

*******APPROVED MINUTES*******

Alexandria Board of Architectural Review
Old & Historic Alexandria District

Wednesday, April 7, 2010

7:30pm, City Council Chambers, City Hall
301 King Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Members Present: Tom Hulfish, Chairman
Oscar Fitzgerald
Arthur Keleher
Wayne Neale
John von Senden
Peter Smeallie
James Spencer

Staff Present: Planning & Zoning
Michele Oaks, Historic Preservation Planner
Al Cox, FAIA, Historic Preservation Manager

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Chairman Hulfish.

1. Consideration of the minutes of the public hearing of March 17, 2010.

BOARD ACTION: Approved as submitted, 7-0.

On a motion by Mr. Smeallie, seconded by Mr. Fitzgerald, the Board voted to approve the minutes, as submitted, with a vote of 7-0.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

2. **CASE BAR2008-0235**

Request for approval of alterations and signage at **134 N. Royal St**, zoned CD Commercial.

APPLICANT: City of Alexandria

BOARD ACTION: **Approved as amended, 7-0.**

SPEAKERS

Lance Mallamo, Director of the Office of Historic Alexandria, presented the application.

Ms. Billie Schaeffer, 327 N. St. Asaph, presented a petition in opposition to the project. She objected to the glass hatch paver and the frameless glass view window as too modern. She was happy with the present signage proposal but continued to question the lack of handrails.

Jeanne Defliese, President of the Gadsby's Tavern Museum Society, spoke in support.

John Hynan, representing HAF, said this present design was a big improvement over the original but that five plaques with text were out of proportion to the importance of the ice well. He stated that HAF did not financially contribute to this ice well project.

Mike Hobbs, 419 Cameron, stated two design principals that he believed applied here: 1. Do no harm & 2. Less is more. He applauded the design simplification but believed the number of

handrails were inadequate. He said that the bronze donor plaque was an improved material but that it should be reduced in size.

Anne Burnette, co-Chair of the Gatsby's Tavern Museum Society ice well fundraising committee, spoke in support.

Karen Byers, 415 Pitt Mews, spoke in support.

John Kester, 313 N. St. Asaph, supported the points made by Mike Hobbs and Billie Schaeffer.

Peggy Harlow, 8 Spring Street, spoke in favor. She noted that the site needed some interpretive signs and that it was time to move on.

Bob Morgan, 4512 Peacock Ave., spoke in favor. He stated that the public is acknowledging the design changes and that this project is needed to explain the ice well. He said that the steps were quite safe and that he would not be afraid to bring his Cub Scout pack here.

Poul Hertel, representing the OTCA, said that the steps were a potential safety hazard, whether they complied with Code or not.

BOARD DISCUSSION

Dr. Fitzgerald said that public participation had improved the design. He said the bronze plaque was tasteful but that he was still concerned with the overall amount of signage. He asked for BAR approval for the final text and asked for clarification on the operation of the view windows.

Mr. Mallamo clarified that there were only 30 to 40 words per panel and that they were distinct messages.

Gretchen Bulova, Director of Gadsby's Museum, explained that there is no way to access the inside of the glass in the current display and that the proposed hinged panels will allow this work to be done safely in the future.

David Bell, architect, explained the key lock at the top of the glass and operation of the hinge at the base.

Dr. Fitzgerald stated that he was now satisfied with the design of the glass and the interpretive panels.

Mr. Smeallie echoed Mr. Fitzgerald's comments and thanked the applicant for revising the design. He was not concerned with weather and wear at the glass paver hatch and did not believe any additional handrails were advisable. He loved the four interpretive panels but asked that the donor plaque be shrunk.

Mr. Keleher stated that, as a neighbor, he did not anticipate that the interpretive panels would cause congestion problems on the sidewalk, as had been represented by citizens. He agreed the center handrail was not necessary.

Mr. Spencer thanked the applicant for working with the community and believed the additional study was successful.

Mr. von Senden echoed the community outreach comments. He questioned the wear on the glass paver hatch; agreed that additional railings were not needed; said that the glass view panels were an elegant solution and much better than the existing; asked which size donor plaque was preferred.

Mr. Neale said the center handrail rail was not necessary and thought that the glass paver hatch was interesting. He complemented the signs carved in the stone above the ice well as a "brilliant filigree." He asked that the donor plaque be recessed into the wall so that the face is flush with the surrounding brick.

