STREET, BOX 65
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22314

FORTY-FIFTH DISTRICT

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS:
PRIVILEGES AND ELECTIONS
HEALTH, WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS

August 1, 2007

Alexandria Boards of Architectural Review
City Hall
301 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Board Members,

I am writing to follow up on my previous letter to the BAR commenting on the proposal for an addition to 323 N. St. Asaph Street. While I understand that the letter was filed as a "dissent" in the BAR application paperwork, I want to clarify that my intention was for it to be cautionary in nature.

In that letter, I expressed my hope that you would consider a number of issues when evaluating this proposal, and I maintain that we need to ensure that those concerns are addressed. However, having had the opportunity to review the proposed project in greater detail, I am impressed with the thoughtful diligence with which the property owners have worked and continue to work to address each of these legitimate concerns.

As I previously stated, our challenge as a community is to balance the charge to protect our historic character and resources with the desire of property owners to live in more expansive homes. In my judgment, the property owners in this case are making great efforts to accommodate these issues, even at their own expense.

While I understand that this process can be somewhat confrontational by its very nature, the property owners have a clear desire to move forward in cooperation with the City and their neighbors. I hope you will evaluate this proposal in that spirit of cooperation so that all parties can come to an agreeable resolution.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Englin", written over a large, stylized circular flourish.

David L. Englin
Member, 45th District
Virginia House of Delegates



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
HOUSE OF DELEGATES
RICHMOND

DAVID ENGLIN
CITY HALL
301 KING STREET, BOX 65
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22314

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS:
PRIVILEGES AND ELECTIONS
HEALTH, WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS

FORTY-FIFTH DISTRICT

August 1, 2007

Ms. Billie Schaeffer
327 N. St. Asaph St.
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Ms. Schaeffer, *Billie*

Please find enclosed a letter I have sent to the Board of Architectural Review as a follow up to the letter I sent at your request. I deeply appreciate your efforts to preserve and protect Old Town's historic character and natural resources. Upon further review of the details of the case, I believe it may be possible for you and your neighbors to come to an agreeable solution that addresses your concerns and preserves the character of our beautiful community.

Disputes among neighbors are always the most difficult, but I hope that the spirit of community that defines Alexandria will move all parties to work together toward a mutually amicable solution.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David L. Englin".

David L. Englin
Member, 45th District
Virginia House of Delegates



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
HOUSE OF DELEGATES
RICHMOND

DAVID ENGLIN
CITY HALL
301 KING STREET, BOX 65
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22314

FORTY-FIFTH DISTRICT

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS:
PRIVILEGES AND ELECTIONS
HEALTH, WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS

June 11, 2007

Alexandria Boards of Architectural Review
City Hall
301 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Board Members:

I generally refrain from commenting on issues before the BAR, but constituents in and around the 300 block of N. St. Asaph Street asked me to comment on the proposal for a large addition to 323 N. St. Asaph Street.

Our challenge as a community is to balance the charge to protect our historic character and resources with the desire of property owners to live in more expansive homes. The five homes along the 300 block currently share the same footprint, and are of great historic value to our community. I am concerned that the proposed addition (a 43% increase to the size of the building) will result in loss of light and air and open space to the adjacent properties, increase the threat of flooding on these already flood-prone properties, and damage or destroy mature trees and bushes due to the construction.

I hope you will consider these issues in making your decision. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David L. Englin".

David L. Englin
Member, 45th District
Virginia House of Delegates

August 10, 2007
Board of Architectural Review
Old Town, Alexandria, VA

RE: **Opposition to addition to 323 N. St. Asaph**

Dear Board,

Please **preserve** the Historic character of our North East bock (300 N. St. Asaph) of Old Town! We feel very fortunate to live on this block of Historic North End of Old Town but at the same time have the obligation to be its' "guardians". Historically, these "row" of homes sometimes called "Hulfish Row" have been in existence since the 1850's **without** any changes, that is about 157 years! Now, that is **AMAZING!**

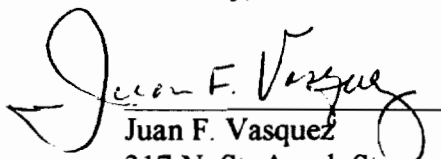
It's a known fact that there are a very limited amount of historical homes here in the North East side compared to the South East side. Also, there are homes that have made additions to the backs of their homes which have totally changed their historical character. One just has to walk around and see these changes. We, on the 300 block of N. St. Asaph are extremely proud that we have continued to **preserve** this historical block of homes and that **NO** changes have been made since the 1850's.

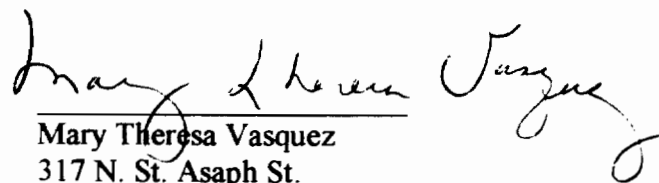
We live about two blocks from the historical areas of Christ Church, Robert E. Lee "boyhood" home, Lee Fendall home and one/half block from the historical pebble street on Princess Street which is between the 300/400 block of N. St. Asaph and George Washington Parkway.

We are also fortunate to have a very "special walkway" which was an alley in the olden days. On a daily basis, this beautiful, brick walkway "invites and showcases" the historical preservation and beauty of the open space of the 1850's of our historical row of homes to the large amount of tourists and neighbor traffic between N. St. Asaph and N. Pitt and beyond. This walkway is situated in the middle of the 300 block of N. St. Asaph between our house at 317 and 313/315 N. St. Asaph. Thanks to the City of Alexandria for investing time, money and landscaping in providing this beautiful brick walkway. This tells us that the City of Alexandria cares for our neighborhood.

As proud and responsible citizens of Old Town, it is our **duty** to preserve the historical significance, beauty, open space and unique character of the 300 block of N. St. Asaph for future generations to come. Therefore, we **object** to the addition to 323 N. St. Asaph which will destroy the historical character to our "row" of homes.

Sincerely,


Juan F. Vasquez
317 N. St. Asaph St.
Alexandria, VA 22314
(w) 202-521-0778
© 703-447-9020


Mary Theresa Vasquez
317 N. St. Asaph St.
Alexandria, VA 22314
(h) 703-519-9437
© 210-380-2523

September 6, 2007

Members of the Board of Architectural Review:

I am a resident of Old Town Alexandria and I am writing to voice strong support for the addition proposed by my friends at 323 North Saint Asaph. Though we are long time friends, we far from agree on all matters so I have followed their slow progress with an open mind to both sides of the argument. I have read the extraordinary amount of supporting materials Laurie Lowe and Carl Gudenius have assembled in an effort to discern the actual facts and address the concerns voiced by several of their neighbors. I have also reviewed the guidelines put forth by the city regarding appropriate additions.

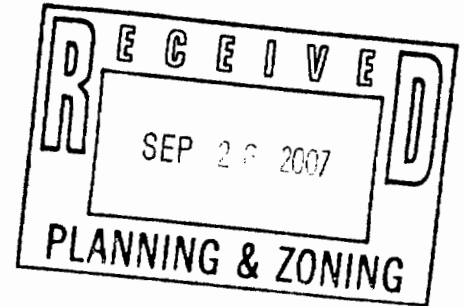
After reviewing all of this material, I felt that I had to write this letter. This addition does not directly impact me; however, the implications of denying this request are extremely troublesome to me. Like everyone who lives in Old Town, I enjoy its ambience; however, I believe that ambience is not the result of locking architecture in time, (which brings to mind the museum like quality of Williamsburg) but rather the result of thoughtful growth and revision that makes the city vibrant and pleasant to live. The proposed addition at 323 North Saint Asaph appears to me to meet that goal without any change to the blockface "look" and within the guidelines and requirements that the B.A.R. have set forward. The fact that several other properties on this block have similar additions seems to support this thought. I hope that as you consider this proposal you apply the same standard you used for granting 313 North Saint Asaph their recent addition.

Sincerely,



Theresa Rowe
15 Wilkes Street
Alexandria, Virginia

Dale E. and Janine H. Bosley
370 North Saint Asaph Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
(703) 548-2740 (H)/ (202) 312-5517(O)



August 23, 2007

Board of Architectural Review (BAR)
City Hall
301 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Re: Application for Addition to 323 North Saint Asaph Street, Alexandria

Dear Members of the BAR:

We are writing to support the application for an addition to the residence of Carl Gudenius and Laurie Lowe, property owners of 323 North Saint Asaph Street. The property is directly across the street from our home.

To those who might contend that because we live opposite Mr. Gudenius and Ms. Lowe our support of their proposal should be subordinated to the opinions of those who live on the same side of the street, we would respond that, we, as many "tangential" neighbors have been, were canvassed for our support by those neighbors in opposition to the proposed addition. In fact, it is as a result of this wide-ranging opposition campaign that we examined the proposed plans in order that our decision would be the "correct" and supportable decision for us. Thus, by round-about way, and without immediate intention, we became personally familiar with the architectural plans for the proposed addition to 323 North Saint Asaph Street and have reviewed them in detail. As we know that other "tangential neighbors'" opinions are being weighed and heard by the BAR, we feel obliged to add our voice in support of Mr. Gudenius and Ms. Lowe's addition.

During our review of the proposed addition plans, we became aware of the exhaustive supporting research Mr. Gudenius and Ms. Lowe have dedicated to insuring that their proposed addition is not only historically in keeping with the architectural tone of the neighborhood but is also well within the ecological and structural impact "footprints" previously established by the Board of Architectural Review ("BAR"). To that end, in their research and redrafting of plans, Mr. Gudenius and Ms. Lowe have addressed historic context, shade, green space and drainage, making necessary accommodations for the interests of any of their immediate neighbors and, as stipulated by the BAR, the City. After our review, we can state unreservedly that we fully support the Gudenius-Lowe addition plans for 323 North Saint Asaph Street as conservative and consistent with past and ongoing expansion projects in the immediate neighborhood.

No letter or author would be entirely forthcoming about the addition at 323 North Saint Asaph Street without acknowledging and discussing the current controversy arising out of the Gudenius-Lowe's proposed addition to their property, to which we averred in the opening paragraph of this letter. Although this type of controversy is not necessarily or directly of interest to, or within the purview of, the BAR, we think it worth discussing because it forms the backbone of some of the neighbor's objections to the proposed building addition. In our view, the proposed project is much more than just an expression of the property ownership rights of one particular couple in Old Town Alexandria. In a larger sense the project represents the reasonable change proposed by responsible owners versus the absolutely hardened "not in my backyard" opposition of other neighbors. There is a bright line between concerns that are reasonable and reasonably-expressed and those which, in their form and manner, are based upon inflated, unreliable and conflated facts designed to cause disharmony among neighbors. One has the commonweal of the immediately-impacted neighbors as its focus. The other is conceived solely as a leverage tool to obtain an outcome which would, if calm and balanced contemplation were the rule, not be obtainable.

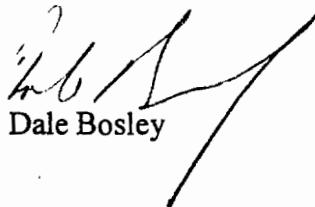
As a resident for over 15 years on our block of Saint Asaph Street (between Queen and Princess Streets), we have never experienced such polarization and dissonance among neighbors. This disquiet among the neighbors in our block is quite disturbing. In fact, as alluded to in the first paragraph of this letter, we were quite prepared to join the opposition in their "campaign" against the Gudenius-Lowe addition until we decided that, in fairness, we needed to examine the proposed addition plans and talk to Mr. Gudenius and Ms. Lowe ourselves. Only after examining the proposed addition's plans, could we wring all the misconstruction of facts and innuendo out of the prior "information" we had been given.

We would posit that many neighbors opposing the Gudenius-Lowe addition would, if they independently reviewed the proposed addition's plans, find, as State Senator Ticer found when she personally examined the plans, that their fears about the addition were baseless. What we have experienced and are experiencing in our little neighborhood is what is most feared in a democracy: the tyranny of the many, fed by misinformation, rumor and innuendo, over a "few" who cannot or will not be heard. The BAR and the City cannot lend support to such baseless opposition to reasonable and responsible owners without doing serious damage to the civic compact. Facts should always carry the day over opinion.

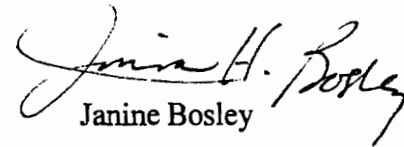
We would encourage the BAR to closely and coldly examine the facts of the proposed Gudenius-Lowe addition with listening to the siren-song of the uniformed. We have every confidence the facts will carry the day in this matter and that those facts will support a decision and a finding by the BAR to allow the now-proposed addition to become a reality for Mr. Gudenius and Ms. Lowe.

In sum, we find the proposal of Mr. Gudenius and Ms. Lowe reasonable and conservative, and strongly urge the BAR to approve its immediate execution, without footnote or exception.

Sincerely,



Dale Bosley



Janine Bosley

607 Queen Street
Alexandria, Virginia
22314

September 17, 2007

Board of Architectural Review
Department of Planning and Zoning
City of Alexandria
301 King Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Re: 323 North Saint Asaph Proposed Addition

Dear Board Members:

I am writing to you to object to the proposed addition to 323 North Saint Asaph Street. The addition would impact on the entire row of five, fragile, plaqued nineteenth century houses, violating their scale and altering the footprint. In addition the rear facades of that row have not been compromised by additions, and are highly visible to the numerous visitors who now use the pedestrian way created out of a former ally.

As a retired ambassador who has spent most of his career abroad, and a resident of Old Town, I know how fragile our historic, built environment is. And once an old building a substantially altered, it proves to be nearly impossible to reverse in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Campbell', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

John Campbell
U.S. Ambassador, Ret.

Daniel Nelson & Mirjana Dedaic
403 North St. Asaph Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
703-587-4250

September 23, 2007

TO: The Board of Architectural Review, City of Alexandria, VA

RE: Cases BAR2007-0097 and BAR2007-0098, 323 North St. Asaph

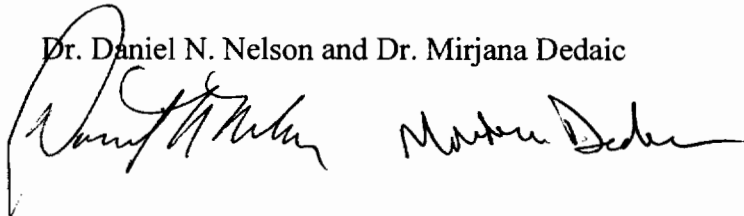
Although we are unable to attend the Board's October 3, 2007 meeting due to out-of-state travel, we do wish to convey our strong and unequivocal opposition to this proposed demolition/addition.

We have owned our home at 403 North St. Asaph since 1996, and have greatly valued the architectural integrity of Old Town and our immediate neighborhood. It is essential that changes to existing structures be *minimal and cosmetic* in order to preserve the history and culture of the city's "Old Town" zone. Fundamental enlargement of properties (e.g., an expansion of square footage by 43%) that restricts adjacent owners' access to open space is inappropriate, and violates core principles of historic preservation. Such an action would also violate the property rights of neighbors by diminishing their use and enjoyment of surrounding trees, air, and space.

It would be an ill-advised and misplaced precedent to grant, to anyone who might afford it, the opportunity to expand a home such that the expansion would intrude both on neighbors' rights and the city's historic identity.

We urge you to reject this request, and to ask the owners (instead) to improve and maintain their existing property.

Dr. Daniel N. Nelson and Dr. Mirjana Dedaic

The image shows two handwritten signatures in black ink. The signature on the left is for Daniel N. Nelson, and the signature on the right is for Mirjana Dedaic. Both signatures are written in a cursive, flowing style.

JOHN G. KESTER
313 North Saint Asaph Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

September 27, 2007

Board of Architectural Review
City of Alexandria
City Hall
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Re: BAR No. 2007-0097
BAR No. 2007-0098
323 North Saint Asaph Street

Dear Chairman and Members of the Board:

I am the owner of property at 313 North Saint Asaph Street, where I have lived for thirty-eight years. I write respectfully to oppose the above-noted applications, which seek this Board's approval and authorization to construct a massive and unprecedented new addition to an early Nineteenth Century historic structure, the townhouse at 323 North Saint Asaph Street.

This is the second time that this matter has been docketed before the Board. Applications were first filed May 7, 2007. They were then removed from the docket following several letters of objection from owners of neighboring properties. The applicants now have filed essentially the same applications again, with no substantial changes that would alter the damaging effect of the proposed building on this historic neighborhood.

I. Nature of Proposed Addition.

Applicants seek to expand by more than half the size of their 1850s (or earlier) historic house -- unfortunately to the detriment of it, the neighboring houses, and the Old and Historic District. The applications would authorize the erection of a large addition extending from the rear of the property, presenting a two-story wall next to the

property line of each of the adjacent yards, and removing a central section of what has been an open area for a century and a half.

The existing historic structure occupies a space measuring 16 by 30.1 feet, a "footprint" of 482 square feet. The proposed addition would fill the width of the back yard and extend back for an additional 22 feet -- an added area of 330 square feet, increasing the footprint by 68%, or more than two-thirds. In terms of mass, if measured by net floorspace the proposal (for two stories over a newly dug occupied basement) would increase from the present 1030 square feet to 1984 square feet, adding 92% -- nearly double. However one makes the calculation, the proposed new structure would be very big.

None of the four adjoining houses in this row of five companion dwellings on North Saint Asaph Street is of such size or configuration. No construction remotely resembling this building has been allowed or, insofar as can be determined, ever proposed.

The proposed structure would overshadow the small houses on either side, depriving other properties of light. It would destroy a large tree, many decades old, that lies on the property line. It likely would cause new water drainage problems for these tightly-packed houses, both during construction and afterwards, and possibly foundation damage. With respect to the construction process, the Bureau of Code Enforcement has warned that

"Permission from adjacent property owners is required if access to the adjacent properties is required to complete the proposed construction. Otherwise, a plan shall be submitted to demonstrate the construction techniques utilized to keep construction solely on the referenced property."

No such plan has been provided, and given the tiny spaces involved, it is difficult to see how one ever could be.

In sum, the application seeks to make this small antebellum house much bigger and longer, at the expense of the neighboring historic structures and the character of a fragile and carefully preserved neighborhood.

II. Standards That Must Be Satisfied.

The proposed construction appears irreconcilable with the standards this Board is charged by law to apply.

City Code § 10-105(A)(2) requires this Board to determine appropriateness based upon ten specific standards, including not just architecture, but history, setting, and other factors. Far from satisfying those standards, this application fails nearly all of them. To highlight the most apparent shortcomings:

1. The Code provision in its subsection (a) requires attention to "[o]verall architectural . . . structure, including, but not limited to, the height, mass and scale of buildings or structures" (Emphasis supplied.) The addition proposed here not only would diminish and alter the character and integrity of the existing historic structure at 323 North Saint Asaph Street. Just as importantly, it would loom in the midst of the row of small, equally historic houses of which it occupies the center. Architecturally, it would present the homes on either side with high walls nearly on the property line.

2. The same Code provision in subsection (b) requires the Board to examine "the degree to which the distinguishing original qualities or character of a building, structure or site . . . are retained." (Emphasis supplied.) In this proposal, the original qualities of not just the building, but the site, would be altered forever.

3. Also required to be considered is

"the impact upon the historic setting, streetscape or environs."

Subsection(c) (emphasis supplied). Here the impact could well be devastating. Such a new building would destroy the aspect of the back of this block, both a new and old façades and a charming set of connected open spaces, all of it visible from walkways much used by the public, and often photographed by visitors.

4. The Code further requires in subsection (e) that this Board weigh "[t]he relation to buildings and structures in the immediate surroundings." (Emphasis supplied.) That standard requires rejection of a proposal that would overwhelm this historic row of modest pre-Civil-war houses, adding a structure built to satisfy habits of 2007. The consternation of many who own and live in "structures in the immediate surroundings," discussed below, attests to that.

5. Subsection (g) refers to "[t]he extent to which the building or structure will preserve or protect historic places and areas of historic interest in the city," and subsection (i) reiterates the need for "preservation and protection of historic interest in the city." (Emphasis supplied.) Subsection (j) similarly emphasizes the need for "preservation and protection" in order to attract "students, writers, historians, artists" and "encouraging study and interest in American history" and "educating citizens in American culture and heritage." The Alexandria Archaeology Office's report points out that this almost-miraculously-preserved row of houses is a rarity, a still-standing grouping of modest buildings that included dwellings of free African-American residents of Alexandria in the 1850s, before the Civil War.

6. Finally, the Code's standards in three separate places require attention to whether such construction would be "harmonious with or incongruous with the old and historic aspect of the George Washington Memorial Parkway." Subsection (f); see also subsections (h) and (i). Although these houses do not face directly on the Parkway (Washington Street), they stand only a few dozen feet away. Moreover, they lie right at the foot of the Parkway's intersection with the 600 block of Princess Street,

which is one of the only two cobblestone streets remaining in Old Town and is a magnet for visitors.

III. The Neighborhood.

Surely not many applications the Board receives generate so much, and such overwhelming, opposition from neighboring homeowners. The file as of this writing contains letters from:

Mr. and Mrs. Rigby
330 North Pitt Street:

("Will change the historic nature of the area . . . [c]urrently there is a recognizable and historic similarity to all the houses along that section . . . would do damage to that historic context")

Judge and Mrs. Vasquez
317 North Saint Asaph Street:

("appearance, character and 'footprint' of these historical homes on this block would forever be altered . . . have been in existence since the 1850's without any changes . . . could very well increase the flooding and damage to our homes . . . green space in our neighborhood would forever be altered")

Ms. Critz
307 North Saint Asaph Street:

("The charm is not only from the front, but also from the back . . . From very public walkway . . . there is a completely unobstructed view . . . many times I have seen tourists photograph

the back . . . addition is completely out of character")

Ms. Schaeffer and Mr. Williams
327 North Saint Asaph Street:

("a unique row of five plaqued colonial homes . . . backs of our five town homes are totally visible . . . A three story addition at 323 would block our sunlight and deprive our back rooms of natural light . . . demise of our Dogwood, Holly trees and several shrubs . . . would ruin the open space for all the surrounding yards . . . structural and flooding issues . . . Our particular block is photographed all the time")

Mr. Ballowe
311 North Saint Asaph Street:

("out of character for this historic and beautiful block . . . We chose to live in historic homes -- with their attendant costs and limitations")

Ambassador and Mrs. Campbell
607 Queen Street:

("impact on the entire row of five, fragile, plaqued nineteenth century houses, violating their scale and altering the footprint . . . highly visible to the numerous visitors who now use the pedestrian way")

Mr. and Mrs. Steve
325 North Saint Asaph Street:

("One of the most important factors in choosing . . . our home was the open, unobstructed access to light and air in the back yard . . . building two inches from our property line . . . a two-story wall along our back yard cutting off access to direct sunlight . . . break up the unique open space . . . kill trees . . . worsen flooding . . .")

architect has stated that . . .
construction crews will want -- and
need -- access to our property")

Mr. and Mrs. Teresinski
319 North Saint Asaph Street:

("we wanted to have a home in a
neighborhood that was peaceful, . . .
charming (with a historic footprint),
and an open backyard for our child to
enjoy . . . no sooner had we moved in
. . . we discovered that our immediate
neighbors wanted to put up a three
story addition . . . amazement and
shock . . . may cause irreparable
damage to the structural integrity of
our home . . . major disturbance to the
foundation and ground of the structures
attached . . . destroy the historical
footprint of our serene neighborhood
. . . our homes have a unique front and
rear . . . some of the last few . . .
noise and chaos . . . we plan to bring
home our adopted infant . . . at the
same time that construction is to begin
. . . had we known . . . we would have
bought elsewhere").

Dr. Nelson and Dr. Dediac
403 North Saint Asaph Street:

("violates core principles of historic
preservation . . . It would be an ill-
advised and misplaced precedent to
grant, to anyone who might afford it,
the opportunity to expand a home such
that the expansion would intrude both
on neighbors' rights and the city's
historic identity")

As of this writing, three letters in the file support
the construction, one from an owner whose house is
used as a rental property.

This is an unusual outpouring from the residents of this unique corner of Old Town, who are sensitive to standards of appropriateness and historical respect, and who know from living there what this block is like. Their serious assessment deserves the Board's consideration. It is always easier to remain silent. None of us takes any pleasure in speaking against a neighbor's wishes; but many of us have examined the proposal and reluctantly concluded that as responsible stewards of our unique residences and historic setting, we have little choice but to ask this Board not to allow it.

Senator Ticer in a letter to this Board (breaking her usual silence in Board matters), expressed "concerns about this request," including "the loss of light and air and open space to the adjacent properties, the threat of flooding . . . the potential loss of mature trees and bushes." The five very old houses of which this property is at the center, she said,

"share the same footprint, and one of great historic value"

IV. This Board's Responsibility.

This Board often, and properly, devotes time and care to seemingly small matters of suitability, appearance and historical appropriateness within the Old and Historic District. That is time well spent, for even though many small decisions of the Board individually may seem to have minor effect, collectively they do.

This case is different. This unusual proposal engages the Board's most fundamental duty: to protect Old Town and our successors from structures that would irreparably alter, and have no place in, the small and precious District this Board is charged to preserve. This case also compels attention to what the effects of such a precedent could be.

