

Docket Item #28
BAR CASE #2006-0153

BAR Meeting
July 19, 2006

ISSUE: Alterations
APPLICANT: Ernest and Dianne Abruzzo
LOCATION: 107 Queen Street
ZONE: RM/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. That the nails not show in the installation of the fiber cement siding; and,
2. That the replacement roof and new dormer roof be either standing seam metal or true slate shingles.

(Insert sketch here)

NOTE: Docket item #27 must be approved before this item may be considered.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for a new dormer on the rear slope of the roof and for a replacement roof. The three story brick faced house appears to have a gable roof from the street, but is more of a mansard, with sloped faces at the front and rear and a flat center portion. The new gabled dormer will be centered in the rear sloped area of the roof. The dormer will be 10' wide and 6' high at the peak. It will have a fixed window in the center flanked by two casement windows. The three window heads will together form a gentle arch. The windows will be Pella Architect Series wood windows with an EnduraClad exterior. The sides of the dormer will be clad in smooth finish, lap, Hardi-Plank siding. The trim will be Azak, a composite PVC type material. The siding will be painted in Benjamin Moore's Abingdon Putty (HC-99) and the trim in Baby's Breath (OC-62). The roof of the dormer will be clad in Tamko brand synthetic slate shingles, either Dusk Grey or Midnight Black.

In addition, the applicant is requesting approval to replace the existing standing seam metal roof with the Tamko brand synthetic slate shingles, either Dusk Grey or Midnight Black.

The rear of the house is visible in a through-the-block view from North Union Street and Founder's Park.

II. HISTORY:

The dwelling at 107 Queen Street is a one of a group of 86 three-story brick townhouses bounded by North Union, North Lee, Queen and Oronoco Streets which was approved by City Council in 1968 and constructed in 1971. The attached rowhouses are a variety of simple Colonial Revival styles. This area was not included in the Old and Historic Alexandria District between the late 1960s and June of 1984. As discussed in docket item #27, the Board has reviewed a number of cases involving dormers in this area.

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed dormer complies with the zoning ordinance requirements.

During the past several years the Board has reviewed a number of substantial alterations and additions to the properties within this development. The Board has responded to the requests on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the visibility and design of the alteration. The Board has approved front and rear dormers on these properties but in at least one case, at 105 Quay Street, denied front dormers. In that case, the Board noted that at that time there were no other front dormers on Quay Street. The Board also objected to the Palladian style dormers as being overly ornate for the simplified Colonial style design of the building. In the present case, the dormer is located on the rear of the building, although visible in a through-block view, and is in a block that already has several rear dormers. In addition, the dormer design is relatively simple

and compatible with the design of the development. For these reasons, Staff has no objection to the proposed dormer.

Staff notes that the proposed new dormer will utilize a variety of synthetic materials, including Azak trim, Hardi-Plank siding, clad windows and Tamko synthetic slate shingles. Although the Design Guidelines cite a preference for authentic materials, Staff has no objection to the use of the synthetic materials in this case as the dormer will not be accessible to the public and will be viewed from a distance. Staff notes that the Boards have developed the following policy regarding the use of fiber cement:

1. That fiber cement siding not be installed on an historic structure;
2. That historic materials should not be removed to install fiber cement siding;
3. That fiber cement siding replace other artificial or composite siding;
4. That the nails not show in the installation of the siding; and,
5. That smooth (not wood grained) siding be installed.

As the addition is new construction, the use of fiber cement is acceptable. The application materials state that the siding will be smooth. The only applicable item, item #4, should be noted and included in the conditions of the approval.

In addition to the dormer, the applicant is requesting approval to replace the original standing seam metal roof with a synthetic slate roof. As built, the development had houses with standing seam and true slate roofs grouped in clusters on the same blockface. The house at 107 Queen Street is within a cluster with standing seam metal roofs. Staff would prefer not to see the original rhythm of roof materials (slate and metal in clusters) disturbed, but does not feel this is as important an issue as the proposed use of synthetic slate. Staff does not recommend the use of synthetic slate in a blockface that has true slate roofs. The application maintains that the property owners wish to replace the metal roof to eliminate the need to repaint. Staff suggests that the applicant consider a new pre-finished metal roof which would not require the routine repainting that the current roof does but would have a similar look. Alternatively, Staff recommends that the replacement roof be true slate shingles. The dormer roof should match the roofing of the visible portions of the main roof.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. That the nails not show in the installation of the fiber cement siding; and,
2. That the replacement and new dormer roof be either standing seam metal or true slate shingles.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

- C-1 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-2 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-3 Construction permits are required for this project. Plans shall accompany the permit application that fully detail the construction as well as layouts and schematics of the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems.

Historic Alexandria:

The proposal seems appropriate.