On a motion by Mr. Neale, seconded by Mr. Smeallie, the Board voted to approve the application, with the face of the donor plaque mounted flush with the brick wall, with a vote of 7-0.

REASON

The Board generally agreed with the staff analysis.

3. CASE BAR2009-0035

Request for approval of alterations and waiver of HVAC screening requirement at **202 Duke St**, zoned RM Residential.

APPLICANT: Lynn Rogerson Lewis

BOARD ACTION: **Approved as amended, 4-3.**

SPEAKERS

Ms. Rogerson, presented her application.

Bob Webster, 304 S. Lee St., said that the units will damage historically significant buildings.

He said compressors would be silhouetted against the sky but supported the proposed screening.

Beale Lowen, 221 S. Lee St., said that the private contract for the open space easement in the front yard was for monetary gain and that the easement agreement should be undone.

Carl Smith, 200 Duke, believed the commission should change their ruling denying HVAC condensers in open space. He suggested a compromise that would trade easement area for the side yard at the front door.

John Hynan, representing HAF, said they value citizens fighting for preservation and asked whether there was a compromise.

Gail Rothrock, representing the HAF minority view, said the vote on the HAF Board was 10-6 and that the rooftop mechanical was much less important than the 3rd dormer approved by the BAR on the Flounder in 1992.

BOARD DISCUSSION

Mr. von Senden said the only question before the Board this evening was whether a rooftop HVAC unit was appropriate. He stated that no historic fabric was destroyed and that the screening design was highly appropriate.

Mr. Spencer opposed all rooftop units.

Dr. Fitzgerald observed that once a tax credit is given, it can't be taken back. He stated that the issue was blown out of proportion to the proposal and would reluctantly support the unit but with no screening.

Mr. Smeallie said that he could not support a mechanical unit on this roof.

Mr. Keleher noted that negotiating easements was not part of the BAR's job. He restated the issue as whether a mechanical unit was appropriate on the roof or not. He observed that they exist all over town and said that it was appropriate here with screening.

Mr. Neale was satisfied with the screening and moved the staff recommendation to approve the rooftop units and deny the waiver of screening. Mr. Keleher seconded.

Dr. Fitzgerald's substitute motion to waive the screening failed for lack of a second.

REASON

The Board agreed with the analysis in the staff report.

4. CASE BAR2009-0295

Request for approval of alterations at **211 N Patrick St**, zoned RB Residential.

APPLICANT: Patrick Street Associates, LLC by Duncan W. Blair, Esquire

BOARD ACTION: **Denied, 7-0.**

SPEAKERS

Duncan Blair, attorney, presents for the applicant. He cited the use of this synthetic slate product on other historic buildings in other cities. He noted the 50 year warranty, colorfast guarantee and 80% recycled material content. He stated that it was 1/3 the cost of real slate and compared the use of this modern material to new windows and current paint chemistry.

Mr. Hynan, representing the HAF, strongly supported the staff recommendation. He said this would be an incremental change to the building which would eventually remove all historic fabric. He noted that a Zircon was not the same as a diamond.

Mary Ellen Staunton, 2600 King, Chair of HARC, stated that HARC members are opposed to synthetic slate and that it was a terrible precedent for historically significant buildings and eroded historic fabric in the District. She supported public workshops, as described by Staff at the City Council appeal.

Poul Hertel, representing OTCA, strongly objected to the application. He observed that historic preservation is about preservation, not synthetic materials.

Katy Cannady, 20 E. Oak St., said that Phony Colony is bad and phony slate is bad. She observed that there are benefits to being in a historic neighborhood and that there was reciprocal responsibilities to maintain the historic materials.

Stuart Dunn, 418 S. Lee St., observed that we are stewards of these homes. Cost is always a factor but there is also a good return. He noted a property value study comparing those inside and outside of a historic district. He said Yates Gardens is different and that late 20th century materials are ok there but not here.

Penny Jones, 4906 Gardner Drive, observed that this is one of only a few Queen Anne homes, that it needs natural materials, and that tax credits were available for restoration.

Mike Hobbs, 419 Cameron, opposed synthetic slate and was concerned with a consistent process with comparable results in comparable cases.

Charles Trozzo, representing the Historic Alexandria Restoration and Preservation Commission, strongly urged the recommendation of staff. He suggested that salvaged slate may be a less expensive alternative.

Gail Rothrock, 209 Duke, observed that Annapolis does not allow modern materials on historic buildings and said that we should not either.