Perhaps many of us, like the applicants, might sometimes feel the urge to live in a bigger house, and never mind the neighborhood. Probably we

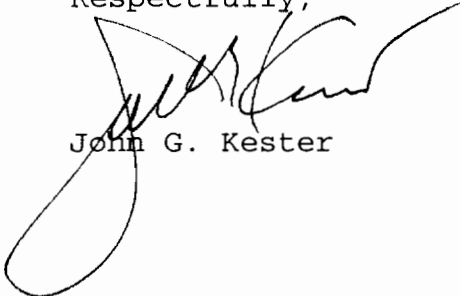
all could obtain a great deal more space by moving elsewhere. We have preferred, however, to respect and accept the sizes and historic-preservation restrictions of the historic homes we elected to buy. And in choosing to live in Old Town, we also have relied on the vigilance of this Board to protect the unique area in which we are property owners. I have observed that vigilance wisely applied for four decades.

In a letter supporting the applications, my old friends Dale and Janine Bosley, whose views are honorable and entitled to respect, request that the Board "examine the facts." That is entirely correct. They also state rightly that any disagreement engendered by this proposal is regrettable. Inescapably, however, many who sincerely believe, after examining this proposal fully, that it is not compatible with the legal and accepted standards, may sincerely feel a civic responsibility, on behalf of the present and for posterity, to object.

The homes on this particular block are not grand mansions, like the Robert E. Lee house (one street away) or the Lord Fairfax house (one street away in the other direction). But individually and collectively, they are a significant facet of the Old and Historic District of Alexandria. If there is any duty of this Board that is truly basic, it is to protect one of the oldest and most unique blocks in Old Town from massive construction that would destroy what so many, including you and your own predecessors on this Board, have worked so hard for so many years to preserve.

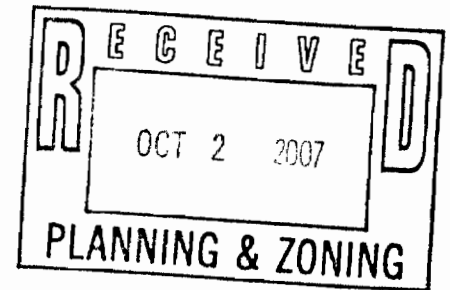
Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,


John G. Kester

THOR E. RONAY
328 North Pitt Street, Alexandria, VA 22314

Board of Architectural Review
Department of Planning and Zoning
City of Alexandria
301 King Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314



Re 323 North Saint Asaph proposed alteration and expansion
CASE BAR2007-0097 & BAR2007-0098
October 1, 2007

Dear Board Members and Staff:

I write as a 22 year resident of the Old and Historic District of Old Town Alexandria. I own and reside in 328 North Pitt Street, the second home I have owned in our town. I stand in strong opposition to the proposed destruction and expansion at 323 N. St. Asaph.

Like many Old Towners, I chose to live here because of the ambience, calm, charm and amenities of Old Town which you have increasingly preserved and improved over the recent decades. Through efforts and choices of professional preservationists such as yourselves, and dedicated residents such as our neighbors, Old Town has become so much more of a charming town and site-seeing destination than it was in the nadir of the 1970's. Accordingly, our property values have remained strong, and the quality of shops, restaurants and other commercial investments has improved, contributing to our revenue base. All this has shown that small indeed can be valuable, and preservation can sustain vitality.

I chose my current home for its bright southern exposure and the great green open space of the inner block, a sort of secret sanctuary for all who adjoin it. It is not only full of light, particularly in the afternoon, but also rimmed with 40-50 foot trees -- including a beautiful magnolia which I delight in seeing year 'round from each of my nine windows which face south and west. There are all manner of birds, cardinals and yellow finches, and a riot of squirrels, and even a community cat and possum! From the small patio that is my own backyard, I can sit in the peaceable quiet, insulated from the streets and traffic and contemplate this patch of earth and sky in peace, far removed from my daily work in counterterrorism, with its existential threats and unpleasant surprises.

Completing the picture, framing it really, are the wonderful historic 1800 houses of Hulfish Row, stretching along the western perimeter, and unaltered in their essentials, all with open yards, trees, the occasional weathered gazebo, crepe myrtles and lazy post fences. A scene Jefferson would recognize. It is perhaps the finest open block in the Northeast quadrant, and certainly one of the most historic, bordered even by the North side's only cobble street, and block from the Lee-Fendall homes. This is Old Town life at its best.

Presumably, we all could afford to live elsewhere, with more land, pools, expansive driveways, towering edifices and columns and Palladian windows festooned with balconettes, in the current fashion. But we choose to live here, and, too, to do our part, along with you, as stewards, to

ensure that Old Town will be here, as it is -- its best and oldest preserved for those who follow us. Those who crave modern expansiveness have plenty of places nearby, Great Falls, for instance, in which to spin their life's plans. An historic row block in Old Town is not the place.

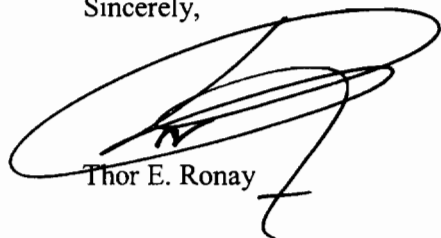
Along with most all of my neighbors, I was astonished to learn that my view of all of this -- the magnolia and sycamore trees and the light filtering in all day, and the quiet, open space I look out to from half my house, the peace and privacy of my patio garden -- is threatened, as with sudden death and destruction, by the proposed "McTownhousing" of one of the perfect row of 1800 houses. Indeed the one right out my window and over my patio!

It had never occurred to me that this row of houses -- this wonderful inner block of greenery, this open view and sanctuary -- could ever be so altered as to, in one rip of destruction and construction, eliminate trees, kill the root systems of others, threaten the view and light of so many neighbors, alter the water table, threaten the structural integrity, and permanently alter the line of view of this block as it is now fully settled. As we have learned, this came as a shock to many, including our newest home owners who envisioned the whole area as the perfect quiet sanctuary for their newly arriving baby.

The bill of particulars is amply outlined by my various neighbors. The structural and water aspects cannot be fully determined without major in-depth analysis, but could be not only life-altering but prohibitively expensive, and harmful both to health and the site-specific environment. The proposed plans also show the intent of to park in an easement area, there being, by force of the full lot build out, no remaining off-street parking for the McTownhouse. In my own case, instead of looking out my bedroom, dining room, or library windows to watch birds in branches 10 and 15 feet away, I will face 3 solid stories of construction, windows and roof. The enjoyment of my home will, for me, be vastly diminished, along with its value.

I urge you to reject this or any similar plan, and thus ensure that the social compact between Old Town and its residents, between the past and the future, is honored -- not vitiated by a sort of shell game replete with pop-up additions and disappearing trees, as if in some bad construction company hustle. This is Old Town. If we go down a path of such ad hocery, the precedent is set for a row of McTownhouses in place of Hulfish Row -- and the ineluctable loss of trees, air and space, and the secret places that make this our town. Surely you do not want to move in this direction, and so the choice before you as is simple as it is for us who live here. Thank you for your time and for all that you do.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thor E. Ronay". The signature is stylized with several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke at the bottom.

Cc: The Concerned Neighbors



"Franko, Jeff"
<jfranko@gns.gannett.com>
10/03/2007 02:38 PM

To <holly.dammann@alexandriava.gov>
cc
bcc
Subject Old & Historic BAR2007-0098



Hi Holly,

I am writing to voice my opinion on the case shown below on the docket for Oct. 3, 2007.

Unfortunately something has come up and I won't be there in person.

23. CASE BAR2007-0098

Request for approval of an addition & alterations at 323 N St Asaph St, zoned RM Residential.
APPLICANT: Laurie Lowe & Carl Gudenius by Robert Bentley Adams & Associates
BOARD ACTION:

I understand the BAR is recommending approval of the above mentioned case.

While I am a proponent of homeowner rights, and the addition proposed appears very nice, all of us in the community must consider the spirit of Old Town Alexandria, our neighbors and neighborhood.

I find the depth and height of of the project to be overbearing. If I was an immediate neighbor of, or nearby on the north side, I'd be furious with the ecological implications and change in nature that will certainly occur should this be built. Let along the visual changes.

Realizing I am not any form of expert, it looks like at least two mature trees in neighboring properties will be affected and likely killed as their roots are disturbed and cut during the construction process.

The additional shade and lack of free airflow across the neighboring lots will change the existing environment.

If I understand correctly, both sides of proposed building will be on the lot line. As a resident who bought into a similar situation I highly recommend further evaluation of this as it is certain to reduce the value of tangent homes, make side maintenance an issue for the owner and should any future owners neglect these sides - the visual eyesore will be be a further detriment to tangent property values.

I would propose a one (preferred) or two story compromise that is 24 inches or so off the property line, allowing for future work without damaging or entering tangent properties.

Then there is the water runoff issue. While I presume the water is appropriately designed for runoff, rain bouncing off the sides of the new building will further affect the tangent properties, most likely in a negative runoff, erosion pattern.

The additional runoff into the neighboring parking lot to the east and those properties should be considered as well.

I have a one story addition next to me on the property line. It really doesn't work, roof runoff is an issue and access to well over half of the property is through my backyard.

We are neighborly about this, but it can be a bit frustrating to look at and deal with the additional runoff.

I'll stop here by saying I believe the proposed addition is overbearing and without thought to the overall environment of Historic Old Town.

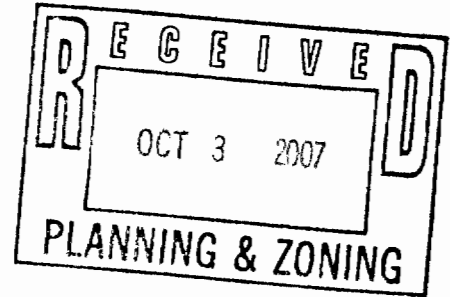
Regards,

Jeff Franko
519 N. Alfred St.
Alexandria, Va. 22314
(Parker Gray)

JOHN G. KESTER
313 North Saint Asaph Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

October 3, 2007

Board of Architectural Review
City of Alexandria
City Hall
Alexandria, Virginia 22314



Re: BAR No. 2007-0097
BAR No. 2007-0098
323 North Saint Asaph Street

Dear Chairman and Members of the Board:

This is to request that the record be corrected as to a factual representation.

Yesterday I became aware for the first time of a late filing by the applicants, dated last Friday, September 27, which includes a letter not previously furnished to the Board from a Ms. Theresa Rowe of 15 Wilkes Street. That letter concludes with an incorrect reference to this Board's supposedly "granting 313 North Saint Asaph their recent addition."

That statement is in error. 313 is my home. In 2004 the Board approved an application to combine two doorways at the rear while renewing the existing clapboard siding and trim (Nos. 2004-180-183). There was no "addition" -- i.e., no expansion -- of the existing house whatsoever. The footprint of the house did not change by a millimeter. The dimensions remained entirely the same, both height and width, just as they had been for decades.

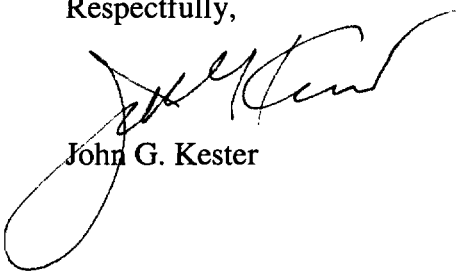
In contrast with the pending proposal to nearly double the size of the house at 323, no neighbor objected to the work on the back of my house. The Staff likewise expressed no objection. In fact, the Staff report (applying the standards of the Board and the City Code) pointed out that it "does not impinge upon the existing historic fabric;" that it "meets the recommendations of the Design Guidelines;" and that it "will not overwhelm the existing houses" and "is clearly subservient to the existing structures." The report added that the structure "is only minimally visible from the public right-of-way." Members of this Board complimented the proposal, and unanimously approved it.

The letter from Ms. Rowe also is mistaken in its assertion that “several other properties on this block have similar additions.” To the best of my knowledge, and confirmed by the maps, there have been no “additions” of any consequence to the relevant houses since the 1890s or earlier, when it appears that a room was added to 317 for a store long since gone. As the applicants’ own submission acknowledges, the configuration of the relevant houses has not changed for more than a century, and

“During its approximate 150-year life the building has been altered, but retains its original footprint.”

Perhaps because she is unfamiliar with this part of Old Town, living as she does in the new Harborside development on the south waterfront, the writer of that letter (a “long time friend” of the applicants) was confused. She is, of course, entitled to her stated opinions opposing “locking architecture in time” and urging “thoughtful growth and revision” of heretofore preserved houses.

Respectfully,



John G. Kester

cc: Ms. Theresa Rowe

12-15-07

December 7, 2007

The Honorable Tim Lovain
City Council
Alexandria, VA

RE: Appeal of BAR Case # 2007-0097 Demolition/Encapsulation of 323 N. Saint Asaph Street

Dear Council Member Lovain,

We own and live at 325 N. Saint Asaph St. – right next to 323 N. Saint Asaph St. – and would be the most directly impacted by the proposed addition. We strongly oppose the proposed addition which would virtually double the size of 323 N. Saint Asaph St. and destroy the historic footprint of 323 N. Saint Asaph St. and the surrounding neighborhood.

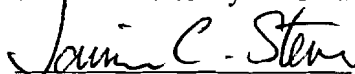
As you are aware, the Board of Architectural review voted 5 to 1 to deny the permit to demolish the property in question and the property owners have appealed to the City Council. We urge you to vote to uphold the carefully considered decision by the Board of Architectural Review.

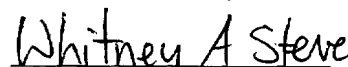
We moved into our house nearly three years ago and want to stay. One of the most important factors in choosing to make the house our home was the open, unobstructed access to light and air in the back yard.

We oppose the addition to 323 N. Saint Asaph St. for the following reasons:

1. Block Sunlight & Destroy Open Space: Building two inches from our property line, the effect of the proposal is to place a two-story wall along our back yard cutting off access to direct sunlight. Our house is located on the North side of 323 N. Saint Asaph St. The addition also would severely break up the unique open space currently existing along the backs of five contiguous plaqued homes, all of which maintain their original footprint.
2. Kill Trees: Digging the foundation for expansion would kill a large sycamore tree on our property by destroying its root system. The tree is located right next to the planned addition. Construction also would destroy the roots and cut off light to two other smaller trees on our property.
3. Construction Noise & Disturbance: Removing the fence during construction will bring significant noise, activity and disturbance within inches of an area on which we rely for peace, quite and tranquility. The architect has stated that due to building within only two inches of our property, construction crews will want -- and need -- access to our property.

Finally, as guardians of these historic homes, we want to protect and preserve the existing look and feel of our unique neighborhood for future generations. We ask that you vote to uphold the 5 to 1 decision by the Board of Architectural Review. Thank you.


Jaime C. Steve
325 N. Saint Asaph Street
Alexandria, VA 223124


Whitney Steve
325 N. Saint Asaph Street
Alexandria, VA 22314 tel: 703-683-4385

Billie Schaeffer

18

12-15-07

Enclosed please find the following:

1. 15 Letters of "opposition" to the BAR regarding BAR CASE 2007-0097 and
CASE # 2007-0098 Lowe/Gudenius – Permit
for Demolition/encapsulation – Permit for Addition
2. 1877 Site Map of Property
3. Staff Recommendation of BAR CASE 2007-0097 – Denial
4. Transcript of BAR CASE # 2007-0097 – October 3, 2007
5. Photos of proposed demolition/encapsulation
6. DVD of BAR Hearing CASE # 2007-0097 – October 3, 2007
7. Letter to Mayor, Vice Mayor and Council

Docket Item # 22
BAR CASE # 2007-0097

BAR Meeting
October 3, 2007

ISSUE: Permit to Demolish

APPLICANT: Laurie Lowe and Carl Gudenius by Robert Bentley Adams & Associates

LOCATION: 323 North St. Asaph Street

ZONE: RM/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends denial of the application.



BAR CASE #2007-0097/0098

10/03/07



Note: This docket item requires a roll call vote.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Permit to Demolish and Capasulate the bulk of the rear (east) wall as well as portions of the roof of the residential rowhouse at 323 North St. Asaph Street in order to construct a rear addition.

II. HISTORY:

323 North St. Asaph Street is a two story, two bay frame vernacular residential rowhouse that was constructed as a rental property by John A. Dixon, a prosperous landowner, sometime between 1858 and 1867. It was constructed together with the adjacent rowhouses at 321 and 319 and the properties share common chimneys structures.

The house was substantially remodeled in the late 1960s and early 1970. In 1966 the Board approved shutters and a new stoop (4/13/1966) and in 1970 alterations to the windows (9/2/1970). The change out in windows was the replacement of single double hung window on the second level with new paired double hung windows and a new matching sized window on the first level. This remodeling created a much more "Colonial" caste to the house than had heretofore existed and was part of a number of such residential remodelings in these decades that sought to cement the impression of the historic district as a cornerstone of colonial architecture.

The bay window that is a prominent visual feature of the rear of the house was installed by a previous homeowner in the late 1970s is apparently a direct and conscious violation of the requirements of the historic district ordinance.

III. ANALYSIS:

In considering a Permit to Demolish/Capsulate, the Board must consider the following criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance, §10-105(B):

- (1) Is the building or structure of such architectural or historical interest that its moving, removing, capsulating or razing would be to the detriment of the public interest?
- (2) Is the building or structure of such interest that it could be made into a historic house?
- (3) Is the building or structure of such old and unusual or uncommon design, texture and material that it could not be reproduced or be reproduced only with great difficulty?
- (4) Would retention of the building or structure help preserve the memorial character of the George Washington Memorial Parkway?
- (5) Would retention of the building or structure help preserve and protect an historic place or area of historic interest in the city?
- (6) Would retention of the building or structure promote the general welfare by maintaining and increasing real estate values, generating business, creating new positions, attracting tourists, students, writers, historians, artists and artisans, attracting new residents, encouraging study and interest in American history, stimulating interest and study in architecture and design, educating citizens in American culture and heritage, and making the city a more attractive and desirable place in which to live?

The basic historic physical form of these three rowhouses has remained remarkably unaltered since they were constructed in the latter part of the 19th century. However, there has been

considerable change in the physical environment surrounding their location. The rear yards have certainly changed since the houses were constructed and secondary structures such as outhouses, storage shed, stables and similar outbuildings have disappeared and been replaced by passive open space. Similarly, the roadway in front of these rowhouses has changed considerably during the last century and a half as have the surrounding land uses. To some extent, the exterior architectural appearance of the rowhouse has also changed. What has remained a constant, however, is the essential volumetric configuration of these houses and, as such, they provide a direct and tangible link to the immediate post Civil War period in the City.

The expressed skin of the house has been changed with replacement siding. Additionally, because of the alterations and changes to the fenestration on both the front and rear of the house the framing has likely been modified and altered. What has not changed, however, is the spatial relationship of the house to the street and its neighbors.

Staff notes that previously we had recommended denial of a similar request for a Permit to Demolish the rear wall of the house at the south end of this row at 319 N St Asaph Street (BAR Case #95-00150, 10/14/95). In considering the case in 1995, the Board was also concerned about the extent of the demolition of the rear wall and asked for additional information. However, the case was withdrawn before the Board made a decision.

Staff finds the proposed demolition of the east (rear) elevation of this 19th century vernacular frame rowhouse an unacceptable loss of historic architectural fabric and form.

In the opinion of Staff, the proposed demolition of the rear façade meets criteria #'s 1, 2, 5 & 6 and the Permit to Demolish should not be approved.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends denial of the application.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

Legend: C - code requirement R - recommendation S - suggestion F- finding

Code Enforcement:

C-1 Prior to the issuance of a demolition permit or land disturbance permit, a rodent abatement plan shall be submitted to Code Enforcement that will outline the steps that will taken to prevent the spread of rodents from the construction site to the surrounding community and sewers.

Historic Alexandria:

S-1 Approve with wood clapboards.

Alexandria Archaeology:

F-1 According to Ethelyn Cox's *Historic Alexandria, Street by Street, A Survey of Existing Early Buildings*, the house on this lot dates to the mid-nineteenth century. Tax records from 1850 indicate that there was a free African American household on this street face, but the exact address in not known. The property therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources, perhaps relating to African Americans, that could provide insight into residential life in nineteenth-century Alexandria..

R-1 Call Alexandria Archaeology immediately (703-838-4399) if any buried structural remains (wall foundations, wells, privies, cisterns, etc.) or concentrations of artifacts are discovered during development. Work must cease in the area of the discovery until a City archaeologist comes to the site and records the finds.

R-2 The above statement must appear in the General Notes of all site plans and on all site plan sheets that involve demolition or ground disturbance (including sheeting and shoring and grading) so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement. above must appear in the General Notes of the site plan so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement.

Transportation & Environmental Services:

F-1 An approved Plot Plan must be attached to the building permit application. This determination is based on the change in grade of 12-inches or greater, changes to existing drainage patterns and the existence of current drainage problems in the vicinity. (TES)

R-1 The building permit plans shall comply with requirements of City Code Section 8-1-22 regarding the location of downspouts, foundation drains and sump pumps. Refer to Memorandum to Industry dated June 18, 2004. [Memorandum is available online at the City web site under Transportation\Engineering and Design\Memos to Industry.]. (TES)

R-2 Applicant shall be responsible for repairs to the adjacent city right-of-way if damaged during construction activity. (TES)

- R-3 All improvements to the city right-of-way such as curbing, sidewalk, driveway aprons, etc. must be city standard design. (TES)
- R-4 No permanent structure may be constructed over any existing private and/or public utility easements. It is the responsibility of the applicant to identify any and all existing easements on the plan. (TES)
- R-5 Compliance with the provisions of Article XIII of the City's zoning ordinance for stormwater quality control is required for any land disturbing activity greater than 2,500 square feet. (TES)

John Williams

BAR Case #2007-0097

October 3, 2007 Hearing

Permit to Demolish 323 N. St. Asaph Street

CHAIRMAN: . . . the next item on the docket is . . . 2007-97, request for full demolition/encapsulation of 323 North St. Asaph Street. Applicants are Laurie Lowe, Carl Gudenius, by Robert Bentley Adams & Associates.

ADAMS: Good evening . . .

CHAIRMAN: Hello, Rob . . . Adams.

ADAMS: I'm representing Laurie Lowe and Carl Gudenius. Laurie is here tonight as, however, Carl cannot be with us tonight. He's on a trip. My office has worked with Carl and Laurie for many months on this project, and they've been really conscientious of their thoughts that they've given the project. Shall I talk about the first application?

CHAIRMAN: And you cannot talk about the second one.

ADAMS: Okay.

CHAIRMAN: You've got to do the demolition one.

ADAMS: Well, I may not go into a lot of detail about the design since staff, we're happy to report, recommend its approval of the new construction. I do want to quote their favorable comments. The addition is at rear of the existing house. It is not visible from the principal street front and does not appear to visually overwhelm the main block, the main historic block.

And another comment, in the opinion of the staff that the design of the addition is appropriate and generally meets the recommendations of the design guidelines . . . you have received a binder with a lot of information about the project. The results, also a supplemental graphic, I've given to Dr. Smith tonight. It clarifies the rear elevation that is already in your packet.

We want you to know that before we came before with this proposal, there were two other proposals previous to this, and with each incarnation, they tried to do some of the homework that you might have recommended. We reduced the scale of the project both in footprint and in height.

We studied the design guidelines, and especially chapter four of the demolition chapter. We looked to the guidance that you've given us on other projects and other

people here in town. We've listened to the neighbors' comments. We had done, our office did historic research and also tracers did work for us. And, of course, we evaluated the existing conditions of the house, including, especially looking at the existing materials there onsite.

Again, we shrunk the footprint and lowered the height two feet. And we now include a separation between the original block of the house and the addition with the height and which created sort of an area . . . notch on the north side of the house as a connector.

We've had many conversations with the neighbors, run meetings held at our office. Many were invited to this site. And the thing that was, the important thing about the project, I think, in a broad scale for everyone to understand is that it's small scale not overreaching the addition that we're proposing to a house that has 15-foot wide rooms on the inside and a 480-foot square footprint. So it's only two rooms deep. It's a modest house.

The other thing is every, some people may be confused about is this enormous size of the lot, that all of the gravel space at the rear is the Lowe/Gudenius property. It runs 123 feet deep, and they propose to landscape that area of the back which is not used for the modest addition, so, and just have one parking space and more green space. This results in a, again, a modest proposal where the open space still remains as 48%, a much greater open space than the code asks us to comply with.

We also took a look at some of the other blocks in Old Town, including that had other modest houses. It may have been billed as working class homes for people here in town. Green Street has rows where there are groups of them together. World Street, Lee Street, and almost without exception, these houses have had additions put on them, sometimes almost immediately, and often to our times, it continued. But in my office on South Washington Street is one of five houses, having a rare addition in the back of it. And we have the luck to have the original fabric on our house, even though you have to duck to get out the front door.

Again, the historic research that was done turned up the history that's in this packet about the age of the house. It was built in the second half of the 19th century, . . . almost an industrial neighborhood, a spec . . . Lisa Smith made the largest changes to the house in the 1960s. That's very important in our review of the house. She used the sensibilities of her period for a spec renovation.

She stylistically transformed the house from its existing form of detailing into a colonial revival prototype using elements that were, of course, popular at that time. The German siding at the rear of the house, of course, is not original. None of the siding on the house is original. The windows were enlarged and widened, turned into six over six windows.

The front door has a very nice door surround that the gentleman just before me might want that were put upon it. There was a much larger chimney put on the house, again, the kind of look that were drawn to in these Williamsburg style houses. The bay window was added some time after 1960 when Lisa did the house. The roofing's been replaced. So from a historic preservation standpoint, there's really no visible original fabric on the house. If Dr. Smith would put up the graphics, which, again, only clarify the rear elevation that you have seen, can you do that, Peter?

MAN: . . .

ADAMS: Oh, excuse me. There are three of them, Peter. One, the first one, graphic number one, shows the existing rear façade and roof as you see with the bay window. And it, the façade and the roof is under 700 square feet of surface, again, not original 1960s elements. You also see them in the photos, of course.

Graphic number two shows the rear façade with the form of the proposed addition superimposed showing the area of encapsulation. As you see that area is 324 square feet of which 87 square feet are about the quarter of that area is already penetrated by openings. Peter, let's see, once again, these have been altered.

There is a portion of the original wall left to visually separate, as I said earlier, the original, the old part of the house from the new part by use of a hyphen connector. And, yes, we have shown windows in this little sliver of a spot, but it does allow daylight to reach an area that is, would be a very lightless, dark room on the inside for an outcome. So we believe this amount of encapsulation is in accordance with the guidelines, and it is a minimum to provide a reasonable floor plan on the inside with the appropriate uses that the house needs in our times to be, for every house without, again, overreaching the size of things.

Graphic three does show the areas to be demolished. Under each window that exists now, there were just, we're cutting the openings through at this space where there are already windows. That's 28 square feet, only 3 square feet more than was permitted, you know, if this were a rear façade without approval, a review. Again, none of this fabric is original. It's all from 1960 or later.

We also found in the Sanborn maps that they consistently show that the footprint of an addition along all three of these connected houses at the rear. We know that it was there, something was there. And typically, although we don't know what it looked like, we would assume it's some kind of modest rear addition, an open screened or sleeping porch, often bathrooms were added on the back of these houses.

So you could interpret the Sanborn maps to show that this back wall was completely encapsulated during the period when they were made. It probably was a poor-quality construction. That's what it wasn't there any longer. So, again, we want to establish that the existing fabric is not original, and it was once covered at the rear façade.

I also want to now refer to the guidelines and refer to the criteria for demolition that the staff report cites. I don't mean to belabor this, but the, I'll list, reach each one of them.

Criteria one, is the building or structure of such architectural or historical interest that it's moving, removing, encapsulating, or razing to be to the detriment of the public interest? We don't believe this to be the case. There is very little historic original fabric or none that we can see. The building is fundamentally a creation of Lisa Smith and others with their sense. The addition is minimally visible from the public space.

Criteria, two is the building or structure of such interest that it could be made into a historic house? No, there's really nothing significant that has happened in this house. There's no ability to say it has associative value with that, any one person or that way of interpreting this. And again, the fabric is so altered that it's not original on the outside nor on the inside.

Criteria five, would retention of the building or structure help preserve or, and protect a historic place of historic interest in the city? No. Again, there are other houses of similar age that were created and appear like a 1960s house that this is really the scale of this house is in the same kind of colonial style. They exist elsewhere, and I think there's adequate supply of them. The windows have been widened again, six over six. The photos before and after show that. The door has been enlarged. The surround added. The siding has been replaced. The chimney has been enlarged and rebuilt. The roof was replaced.

Criteria six, would retention of the building or structure promote the general welfare by maintaining and increasing real estate value, generating business, creating new positions, attracting tourists, students, writers, historians, artists, artisans, and attracting new residents, encouraging study and interest in American history, American culture and heritage, and making the city more attractive and a desirable place to live?

Well, we don't believe that the proposed addition and encapsulation would diminish the old and historic district in the manner that this item six, criteria six, refers to. If a new addition is built, we don't believe we've degraded the public welfare or reduced the historic value of this house, again, since it's almost all new. The new construction will not be detrimental. There are too many alterations to this house to consider it original. We don't believe that if the house remains as is, it will become a shrine of any kind. And, in fact, there would be more public interest, we think, if their request were denied.

In conclusion, we know the Board is going to carefully consider this addition. If denied, you're not only denying Carl and Laurie's wish to improve their house for modern living, but you're also denying the neighbors in this row and others in an old and historic district with similar circumstances.

The project is not substantial enough to have a bearing on the public's benefit or to say it justifies denying this application. We understand the demolition and encapsulation is an important part of the criteria of your work. We live in a community where adoptive reused structures often include demolition and encapsulation in order to live in our times.

These architectural solutions allow the community and this house and others to evolve and do meet the architectural guidelines. Preservation is your charge. It has been mine as well. I've worked on category one national landmarks, and now I'm working on one of the simplest houses in Old Town.

And we give equal view to every project, whether it be a federal building or a two-room deep house, first of all, looking at the originality preservation aspects of it. And in this case, we just could not say that it, that there was anything to preserve on every elevation because it's a 1960s house. Again, if you'd like, I can speak about the addition.

CHAIRMAN: No.

ADAMS: That's what I, I've been available to speak about that . . .

CHAIRMAN: We understand, and you know the rules . . .

ADAMS: Okay.

CHAIRMAN: Okay? We're guided by long-term practice up here. Okay.

ADAMS: Thank you. I'm here if you need any further . . .

CHAIRMAN: Thank you . . . ladies and gentlemen, would someone from the audience like to make a comment on this application? Mr. Hynan.

HYNAN: Hello. My name is John Hynan. I represent the Historic Alexandria Foundation. I urge the BAR to accept the recommendation of the city staff, that is, that the permit to demolish should be denied. The staff points out that, quote, the basic physical form of these three row houses, 319, 320 . . .

CHAIRMAN: There are five.

HYNAN: Yes, but in this particular sentence, it's three. There are five, yes, and I refer to the whole number . . . with this relationship has remained unaltered since they were constructed in the latter part of the 19th century. And, quote, today, the Historic Alexandria seeks to preserve them. They provide, quote again, a direct and tangible link to the immediate post-Civil War period of this city, end quote. And again to open the quote to, of the staff, the spatial relationship of the house at 323 to the neighboring houses of five and the street they face has endured over many decades.

The architect pointed out that there were other buildings in the rear, and the staff report recognizes that. There were sheds, outhouses, sheds to protect wood from the, firewood from the rain, a shed to protect a horse from the elements, that sort of thing. There is no evidence that for a century and a half that these footprints of these houses were altered, or changed, or expanded, or otherwise tampered with.

The essential element of the historical feature of this, of these row houses is the size of the house in the footprints. That's the important part. If you were to build in the back rows of like shoeboxes going back, you have destroyed the historical character of this row house. It relies on the footprints being unchanged for a century and a half, and that's why we're opposed to this, and we think that nothing should be demolished, and that the application should be denied. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Anyone else? Yes.

STEVE: Yes. Hi. My name is Jaime Steve. I live at 325 North St. Asaph Street, the blue house on the left there of the one in question. And my wife and I have lived there for about two and a half years. She would have been here tonight in opposition as well. I can assure you on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being in strong opposition, she would have been a 15. Okay.

I'll be very brief because we have a lot of folks who want to speak about this. We have three key concerns, a lot of concerns, but three key concerns. Number one is, as this has been discussed, destroying the historic . . . of these back. One really has to see these backyards to really appreciate the open space that's back there, and the fact

that it's been maintained for long as it has for five adjacent homes. The second point, this is essentially erecting a two-story, roughly 30-foot wall in our backyard. We are on, as I said, the blue house is to the north of the house in question, which means the sun comes from the back.

ADAMS: Mr. Chairman, I point out that we are on the demolition, not on the effect of the addition is going to be.

CHAIRMAN: We're only speaking of the demolition at this point and not the . . .

STEVE: Okay, so focus on that. Okay. The last point focuses on, I believe, is on point for demolition, and that's the effect it would have on a very large old tree that's on our side of the property. And I believe it's already been acknowledged by those proposing the addition that that would destroy the root system and essentially kill the tree. So we urge denial of the permit to demolish. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Anyone else?

TERESINSKI: Good evening. My name is Laura Teresinski. And I actually live in the green house, which is the end of the three houses that are connected there. And I along with my husband bought the house in January of this year. And we oppose the proposed demolition for the reasons that have already been stated about the destruction of the historic footprint, which is why we bought the house, which is why we fell in love with the block and the area.

And our other concerns, what I would like to address is the architect mentioned the fear that this would become a shrine and somehow inhibit property values. I believe it's just the opposite. Jaime, who just spoke, bought his house relatively recently. We bought our house in January.

These, we consciously bought a small historic home. We plan on raising our children there. We plan on adopting this year. We paid what I considered to be a small fortune for this home because we love this area, and we love this block. There is nothing, there is nothing about, in our opinion, these additions aren't necessary. And if you love historic homes in historic neighborhoods, the space isn't necessary.

What's necessary is the preservation and respect for what has existed and what's been belovedly restored and handed down, and I feel like we are stewards of that. And so I oppose the demolition, and I'll limit my comments to that. And I'll also say that my husband, who is on trial, couldn't be here tonight, but he also is very much opposed to the demolition as well. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN: Thank you. I hope he comes out of the trial all right.

TERESINSKI: He's . . . trial. He's a lawyer.

CHAIRMAN: Good luck.

MARY THERESA VASQUEZ: Good afternoon. My name is Mary Theresa Vasquez. And thank you for hearing our concerns. I'm also known as Terry in the neighborhood. I am a homeowner with my husband, Judge Juan Vasquez, at 317 North St. Asaph. Obviously, my house is not on there, but we are right on the walkway, the public walkway, which the city built in the beautiful walkway.

And it's the blue house with the red shutters and white trim. Anyway, we are facing the walkway, like I said. We are on the same side of the said property, and we're three doors down, so we can see the beautiful backyards and the front yards. We moved here 12-1/2 years ago when my husband was appointed to the federal branch in Washington, D.C.

As a result, we had to move from our beautiful historical San Antonio, Texas. When we looked for houses here in Old Town, the realtor kept asking us if we wanted to look elsewhere for a large home and yard, which we had, and we kept repeating, no, we want to look only at Old Town and by history, like my husband's historical appointment.

Of course, after several days, we came across our dollhouse, as our teenage son calls it. This block of homes gave and continues to give us history, which we live through every day as we work, shop, and worship right in our neighborhood. Living here takes me back to school when we tried to learn our American history, but actually we live it here every day. And we're blessed that we share this with family and friends who visit us quite often and impressed with the neighborhood. We're right a couple blocks in . . . our house, quiet church, big house, the renting house, we all know this.

We purchased our house in 1995. We've been given the responsibility and guardianship to protect and preserve the last remaining block of Old Town and history. We gladly accepted this guardianship and responsibility, and we will continue to fight for our future generations. Therefore, I oppose the demolition, an addition to said property. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

JUAN VASQUEZ: I am her husband.

CHAIRMAN: Oh, good evening.

JUAN VASQUEZ: And I'm here strictly as a homeowner, as my said, Terry, that we live at 317 North St. Asaph. One of the things we do oppose the permit to demolish. The one thing I wanted to clarify about our house is in the applicants' report, they noted that we have an addition, but that it's grandfathered. It was grandfathered back in 18, if you look at the applicants' maps from Sanborn, we had a one-room addition that was built at the rear of our house back in 1896 when it was a grocery store.

If it hadn't been for this event tonight, we would not have known that our house was a grocery store at one time, so we're glad and proud of the fact that at one time, it served the community as a grocery store, at least from 1891 through, and I saw a permit, repair permit, as late as 1922.

But having said that, it continued to be a grocery store, but you know what's important is that the, really the historical footprint is still there. You know, as the staff report states, it's there. And what I wanted to point out is that the public walkway that's

next to our house, it's a very different part, walkway. You know, I may call it an alley, but the city bricked it. As a rezone, we have lots of visitors, I mean, people that walk through that walkway, and they, the addition, if they built this addition, would be clearly visible from that walkway.

And now seen, I've personally seen people, and you can tell when they're tourists as opposed to our . . . workers or, you know, our regular residents from the area, I've seen tourists come to the back of our house and walk behind the houses and take pictures of this historical footprint.

Now my wife and I have walked as a result of this through a lot of alleys recently in Old Town, and we have of them, but not, and everywhere we saw, there's nothing quite similar to this historic footprint of these five houses. And we urge the Board to please preserve this for future generations.

And one thing I would also point out is we have lots of buses that pass the, you know, the Gray Line buses that pass right in front of our houses and look at our houses. And they always stop right in front of our houses there, and one of these days, I'm going to take that Gray Line tour and see what complimentary things they're saying about our houses. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Next speak, please.

SCHAFFER: Hello. My name is Billie Schaffer. And my husband and I live at 327 North St. Asaph for the past 22 years. We've always been so incredibly proud of our block. Where other homes had been altered, we have not. Where other homes have lost their character, we have not. We are part of about five homes that share the footprint as they did in the 1850s. And not only do we share our footprint, but we also enjoy a wonderful amount of open space, which is a definite part of our historic character.

In my first photo is the rear view of the five row houses starting with 319 and ending with 327. My second photo, thank you, is the rear view of the same row houses on opposite sides, and get a clear look and you can see the blue, which used to be the grocery store. We find it charming. As you can see, these five homes do share the same footprint, and demolishing and/or encapsulating 323 will forever destroy the character of our five row houses as well as the character of our neighborhood.

The 300 block of North St. Asaph is in close proximity to the Lee Homes, Christ Church, Gatsby Tavern, George Washington's town home, and the Carlisle house. And because we are in such good company, we enjoy a great deal of foot traffic, not only from our residents who are often accompanied by their dog, but also from the tourists who come complete with maps, cameras, and questions. The back as well as the front of our five town homes are highly visible to the foot traffic of Old Town.

Number, number three thank you. You've been hearing a lot about this. Okay. This is a photo of the public walkway, alley between 317 and 315 North St. Asaph. This alley crosses Pitt and ends at Royal. It's well traveled by both residents and tourists.

And number four, thank you, Peter. This is a view of the proposed demolition site from the public walkway and/or alley.

Number five, please, Peter. Thank you. This is a photo of the intersection of Princess Street and North St. Asaph. Princess Street is one of the two cobblestone streets in Old Town, and I must say it is a magnet for every tourist.

Number six, please, thank you. Okay. As you continue on Princess Street, and you will look to the right, you can see the back of the five row houses, and in clear view is the proposed demolition site.

And number seven, please, thank you. Interesting. My last photo is very unique, as we believe that our town houses are. It is a view of the passageway between 325 and 323 North St. Asaph. And you will notice, if you look really carefully, you will see where the house ends and any addition will begin. Also from, okay, any alteration of our footprint will forever destroy our historic significance. We chose to live in Old Town, not for the size of our home, but for its character. And if we change the character, we no longer live in the place that we chose. I find that ironic.

And I do want to make a comment about the architects made a comment about no one of any importance has ever lived in our homes, ergo we are not important. I do not follow that at all. I believe that every person on this earth makes a difference. And if one person is missing, there can be a great hole. So I think that we're important people, and I hope there will always continue to be important people that will protect it for the next generation. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

WILLIAMS: My name is John Williams. And I am Billie's wife.

CHAIRMAN: Billie's wife?

WILLIAMS: And I'll try not to repeat anything she said. I do take issue with a couple of things, but I had to say . . .

CHAIRMAN: You're Mr. Billie Schaffer, is that what you . . .

WILLIAMS: If you would like, if that's easier for you, sure, but, no, the name is John Williams. Adams made a statement that he believes there's nothing original to these buildings anymore, that they were replaced in the 1960s. We all know that the Seaport Development Corporation and another corporation called the Old Alexandria Restoration, Inc., redid most of this block back in 1965.

They did not raze these houses. These houses were basically standing, and they replaced the siding. A lot of the original roofs are still on there. If you any work on these houses, you see that there's a lot of the original house is still there. We have original pine, excuse me, random width floors that are original to the house, so these houses are were not new in 1965. They were lovingly restored on the original footprint at that time.

As my wife said, we've lived here for 22 years, and we've both felt honored and humbled to be a trustee of these tiny, little antiques, as my mother used to call them. We love the open space at the rear of the house with these mature trees. We have

watched the neighborhood change over the years with new houses across the street, the old jail being torn down and replaced with town houses.

But our elite little block has stayed the same. Our little houses are sit in the same footprints they were on the day that they were built back a decade before the Civil War. They are modest houses built by modest people for modest people. To change and enlarge them, I believe, would be a travesty.

Correct me if I'm wrong, but I think we're here tonight to discuss the issuing of a certificate of appropriateness. I can see in no way is this proposed addition appropriate. This addition would add mass to the house, which is out of character with the historic district, and particularly as well . . .

CHAIRMAN: John, John, we're speaking only of the demolition.

WILLIAMS: I'm sorry. I only have one more thing to say then. We ask this Board to help protect one of the oldest and most unique blocks in Old Town from massive construction that would destroy what you and your predecessors have worked so many years to preserve. Thank you, gentlemen, for your time.

CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Next speaker, please.

HAYDEN: Good evening, gentlemen. My name is Nancy Hayden. And I moved into the red house at 321 North St. Asaph one week ago. The first I heard of any of this was several days after I was able to unpack my boxes, which was three or four days ago. And I don't really know whether to say I'm opposed or against, I just want to tell you what I'm for for myself.

I signed a lease agreement on this house in particular because I'm embarking on three years here of very intense work that's of a national security nature. I have very high clearances and do very, well, high-stress work for the government. And at the same time, I'm starting a Ph.D. program at night at the University of Maryland, having gotten both of my children off to college.

And I chose this instead of places that cost much less because of the quietness of the neighborhood, the historic value of the neighborhood, and what appeared to me a perfect setting for me to come home to each night and be able to do my studies, to enjoy the garden in the back, to walk quietly, and shop in a nice neighborhood. And that's what I'm hoping to have for the next three years for a fairly substantial rental price on this property.

And I have not been approached about access to my property. I would support giving anyone access to my property. I have a small dog and some valuables I brought with me that I don't intend to share with a construction crew. And I find everyone in the neighborhood entirely charming, both, on both sides of it, but I do intend to live the next three years in peace and quiet, if I could, in this historic neighborhood. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Next speaker, please.

KESTER: Mr. Chairman and Members of the Board, my name is John Kester. I live at 313 North St. Asaph Street, a few doors up from the proposed changes. I guess I,

Ms. Wiley earlier in one of the matters before the Board said she lived in Old Town 37 years, although she moved around. I have her beat by a year. I've been here for 38 years, and I never moved around. I've been in the same house on St. Asaph Street since that time.

And I've also had the honor of serving on the Board of . . . Appeals of Alexandria, so I know what it's like to sit late at night with a long docket, and I will try to keep my remarks short. I understand that the Board is trying to confine the current discussion to demolition, and I'm going to try to do that. I filed a very long letter. I'm not going to repeat what I said in the letter.

I will quote, as Mr. Hynan quoted from the staff report on this subject. He quote some of the words, the very words I had intended to call the Board's attention. A couple others are in the staff report it says in recommending denial, it says what has remained a constant is the essential volumetric configuration of these houses and that granting the application would result in an unacceptable loss of historic architectural fabric and form.

The rest of my remarks, I think, I think I'll try to confine to Mr. Adams' presentation. He referred to a very large packet of materials, more than 100 pages, which came in, I guess it was filed with the Board on Friday. I had a chance to read it yesterday. I didn't have a chance to respond to it in writing.

I would just, I'd like to point out a couple things about that packet of materials that kind of leapt out at me. First of all is they sidestepped the central issue of historic value here. The report itself or rather the submission itself says, and I quote, during its approximate 150-year life, the building has been altered, but it retains its original footprint, close quote. And the alterations that Mr. Adams talked about, as you can, the pictures speak for themselves, you can see, these buildings have not been turned into . . . items or something like that. These are the buildings as they were.

With respect to vegetation, the materials that the applicants submitted late on Friday talk about the very large tree, I don't know how high it is, 50, 60, 70 feet, which is one of several trees back there. And their own submission says this proposal is going to kill the tree, except they don't say it in those words.

What they say is that the proposal, quote, would most likely result in acceleration of the tree's demise, close quote, which is, I think that what that's saying is it's like say, well, we're all going to die sometime. So if I shoot you, I'm simply accelerating your demise.

With respect, and the solution on the tree is they're going to buy a new one. I don't think that the Merry Field Garden Shop or any others that I know of around here stock trees like that. Water and drainage, the materials admit that there's going to be an addition to the water problem. They say, okay, buy a pump, and we'll pump it all out in the front gutter. I can tell the front gutter overflows now.

CHAIRMAN: Can you please keep your comments to the demolition?

KESTER: Well, I took it . . .

CHAIRMAN: I understand.

KESTER: I took it Mr. Adams was putting all that in the record, and I just don't want it to go by too easily.

CHAIRMAN: All right.

KESTER: But let me go back to some of these other remarks. He began by talking about this supposed cooperation and efforts to please the neighbors, and all that said, nobody invited me to any meetings. I don't think many of us were invited. Many of us didn't learn about this until we saw something posted on the house, and this has been kicking around, I gather, for a long time.

Mr. Adams said that this is not quite what they had thought about a year ago, which it sounded to me like he was saying if you think this is bad, you should see what we started out planning to do. And then he describes it, his words, he says this is a modest proposal.

Well, the Members of the Board may recognize that phrase, a modest proposal, because it was a phrase first popularized by Jonathan Swift when he was satirically suggesting with the way to get rid of the population problem in Ireland was to eat the children.

The alterations to these houses were not significant, as I say, they were to the interior for the most part. Then the references to the fabric of the houses, it says it's not the same fabric. I'm not sure what that means. If it means that the old doors aren't there anymore, well, that's certainly true. Lumber doesn't last that long.

But he then says that, well, the materials start out with a rather surprising quote from an old 1960 zoning case in Alexandria, which referred to these houses as being in dilapidated condition. It was simply a passing remark by the court at that time. It had nothing to do what the case was about. Well, in 1960, I was here in the 1960s. These houses in 1960 were in dilapidated condition, and then they were carefully restored, which is how they got to be what they are today. I mean, this denigration of the houses that we live in, I think, is entirely inappropriate.

Mr. Adams said that, and this is, I think, the quote that disturbed me the most, he said there's nothing significant that has happened in this house, close quote. And as Billie Schaffer pointed out, first of all, and you can pretty much say anything, is significant if a human being lived there.

But the history of these houses, as their own materials show, are that these were houses that were the homes of freed African slaves before the Civil War, and the homes of liberated African-Americans after the 14th Amendment. This is where common people, poor people, working people lived.

We've got the grand Lord Fairfax house right on our street, a block away. And we've got the Robert E. Lee boyhood home a block in the other direction. And those houses are carefully preserved in their honor, and important live there, but I would suggest these houses were lived in by important people too, and that that ought to be taken into account.

And whether something happened in this house or whether it's going to become a shrine, in my Mr. Adams' words, if that's the new standard for preserving houses in the city of Alexandria's old historic district, then I think there aren't going to be very

many left standing . . . it's late. I could go on for quite awhile, but you can be grateful that I won't, so unless the Board has any questions . . .

CHAIRMAN: That's, thank you very much.

KESTER: I'll sit down.

CHAIRMAN: Any other people who want to speak on this issue? Now let's keep on coming forward.

RONAY: Good evening.

CHAIRMAN: Good evening.

RONAY: My name is Thor Ronay. And I'm a 22-year resident of Old Town's historic district. I live at 328 North Pitt, the second home I've owned in our town . . . strong opposition to the proposed destruction and expansion, which will occur at the back of my house.

Like many Old Towners, my neighbors here tonight, I chose to live here because of Old Town's charm and ambiance, which has improved over recent decades through the effort and choices of professional preservationists on Boards such as this and dedicated residents.

Accordingly, property values have improved as has the quality of shops, restaurants, and other commercial investments. This shows that small indeed can be valuable and preservation can sustain vitality. People are attracted to Old Town for these charms.

I chose my current home for its bright southern exposure and for the great green open space of the inner block, a sort of secret sanctuary for all who adjoin it. It is full of light, particularly in the afternoon, and home to 40- and 50-foot trees, including a beautiful magnolia, which I delight in seeing year round and from each of my 9 windows facing south and west towards the proposed expansion. I can sit in the peaceful quiet of my rear patio. I'm insulated from streets and traffic and enjoy this open expanse of sky and greenery far removed from my daily work in counterterrorism with its existential threats and its quite unpleasant surprises.

Completing the picture, framing it really, the wonderful story to 1800s homes known as Hulfish Row on the tour bus, unaltered in their essentials for going on two centuries, indeed attempting to re-label one of them as a, quote, 1960s house is a sophistry which requires no further comments.

All of these houses have open yards, towering trees, lazy fences, an occasional gazebo. It is one of the few and finest open blocks in the northeast quadrant and certainly with the most historic . . . has mentioned by the north's only cobble street by a block from the . . . of the Fairfax homes and more than half of the entire block square is . . . this is Old Town life at its best.

Presumably, we could all afford to live elsewhere with more land, expansive drives, towering edifices, Palladian windows, festoons with balconettes in the current fashion, but we choose to live here. To do so, to do our part, along with the you as

stewards to ensure that Old Town will here as it is, it's best to know that it's preserved for our enjoyment and out of those who follow.

People who crave modern expansiveness have plenty of places nearby, Great Falls, for instance, in which to spend their life's plans. An historic row block in Old Town is not the place for this sort of thing. Along with my . . . my neighbors, I was astonished to learn that all of this, the magnolia and the sycamore trees and the light flowing in all day, and the quiet, open space we share, the peace and privacy of our gardens, all of this is threatened with the sudden elimination by what is the 19th century terms in the town housing.

We have, it has never occurred to me that this clean row of houses, wonderful inner block of greenery, this open view and sanctuary could be so suddenly altered in one rip of destruction and construction that is being considered, eliminating trees, killing root systems of others, taking away so much of the view and light of so many neighbors, endangering the water table, threatening the structural integrity and probably altering the line of view of this block as it is now fully settled.

This aberration came as a shock to most of us, as you heard, including our newest neighbors who chose this block as the perfect quiet sanctuary for their newly arriving baby, imagine their surprise. Virtually the entire affect neighborhood opposes this, as I hope you will if you lived in our homes.

The bill, particularly as outlined by my neighbors, the structural moderate risk cannot be fully determined without major in-depth analysis, but could be life altering and prohibitively expensive for those to . . . and specific environment, and not every damage is easily remediable nor should we have to suffer the risk. In my own case, instead of looking out a bedroom, dining room, or library windows to see birds and branches . . . 10 or 15 feet away, I instead would see first destruction and then two solid stories of construction, four windows, and a metal roof.

CHAIRMAN: Well, we're talking about demolition here.

RONAY: Well, that's all I have to say about the proposed obstruction of view that will result from the demolition. My computer's simulated light shows such as that conjured up by the proposers alters this reality. The dying of the light is real, obvious . . . with eyes and sense, and so too is, as the staff points out, is the loss of historic integrity. Enjoyment of my home will for me be vastly diminished, along with its value. Clearly, the vast majority adjoining feel the same.

The question is not how much is left open. The question is how much is being taken away and from how many. We are ambassadors, judges, analysts, attorneys, and artists. We have all manner of views, backgrounds, and skills, and we are united on this matter after a detail and prolonged study.

I urge you to reject this plan and thus ensure that the implicit social compact between Old Town and its residents, between the past and the future is honored and not vitiated by sort of shell game recruitment, pop-up additions, and disappearing trees as if in some bad construction company hustle.

CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

RONAY: This is about the rights of many and about the common good, which is our heritage and our change. This is Old Town. If we go down the path of such . . . the . . . has set for a row of town houses in place of Hulfish Road, and not only on our block, but all over town, we may have the loss of trees, air, space, and . . . the secret places and open ambience that make this our town, we'll be getting for speculators and expansionists of all manner and intent. Simply our way of life will be . . . surely, you don't want to move in this direction, and so a decision before is as simple as it is for we who live here. This must be denied. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN: Thank you, thank you.

CRABTREE: Hi. Good evening.

CHAIRMAN: Good evening.

CRABTREE: My name is Kristin Crabtree. And I've been asked to read a statement on behalf of Elaine LaMontagne, who owns the red house, number 321 North St. Asaph. Member of the BAR, I own a town house attached directly to the 323 property. Therefore, my property is the most impacted by the proposed demolition. I have followed the development of this proposal closely. They have shared their plans with me at every stage and have listened to and responded to my concerns thoughtfully, reasonably, and quickly.

I am familiar with the plan that they are presenting tonight and know for those results of careful design and development. More importantly for me, I'm concerned how the denial of this request will affect what I can do with my property in the future. The staff report seems to suggest that I will never be allowed to add or significantly change my house. I have no plans to make changes, but may in future years.

My request is that the Board considers the merits of the proposed design. I like the design that maintains the integrity of the historical environment. I do not believe that the construction will have detrimental structural impacts on the adjoining properties. I strongly approve, support its approval. Elaine LaMontagne.

CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Anyone else care to speak?

TERESINSKI: I'm sorry. My husband will kill me if I don't make this point. Like I said, we live in the green house, and our concern with the demolition was the impact it would have on our property. And as actually the last speaker said, we did speak with Laurie and Carl, and they were very responsive to our questions, but any concern that we had about the impact that the demolition would have on our property, we referred to their architect. And we didn't think that the architect who worked on their behalf would necessarily be a good proponent of our interests.

When we consulted with a structural engineer this weekend, we were told that the only way we could ensure that there were no, there's no inherent damage done to our property because we're on the other side of the red house is to, for them to, as they're doing a demolition, separately shore up and prop up, stabilize our home while

they're doing. And that to me is a huge sacrifice to ask of us who have no plans for an addition, no plans, and derive absolutely no benefit and actually suffer for their plans.

CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

TERESINSKI: So thank you.

RON RIGBY: My name is Ron Rigby. I'm here with my wife, Hazel.

HAZEL RIGBY: We're trying to save you time.

RON RIGBY: We're, to give you a location, we live at 330 North Pitt. We have a view that comes off of North Pitt, but we back onto Princess Street. We are directly facing the alley where all of the construction material would be. It's about five or six yards from the front of our house, so we're directly in front or behind, depending on however you're looking north or south, of the, all the construction material for the demolition. Now I have a number of notes that I that I wanted to make. I'm going to limit it to the demolition.

CHAIRMAN: Please.

RON RIGBY: The, it's difficult to speak against this because we know the applicants. We like them, but we strongly disagree with what they're trying to do in terms of demolishing this particular structure. I would certainly speak in favor the historical position, which is we have a footprint that should not be dealt with.

And I'm particularly interested in the commented by the individual who owns and is now leasing that is now living in the red house because the indication there is exactly what my concern is. This demolishing allowed, what is going to be demolished next? The footprint is gone forever, and all the other houses at some later now have a precedent for establishing an additional loss of a footprint. I think the demolishing ruins the footprint. That's the demolishing aspect. We strongly oppose.

CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

HAZEL RIGBY: I would just like to mention that we are an original owner in the group of town houses, and our address is 330 North Pitt Street. We connect directly to Mr. Ronay's house. He did a beautiful job of telling you what the demolition would do. And he said the back of his house. It is exactly the front of our house that would be within five feet of probably a year's reconstruction.

And I understand the demolition will, the applicants are moving out of their house. Well, we can't move out of our house. We would be there with that. I have, we have lived here for 34 years in the same house. My name is Hazel Rigby. I taught at T.C. Williams for 30 years . . . has changed considerably since we lived here. I want to live a neighborhood where the poor and the working class have availability to housing and where the historic nature of it exists.

In my definition of the demolition, this little house would be an incredible loss for our neighborhood, along with the friendliness and the enjoyability that we've had here for 34 years. And I know this is not the first time that Billie and John have alerted us to dangers in our neighborhood of historic and preservation concepts taken from us. We have worked with them over the years to protect this. I would like that to continue. I strongly am opposed to this demolition. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Thank you very much. Is there any more speakers?

BOSELY: Yes.

CHAIRMAN: All right. Duncan, there's one behind you.

BLAIR: Okay.

CHAIRMAN: Come ahead, please.

BOSELY: Mr. Chairman, Members of the Board, my name is Dale Bosely. My wife and I live across the street from this property at 370 North St. Asaph Street and are on the other side of this issue. It sounds, I deeply respect and was just visited by one of the commentators who took issue with the letter that we wrote to the Board on August 23rd, but we deeply respect their positions and opposition.

It seems like much of the conversation that's gone on here, despite your urgings, Mr. Chairman, has been with regard to the application approved for the new structure, which is not before us here, and I just wanted to address the demolition and make a couple of comments with regard to the architect's comments and focus, relate them to the study that was done by staff here.

It seems that the whole focus of the demolition and the disapproval of it is based on the question of historical significance, not significance, mere significance. We recognize that everybody is significant, and all these houses are significant, and not the just fact that they're wonderful homes for people who have lived in them, in some cases, for many, many years. But that does not sound like it's issue before this Board. The issue is whether the changes and demolition are going to affect the historic significance.

And as the architect stated, the footprint to begin with of the house that Ms. Lowe and Mr. Gudenius would care to alter, he said has already had a sleeping porch or some kind of extension of the back that probably because of poor construction had been demolished.

The footprint, if he is correct, and I have no reason to think he's not, the footprint has already been altered from what it had previously been, and to some extent, that footprint would only be restored by the addition of the, by the demolition and then the addition of the, the addition that's already been approved.

Secondly, the architect pointed out that the historic fabric simply does not exist. There was a comment about how these homes were all restored, and this home in particular was restored in the last '60s and 1970s. But that's not what Dr. Smith says in his comment. The word he uses is remodel, which is quite different from restored, at least in my understanding of architectural building.

And I can now appreciate the adjacent homeowners would be consumed about demolishing/restoration. The demolishing/remodeling that was done in the '60s and '70s in this particular house, not addressing any of the others, it seems to me, is not a matter of doing away with anything that's historically significant.

Third, the proposal here, which is rejected for demolition, goes on to say in terms of historical significance, that the bay window on the back of the house, which is quite prominent in the photograph, is, in the words of the staff, a prominent visual feature that was installed by the previous homeowner in the late 1970s, apparently a direct and conscious violation of the requirements of the historic district ordinance. And a violation of that nature and significance in itself does not seem to be reasons to be preserving that particular feature in the interests of historic preservation.

It just seems that the logic of the BAR Case 22 argues it jumps rather dramatically from what sounds like support for demolition to a conclusion that there should be no demolition on the basis of six criteria for historic significance, which do not seem to be borne out in the commentary. And since that's to the extent of our comments here tonight with regard to demolition, I would urge that the demolition be allowed if the Board will allow the project to go forward. Thank you, Sir.

CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Mr. Duncan, your letter . . .

BLAIR: Thank you. It's interesting, you look at the picture behind is referred frequently, and you talk about the character of Old Town, I think I can say something about the character of Old Town. I've lived here 55 years. The recent years, I have lived outside of the old and historic district, but have spent my entire career in the old and historic district, and I think I know the streets and alleys very well.

The character of Old Town, in my opinion, is that it has evolved as a community. It has not been stagnant. Older buildings were adaptively reused. Traditionally, buildings that aren't reused become obsolete. Once they become obsolete, they fall into disrepair. The quote from . . . case is very true. These buildings were very simple buildings that were not in good repair.

My parents taught Sunday School at St. Paul's. They used to walk their class to the 600 block of St. Asaph Street, showing how poor people lived. I doubt today that anyone in the 600 block of South St. Asaph Street would like to be referred as a neighborhood where poor people lived that they were shown in poverty.

Those houses have been restored. Houses in Old Town have been restored. Lisa Smith is a friend of mine. We talked to her in North Carolina about this particular house. This building was Old Town restored. There is very little original fabric. The original fabric, when you look at your charge, is a lot about this.

Demolition has gone through an evolution. I think this case is maybe the culmination of this evolution. The evolution is a change from potentially chapter four, Demolition of Existing Structures of your design guidelines. I'm not going to quote the historic preservation that I did before in another case. But this reads, and these are the official design guidelines of the city.

The Board, the Boards because this relates to Parker . . . as well as the old restore, the Boards are extremely conscious of the need to preserve the existing building resources of the historic district. At the same time, the Boards are sympathetic

to the needs of building owners to make contemporary 20th century use of a property. It is the policy of the Boards that the absolute minimum demolition of the existing structure takes place.

For example, in the case of a rear addition, the Boards prefer that the amount of demolition be limited to that necessary to accommodate access to the addition rather than the wholesale demolition and replacement of the rear façade. In this case, that could be debated, this part of the certificate of appropriateness, but I think the policy of the Board has been adapted for use. Buildings expand. They evolve over history. That's the character of the building.

The White House would be quite different if it didn't expand. So would the Capitol. So would most every house in Old Town. Bud was not trying to belittle when he talked about his opposites. They were very simple similar houses, but they were about to evolve, adaptively reused as houses of now Bud's office. The one I look at is 400 block of South Lee Street, small houses, English gardens, some of them much shallower lots. Some have additions, and some don't.

The 100 block of Queen Street, what everyone looks at is an indenture's house, very small houses, teeny houses allowed to evolve. And I think that when we look at the decision to demolish, we have to look at the precedent. We have to look at the character of the city, and the way the city will continue to evolve.

We're not talking about wholesale demolitions that could have happened before Lisa Smith and Polly Hulfish took shells and made them into Old Town. And when they did that, it became the character of Old Town. And I think it would be unfortunate if that character was lost.

We looked at the Parker Gray district where buildings have continued to be evolved. And I think that character, what you see, in Old Town and Parker Gray the gentrification, I think, is a major question, but I don't think anyone would say that the architectural evolution of those buildings is detrimental to the character of the Parker Gray district.

Again, I think it's fundamental character. It's a major policy decision. I'm not sure that decision would be made here or elsewhere, but I think that as you sit back and look at demolition, you need to look at the criteria, and you need to look at the fabric of the community and make a decision. And with that, I'll be glad to answer questions.

CHAIRMAN: Thank you. That closes the public portion of this hearing. And now we will comment up here. Anybody want to jump in? This has been an interesting application. I've been amazed by the response from the community. I've been amazed by the lack of response from Old Town Civic. That's surprising. And I'm surprised at the member of our State Legislature who sends a letter on both sides of the issue. That's a real politician, I think. That's a first for us.

Anyway, I'll make a couple of comments. Bud, you mentioned other rows of houses. You don't have to respond. You mentioned other rows of houses that have, they're small . . . sense, re-indigenous properties, wherein additions were allowed by this Board. And in some cases, they have evolved, and there are lots of additions. The rear of those houses is not the same as it was.

This particular situation, to my knowledge, is the last row of five houses where the form has not changed since they were originally built. I take that as admission

myself because when this one goes, they'll all be gone. There won't be anymore. We won't have the advantage of seeing what it was like.

And that's the comment here. And you said some modest additions, you were talking about, we got . . . addition, but this thing is not modest at 33%. But that's, well, I'm thinking that it isn't. Staff is going to ring my bell in a minute. But anyway, that's my comment for the moment, I did want to say.

MAN: I also want to commend that the neighbors and others for very well thought out and helpful comments on both sides. It doesn't make our job any easier, but it certainly gives us a lot more information. I have to sort of reiterate what the Chairman had said maybe from a little bit of a different perspective.

The, certainly it's the right of a property owner to do whatever he or she wants with their property within the guidelines of zoning and the other requirements, and Old Town, you have the Boards of Architectural Review and the guidelines and everything else. Our job and the reason we're put up here and volunteer to do this is to maintain those guidelines, which are basically to maintain the historic character of the old and historic district.

The, and that takes a lot of different forms, and shapes, and exceptions to rules, and a little bit here, and a little bit there that's sort of the nature of what a Board does. If we had to follow strict criteria, or standards, or guidelines, you wouldn't need us. You just check off the boxes, and this is one of those cases. And I've spent a lot of time at the site and did a lot of, read everything that came in, listened to everybody. And my conclusion is that it's the public accessibility to the rear of that site that is the turning point, at least in my decision.

In other words, because of the alley that was referred to, the fact that it's highly visible from Princess Street that you can see it from the alley that comes in, and the reference to the buses and the people taking pictures and everything, that the backs of those houses, which we all say is just an unbelievable and very precious part of Old Town, is the historic nature of what we're trying to protect. And, therefore, I could not support any demolition to go on that row of houses, so I support the staff recommendation.

CHAIRMAN: Mr. Keleher.

KELEHER: We have to deal with demolition and encapsulation, and we're always going to every meeting we have. And this is a very unique situation. I feel that because we are talking about just not one house, we're talking about five, it's almost as if we would somehow destroy, encapsulate the whole atmosphere of five houses as opposed to one.

And I feel that this, I want that alley a lot. I look down there a lot. And I would be really very unhappy with the, an alteration to that vista as you look down behind all those alleys behind all those houses. It's a very, very pretty sight, but one addition to the back of those houses would severely alter the atmosphere of all the rest.

CHAIRMAN: Wayne.

NEALE: As I looked through the booklet that was submitted to us, which contained responses to issues concerning this project, I flipped through the Sanborn maps that were here, and it kind of reminded me of the urban design Flaherty studies, courses I took when I was back in college. It reminded of the principle of town planning called Accretian, and Accretian means that a town starts with one building, and then two buildings, and then three buildings, and so on, and eventually grows into a town or city.

And Alexandria was platted in, I think, 1749 into a grid of streets divided into quarter blocks with the intention that a house would be built on each quarter of a block. And over time, those blocks were partitioned into 8ths, and 16ths, and 32nds, and so on, and so we ended up with the pattern of lots that we have today.

Within the lots, houses were built, usually one single mass that was added onto by another mass, either in the front or in the back, and they evolved over time, and for very good reasons because people's lifestyles changed. They need more space. They need less space. They need different space than what they have.

And you flip through these Sanborn maps, you can see a pattern of that kind of pyramid of the box. And it's true of every block in Old Town, to my knowledge, and has been done with regularity over the years. It's controlled by zoning. Zoning controls the size of building, the footprint of building, the building envelope to protect us.

And I think it's the duty of this Board to, within the context of design, adjudicate the masses of the buildings that are created. And these houses are entitled to expansion just as any other property in Old Town is. And I think that to deny them simply because they come late to the process is an injustice. And, therefore, I would support the demolition.

CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Dr. Fitzgerald.

FITZGERALD: I think I've been on the Board quite awhile, and I must say I think this is the best-argued case on both sides of the issue that I've come across, and it makes it a very difficult decision because this is not a quick issue. I will say that I wish that all of the people who oppose this demolition will show up when we hear the issue in the . . . development on South Washington Street and be as impassioned as you are tonight because that's going to be a big issue. That's getting off the track.

But anyway, I totally agree with the applicants. Every, they've answered really every issue that has been raised by the opposition. I think the Foundation's not a problem. The tree will dry(?) whether you build it or not. The house has been altered, and so you can, you know, there's not much original fabric back there. But that said, but to me, the key issue is the mass of that building.

And, yes, if you added an addition to that building, it would not destroy very much original fabric in the back of the building, but it would destroy the overall, that overall building basically. And as has been pointed, it is pretty much unique in Old Town. And if you go back there, as I think we all did, and I did, I went back several times because it was I wanted to really be clear on how I stood on this, and it is, it's kind of magical spot back there. You know, the trees, and it's just that I can really see why the neighbors are so passionate about it because it really is kind of a little oasis.

And so as Mr. Neale said, yes, people have the right to add on, and it's too bad that for the applicants anyway that it wasn't added on 50 years ago. But nevertheless, it

is still there, and we as a Board are charged with preserving Old Town, and this is the last area like that.

And so though I feel that the applicants made an excellent presentation and under normal circumstances almost any other situation, it would be a no-brainer. In this case, it's a unique building, yet, no, not the back of the building, but the whole environment. And so I would uphold the staff recommendation for denial.

CHAIRMAN: Mr. Spencer.

SPENCER: This is, first, I'd like to thank both sides for putting together a well-put together argument on both sides. And as previously said, this does not make the decision any easier. To me, this is, this project or this proposal demolition is not really about the destroying of the fabric of the buildings because these building have been altered, but it's more about destroying the fabric of a community. If you walk around this site, I agree with my colleagues that this is a magic place. It does feel special. Walking around Old Town, there are lots of little special places that you would destroy the vista, the views in this area. So for me, I could not support this.

CHAIRMAN: . . . Mr. Smeallie.

SMEALLIE: I'd like to make a motion to approve the staff recommendations for denial with the application.

CHAIRMAN: Is there a second?

KELEHER: Second.

CHAIRMAN: Call the question, please.

MAN: . . .

MAN: Mr. Spencer.

SPENCER: Aye.

MAN: Dr. Fitzgerald.

FITZGERALD: Aye.

MAN: Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN: Aye.

MAN: Mr. Smeallie.

SMEALLIE: Aye.

MAN: Mr. Keleher.

KELEHER: Aye.

MAN: Mr. Neale.

NEALE: No.

MAN: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN: I assume we'll be seeing you again, perhaps on television. Next item, please.

MAN: Mr. Chairman, that's the end of discussion of dockets because we didn't approve the necessary demolition to proceed then to the certificate of appropriateness, and so now we could turn now to other business.

CHAIRMAN: Ladies and gentlemen, would you all clear the room, please? We've got a little business to do here. Thank you. Now let's try this again.

MAN: What I said was that since we didn't approve the necessary demolition, we won't hear the certificate of appropriateness application. So just to turn to other business, I've just got basically one thing is to remind the Board that in November, there's only one meeting because the second meeting . . . before Thanksgiving, which I assume nobody wants to do. So we are not meeting the first Wednesday. It's the second Wednesday, which is the 14th. And one meeting is the 14th, and it's the second Wednesday, not the first or the third.

CHAIRMAN: Oh, the 13th.

MAN: Right. It's the one before Thanksgiving.

CHAIRMAN: Okay.

MAN: It was on the calendar, I mean, it was on the schedule we gave you previously, but just to remind you that's what we're doing.

CHAIRMAN: Okay. We have a lot of stuff coming in here?

MAN: We just did the docket today for the next meeting in two weeks by the 17th, and that's not a particularly docket. It's not as big as this one.

CHAIRMAN: Okay. Could you, please, in your first official act . . . and you can shout at them if you want.

MAN: And then Ms. Lowe's got a couple of things, but I just wanted to say one thing. We have told the Board this before. I would just like to remind you to tell the applicant that on a project, they can come back in two weeks is very tough.

CHAIRMAN: I understand.

MAN: Basically, in order for us to try . . . docket around, we need the material then two or three other . . . following, and if we get through the night, the architect on the project basically has four working days. That's Thursday, Friday, Monday, and Tuesday before he needs to get it back.

So, I mean, realistically, I mean, it's a month, and two weeks is not, it would be just because of the way we work in terms of time, we have to get everything turned around. A two-week turnaround is, the applicant may sound fine to, I mean, to the actual persons, to the person trying to do the design work. There's a lot of decisions that have got to be made within four days, and it's very tough, especially when you change materials, for example.

CHAIRMAN: Yeah, sorry.

MAN: And in addition, as Mr. Smith said, Dr. Smith said that the report would have to go out to Friday with all the materials. And also, sometimes they require a review by, particularly in this issue, people are making comments about drainage and things, and it has to go to Transportation and their engineers. They have a standard backlog of their projects as well.

CHAIRMAN: Jill(?) will get the thing from Old Town Civic today.

MAN: No, no, we . . .

MAN: We have not.

CHAIRMAN: Yeah, and it's about after the fact, and how we stop it, well, as you know, we've tried to, they talk about severe fines, and we tried to give a serious fine to one situation that the City Council said, oh, you don't want this to be punitive, so, you know, that didn't work out too well.

They also suggest, and it might be a good suggestion, that we perhaps and try a new method or something more forceful in notifying people if they need to come before us. I talked to people, the fellow who presented things of importance today, he called me, and I said all of you involved in this project know you need approval.

MAN: But as you recall . . .

CHAIRMAN: Well, he said, no, he said it was just replacement in kind, and this, and that, and the other, and he's an attorney, and he researched it, and he said, you know, so forth. We really have difficulty with these constant after-the-fact approvals, and there

ought to be some way, and we need to go out to the real estate offices, we can do that again. That's not going to cure the whole thing, but we do need to do that again.

MAN: Agreed . . .

JOHN G. KESTER
313 North Saint Asaph Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

September 27, 2007

Board of Architectural Review
City of Alexandria
City Hall
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Re: BAR No. 2007-0097
BAR No. 2007-0098
323 North Saint Asaph Street

Dear Chairman and Members of the Board:

I am the owner of property at 313 North Saint Asaph Street, where I have lived for thirty-eight years. I write respectfully to oppose the above-noted applications, which seek this Board's approval and authorization to construct a massive and unprecedented new addition to an early Nineteenth Century historic structure, the townhouse at 323 North Saint Asaph Street.

This is the second time that this matter has been docketed before the Board. Applications were first filed May 7, 2007. They were then removed from the docket following several letters of objection from owners of neighboring properties. The applicants now have filed essentially the same applications again, with no substantial changes that would alter the damaging effect of the proposed building on this historic neighborhood.

I. Nature of Proposed Addition.

Applicants seek to expand by more than half the size of their 1850s (or earlier) historic house -- unfortunately to the detriment of it, the neighboring houses, and the Old and Historic District. The applications would authorize the erection of a large addition extending from the rear of the property, presenting a two-story wall next to the

property line of each of the adjacent yards, and removing a central section of what has been an open area for a century and a half.

The existing historic structure occupies a space measuring 16 by 30.1 feet, a "footprint" of 482 square feet. The proposed addition would fill the width of the back yard and extend back for an additional 22 feet -- an added area of 330 square feet, increasing the footprint by 68%, or more than two-thirds. In terms of mass, if measured by net floorspace the proposal (for two stories over a newly dug occupied basement) would increase from the present 1030 square feet to 1984 square feet, adding 92% -- nearly double. However one makes the calculation, the proposed new structure would be very big.

None of the four adjoining houses in this row of five companion dwellings on North Saint Asaph Street is of such size or configuration. No construction remotely resembling this building has been allowed or, insofar as can be determined, ever proposed.

The proposed structure would overshadow the small houses on either side, depriving other properties of light. It would destroy a large tree, many decades old, that lies on the property line. It likely would cause new water drainage problems for these tightly-packed houses, both during construction and afterwards, and possibly foundation damage. With respect to the construction process, the Bureau of Code Enforcement has warned that

"Permission from adjacent property owners is required if access to the adjacent properties is required to complete the proposed construction. Otherwise, a plan shall be submitted to demonstrate the construction techniques utilized to keep construction solely on the referenced property."

No such plan has been provided, and given the tiny spaces involved, it is difficult to see how one ever could be.

In sum, the application seeks to make this small antebellum house much bigger and longer, at the expense of the neighboring historic structures and the character of a fragile and carefully preserved neighborhood.

II. Standards That Must Be Satisfied.

The proposed construction appears irreconcilable with the standards this Board is charged by law to apply.

City Code § 10-105(A)(2) requires this Board to determine appropriateness based upon ten specific standards, including not just architecture, but history, setting, and other factors. Far from satisfying those standards, this application fails nearly all of them. To highlight the most apparent shortcomings:

1. The Code provision in its subsection (a) requires attention to "[o]verall architectural . . . structure, including, but not limited to, the height, mass and scale of buildings or structures" (Emphasis supplied.) The addition proposed here not only would diminish and alter the character and integrity of the existing historic structure at 323 North Saint Asaph Street. Just as importantly, it would loom in the midst of the row of small, equally historic houses of which it occupies the center. Architecturally, it would present the homes on either side with high walls nearly on the property line.

2. The same Code provision in subsection (b) requires the Board to examine "the degree to which the distinguishing original qualities or character of a building, structure or site . . . are retained." (Emphasis supplied.) In this proposal, the original qualities of not just the building, but the site, would be altered forever.

3. Also required to be considered is

"the impact upon the historic setting, streetscape or environs."

Subsection(c) (emphasis supplied). Here the impact could well be devastating. Such a new building would destroy the aspect of the back of this block, both a new and old façades and a charming set of connected open spaces, all of it visible from walkways much used by the public, and often photographed by visitors.

4. The Code further requires in subsection (e) that this Board weigh "[t]he relation to buildings and structures in the immediate surroundings." (Emphasis supplied.) That standard requires rejection of a proposal that would overwhelm this historic row of modest pre-Civil-war houses, adding a structure built to satisfy habits of 2007. The consternation of many who own and live in "structures in the immediate surroundings," discussed below, attests to that.

5. Subsection (g) refers to "[t]he extent to which the building or structure will preserve or protect historic places and areas of historic interest in the city," and subsection (i) reiterates the need for "preservation and protection of historic interest in the city." (Emphasis supplied.) Subsection (j) similarly emphasizes the need for "preservation and protection" in order to attract "students, writers, historians, artists" and "encouraging study and interest in American history" and "educating citizens in American culture and heritage." The Alexandria Archaeology Office's report points out that this almost-miraculously-preserved row of houses is a rarity, a still-standing grouping of modest buildings that included dwellings of free African-American residents of Alexandria in the 1850s, before the Civil War.

6. Finally, the Code's standards in three separate places require attention to whether such construction would be "harmonious with or incongruous with the old and historic aspect of the George Washington Memorial Parkway." Subsection (f); see also subsections (h) and (i). Although these houses do not face directly on the Parkway (Washington Street), they stand only a few dozen feet away. Moreover, they lie right at the foot of the Parkway's intersection with the 600 block of Princess Street,

which is one of the only two cobblestone streets remaining in Old Town and is a magnet for visitors.

III. The Neighborhood.

Surely not many applications the Board receives generate so much, and such overwhelming, opposition from neighboring homeowners. The file as of this writing contains letters from:

Mr. and Mrs. Rigby
330 North Pitt Street:

("Will change the historic nature of the area . . . [c]urrently there is a recognizable and historic similarity to all the houses along that section . . . would do damage to that historic context")

Judge and Mrs. Vasquez
317 North Saint Asaph Street:

("appearance, character and 'footprint' of these historical homes on this block would forever be altered . . . have been in existence since the 1850's without any changes . . . could very well increase the flooding and damage to our homes . . . green space in our neighborhood would forever be altered")

Ms. Critz
307 North Saint Asaph Street:

("The charm is not only from the front, but also from the back . . . From very public walkway . . . there is a completely unobstructed view . . . many times I have seen tourists photograph

the back . . . addition is completely out of character")

Ms. Schaeffer and Mr. Williams
327 North Saint Asaph Street:

("a unique row of five plaqued colonial homes . . . backs of our five town homes are totally visible . . . A three story addition at 323 would block our sunlight and deprive our back rooms of natural light . . . demise of our Dogwood, Holly trees and several shrubs . . . would ruin the open space for all the surrounding yards . . . structural and flooding issues . . . Our particular block is photographed all the time")

Mr. Ballowe
311 North Saint Asaph Street:

("out of character for this historic and beautiful block . . . We chose to live in historic homes -- with their attendant costs and limitations")

Ambassador and Mrs. Campbell
607 Queen Street:

("impact on the entire row of five, fragile, plaqued nineteenth century houses, violating their scale and altering the footprint . . . highly visible to the numerous visitors who now use the pedestrian way")

Mr. and Mrs. Steve
325 North Saint Asaph Street:

("One of the most important factors in choosing . . . our home was the open, unobstructed access to light and air in the back yard . . . building two inches from our property line . . . a two-story wall along our back yard cutting off access to direct sunlight . . . break up the unique open space . . . kill trees . . . worsen flooding . . .

architect has stated that . . .
construction crews will want -- and
need -- access to our property")

Mr. and Mrs. Teresinski
319 North Saint Asaph Street:

("we wanted to have a home in a
neighborhood that was peaceful, . . .
charming (with a historic footprint),
and an open backyard for our child to
enjoy . . . no sooner had we moved in
. . . we discovered that our immediate
neighbors wanted to put up a three
story addition . . . amazement and
shock . . . may cause irreparable
damage to the structural integrity of
our home . . . major disturbance to the
foundation and ground of the structures
attached . . . destroy the historical
footprint of our serene neighborhood
. . . our homes have a unique front and
rear . . . some of the last few . . .
noise and chaos . . . we plan to bring
home our adopted infant . . . at the
same time that construction is to begin
. . . had we known . . . we would have
bought elsewhere").

Dr. Nelson and Dr. Dediac
403 North Saint Asaph Street:

("violates core principles of historic
preservation . . . It would be an ill-
advised and misplaced precedent to
grant, to anyone who might afford it,
the opportunity to expand a home such
that the expansion would intrude both
on neighbors' rights and the city's
historic identity")

As of this writing, three letters in the file support
the construction, one from an owner whose house is
used as a rental property.

This is an unusual outpouring from the residents of this unique corner of Old Town, who are sensitive to standards of appropriateness and historical respect, and who know from living there what this block is like. Their serious assessment deserves the Board's consideration. It is always easier to remain silent. None of us takes any pleasure in speaking against a neighbor's wishes; but many of us have examined the proposal and reluctantly concluded that as responsible stewards of our unique residences and historic setting, we have little choice but to ask this Board not to allow it.

Senator Ticer in a letter to this Board (breaking her usual silence in Board matters), expressed "concerns about this request," including "the loss of light and air and open space to the adjacent properties, the threat of flooding . . . the potential loss of mature trees and bushes." The five very old houses of which this property is at the center, she said,

"share the same footprint, and one of great historic value"

IV. This Board's Responsibility.

This Board often, and properly, devotes time and care to seemingly small matters of suitability, appearance and historical appropriateness within the Old and Historic District. That is time well spent, for even though many small decisions of the Board individually may seem to have minor effect, collectively they do.

This case is different. This unusual proposal engages the Board's most fundamental duty: to protect Old Town and our successors from structures that would irreparably alter, and have no place in, the small and precious District this Board is charged to preserve. This case also compels attention to what the effects of such a precedent could be.

Perhaps many of us, like the applicants, might sometimes feel the urge to live in a bigger house, and never mind the neighborhood. Probably we

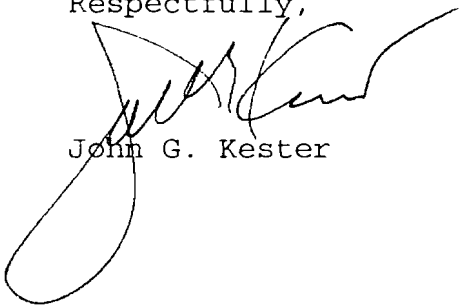
all could obtain a great deal more space by moving elsewhere. We have preferred, however, to respect and accept the sizes and historic-preservation restrictions of the historic homes we elected to buy. And in choosing to live in Old Town, we also have relied on the vigilance of this Board to protect the unique area in which we are property owners. I have observed that vigilance wisely applied for four decades.

In a letter supporting the applications, my old friends Dale and Janine Bosley, whose views are honorable and entitled to respect, request that the Board "examine the facts." That is entirely correct. They also state rightly that any disagreement engendered by this proposal is regrettable. Inescapably, however, many who sincerely believe, after examining this proposal fully, that it is not compatible with the legal and accepted standards, may sincerely feel a civic responsibility, on behalf of the present and for posterity, to object.

The homes on this particular block are not grand mansions, like the Robert E. Lee house (one street away) or the Lord Fairfax house (one street away in the other direction). But individually and collectively, they are a significant facet of the Old and Historic District of Alexandria. If there is any duty of this Board that is truly basic, it is to protect one of the oldest and most unique blocks in Old Town from massive construction that would destroy what so many, including you and your own predecessors on this Board, have worked so hard for so many years to preserve.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,



John G. Kester

JOHN G. KESTER
313 North Saint Asaph Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

October 3, 2007

Board of Architectural Review
City of Alexandria
City Hall
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Re: BAR No. 2007-0097
BAR No. 2007-0098
323 North Saint Asaph Street

Dear Chairman and Members of the Board:

This is to request that the record be corrected as to a factual representation.

Yesterday I became aware for the first time of a late filing by the applicants, dated last Friday, September 27, which includes a letter not previously furnished to the Board from a Ms. Theresa Rowe of 15 Wilkes Street. That letter concludes with an incorrect reference to this Board's supposedly "granting 313 North Saint Asaph their recent addition."

That statement is in error. 313 is my home. In 2004 the Board approved an application to combine two doorways at the rear while renewing the existing clapboard siding and trim (Nos. 2004-180-183). There was no "addition" -- i.e., no expansion -- of the existing house whatsoever. The footprint of the house did not change by a millimeter. The dimensions remained entirely the same, both height and width, just as they had been for decades.

In contrast with the pending proposal to nearly double the size of the house at 323, no neighbor objected to the work on the back of my house. The Staff likewise expressed no objection. In fact, the Staff report (applying the standards of the Board and the City Code) pointed out that it "does not impinge upon the existing historic fabric;" that it "meets the recommendations of the Design Guidelines;" and that it "will not overwhelm the existing houses" and "is clearly subservient to the existing structures." The report added that the structure "is only minimally visible from the public right-of-way." Members of this Board complimented the proposal, and unanimously approved it.

The letter from Ms. Rowe also is mistaken in its assertion that “several other properties on this block have similar additions.” To the best of my knowledge, and confirmed by the maps, there have been no “additions” of any consequence to the relevant houses since the 1890s or earlier, when it appears that a room was added to 317 for a store long since gone. As the applicants’ own submission acknowledges, the configuration of the relevant houses has not changed for more than a century, and

“During its approximate 150-year life the building has been altered, but retains its original footprint.”

Perhaps because she is unfamiliar with this part of Old Town, living as she does in the new Harborside development on the south waterfront, the writer of that letter (a “long time friend” of the applicants) was confused. She is, of course, entitled to her stated opinions opposing “locking architecture in time” and urging “thoughtful growth and revision” of heretofore preserved houses.

Respectfully,



John G. Kester

cc: Ms. Theresa Rowe

May 8, 2007

Board of Architectural Review
Department of Planning and Zoning
City of Alexandria
301 King Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Re: 323 North Saint Asaph Proposed Addition

Dear Board Members:

For the past 22 years my husband and I have lived at 327 North Saint Asaph. I'm amazed how quickly the time has passed. I can still remember the day we moved in...how exciting, we were Old Town residents and guardians of such a large antique. Were we up to such a responsibility...time would tell. After painting, wallpapering, refinishing floors and replacing appliances, we suddenly realized that our house had become our home. Now it was time to make the yard...our yard. This was my first yard and has been a work in progress....putting in plants....taking out plants....putting in grass...taking out grass. After 22 years I think I finally have it right.

I am writing to you to protest the proposed addition to 323 North Saint Asaph. We live in a unique row of five plagued colonial homes. All of these homes maintain the original footprint. This particular block was restored by Polly Hulfish in the 60's. Polly took great care to maintain our footprint. It's not surprising the Tour Buses refer to this block as "Hulfish Row". Behind our homes was the Alexandria Dairy. Because of the Dairy and it's historic significance, there is now an alley/parking for 323, 321, and 319 North Saint Asaph. We believe this was created to provide access to anyone wishing to view the former site of the Alexandria Dairy. Whatever the reason, this alley provides access and parking for 323, 321, and 319 North Saint Asaph. The access/parking connects to a larger alley/walkway which begins on North Saint Asaph, crosses North Pitt and continues to North Royal. In the 80's, the city along with residents, closed off the the larger alley at North Saint Asaph to make it more "walking friendly". As a result there is a charming walkway between 317 and 315 North Saint Asaph. The backs of our five town homes are totally visible from this walkway/alley. On the former site of the Dairy there now stands a town home development called Carriage Square West. This development consists of 14 three story, plus attic, town homes. At the end of our backyard is the wall of one of these town homes. To put a three story addition on 323 would further close in our homes and take away open space.

We consider ourselves fortunate to have a charming colonial home, but we are indeed fortunate to have a yard which provides us with open space. It is so rare, if not impossible, to find a row of 5 plagued colonial homes with the original footprint and a nice yard. This open space is the most charming surprise one can imagine. It is indeed our sanctuary. We currently enjoy the sunlight all morning and part of the afternoon. A three story addition at 323 would block our sunlight and deprive our back rooms of natural light. Blocking this light would also result in the eventual demise of our Dogwood, Holly trees and several shrubs. These five homes have shared this space for over one hundred and fifty years. During our 22 years we have continued to share this space separated only by neighbor friendly board on board fences. The configuration allows all of our homes equal open space. The proposed three story addition would ruin the open space for all the surrounding yards.

In addition to destroying our historic footprint and our open space, we also have structural and flooding issues. This is largely due to the age of our home, the proximity of our neighbors and our unique "English basements". We feel that any construction would not only damage our walls and ceilings, but would most likely damage our foundations. Flooding has been an ongoing problem for our homes. Over the years we have learned to deal with this problem. We have "French drains" outside our back doors. These drains can't deal with large amounts of rain for an extended period of time. We have all experienced flooding and have learned ways to deal with the problem. In our case....we come home during a bad storm and get the towels. This is part of living in Old Town....we call it charming and make it work. To change the delicate balance of water flow could make our problems even worse, and quite frankly, we don't have that many towels.

I ask you to help us protect our homes and preserve them for future generations.

It's interesting....the most photographed homes are not the new homes or homes with additions, but the smallest homes. Our particular block is photographed all the time, and why not...we are a block of colorful modest plagued colonials. We not only maintain our historic look in the front, but also the back. Obviously, the front of our homes are visible from North Saint Asaph, but the backs of our homes are visible from Princess Street as well as the highly used walkway/alley between 317 and 315 North Saint Asaph.

Any addition would forever destroy our historic significance. We choose to live in Old Town not for the size of our home, but for it's character. If we change the character we no longer live in the area we chose....how ironic.

Sincerely,



Billie Schaeffer
327 N. St. Asaph



John Williams
327 N. St. Asaph

May 11, 2007

RE: Opposition to addition to 323 N. Saint Asaph Street

Dear Members of the Board of Architectural Review,

We own and live at 325 N. Saint Asaph St. – right next to 323 N. Saint Asaph St. – and would be the most directly impacted by the proposed addition. We strongly oppose the proposed addition which would virtually double the size of 323 N. Saint Asaph St. with a 45 percent increase.

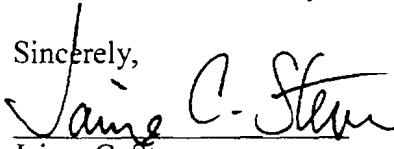
We moved into our house nearly three years ago and want to stay. One of the most important factors in choosing to make the house our home was the open, unobstructed access to light and air in the back yard. We bought our home largely because of this and we actually spend a great deal of time in the yard.

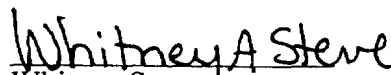
We oppose the addition to 323 N. Saint Asaph St. for the following reasons:

1. Block Sunlight & Destroy Open Space: Building two inches from our property line, the effect of the proposal is to place a two-story wall along our back yard cutting off access to direct sunlight. Our house is located on the North side of 323 N. Saint Asaph St. The addition also would severely break up the unique open space currently existing along the backs of five contiguous plagued homes, all of which maintain their original footprint.
2. Kill Trees: Digging the foundation for expansion would kill a large sycamore tree on our property by destroying its root system. The tree is located right next to the planned addition. Construction also would destroy the roots and cut off light to two other smaller trees on our property.
3. Worsen Flooding: The proposal would increase rainwater runoff to our property which already experiences flooding to our bottom floor during sustained rain storms. This bottom floor contains our kitchen and dining areas.
4. Construction Noise & Disturbance: Removing the fence during construction will bring significant noise, activity and disturbance within inches of an area on which we rely for peace, quite and tranquility. The architect has stated that due to building within only two inches of our property, construction crews will want -- and need -- access to our property.

Finally, as guardians of these historic homes, we want to protect and preserve the existing look and feel of our unique neighborhood for future generations. We ask that you either disapprove the addition, or severely decrease its size and impact on our neighborhood.

Sincerely,


Jaime C. Steve
325 N. Saint Asaph Street
Alexandria, VA 223124
703-683-4385


Whitney Steve
325 N. Saint Asaph Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
703-683-4385

319 N. Saint Asaph Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

June 11, 2007

Board of Architectural Review
City of Alexandria City Hall,
Alexandria, Virginia

RE: Opposition to Proposed Addition at 323 N. Saint Asaph Street, Old Town Alexandria

Dear Members of the Board and Staff:

We live at 319 N. Saint Asaph Street, a two story Historic home which was built in 1800 in the Historic District of Old Town Alexandria. Our structure is attached to 321 N. Saint Asaph Street (which is a rental property), which in turn is attached to the proposed construction site at 323 N. Saint Asaph Street. These three homes are dedicated historic homes which have been physically attached at their foundations for over two centuries.

We moved to the Washington, D.C. area from Philadelphia, PA in 2006 for tremendous employment opportunities. We had lived in Philadelphia for nearly two decades and always lived in historic homes. When we relocated, this area's expensive real estate prices prompted us to methodically choose a permanent location for our family by extensively researching the areas neighborhoods and schools. We are expecting to adopt a child internationally this year and in light of all the difficulties associated with such an adoption, we wanted to have a home in a neighborhood that was peaceful, stable, safe, charming (with a historic footprint), and an open backyard for our child to enjoy. Old Town Alexandria was the hands down winner.

We settled on Old Town and fell in love with our home at 319 N. Saint Asaph Street in the Historic District because of the neighborhood, and because all three of the attached homes (ours being one) had stood in this location for over 200 years. Given the history of the houses, expected that the beauty, charm, and architectural integrity of our home and its surrounding environs would remain untouched for the foreseeable future. But, no sooner than we had moved in the first boxes of our items on Presidents Day in February 2007, we discovered that our immediate neighbors wanted to put up a three story addition. We looked at each other with amazement and shock. No one ever told us that a proposed addition of this magnitude was imminent. Had we known, we would not have selected this house.

We object to the proposed addition as it may cause irreparable damage to the structural integrity of our home and destroy the historical footprint of our serene neighborhood. The attached three structures – our home at 319, next door at 321, and the proposed construction site at 323 – have been standing attached in this location for over 200 years. The impact of the excavation for the sub-ground level first floor of the addition may lead to structural problems for the attached homes that might not show up for years. The three homes currently stand upright and have no sagging or leaning that is seen in other homes of similar age. We are very concerned that the major disturbance to the foundation and ground of the structures attached to our property will cause our home to move, shift and become unstable in the future.

Such damage might not be apparent in the first year post construction, but no one can give us any guarantee that it would not occur in future years. While structural engineers can provide their "best estimates" as to the impact that such events may have on attached structures, there is no way to know for sure its "actual" impact until the structure is erected. There can be no guarantee that our property would not become permanently damaged. We would be forced to seek restitution from the property owners who constructed the addition, adding further conflict to the neighborhood. Further, it is our understanding that no comprehensive impact study has been done. It is incomprehensible to us that the Board would allow a project of this magnitude on a historic home to go forward without such a study that would demonstrate the impact that the proposed addition – which includes sub-ground level excavation and the raising of ceiling heights – will have on the attached and surrounding historic homes.

Most importantly, these three homes (and those surrounding it) have stood unchanged in this location for over 200 years. I have been told that our homes have a unique front and rear to them, and that they may be considered some of the last few homes in Old Town to maintain this type of structural integrity. Additionally, the light and beauty of our rear yards is idyllic. We truly enjoy relaxing in our backyard, and enjoying our undisturbed views of nature, the light, and the openness of our property. These factors will be eradicated if a three-story addition is added just two doors away.

We also object to the proposed addition because it may cause unnecessary run-off of rain water and flooding, and pose health and environmental dangers that we did not anticipate when we purchased our home, and create chaos for those that will have to live here during the construction period. At the outset, we have been told that with heavy rain in the past, our homes in this row of homes have all flooded. Indeed, the previous owners even put a sump pump in the basement to handle this problem. Aside from the clean-up of such problems (mold, etc.), we simply do not want any additional flooding. There can be no way to predict that this will not happen if the ground is disturbed (in a major way) and a new structure erected just two doors down from our property. We do not want to take that chance – and again – we will be left on our own to rectify the problem if, and when it occurs in the future.

Further, the anticipated noise, moving of construction equipment, and dangers associated with operating a construction site (i.e., to include the dust, dirt, noise level, potential dangerous substances yet undiscovered) two doors from our home will pose an unfair hardship to our family. We note that the proponents of the addition at 323 N. Saint Asaph Street expect that there will be so much noise and chaos for the neighborhood during the construction period that they will buy a condo to live in during the construction period. However, we and all of our neighbors will be left to deal with the environmental and noise pollution associated with this undertaking. This aspect of the proposed construction is especially troubling for us, as we plan to bring home our adopted infant (five-month old is the estimated age) from an orphanage and take family leave at the same time that construction is due to begin at 323 N. Saint Asaph.

Experts of adoptive children agree that new adoptive parents have a very short period of time in which to bond with their adoptive child. The more peaceful, serene, and stress-free that this period of bonding is, the healthier the adjustment of the child will be to our culture. To have a full-fledged construction site two doors down at this critical time in our child's life will be immensely unfair to our child's future physical and emotional well-being. *We ask that this hardship*

be given special consideration by the BAR in your decision-making concerning this proposed addition. Again, had we known that this type of project was imminent, we would have re-thought the purchase of our home and bought elsewhere in Old Town. We only want peace, quiet, and a good life for our new family.

Finally, we object to the proposed addition because it will block sunlight and restrict the quiet enjoyment of our open spaces, our backyard, and those that our neighbors enjoy. Likewise, we are concerned that the property value of our home will significantly decrease if the addition is built. When we purchased our home, we were amazed at the space we had concerning our property. Indeed, our property extends the longest of all the three attached homes referenced, into an area behind our home (our property) where we are able to park our vehicle. We are worried that if the addition at 323 N. Saint Asaph is approved and built, this space and enjoyment of it will be ruined. Aside from the blocking of sunlight that will occur if the proposed addition is approved and built, we will have a further problem. We have been told by the proponents of the addition that if their plans are approved, the owner of 321 N. Saint Asaph Street, who lives elsewhere and uses the property as a rental property, will likely seek to do the same to her property. We will then essentially be sandwiched in between two three-story additions (one at 323 N. Saint Asaph, and then one at 321 N. Saint Asaph), and the one-story addition (grand-fathered) at 317 N. Saint Asaph Street, which will destroy esthetic value that the open space, light, and privacy of our backyard add to our property.

In summary, we oppose the proposed addition for all of reasons stated above. We do not wish any ill-will to the proponents of the addition, but we have been thrust into an untenable situation. The Historic section of Old Town is special. There can be no replacement for a home which is original, unique, and charming, built on the sweat of our forebears and designed from the depths of their hearts. To allow this proposed addition to be built – now or in the future – would be unjust, and it would irreparably damage the historic footprint of our special neighborhood. Life changes fast, often, and with unpredictability: the character and historic quality of our homes should not be subjected to these unpredictable vicissitudes.

We thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,


JEROME J. TERESINSKI


LAURA K. TERESINSKI

August 10, 2007
Board of Architectural Review
Old Town, Alexandria, VA

RE: Opposition to addition to 323 N. St. Asaph

Dear Board,

Please preserve the Historic character of our North East bock (300 N. St. Asaph) of Old Town! We feel very fortunate to live on this block of Historic North End of Old Town but at the same time have the obligation to be its' "guardians". Historically, these "row" of homes sometimes called "Hulfish Row" have been in existence since the 1850's without any changes, that is about 157 years! Now, that is AMAZING!

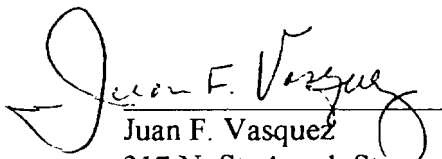
It's a known fact that there are a very limited amount of historical homes here in the North East side compared to the South East side. Also, there are homes that have made additions to the backs of their homes which have totally changed their historical character. One just has to walk around and see these changes. We, on the 300 block of N. St. Asaph are extremely proud that we have continued to preserve this historical block of homes and that NO changes have been made since the 1850's.

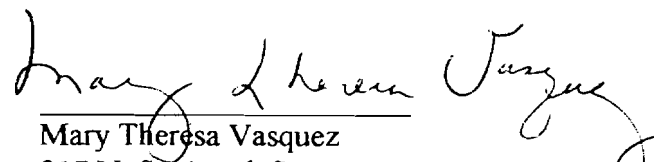
We live about two blocks from the historical areas of Christ Church, Robert E. Lee "boyhood" home, Lee Fendall home and one/half block from the historical pebble street on Princess Street which is between the 300/400 block of N. St. Asaph and George Washington Parkway.

We are also fortunate to have a very "special walkway" which was an alley in the olden days. On a daily basis, this beautiful, brick walkway "invites and showcases" the historical preservation and beauty of the open space of the 1850's of our historical row of homes to the large amount of tourists and neighbor traffic between N. St. Asaph and N. Pitt and beyond. This walkway is situated in the middle of the 300 block of N. St. Asaph between our house at 317 and 313/315 N. St. Asaph. Thanks to the City of Alexandria for investing time, money and landscaping in providing this beautiful brick walkway. This tells us that the City of Alexandria cares for our neighborhood.

As proud and responsible citizens of Old Town, it is our duty to preserve the historical significance, beauty, open space and unique character of the 300 block of N. St. Asaph for future generations to come. Therefore, we object to the addition to 323 N. St. Asaph which will destroy the historical character to our "row" of homes.

Sincerely,


Juan F. Vasquez
317 N. St. Asaph St.
Alexandria, VA 22314
(w) 202-521-0778
© 703-447-9020


Mary Theresa Vasquez
317 N. St. Asaph St.
Alexandria, VA 22314
(h) 703-519-9437
© 210-380-2523

May 3, 2007

RE: Opposition to addition to 323 N. St. Asaph

Dear Board of Architectural Review,

We live at 317 N. St. Asaph which is located in the middle of the 300 block of North St. Asaph. Our house is located next to the public walkway. From our back yard, we have an unobstructed view of the open space and beauty of Nature as well as the historical integrity of all of our neighbor's homes at 319, 321, 323, 325, 327, 329 and a partial view of 331.

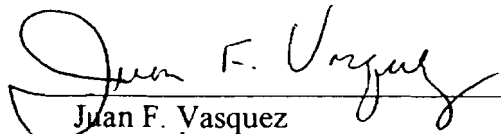
In 1995, we moved from San Antonio, Texas to this area and decided to purchase in this block of Old Town because of the unique, historical footprint and quality of these historic homes as well as the open, green space.

We oppose the addition to 323 N. St. Asaph St. for the following reasons:

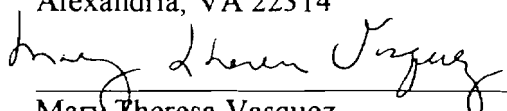
1. The appearance, character and "footprint" of these historical homes on this block would forever be altered.
2. Since most houses in this block have flooding in their basements, including ours, the change could very well increase the flooding and damage our homes.
3. The green space in our neighborhood would forever be altered.
4. There would be detriment and damage to the adjacent trees.

Finally, as Guardians of these historical homes, we want to protect and preserve its "footprint" for future generations and also prevent damage from flooding.

Sincerely,



Juan F. Vasquez
317 N. St. Asaph St.
Alexandria, VA 22314



Mary Theresa Vasquez
317 N. St. Asaph St.
Alexandria, VA 22314

May 6, 2007

Re: 323 North Saint Asaph Proposed Addition

Dear Board of Architectural Review:

My name is Cay Critz and I live at 307 North Saint Asaph. I moved from Savannah, Georgia to Alexandria, Virginia in 1990. It was such a delight to find Old Town. The charming old buildings, the preservation, the history, all these elements are so reminiscent of Savannah. I found the five homes from 327 North Saint Asaph to 319 North Saint Asaph to be especially charming. The charm is not only from the front, but also from the back. There is a very nice walkway between 317 and 315 North Saint Asaph. This walkway turns into a fairly expansive alley and connects North Saint Asaph to North Royal. From this very public walkway/alley there is a completely unobstructed view of the back of 327, 325, 323, 321 and 319 North Saint Asaph. Many is the time I have seen tourists photograph the back as well as the front of these charming homes.

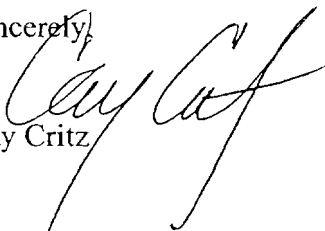
I have seen the plans for the proposed addition to 323 North Saint Asaph and strongly oppose this addition for the following reasons:

1. The addition is completely out of character for the our block.
2. The "footprint" of the home would be forever destroyed.
3. The addition would deprive light from 327 and 325 North Saint Asaph.
4. The addition could cause structural damage to the surrounding homes as well as their foundations.

I live in Old Town not to change, but to preserve. Our time here is brief, we should be the "stewards" of this charming town, not the "destroyers". Please help us in our effort to preserve.

Sincerely,

Cay Critz

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cay Critz", written over the printed name.

May 4, 2007

To Whom It May Concern:

We are writing as neighbors in the North St. Asaph/Princess Street area of Old Town. We are particularly concerned with proposed additions at 323 North St. Asaph. We feel that these additions will change the historic nature of the area and will likely have a negative environmental impact, i.e. water removal, light for plants and trees, etc. Currently there is a recognizable and historic similarity to all of the houses along that section of North St. Asaph. Changes would do damage to that historic context.

We know the owners of the property and enjoy their friendship, but are against changes which extend the existing house footprint and change the neighborhood's historic status.

Ronald K. Rigby
Hazel Rigby
Ronald K. and Hazel Rigby

THOR E. RONAY
328 North Pitt Street, Alexandria, VA 22314

Board of Architectural Review
Department of Planning and Zoning
City of Alexandria
301 King Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Re 323 North Saint Asaph proposed alteration and expansion
CASE BAR2007-0097 & BAR2007-0098
October 1, 2007

Dear Board Members and Staff:

I write as a 22 year resident of the Old and Historic District of Old Town Alexandria. I own and reside in 328 North Pitt Street, the second home I have owned in our town. I stand in strong opposition to the proposed destruction and expansion at 323 N. St. Asaph.

Like many Old Towners, I chose to live here because of the ambience, calm, charm and amenities of Old Town which you have increasingly preserved and improved over the recent decades. Through efforts and choices of professional preservationists such as yourselves, and dedicated residents such as our neighbors, Old Town has become so much more of a charming town and site-seeing destination than it was in the nadir of the 1970's. Accordingly, our property values have remained strong, and the quality of shops, restaurants and other commercial investments has improved, contributing to our revenue base. All this has shown that small indeed can be valuable, and preservation can sustain vitality.

I chose my current home for its bright southern exposure and the great green open space of the inner block, a sort of secret sanctuary for all who adjoin it. It is not only full of light, particularly in the afternoon, but also rimmed with 40-50 foot trees -- including a beautiful magnolia which I delight in seeing year 'round from each of my nine windows which face south and west. There are all manner of birds, cardinals and yellow finches, and a riot of squirrels, and even a community cat and possum! From the small patio that is my own backyard, I can sit in the peaceable quiet, insulated from the streets and traffic and contemplate this patch of earth and sky in peace, far removed from my daily work in counterterrorism, with its existential threats and unpleasant surprises.

Completing the picture, framing it really, are the wonderful historic 1800's homes of Hulfish Row, stretching along the western perimeter, and unaltered in their essentials -- all with open yards, trees, the occasional weathered gazebo, crepe myrtles and lazy post fences. A scene Jefferson would recognize. It is perhaps the finest open block in the Northeast quadrant, and certainly one of the most historic, bordered even by the North side's only cobble street, and a block from the Lee-Fendall homes. This is Old Town life at its best.

Presumably, we all could afford to live elsewhere, with more land, pools, expansive driveways, towering edifices and columns and Palladian windows festooned with balconettes, in the current fashion. But we choose to live here, and to do our part, along with you, as stewards, to ensure

that Old Town will be here, as it is -- its best and oldest preserved for those who follow us. Those who crave modern expansiveness have plenty of places nearby, Great Falls, for instance, in which to spin their life's plans. An historic row block in Old Town is not the place.

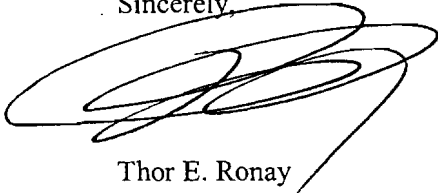
Along with most all of my neighbors, I was astonished to learn that my view of all of this -- the magnolia and sycamore trees and the light filtering in all day, and the quiet, open space I look out to from half my house, the peace and privacy of my patio garden -- is threatened, as with sudden death and destruction, by the proposed "McTownhousing" of one of the perfect row of 1800 houses. Indeed the one right out my window and over my patio!

It had never occurred to me that this row of houses -- this wonderful inner block of greenery, this open view and sanctuary -- could ever be so altered as to, in one rip of destruction and construction, eliminate trees, kill the root systems of others, threaten the view and light of so many neighbors, alter the water table, threaten the structural integrity, and permanently alter the line of view of this block as it is now fully settled. As we have learned, this proposal came as a shock to many, including our newest home owners who envisioned the whole area as the perfect quiet sanctuary for their newly arriving baby.

The bill of particulars is amply outlined by my various neighbors. The structural and water aspects cannot be fully determined without major in-depth analysis, but could be not only life-altering but prohibitively expensive, and harmful both to health and the site-specific environment. The proposed plans also show the intent to park in a common easement area, there being, by force of the full-lot expansion, no remaining off-street parking for the McTownhouse. In my own case, instead of looking out my bedroom, dining room, or library windows to watch birds in branches 10 and 15 feet away, I will face 3 solid stories of construction, windows and roof. The enjoyment of my home will, for me, be vastly diminished, along with its value.

I urge you to reject this or any similar plan, and thus ensure that the social compact between Old Town and its residents, between the past and the future, is honored -- not vitiated by a sort of shell game replete with pop-up additions and disappearing trees, as if in some bad construction company hustle. *This is Old Town*. If we go down a path of such ad hocery, the precedent is set for a row of McTownhouses in place of Hulfish Row -- and the ineluctable loss of trees, air and space, and the secret places that make this our town. A way of life will be coarsened. Surely you do not want to move in this direction, and so the choice before you as is simple as it is for us who live here. Thank you for your time and for all that you do.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thor E. Ronay", with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Thor E. Ronay

Cc: The Concerned Neighbors

*James E. Ballowe, Jr.
311 North Saint Asaph Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314*

May 7, 2007

Board of Architectural Review
Department of Planning and Zoning
City of Alexandria
301 King Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Re: 323 North Saint Asaph Street Proposed Addition

Dear Board of Architectural Review:

I live at 311 North Saint Asaph Street, a flounder that, according to research, dates back to circa 1785-1787. I moved here from South Fairfax Street several years ago, in part because of the historic character of this block as well as because of disappointing and seemingly unmanaged changes occurring in my former block of Old Town.

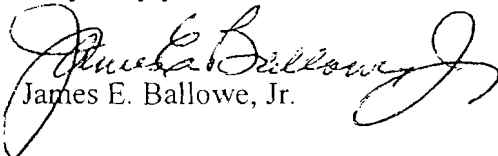
I write now because my neighbors, as well as myself, are concerned about a major addition planned at 323 North Saint Asaph. To be perfectly fair, I will not be able to see the addition from my back courtyard, and I have a sympathetic addition on the rear of my house built, to the best of my knowledge, approximately 25 years ago.

While I generally champion the rights of homeowners to expand and improve their dwellings, my concerns about the proposed addition at 323 (the plans for which I have reviewed) are three-fold:

1. The addition would be out of character for this historic and beautiful block of our neighborhood;
2. The addition would obstruct light and possibly access for my neighbors; and
3. The addition could imperil the integrity of the foundations of neighboring homes.

We chose to live in historic homes—with their attendant costs and limitations—because we want to be careful stewards of the legacy that is Old Town Alexandria. Please help us uphold that stewardship.

Very truly yours,


James E. Ballowe, Jr.

Daniel Nelson & Mirjana Dedaic
403 North St. Asaph Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
703-587-4250

September 23, 2007

TO: The Board of Architectural Review, City of Alexandria, VA

RE: Cases BAR2007-0097 and BAR2007-0098, 323 North St. Asaph

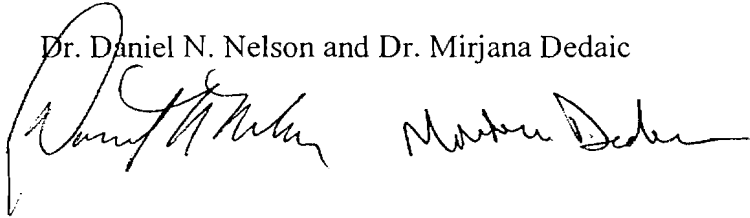
Although we are unable to attend the Board's October 3, 2007 meeting due to out-of-state travel, we do wish to convey our strong and unequivocal opposition to this proposed demolition/addition.

We have owned our home at 403 North St. Asaph since 1996, and have greatly valued the architectural integrity of Old Town and our immediate neighborhood. It is essential that changes to existing structures be *minimal and cosmetic* in order to preserve the history and culture of the city's "Old Town" zone. Fundamental enlargement of properties (e.g., an expansion of square footage by 43%) that restricts adjacent owners' access to open space is inappropriate, and violates core principles of historic preservation. Such an action would also violate the property rights of neighbors by diminishing their use and enjoyment of surrounding trees, air, and space.

It would be an ill-advised and misplaced precedent to grant, to anyone who might afford it, the opportunity to expand a home such that the expansion would intrude both on neighbors' rights and the city's historic identity.

We urge you to reject this request, and to ask the owners (instead) to improve and maintain their existing property.

Dr. Daniel N. Nelson and Dr. Mirjana Dedaic

The image shows two handwritten signatures in black ink. The signature on the left is for Daniel N. Nelson, and the signature on the right is for Mirjana Dedaic. Both signatures are written in a cursive, flowing style.

607 Queen Street
Alexandria, Virginia
22314

September 17, 2007

Board of Architectural Review
Department of Planning and Zoning
City of Alexandria
301 King Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314


Re: 323 North Saint Asaph Proposed Addition

Dear Board Members:

I am writing to you to object to the proposed addition to 323 North Saint Asaph Street. The addition would impact on the entire row of five, fragile, plaqued nineteenth century houses, violating their scale and altering the footprint. In addition the rear facades of that row have not been compromised by additions, and are highly visible to the numerous visitors who now use the pedestrian way created out of a former ally.

As a retired ambassador who has spent most of his career abroad, and a resident of Old Town, I know how fragile our historic, built environment is. And once an old building a substantially altered, it proves to be nearly impossible to reverse in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Campbell', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

John Campbell
U.S. Ambassador, Ret.

SENATE OF VIRGINIA



PATRICIA S. TICER

30TH SENATORIAL DISTRICT
PART OF ARLINGTON AND FAIRFAX COUNTIES,
AND PART OF THE CITY OF ALEXANDRIA
CITY HALL, 301 KING STREET
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22314
(703) 549-5770 ALEXANDRIA
(703) 739-6761 FAX
(804) 698-7530 RICHMOND
DISTRICT30%SOV.STATE VA US

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS
AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND
NATURAL RESOURCES
LOCAL GOVERNMENT
REHABILITATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES

May 29, 2007

Billie Schaffer
327 N. St. Asaph Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Board Members;

Previously, it has been my practice to stay away from registering my opinion on requests for change made to the BAR. However, I believe we are all (residents of the Old and Historic District) charged with stewardship of our historic character as we inherited it. It is difficult when the perceived need to expand property to make it more livable for the 21st century conflicts with the charge to protect that which is of historic value.

I was asked by neighbors to view the five houses in the 300 block of North St. Asaph Street, which share the same footprint, and are of great historic value. The question is the proposal for a large addition (45% increase) to 323 North St. Asaph St.

My concerns about this request are the loss of light and air and open space to the adjacent properties, the threat of flooding which is increased with additional impervious surface (previous problems with flooding have already required installation of French drains for the English basement homes) and the potential loss of mature trees and bushes due to the construction.

I hope you will consider these issues in making your decision. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Patricia S. Ticer'. The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Patricia S. Ticer



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
HOUSE OF DELEGATES
RICHMOND

DAVID ENGLIN
CITY HALL
301 KING STREET, BOX 65
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22314

FORTY-FIFTH DISTRICT

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS:
PRIVILEGES AND ELECTIONS
HEALTH, WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS

June 11, 2007

Alexandria Boards of Architectural Review
City Hall
301 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Board Members:

I generally refrain from commenting on issues before the BAR, but constituents in and around the 300 block of N. St. Asaph Street asked me to comment on the proposal for a large addition to 323 N. St. Asaph Street.

Our challenge as a community is to balance the charge to protect our historic character and resources with the desire of property owners to live in more expansive homes. The five homes along the 300 block currently share the same footprint, and are of great historic value to our community. I am concerned that the proposed addition (a 43% increase to the size of the building) will result in loss of light and air and open space to the adjacent properties, increase the threat of flooding on these already flood-prone properties, and damage or destroy mature trees and bushes due to the construction.

I hope you will consider these issues in making your decision. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David L. Englin".

David L. Englin
Member, 45th District
Virginia House of Delegates

December 3, 2007

Mayor, Vice Mayor & Members of the City Council
City of Alexandria
City Hall
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Re: Appeal of BAR Case 2007-0097 Demolition/encapsulation of 323 N. St. Asaph

Dear Mayor, Vice Mayor & Council Members,

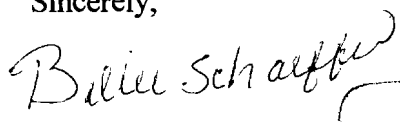
On October 3, 2007 the BAR voted, in a 5 to 1 decision, to deny the demolition/encapsulation of 323 N. St. Asaph. We are asking you to please support this decision.

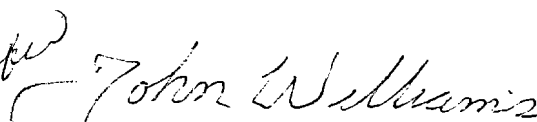
My husband and I have lived at 327 N. St. Asaph for over 22 years. We are one of five homes that were built in the 1850's. Three of these homes are attached, there is a narrow walkway separating the remaining two homes which are also attached. The applicant's home is in the middle of the five. What makes our situation truly unique is our footprint. All of the homes share the same footprint as they did in the 1850's. In addition to our footprint, we also share green space. It is rare indeed, if not impossible, to find a property of this nature in Old Town. Together we are a "window to the past". Our homes were built not for the wealthy, but for the folks that were the backbone of Alexandria...the workers. Without these people, Alexandria wouldn't be here today. We are proud to share in their heritage. When the five homes were renovated in the 60's, care was taken to preserve the footprint and a good portion of the green space. As a result, we have our charming home, lovely green space, and the feeling that you are truly part of a community. Please help us save our very special part of Old Town. It would be an honor to pass it to a future generation as it was passed to us.

It is also important to mention our relationship to the Lee Homes, Christ Church, Washington's Town Home and Gatsby's Tavern. We are in the middle, therefore, we are visited by all the tourists. Our homes are constantly photographed, not only from the front, but also from the back. And why not, we are a row of five charming town homes, all of which maintain their original footprint and beautiful green space.

I realize this hearing is only for demolition/encapsulation. If for any reason the subject of an "addition" is heard, please be advised that the extent of damage to our foundation as well as our property could be devastating.

Sincerely,


Billie Schaeffer


John Williams

December 7, 2007

The Honorable Paul Smedberg
City Council
Alexandria, VA

RE: Appeal of BAR Case # 2007-0097 Demolition/Encapsulation of 323 N. Saint Asaph Street

Dear Council Member Smedberg,

We own and live at 325 N. Saint Asaph St. -- right next to 323 N. Saint Asaph St. -- and would be the most directly impacted by the proposed addition. We strongly oppose the proposed addition which would virtually double the size of 323 N. Saint Asaph St. and destroy the historic footprint of 323 N. Saint Asaph St. and the surrounding neighborhood.


As you are aware, the Board of Architectural review voted 5 to 1 to deny the permit to demolish the property in question and the property owners have appealed to the City Council. We urge you to vote to uphold the carefully considered decision by the Board of Architectural Review.

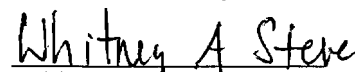
We moved into our house nearly three years ago and want to stay. One of the most important factors in choosing to make the house our home was the open, unobstructed access to light and air in the back yard.

We oppose the addition to 323 N. Saint Asaph St. for the following reasons:

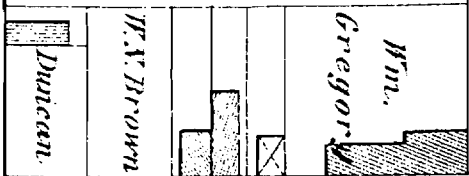
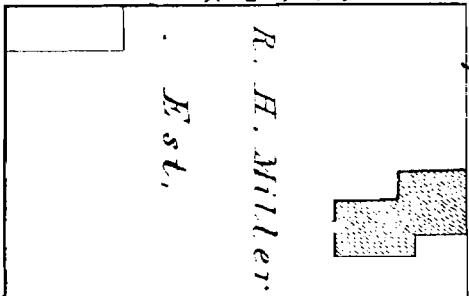
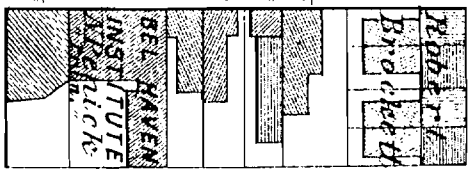
1. Block Sunlight & Destroy Open Space: Building two inches from our property line, the effect of the proposal is to place a two-story wall along our back yard cutting off access to direct sunlight. Our house is located on the North side of 323 N. Saint Asaph St. The addition also would severely break up the unique open space currently existing along the backs of five contiguous plaqued homes, all of which maintain their original footprint.
2. Kill Trees: Digging the foundation for expansion would kill a large sycamore tree on our property by destroying its root system. The tree is located right next to the planned addition. Construction also would destroy the roots and cut off light to two other smaller trees on our property.
3. Construction Noise & Disturbance: Removing the fence during construction will bring significant noise, activity and disturbance within inches of an area on which we rely for peace, quite and tranquility. The architect has stated that due to building within only two inches of our property, construction crews will want -- and need -- access to our property.

Finally, as guardians of these historic homes, we want to protect and preserve the existing look and feel of our unique neighborhood for future generations. We ask that you vote to uphold the 5 to 1 decision by the Board of Architectural Review. Thank you.

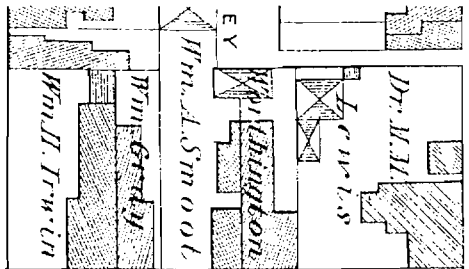
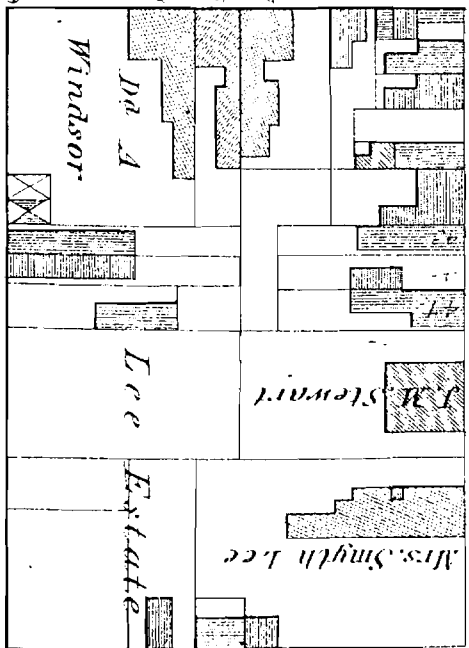

Jaime C. Steve
325 N. Saint Asaph Street
Alexandria, VA 223124


Whitney Steve
325 N. Saint Asaph Street
Alexandria, VA 22314 tel: 703-683-4385

HOPKINS / 877

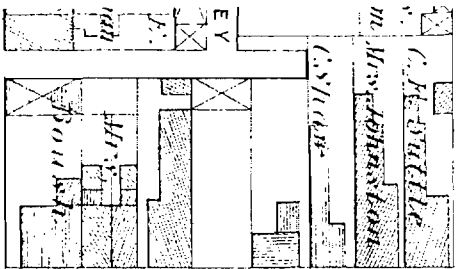
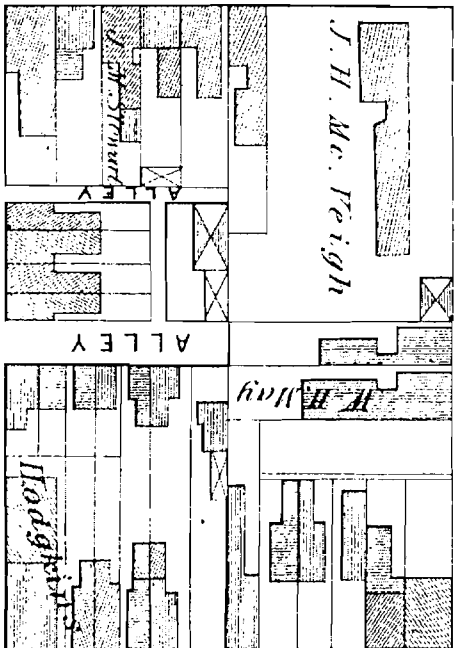
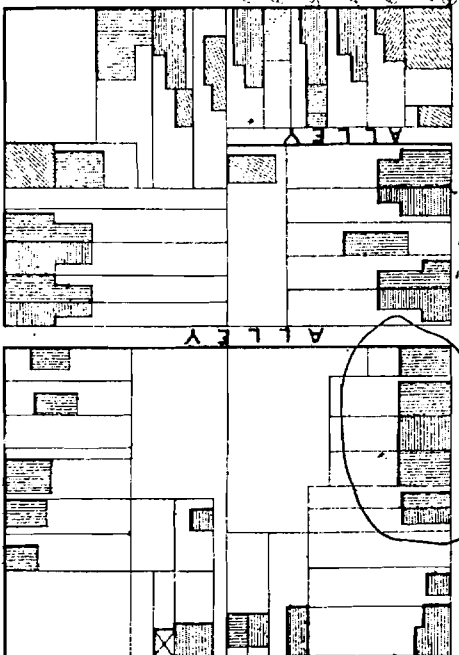


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12-15-07



<troutquintet@comcast.net>

12/14/2007 07:35 AM

Please respond to
<troutquintet@comcast.net>

To <alexvamayor@aol.com>, <timothylovain@aol.com>,
<councilmangaines@aol.com>, <council@krupicka.com>,
<delperpepper@aol.com>, <paulcsmedberg@aol.com>,

cc

bcc

Subject COA Contact Us: Lowe/Gudenhuis support

Time: [Fri Dec 14, 2007 07:35:04] IP Address: [76.21.183.238]

Issue Type: Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Council Members
First Name: Camille
Last Name: Nelson
Street Address: 329 N Saint Asaph St
City: Alexandria
State: VA
Zip: 22314
Phone: 7036838960
Email Address: troutquintet@comcast.net
Subject: Lowe/Gudenhuis support

Since I will be unable to attend Saturday's City Council hearing on this project, I wanted to again express my support for approval of demolition and addition at 323 N Saint Asaph Street. Carl and Laurie are very good neighbors and from the beginning have been forthcoming to all who might be impacted by the project with their plans and changes to plans they have made.

As a property owner on the 300 block of North Saint Asaph, I have great concern that if the project is not approved that it will greatly reduce the resale value of the homes in the block because it will have been predetermined that no additions can be made to homes here. Emotional arguments against the project and terms used by the BAR such as "magical" to describe the 5 homes in question seem shallow. Also to hear people who have added on to their homes in this block speak out against the project seems ridiculous to me as well.

Comments: I have already seen recently a decision

by the BAR and City Council impact a business in Old Town that I frequented - The Trophy Room. As a flyfisherman, I was delighted when The Trophy Room opened, not only for the convenience for me, but also because it was an attractive, unique business in Old Town run by very friendly proprietors.

I am very disappointed to see the store close and do not understand why the BAR and the City of Alexandria appeared to be in support of the expansion of this successful business until it came time for the vote.

I do hope

the demolition and addition to 323 N Saint Asaph Street will be approved by the City Council. I would like to think that in the future I might be able to expand my home as so many others in Old Town have done through the years, or at least feel like it is an option for me or for a future homeowner in this block. Thank you for your serious consideration on this matter.

18

12-15-07

VIRGINIA:

BEFORE THE
MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF ALEXANDRIA

In re 323 North Saint Asaph Street) Docket No. 18
Old and Historic District)
Alexandria) December 15, 2007

OPPOSITION TO APPEAL OF DECISION
OF BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

This appeal concerns a proposal that would alter dramatically what may be the last remaining preserved grouping of row houses in Alexandria that were occupied in the latter half of the Nineteenth Century by former slaves. The house in question is a plaqued house, built before the Civil War, in the Old and Historic District.

The appellants asked the Board of Architectural Review to permit them to demolish and encapsulate the back of the house at 323 North Saint Asaph Street, in order to connect to a proposed massive addition to be attached to the existing house, increasing the size by 92%, or nearly double, and towering over the yards of the neighboring houses.

The Board of Architectural Review rejected the proposal by vote of 5-1. Statements herein are from the record.

Historic Importance

The best historical evidence is that for decades the occupants of these modest dwellings, of which 323 is the central one, were small tradespeople and providers of services. Most were former slaves. These houses are marked on a city map of 1885 as "Negro Tenements." The dwelling in question was built sometime between 1858 and 1867. It is situated in the exact middle of a row of five of these townhouses that were renovated in the 1960s. All these houses are of the same scale. The Historic Alexandria Foundation reported that

"There is no evidence that for a century and a half that these footprints of these houses were altered, or changed, or expanded, or otherwise tampered with."

Transcript of public hearing (Tr.), p. 5. Together these nicely restored small houses uniquely embody an important and neglected part of Alexandria's past.

When the applicants presented their proposal, their representative told the Board:

“No, there’s really nothing significant that has happened in this house. There’s no ability to say it has associative value with that, any one person or that way of interpreting this.”

Tr., p. 3.

“We don’t believe that if the house remains as is, it will become a shrine of any kind.”

Tr., p. 4. He said that these were “working class homes,” and that historically the house did not matter and was “one of the simplest houses in Old Town.” Tr., pp. 2, 4.

The neighbors believe that the house, and the ones beside it, do matter. Perhaps no one who once lived in that house can be found pictured in history books. It is not as grand and famous as the Lord Cameron house or the Robert E. Lee house, each of which is block and a half away. But real people lived in that house, and those adjoining it. They contributed to the history of Alexandria, however humble their social recognition or unappreciated their occupations. The Old and Historic District was not established to preserve only the houses of the rich and famous. The homes of ordinary people, of which too few such structures remain, also matter.

Effect on the Neighborhood

The Board recognized that to permit such a project would mean the unraveling of this unique part of Old Town. If the Board had allowed this central house to be converted, how would it be possible to say no to anyone else who bought a house anywhere nearby and decided they would prefer it changed and twice as large? In fact the appellants conceded this would be the inevitable consequence. Apparently they thought it would be a good thing. They told the Board: “If denied . . . you’re also denying the neighbors in this row and others in an old and historic district with similar circumstances.” Tr., p. 4. In other words, if this is permitted, the neighbors then can alter their historic homes the same way.

But the “neighbors in this row” -- who depend on the regulations of the City and the judgment of the Board -- do not want for themselves a license to deform their own historic houses. If they wanted big houses, they would be living in McLean or Potomac.

Chairman Hulfish observed at the Board’s hearing:

“This particular situation, to my knowledge, is the last row of five houses where the form has not changed since they were originally built.”

Tr., p. 19. He added that “when this one goes, they’ll all be gone.” Tr., p. 20.

Neighbors' Objections

Those who live in this neighborhood have objected in overwhelming numbers. Twelve neighbors came to the Board meeting and spoke in opposition to the proposal. In addition, almost that number submitted letters. The Board Chairman commented that "I've been amazed by the response from the community." Tr., p. 19. A summary of some of those letters is attached as an addendum to this submission.

Staff Report to the Board

In recommending denial, the City Staff's report to the Board took note that:

"What has remained a constant . . . is the essential volumetric configuration of these houses."

"They provide a direct and tangible link to the immediate post Civil War period in the City."

"What has not changed is the spatial relationship of the house to the street and its neighbors."

Findings by the Board

The Board by vote of 5-1 rejected the application. The Board Members carefully explained their decision. As one of them summarized:

"To me, this is, this project or this propos[ed] demolition is not really about the destroying of the fabric of the buildings because these buildings have been altered, but it's more about destroying the fabric of a community."

Tr., p. 22 (emphasis supplied) (Mr. Spencer). He added:

"If you walk around this site, I agree with my colleagues that this is a magic place. It does feel special. Walking around Old Town, there are lots of little special places that you would destroy the vista, the views in the area. So for me, I could not support this."

Tr., p. 22 (emphasis supplied). A colleague agreed that

"[A]s has been pointed out, it is pretty much unique in Old Town. And if you go back there, as I think we all did, and I did, I went back there several times because I wanted to really be clear on how I stood on this, and it is, it's kind of magical spot back there. . . .

[I]t's just that I can really see why the neighbors are so passionate about it because it really is kind of a little oasis. . . . [W]e as a Board are charged with preserving Old Town, and this is the last area like that."

Tr., pp. 21-22 (emphasis supplied) (Dr. Fitzgerald). Another Board member explained:

"[T]his is a very unique situation. I feel that because we are talking about just not one house, we're talking about five, it's almost as if we would somehow destroy, encapsulate the whole atmosphere of five houses as opposed to one. . . . And I would be very unhappy with the, the alteration to that vista as you look down behind all those alleys behind all those houses. It's a very, very pretty sight, but one addition to the back of those houses would severely alter the atmosphere of all the rest."

Tr., p. 20 (emphasis supplied) (Mr. Kelcher). Another Board member agreed:

"[B]ecause of the alley that was referred to, the fact that it's highly visible from Princess Street^{1/} that you can see it from the alley that comes in, and the reference to the buses and people taking pictures and everything, that the backs of those houses, which we all say is just an unbelievable and very precious part of Old Town, is the historic nature of what we're trying to protect. And, therefore, I could not support any demolition to go on that row of houses, so I support the staff recommendation."

Tr., p. 20 (emphasis supplied) (Mr. Spencer).

Appellants' Arguments on Appeal

None of the arguments the appellants have raised meets the heavy burden to overturn the well-reasoned decision of the Board.

1. The appellants argued to the Board that because the exterior of the house, restored in the 1960s, is not constructed of the same boards or "fabric" that were there in the Nineteenth Century, therefore, even though already designated a historic structure, somehow it cannot be historic. Their representative told the Board that "There is very little historic original

^{1/} Appellants conceded on the record that "the addition is minimally visible from the public space." Tr., p. 3. It is in fact visible in a major way from several directions from public ways, including Princess Street, and from a public area in mid-block that is traversed and frequented by dozens of residents and visitors every day. There was undisputed testimony that tourists frequently use this public access to take pictures of the rear of this group of houses.

fabric or none that we can see.” Tr., p. 3. He argued that tearing off and concealing the back was not important because “the fabric is so altered that it’s not original on the outside nor on the inside.” Tr. p. 3.

If whether lumber or every detail is original were to become the new test for historic worth in the Old and Historic District, presumably structures in Old Town would be preserved only if made of brick, and perhaps not even all of those. Nearly every home on this block has clapboard or similar siding, including one very historic flounder house dating from the 1780s. Wood and wood products deteriorate over time. Nothing makes these houses less historic because their siding has been replaced and restored over the years. The houses in this row all bear bronze plaques from the Historic Alexandria Foundation, attesting to the historic importance of these structures as they exist, and their protection as part of the Old and Historic District.

2. The appellants complain that “The BAR’ decision effectively denies their right to alter their home to allow ‘contemporary 20th century use,’ and to have the benefit of the reasonable use of their property.” Statement of Appeal, p. 1. But appellants do not have a right to do whatever they want. The City Code says that they do not. The rights of all property owners in the Old and Historic District are limited by the Code’s requirement that for such alterations a Certificate of Appropriateness must be secured from the Board of Architectural Review.

Moreover, other property owners have rights also. Everyone who chooses to live in Old Town knows the rules. Property rights include the restrictions that exist on a property when one acquires it. Everyone who purchased a house on this block knew that they were doing so subject to the legal restrictions enacted decades ago for the Old and Historic District. And every neighbor expected to be protected by those restrictions as well. Everyone gave up an unfettered freedom to destroy and build as one pleased -- and at the same time gained the guarantee that their neighborhood would be preserved.

3. The appellants, having acquired this small historic house in 1999 -- it prominently displays the brass plaque -- in 2007 asked the Board to change the rules everyone has been living under, in order, they say, “to improve their house for modern living.” Tr., p. 4. But others in the neighborhood have not thought themselves denied “modern living,” or entitled to be exempt from the standards under which all chose to live on moving here. The Board does not regulate interiors. Most have managed to “improve” their houses “for modern living” quite well, without tearing off and encapsulating the outside walls in order to add huge additions. The simple reality is, appellants want to live in a much bigger house.

4. The appellants characterize their plan as the “demolition [of] . . . less than twenty-nine square feet of non-historic building material . . . necessary to accommodate access to the proposed addition.” Statement of Appeal, p. 1. Their representative described it to the Board of Architectural review as a “modest proposal.” Tr. at 2. The Chairman corrected him: “this thing is not modest.” Tr., p. 20.

5. The appellants also appear to be arguing that the City's power through the Board to regulate demolition does not include the power to regulate partial demolition. Statement of Appeal, p. 2. If that is what appellants are trying to say, that notion is quite remarkable as a legal proposition. Not surprisingly, they cite no supporting authority.

Legal Authority of the Board

The Board of Architectural Review, established in City Code § 10-104, with members appointed by this Council, is the expert agency charged with preserving the purposes of the City's Old and Historic District that are listed in Code §§ 10-101 through 10-103. The Board Members heard extensive testimony at a public hearing and received many letters. The Board also considered a recommendation of the City's Staff that the proposal be rejected. The Board members entered on the record their reasons for concluding that the proposal should be rejected.

In appeals, like this one, to review decisions of expert administrative agencies, it is established practice to give great weight and deference to the decision made by the administrative body. This Council has done so regularly on most such appeals in the past. There is no reason not to continue that sound and sensible practice in this case, particularly given the nearly-unanimous decision of the Board. This Council sits in this instance as a reviewing body, in a quasi-judicial role. The Council should not reverse the decision of the Board unless it finds clear error, and there was no error here.^{2/}

The courts have confirmed the authority conferred on the Board in the City Code. In the recent case of Hoy v. City of Alexandria, 70 Va. Cir. 79 (2005), the Circuit Court explained that even a matter as seemingly minimal as the alteration of a paint color of a particular dwelling the Old and Historic District was in that case a matter confided to the expert judgment of the Board of Architectural Review. The Court held:

“Before a building may be ‘erected, reconstructed, altered or restored within the Old and Historic Alexandria District,’ the Board of Architectural Review (‘the BAR’) must approve an application for certificate of appropriateness. § 10-103, City of Alexandria Zoning Ordinance. The purpose of this requirement is ‘to prevent construction, reconstruction, alteration or restoration incongruous to such existing building or structure, area, surroundings or memorial character.’ § 10-105(1)(A)(1).”

70 Va. Cir. at 83 (emphasis in original). The Circuit Court went on to recognize the authority of the Board in passing upon even the smallest exterior changes to structures in the Old and Historic District:

^{2/} Review by this Council is based on the record compiled before the Board. The appellants are not allowed to alter that record or attempt to present evidence not presented to the Board.

“I find that changing the exterior paint color of an existing building in the Old and Historic District under the circumstances presented herein constitutes an ‘alteration’ within the meaning of § 10-105.”

Id. (emphasis supplied). The Court also held that “the BAR is required to consider . . . the extent to which any new architectural features are historically appropriate to the existing structure and adjacent existing structures.” Id. (emphasis supplied).

The Board in this case acted fully within its authority and duty under the Code. Here it is not a matter of fixing the siding, or changing the paint color. If the appellants are allowed to demolish and conceal the back of their house -- it will vanish. In its place will be the connection to a huge structure almost as large as the historic existing house, dwarfing all those around, and irreparably destroy a remaining piece of history.

Staff Recommendation to Council

The Staff has recommended that Council deny this appeal. The Staff’s report notes that a similar request to alter a house two doors away was recommended for disapproval in 1995 and then withdrawn. The Staff’s report points out that

“The basic historic physical form of these three rowhouses has remained remarkably unaltered since the latter part of the 19th century

“Staff finds the proposed demolition of the east (rear) elevation of this 19th century vernacular frame rowhouse an unacceptable loss of historic architectural fabric and form. . . .

“[T]he Permit to Demolish should not be approved.”

Staff Report to Council, pp. 2-3.

Conclusion

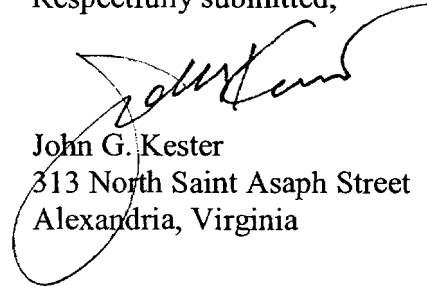
One the many obligations shouldered by the Mayor and Council is to assure continued protection of what makes this City unique. But that does not require the Council to second-guess judgments of the Board based on overwhelming support in the record, and reached by a 5-1 margin. The legal standards are clear, and they were wisely adhered to by the Board whose duty is to implement them. To permit such a violation -- affecting not just one historic house, but a whole row of them -- would, as the Board recognized, undermine decades of historic preservation success achieved by this City. The appellants have not presented a case for reversal that satisfies the standards for overturning a considered, carefully explained, fully supported decision of the Board of Architectural Review. The Board’s 5-1 decision was clearly within its jurisdiction assigned by the Code. And the Board’s decision was clearly correct.

To overturn the Board’s wise decision would be to undermine and threaten the future of the Old and Historic District, and surely soon destroy this “magic” corner of Old Town.

It would also set an undesirable precedent that would oblige the Council to take on the role of the Board, as if the Board's experience and expertise, and its careful examination of the evidence, did not matter. Surely the Council is not required to add that burden to its many others.

For these reasons, the appeal should be denied and the decision of the Board of Architectural Review in this matter should be affirmed.

Respectfully submitted,



John G. Kester
313 North Saint Asaph Street
Alexandria, Virginia

December 12, 2007

ADDENDUM

Excerpts From Letters of Neighbors in Opposition

Mr. and Mrs. Rigby
330 North Pitt Street:

(“Will change the historic nature of the area . . . [c]urrently there is a recognizable and historic similarity to all the houses along that section . . . would do damage to that historic context”)

Judge and Mrs. Vasquez
317 North Saint Asaph Street:

(“appearance, character and ‘footprint’ of these historical homes on this block would forever be altered . . . have been in existence since the 1850’s without any changes . . . could very well increase the flooding and damage to our homes . . . green space in our neighborhood would forever be altered”)

Ms. Critz
307 North Saint Asaph Street:

(“The charm is not only from the front, but also from the back . . . From very public walkway . . . there is a completely unobstructed view . . . many times I have seen tourists photograph the back . . . addition is completely out of character”)

Ms. Schaeffer and Mr. Williams
327 North Saint Asaph Street:

(“a unique row of five plaqued colonial homes . . . backs of our five town homes are totally visible . . . A three story addition at 323 would block our sunlight and deprive our back rooms of natural light . . . demise of our Dogwood, Holly trees and several shrubs . . . would ruin the open space for all the surrounding yards . . . structural and flooding issues . . . Our particular block is photographed all the time”)

Mr. Ballowe
311 North Saint Asaph Street:

("out of character for this historic and beautiful block . . .
We chose to live in historic homes -- with their attendant
costs and limitations")

Ambassador and Mrs. Campbell
607 Queen Street:

("impact on the entire row of five, fragile, plagued
nineteenth century houses, violating their scale and altering
the footprint . . . highly visible to the numerous visitors
who now use the pedestrian way")

Mr. and Mrs. Steve
325 North Saint Asaph Street:

("One of the most important factors in choosing . . . our
home was the open, unobstructed access to light and air in
the back yard . . . building two inches from our property
line . . . a two-story wall along our back yard cutting off
access to direct sunlight . . . break up the unique open space
. . . kill trees . . . worsen flooding . . .

architect has stated that . . . construction crews will want --
and need -- access to our property")

Mr. and Mrs. Teresinski
319 North Saint Asaph Street:

("we wanted to have a home in a neighborhood that was
peaceful, . . . charming (with a historic footprint), and an
open backyard for our child to enjoy . . . no sooner had we
moved in . . . we discovered that our immediate neighbors
wanted to put up a three story addition . . . amazement and
shock . . . may cause irreparable damage to the structural
integrity of our home . . . major disturbance to the
foundation and ground of the structures attached . . .
destroy the historical
footprint of our serene neighborhood . . . our homes have
a unique front and rear . . . some of the last few . . . noise
and chaos . . . we plan to bring home our adopted infant . . .
at the same time that construction is to begin . . . had we
known . . . we would have bought elsewhere").

Dr. Nelson and Dr. Dediac
403 North Saint Asaph Street:

("violates core principles of historic preservation . . . It would be an ill-advised and misplaced precedent to grant, to anyone who might afford it, the opportunity to expand a home such that the expansion would intrude both on neighbors' rights and the city's historic identity")

Mr. Kester
313 North Saint Asaph Street:

("Perhaps many of us, like the applicants, might sometimes feel the urge to live in a bigger house, and never mind the neighborhood. Probably we all could obtain a great deal more space by moving elsewhere. We have preferred, however, to respect and accept the sizes and historic-preservation restrictions of the historic homes we elected to buy.")

When the applicants presented their proposal, their representative told the Board:

“No, there’s really nothing significant that has happened in this house. There’s no ability to say it has associative value with that, any one person or that way of interpreting this.”

Tr., p. 3.

“We don’t believe that if the house remains as is, it will become a shrine of any kind.”

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^{2/} Review by this Council is based on the record compiled before the Board. The appellants are not allowed to alter that record or attempt to present evidence not presented to the Board.

“I find that changing the exterior paint color of an existing building in the Old and Historic District under the circumstances presented herein constitutes an ‘alteration’ within the meaning of § 10-105.”

Id. (emphasis supplied). The Court also held that “the BAR is required to consider . . . the extent to which any new architectural features are historically appropriate to the existing structure and adjacent existing structures.” Id. (emphasis supplied).

The Board in this case acted fully within its authority and duty under the Code. Here it is not a matter of fixing the siding, or changing the paint color. If the appellants are allowed to demolish and conceal the back of their house -- it will vanish. In its place will be the connection to a huge structure almost as large as the historic existing house, dwarfing all those around, and irreparably destroy a remaining piece of history.

Staff Recommendation to Council

The Staff has recommended that Council deny this appeal. The Staff’s report notes that a similar request to alter a house two doors away was recommended for disapproval in 1995 and then withdrawn. The Staff’s report points out that

“The basic historic physical form of these three rowhouses has remained remarkably unaltered since the latter part of the 19th century

“Staff finds the proposed demolition of the east (rear) elevation of this 19th century vernacular frame rowhouse an unacceptable loss of historic architectural fabric and form. . . .

“[T]he Permit to Demolish should not be approved.”

Staff Report to Council, pp. 2-3.

Conclusion

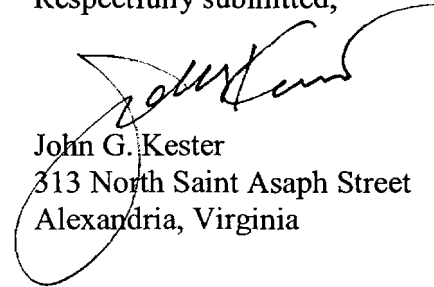
One the many obligations shouldered by the Mayor and Council is to assure continued protection of what makes this City unique. But that does not require the Council to second-guess judgments of the Board based on overwhelming support in the record, and reached by a 5-1 margin. The legal standards are clear, and they were wisely adhered to by the Board whose duty is to implement them. To permit such a violation -- affecting not just one historic house, but a whole row of them -- would, as the Board recognized, undermine decades of historic preservation success achieved by this City. The appellants have not presented a case for reversal that satisfies the standards for overturning a considered, carefully explained, fully supported decision of the Board of Architectural Review. The Board’s 5-1 decision was clearly within its jurisdiction assigned by the Code. And the Board’s decision was clearly correct.

To overturn the Board’s wise decision would be to undermine and threaten the future of the Old and Historic District, and surely soon destroy this “magic” corner of Old Town.

It would also set an undesirable precedent that would oblige the Council to take on the role of the Board, as if the Board's experience and expertise, and its careful examination of the evidence, did not matter. Surely the Council is not required to add that burden to its many others.

For these reasons, the appeal should be denied and the decision of the Board of Architectural Review in this matter should be affirmed.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John G. Kester", is written over the typed name and address. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

John G. Kester
313 North Saint Asaph Street
Alexandria, Virginia

December 12, 2007

ADDENDUM

Excerpts From Letters of Neighbors in Opposition

Mr. and Mrs. Rigby
330 North Pitt Street:

(“Will change the historic nature of the area . . . [c]urrently there is a recognizable and historic similarity to all the houses along that section . . . would do damage to that historic context”)

Judge and Mrs. Vasquez
317 North Saint Asaph Street:

(“appearance, character and ‘footprint’ of these historical homes on this block would forever be altered . . . have been in existence since the 1850’s without any changes . . . could very well increase the flooding and damage to our homes . . . green space in our neighborhood would forever be altered”)

Ms. Critz
307 North Saint Asaph Street:

(“The charm is not only from the front, but also from the back . . . From very public walkway . . . there is a completely unobstructed view . . . many times I have seen tourists photograph the back . . . addition is completely out of character”)

Ms. Schaeffer and Mr. Williams
327 North Saint Asaph Street:

(“a unique row of five plaqued colonial homes . . . backs of our five town homes are totally visible . . . A three story addition at 323 would block our sunlight and deprive our back rooms of natural light . . . demise of our Dogwood, Holly trees and several shrubs . . . would ruin the open space for all the surrounding yards . . . structural and flooding issues . . . Our particular block is photographed all the time”)

Mr. Ballowe
311 North Saint Asaph Street:

("out of character for this historic and beautiful block . . .
We chose to live in historic homes -- with their attendant
costs and limitations")

Ambassador and Mrs. Campbell
607 Queen Street:

("impact on the entire row of five, fragile, plagued
nineteenth century houses, violating their scale and altering
the footprint . . . highly visible to the numerous visitors
who now use the pedestrian way")

Mr. and Mrs. Steve
325 North Saint Asaph Street:

("One of the most important factors in choosing . . . our
home was the open, unobstructed access to light and air in
the back yard . . . building two inches from our property
line . . . a two-story wall along our back yard cutting off
access to direct sunlight . . . break up the unique open space
. . . kill trees . . . worsen flooding . . .

architect has stated that . . . construction crews will want --
and need -- access to our property")

Mr. and Mrs. Teresinski
319 North Saint Asaph Street:

("we wanted to have a home in a neighborhood that was
peaceful, . . . charming (with a historic footprint), and an
open backyard for our child to enjoy . . . no sooner had we
moved in . . . we discovered that our immediate neighbors
wanted to put up a three story addition . . . amazement and
shock . . . may cause irreparable damage to the structural
integrity of our home . . . major disturbance to the
foundation and ground of the structures attached . . .
destroy the historical
footprint of our serene neighborhood . . . our homes have
a unique front and rear . . . some of the last few . . . noise
and chaos . . . we plan to bring home our adopted infant . . .
at the same time that construction is to begin . . . had we
known . . . we would have bought elsewhere").

Dr. Nelson and Dr. Dediac
403 North Saint Asaph Street:

(“violates core principles of historic preservation . . . It would be an ill-advised and misplaced precedent to grant, to anyone who might afford it, the opportunity to expand a home such that the expansion would intrude both on neighbors’ rights and the city’s historic identity”)

Mr. Kester
313 North Saint Asaph Street:

(“Perhaps many of us, like the applicants, might sometimes feel the urge to live in a bigger house, and never mind the neighborhood. Probably we all could obtain a great deal more space by moving elsewhere. We have preferred, however, to respect and accept the sizes and historic-preservation restrictions of the historic homes we elected to buy.”)

18
12-15-07



<teresinski@verizon.net>

12/11/2007 12:51 PM

Please respond to
<teresinski@verizon.net>

To <alexvamayor@aol.com>, <timothylovain@aol.com>, <councilmangaines@aol.com>, <council@krupicka.com>, <delpepper@aol.com>, <paulcsmedberg@aol.com>

cc

bcc

Subject COA Contact Us: docket # 20070097



Time: [Tue Dec 11, 2007 12:51:53] IP Address: [56.0.163.16]

Issue Type: Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Council Members
First Name: Laura
Last Name: Teresinski
Street Address: 319 N Saint Asaph Street
City: Alexandria
State: VA
Zip: 22314
Phone: 703 838 1621
Email Address: teresinski@verizon.net
Subject: docket # 20070097

Dear City Council:

I am writing to voice my opposition to the request for a permit to demolish and encapsulate 323 N Saint Asaph, which is currently scheduled for a hearing on Saturday, December 15. As you may be aware, the BAR heard this case and denied the application, finding that this was the LAST row of 5 houses in Old Town that currently exist in their original historic state that the public is able to view from at least two public walkways and roads. This is indeed a special area of Old Town, and my husband and I were thrilled to have the opportunity to buy our house, which is connected to 323 N Saint Asaph, in January of 2007.

We were drawn to the unprecedented historical integrity of the immediate properties, and the abundance of green space and light due to the surrounding open yards and alleys, and felt privileged to become stewards of this environment. Needless to say, we would not have purchased this

property had we known that our neighbor was contemplating the destruction of the area.

Comments:

We purchased our home fully aware of the responsibilities of living in a neighborhood that values historic preservation, and looked forward to raising our children, whom we hope to adopt this year, in this peaceful and idyllic environment. In addition to the irreparable damage that the demolition will cause to this historic neighborhood, we are quite concerned about the noise and pollution that our children will be exposed to (please note the property owners are planning on living elsewhere during this year or so long project so they will not bear the burden of this project, only the neighbors will), as well as the potential damage to the structural integrity of our home, which still stands straight and proud after nearly 200 years.

As one BAR member noted, this application will not only destroy the fabric of a building, it will destroy the character of these historic homes and the community that lives there. It is truly an oasis deserving of protection. I would welcome the opportunity to have each of you over to our home so you can experience firsthand what the neighborhood cares so deeply about. Please preserve what makes Old Town special, and deny this application to demolish a unique piece of our city and nation's history.

Sincerely,

Laura Teresinski



<teresinski@verizon.net>

12/14/2007 10:51 AM

Please respond to
<teresinski@verizon.net>

To <alexvamayor@aol.com>, <timothylovain@aol.com>, <councilmangaines@aol.com>, <council@krupicka.com>, <delpepper@aol.com>, <paulcsmedberg@aol.com>,

cc

bcc

Subject COA Contact Us: Hearing re: 323 N Saint Asaph Street

18
12-15-07

Time: [Fri Dec 14, 2007 10:51:02] IP Address: [56.0.163.15]

Issue Type: Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Council Members
First Name: Jerome
Last Name: Teresinski
Street Address: 319 N Saint Asaph Street
City: Alexandria
State: VA
Zip: 22314
Phone: 703 838 1621
Email Address: teresinski@verizon.net
Subject: Hearing re: 323 N Saint Asaph Street
December 14, 2007

Dear City Council:

I am writing to oppose the request for a permit to demolish and encapsulate 323 N Saint Asaph Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314. This matter is currently scheduled for a hearing on Saturday, December 15, 2007. My wife, Laura Teresinski, has also forwarded a letter of opposition to you as well.

The BAR in Old

Town Alexandria heard this case and denied the application, finding that this was the last row of five homes in Old Town that continue to exist in their original historic state that the public is able to view from at least two public walkways and roads. We love this area of Old Town. My wife and I fell in love with our home at 319 N. Saint Asaph Street when we purchased it in January of 2007. It was built in or around 1800, and for over 200 years it has been connected to 321 and 323 N. Saint Asaph Street (the

location under consideration). We were drawn to the historical integrity of the immediate properties, the abundance of green space and light due to the surrounding open yards and alleys, and as my wife explained, we have felt privileged to become active stewards of this environment. We take this responsibility very seriously. We were troubled when we learned about our neighbor's plans to destroy the immediate area, and we would not have purchased our property had we known of their plans ahead of time.

We

purchased our home fully aware of the responsibilities of living in a neighborhood that values historic preservation, and we look forward to raising our children, whom we hope to adopt over the coming year, in this peaceful and idyllic environment. In addition to the irreparable damage that the demolition will cause to our family's quiet enjoyment of our

Comments:

property, the demolition will cause the destruction of this historic neighborhood – forever. The demolition's impact will be permanent. Aside from the negative impact on history that will ensue, we are quite concerned about the negative impact that the demolition and the planned three-story addition will have on our property. In addition to the expected noise and pollution that our children will be exposed to, once the foundation of 323 N. Saint Asaph Street will be disturbed, there will be a negative impact on the foundations of the properties that have been structurally untouched for over 200 years (ours being one of them). While I am not an engineer, I do know that our home does not sag, it does not lean, and it is a solidly built home. We do not want that disturbed. Demolishing a portion of an attached property that has been left in undisturbed ground for over 200 years will no doubt have a negative effect on those properties adjacent to it. What is our remedy at that point? Who will fix the damage to our property that may ensue? Likewise, changing the grading of the soil of our neighbors' property will also have a cause and effect on our property as it relates to flooding. All of these issues cause us great concern and we believe that this proposed construction is both unnecessary and unwanted by the entirety of the neighborhood.

In closing, as my wife stated in her letter and as one BAR member noted, this application will "not only destroy the fabric of a building, it will destroy the character of these historic homes and the community that lives there." It is truly an oasis deserving of protection. We would welcome the opportunity to have each of you over to our home so you can experience firsthand what our neighborhood cares so deeply about. Please preserve what makes Old Town and our home special, and deny this application.

Sincerely,
Jerome J. Teresinski

18

12-15-07



"Duncan"
<Dblair@landclark.com>
12/14/2007 07:12 PM

To "Mayor William D Euille" <wmeuille@wdeuille.com>, "Rob Krupicka" <Rob@Krupicka.com>, <PaulCSmedberg@aol.com>, <Justin.Wilson@alexandriava.gov>, <timothylovain@aol.com>, cc <Stephen.Milone@alexandriava.gov>, <jackie.henderson@alexandriava.gov>
bcc

Subject FW: 10 Private Alley

Late this afternoon I received the attached response from S Milone of the Department of Planning and Zoning responding to my November 28, 2007 letter to him requesting determine whether the 10' alley between 315 and 317 North St. Asaph was a public or private or private alley. A copy of my letter is also attached. According to City records the alley is private. AT the BAR hearing on this case there was a great deal of discussion about the view of the property for this alley which was characterized as a public alley. While the demolition regulations apply regardless of visibility from a public place, unlike approval of a certificate of appropriateness, it is germane in evaluating whether there is a substantial public detriment in allowing the limited scope of demolition and encapsulation of portions of the rear façade. I apologize for sending this at this late hour, but I just received it and felt it important to be part of the public record. Duncan

From: Stephen.Milone@alexandriava.gov [mailto:Stephen.Milone@alexandriava.gov]
Sent: Friday, December 14, 2007 5:27 PM
To: Duncan
Cc: lloweco@comcast.net
Subject: Re: 10 Private Alley

Dear Duncan,

Please find attached letter answering your question regarding the pedestrian alley south of 317 N. St. Asaph. I've also pasted the letter below in case you or Laurie have problems opening the attachment. Please call if you have any questions and I'll see you tomorrow.

-- Steve

Stephen Milone, AICP
Division Chief, Land Use Services
Alexandria Planning and Zoning
v 703.838.4666 x373
<http://www.alexandriava.gov/>

December 14, 2007

Sent via electronic mail

Duncan W. Blair

Land, Clark, Carroll, Mendelson and Blair, P.C.
524 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Re: Response regarding public/private alley between 313/315 and 317 North Saint Asaph Street

Dear Mr. Blair:

The City Survey Section has conducted research in response to your questions regarding whether the pedestrian alley located on the east side of North Saint Asaph Street between 313/315 and 317 North Saint Asaph Street is public or private. According to the information that we could find, the narrow portion of the alley immediately adjacent to 313 and 317 is private which according to Surveys Section means that the fee title to the land of the alley remains with the heirs of the original subdivider who created the alley. Rights to use the alley are generally shared among the adjoining property owners. The wider portion of the alley that extends from mid-block to North Pitt Street was dedicated for public street purposes in 1973 with the subdivision for Carriage Square West. Regarding the improvements made in recent years to the private portion of the alley, the City replaced the curb, gutter and sidewalk in the 300 block of N. Saint Asaph Street in March 1991. The driveway entrance to the alley was removed and some improvements to the narrow part of the alley may have been made at that time to solve drainage problems.

If you have further any questions please call.

Sincerely,

Stephen Milone
Division Chief, Zoning and Land Use Services

"Duncan" <Dblair@landclark.com>

12/13/2007 02:52 PM

To <Stephen.Milone@alexandriava.gov>
cc <lloweco@comcast.net>
Subject10 Private Alley

Steve: In conversations with members of the City Council it has become apparent that the St Asaph neighbors continue to be under the impression the alley referenced in my November 28, 2007 letter is a public alley. Please let me know when you can respond to my letter. I intent to draft a letter today and sent to the Council members stating what my research and discussion with the City disclosed and thought it would be good to have your response.

[attachment "Duncan Wardman Blair Esquire.vcf" deleted by Stephen Milone/Alex]



317 N St Asaph alley.doc Milone 11.28.07.pdf



DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING

301 King Street, Room 2100

P.O. Box 178

Alexandria, VA 22313

Phone (703) 838-4666

Fax (703) 838-6393

Alexandriava.gov

December 14, 2007

Sent via electronic mail

Duncan W. Blair
Land, Clark, Carroll, Mendelson and Blair, P.C.
524 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Re: Response regarding public/private alley between 313/315 and 317 North Saint Asaph Street

Dear Mr. Blair:

The City Survey Section has conducted research in response to your questions regarding whether the pedestrian alley located on the east side of North Saint Asaph Street between 313/315 and 317 North Saint Asaph Street is public or private. According to the information that we could find, the narrow portion of the alley immediately adjacent to 313 and 317 is private which according to Surveys Section means that the fee title to the land of the alley remains with the heirs of the original subdivider who created the alley. Rights to use the alley are generally shared among the adjoining property owners. The wider portion of the alley that extends from mid-block to North Pitt Street was dedicated for public street purposes in 1973 with the subdivision for Carriage Square West. Regarding the improvements made in recent years to the private portion of the alley, the City replaced the curb, gutter and sidewalk in the 300 block of N. Saint Asaph Street in March 1991. The driveway entrance to the alley was removed and some improvements to the narrow part of the alley may have been made at that time to solve drainage problems.

If you have further any questions please call.

Sincerely,

Stephen Milone
Division Chief, Zoning and Land Use Services

LAND, CLARK, CARROLL, MENDELSON & BLAIR, P.C.

Attorneys & Counsellors at Law

524 KING STREET

ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314

H. CARTER LAND, III
JAMES C. CLARK
F. ANDREW CARROLL, III
RICHARD S. MENDELSON
DUNCAN W. BLAIR

.....
(703) 836-1000

FACSIMILE
(703) 549-3335

MAILING ADDRESS:
P.O. Box 19888
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22320-0888

November 28, 2007

Steve Milone
Division Chief
Department of Planning & Zoning
301 King Street
City Hall, Room 2100
Alexandria, VA 22314

DELIVERED BY HAND

**In re: Board of Architectural Review Appeal, Case #2007-0097
323 North St. Asaph Street, Alexandria, Virginia.**

Dear Mr. Milone:

I am writing on behalf of our clients, Carl Gudenius and Laurie Lowe, in connection with the above-referenced matter.


During the October 3, 2007 public hearing, there was a substantial amount of public testimony as well as discussion by the members of the Board of Architectural Review concerning the visibility of the property from the ten foot (10') "public right of way" or "public alley" separating the houses located at 315 and 317 North St. Asaph Street. The area of the ten foot (10') alley that was specifically referenced appears to be part of a larger ten foot (10') alley that bisects the block bounded by North St. Asaph Street, North Pitt Street, Queen Street and Princess Street. The visibility of the rear of 323 North St. Asaph Street from the portion of the ten foot (10') alley adjacent to 315 and 317 North St. Asaph Street appeared, based upon the discussions at the hearing, to have been a major factor and basis on which the requested partial demolition and capsulation of the Lowe/Gudenius home was deemed to have been detrimental to the public interest and denied by the Board of Architectural Review.

Steve Milone
Division Chief
Department of Planning & Zoning
November 28, 2007
Page -2-

Subsequent to the October 3, 2007 public hearing, I have researched the origins of the ten foot (10') alley, as well as had conversations with Allen Martin, the City Surveyor. My research disclosed that the ten foot (10') alley in question separating 315 and 317 North St. Asaph Street and continuing to its intersection with North Pitt Street is a private alley and not a public alley as opined by the speakers at the public hearing. The City records indicate that the owners of 315 and 317 requested permission from the City of Alexandria to improve a portion of the alley adjacent to their homes; I am advised that the City had no objection to the improvements since the alley was private, the two adjoining owners could do whatever they desired.

I would appreciate your confirmation prior to the December 15, 2007 City Council public hearing so that the record could be clear that the alley referred to numerous times in the hearing is in fact designated as a private alley and not a public alley.

If you have any questions concerning this, please do not hesitate to call.

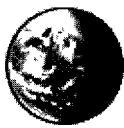
Very truly yours,


Duncan W. Blair

DWB:k|Milone-LaurieLowe 1107

cc: Carl Gudenius and Laurie Lowe
Lee Webb, Supv. Urban Planner
Jackie M. Henderson, City Clerk and Clerk of Council

18
12-15-07



<jballowe@etrade.com>
12/13/2007 10:43 AM
Please respond to
<jballowe@etrade.com>

To <alexvamayor@aol.com>, <timothylovain@aol.com>, <councilmangaines@aol.com>, <council@krupicka.com>, <delpepper@aol.com>, <paulcsmedberg@aol.com>, cc bcc
Subject COA Contact Us: CASE BAR 2007-0097 Appeal



Time: [Thu Dec 13, 2007 10:43:18] IP Address: [208.47.82.254]

Issue Type: Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Council Members
First Name: James
Last Name: Ballowe
Street Address: 311 North Saint Asaph Street
City: Alexandria
State: VA
Zip: 22314
Phone: 703.548.6509
Email Address: jballowe@etrade.com
Subject: CASE BAR 2007-0097 Appeal
Comments: I write in support of the BAR decision to deny a request for demolition/encapsulation at 323 N. Saint Asaph Street. The BAR is entrusted with the protection of historic Alexandria and is expert in the analysis of alterations to existing historic buildings. After careful consideration, the BAR has determined that the proposed demolition and encapsulation is not in the best interests of the community. The BAR's decision should be upheld by City Council.

18

12-15-07

December 13, 2007

Laurie Lowe and Carl Gudenius
323 N. St. Asaph Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Laurie and Carl,

Please accept our support in your appeal of the decision of the Board of Architectural Review (BAR) regarding your proposed demolition and reconstruction of the rear section of your residence. Unfortunately, family commitments require that we be in Philadelphia on December 15. We will not be able to attend the City Board meeting, but you may use this letter of support in any way that aids your hearing in appeal.

We are Carolyn Ann and Robert Joseph Almassy, owners and residents of the property at 316 N. Pitt Street, Alexandria, VA 22314. Our property adjoins the eastern edge of the Lowe/Gudenius property subject to Board BAR case #2007-0097. We have lived at this location since 1990.

During the years we have lived in Alexandria, we have observed, and supported, extensive renovation of properties surrounding us. Those renovations have included modernization of the historic Alexandria Jail and adjoining properties in the 400 blocks of N St Asaph and N Pitt Streets; the renovations to the area known historically as "the Burg," in the 400 and 500 blocks of N Pitt and N Royal Streets; construction and enlargement of homes in the 300 blocks of N Pitt and N St Asaph Streets – one just a half a block to the south of the subject property and one just across the street; and finally current ongoing renovation to the residence on Queen Street, bordering our property on the south. In all cases, subject to the requirements of the BAR, these changes have resulted in improvements in the condition and beauty of our historic Old Town neighborhood. They have proven that modernization can be achieved while retaining the essential historic fabric of our City.

All of these renovations have involved retention of the historic look of the street facades while allowing modernization of the less public areas central to the blocks involved. Many of our visitors have commented to us on Alexandria's ability to present the look of the 17th and 18th centuries for passers-by on our public thoroughfares, while providing our residents often surprisingly modern gardens, recreational areas and structural elements in the less public "inner sanctums" of our center blocks.

The proposed demolition and renovation of the residence at 323 N. St Asaph Street continues this trend of historically respectful modernization. It proposes a modern construction, tastefully consistent with the look of adjoining properties.

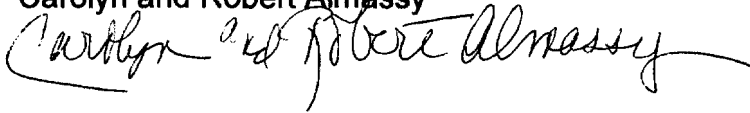
Detractors have argued that the proposed renovation does not retain the "historic footprint" of the row of town-homes, that it might damage a tree near the property line and that it could have adverse impacts on the sunlight and drainage fields of adjoining properties. We have observed the owners and their architects develop responses and mitigation approaches for each of these arguments. In doing this, they have been consistently responsive and respectful in their actions. They have been good neighbors and supporters of Alexandria values.

With the design adjustments proposed to answer and mitigate each of the concerns about renovation, none of those concerns seems to us to merit serious continued consideration. What should be considered, in our opinion, is our ability as a community to adopt 21st century standards with continued respect for those aspects of our history that should be preserved. We believe the proposed renovation accomplishes that goal and should be approved.

We urge the Board to reverse the opinion of the BAR.

Respectfully,

Carolyn and Robert Almassy

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carolyn and Robert Almassy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

December 13, 2007

Laurie Lowe and Carl Gudenius
323 N. St. Asaph Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Laurie and Carl,

Please accept our support in your appeal of the decision of the Board of Architectural Review (BAR) regarding your proposed demolition and reconstruction of the rear section of your residence. Unfortunately, family commitments require that we be in Philadelphia on December 15. We will not be able to attend the City Board meeting, but you may use this letter of support in any way that aids your hearing in appeal.

We are Carolyn Ann and Robert Joseph Almassy, owners and residents of the property at 316 N. Pitt Street, Alexandria, VA 22314. Our property adjoins the eastern edge of the Lowe/Gudenius property subject to Board BAR case #2007-0097. We have lived at this location since 1990.

During the years we have lived in Alexandria, we have observed, and supported, extensive renovation of properties surrounding us. Those renovations have included modernization of the historic Alexandria Jail and adjoining properties in the 400 blocks of N St Asaph and N Pitt Streets; the renovations to the area known historically as "the Burg," in the 400 and 500 blocks of N Pitt and N Royal Streets; construction and enlargement of homes in the 300 blocks of N Pitt and N St Asaph Streets – one just a half a block to the south of the subject property and one just across the street; and finally current ongoing renovation to the residence on Queen Street, bordering our property on the south. In all cases, subject to the requirements of the BAR, these changes have resulted in improvements in the condition and beauty of our historic Old Town neighborhood. They have proven that modernization can be achieved while retaining the essential historic fabric of our City.

All of these renovations have involved retention of the historic look of the street facades while allowing modernization of the less public areas central to the blocks involved. Many of our visitors have commented to us on Alexandria's ability to present the look of the 17th and 18th centuries for passers-by on our public thoroughfares, while providing our residents often surprisingly modern gardens, recreational areas and structural elements in the less public "inner sanctums" of our center blocks.

The proposed demolition and renovation of the residence at 323 N. St Asaph Street continues this trend of historically respectful modernization. It proposes a modern construction, tastefully consistent with the look of adjoining properties.

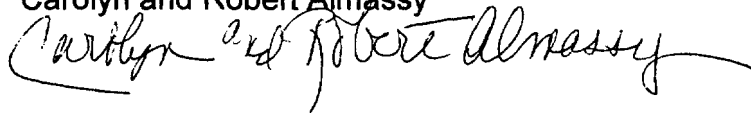
Detractors have argued that the proposed renovation does not retain the "historic footprint" of the row of town-homes, that it might damage a tree near the property line and that it could have adverse impacts on the sunlight and drainage fields of adjoining properties. We have observed the owners and their architects develop responses and mitigation approaches for each of these arguments. In doing this, they have been consistently responsive and respectful in their actions. They have been good neighbors and supporters of Alexandria values.

With the design adjustments proposed to answer and mitigate each of the concerns about renovation, none of those concerns seems to us to merit serious continued consideration. What should be considered, in our opinion, is our ability as a community to adopt 21st century standards with continued respect for those aspects of our history that should be preserved. We believe the proposed renovation accomplishes that goal and should be approved.

We urge the Board to reverse the opinion of the BAR.

Respectfully,

Carolyn and Robert Almassy

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carolyn and Robert Almassy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

SPEAKER'S FORM

DOCKET ITEM NO. 18

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM AND GIVE IT TO THE CITY CLERK
BEFORE YOU SPEAK ON A DOCKET ITEM.

PLEASE ANNOUNCE THE INFORMATION SPECIFIED BELOW PRIOR TO SPEAKING.

- 1. **NAME:** Duncan W. Blair, Esquire
- 2. **ADDRESS:** 524 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22314
TELEPHONE NO. 703 836-1000 **E-MAIL:** dblair@landclark.com
- 3. **WHOM DO YOU REPRESENT, IF OTHER THAN YOURSELF?**
Laurie Lowe and Carl Gudenius
- 4. **WHAT IS YOUR POSITION ON THE ITEM?**
For
- 5. **NATURE OF YOUR INTEREST IN ITEM (PROPERTY OWNER, ATTORNEY, LOBBYIST, CIVIC INTEREST, ETC.):**
Attorney
- 6. **ARE YOU RECEIVING COMPENSATION FOR THIS APPEARANCE BEFORE COUNCIL?**
Yes

This form shall be kept as a part of the permanent record in those instances where financial interest or compensation is indicated by the speaker.

A maximum of three minutes will be allowed for your presentation, except that one officer or other designated member speaking on behalf of each *bona fide* neighborhood civic association or unit owners' association desiring to be heard on a docket item shall be allowed five minutes. In order to obtain five minutes, you must identify yourself as a designated speaker, and identify the neighborhood civic association or unit owners' association you represent, at the start of your presentation. If you have a prepared statement, please leave a copy with the Clerk.

Additional time not to exceed 15 minutes may be obtained with the consent of the majority of the council present; provided notice requesting additional time with reasons stated is filed with the City Clerk in writing before 5:00 p.m. of the day preceding the meeting.

The public normally may speak on docket items only at public hearing meetings, and not at regular legislative meetings. Public hearing meetings are usually held on the Saturday following the second Tuesday in each month; regular legislative meetings on the second and fourth Tuesdays in each month. The rule with respect to when a person may speak to a docket item at a legislative meeting can be waived by a majority vote of council members present but such a waiver is not normal practice. When a speaker is recognized, the rules of procedures for speakers at public hearing meetings shall apply. If an item is docketed *for public hearing* at a regular legislative meeting, the public may speak to that item, and the rules of procedures for speakers at public hearing meetings shall apply.

In addition, the public may speak on matters which are not on the docket during the Public Discussion Period at public hearing meetings. The mayor may grant permission to a person, who is unable to participate in public discussion at a public hearing meeting for medical, religious, family emergency or other similarly substantial reasons, to speak at a regular legislative meeting. When such permission is granted, the rules of procedures for public discussion at public hearing meetings shall apply.

Guidelines for the Public Discussion Period

- (a) All speaker request forms for the public discussion period must be submitted by the time the item is called by the city clerk.
- (b) No speaker will be allowed more than three minutes; except that one officer or other designated member speaking on behalf of each *bona fide* neighborhood civic association or unit owners' association desiring to be heard during the public discussion period shall be allowed five minutes. In order to obtain five minutes, you must identify yourself as a designated speaker, and identify the neighborhood civic association or unit owners' association you represent, at the start of your presentation.
- (c) If more speakers are signed up than would be allotted for in 30 minutes, the mayor will organize speaker