BOARD DISCUSSION

Dr. Fitzgerald stated that this was one of a few grand buildings and does not want to use a modern material here. He said sustainability was a phony argument.

Mr. Smeallie does not support synthetic slate and felt that Hardiplank was not a valid comparison because it was approved by the Board only on additions and modern buildings. He said he personally owned a 1740 house in upstate New York that had its original slate roof and that maintenance was an annual event.

Mr. Spencer said that this project was a question of architectural and historic integrity. He supported real slate.

Mr. Keleher asked how one could have a historic building with a faux slate roof.

Mr. Neale said he would very sympathetic toward slate but that City Council had clearly said that an alternate material should be considered. He said synthetic slate was a reasonable alternative given Council's remand to the BAR.

Mr. von Senden said that the applicant knew the structure was in a historic district when they purchased it; that a real slate roof with a 100 to 150 year life span is more sustainable than a synthetic product; and that even the rubber tile blends are too visually consistent. He moves the staff recommendation.

Dr. Fitzgerald seconded the motion which passed by a vote of 7-0.

REASON

The Board agreed with the staff recommendation that synthetic materials are inappropriate on a historic structure.

5. CASE BAR2010-0042

Request for approval of demolition at **313 N Columbus St**, zoned CD Commercial.

APPLICANT: North Washington Realty, LC.

BOARD ACTION: **Approved as submitted by Unanimous Role Call Vote.**

SPEAKERS

Rapfael Rice Chief Engineer for North Washington Realty presented the application.

BOARD DISCUSSION

The Chairman called the question on the staff recommendation which passed by unanimous roll call vote.

REASON

The Board agreed with the analysis in the staff report and agreed that the remnant of the wall was not historic or significant.

6. CASE BAR2010-0035

Request for approval of alterations at **217 N Columbus St**, zoned RM Residential.

APPLICANT: Andrew H. Macdonald

BOARD ACTION: **Approved as amended, 6-1.**

SPEAKERS

Mr. Macdonald presented his application.

BOARD DISCUSSION

Mr. Neale said that he needed more professionally prepared drawings in order to evaluate the application and noted that additional drawings would be needed for a building permit anyway.

Mr. von Senden and Spencer agree.

Mr. Smeallie said that he believed the drawings were adequate for a minimally visible shed on a private alley and moved the staff recommendation.

Mr. von Senden offered an amendment to require staff review of the building permit application to insure that it was consistent with the BAR application.

Mr. Fitzgerald seconded the amended motion, commenting that the Board needed to be as user friendly as possible.

The motion passed 6-1 with Mr. Spencer opposed.

REASON

The Board agreed with the analysis in the staff report.

END DISCUSSION ITEMS

7. OTHER BUSINESS

1. Staff noted that they were now using the King Street Outdoor Dining Design Guidelines for restaurants on other streets in the District, such as Washington and South Union. The Board acknowledged that this was appropriate.
2. Staff presented a draft of the Roof Materials Policy. Staff outlined a proposal to form a committee with representatives from the BARs, the community, and preservation organizations to review the draft during April and to return to the Board with a Policy for adoption at the May 19, 2010 BAR hearing. Staff proposed that a similar study of appropriate window replacement would follow in June and July, 2010. The Board agreed with the concept of the policy and staff's proposed timetable.

ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS:

The following items have been administratively approved by BAR Staff:

CASE BAR2010-0044

Request for approval of roof replacement at **828 S Pitt St**, zoned RM Residential.

APPLICANT: Pheobe Brown

CASE BAR2010-0045

Request for approval of garden wall replacement at **806 Green St**, zoned RM Residential.

APPLICANT: Karen Becker

CASE BAR2010-0046

Request for approval of stair replacement/repair at **702,706, & 712 Prince St**, zoned RM Residential.

APPLICANT: Swann Daingerfield HOA

CASE BAR2010-0058

Request for approval of deck replacement & penthouse repairs at **318 Prince St**, zoned RM Residential.

APPLICANT: Prince St Club Condominium

CASE BAR2010-0065

Request for approval of awning recovering at **100 N Pitt St**, zoned KR King Street Retail.

APPLICANT: Simpson Properties

CASE BAR2010-0066

Request for approval of roof replacement at **321 Duke St**, zoned RM Residential.

APPLICANT: Scott SinClair

CASE BAR2010-0067

Request for approval of fence replacement at **816 Green St**, zoned RM Residential.

APPLICANT: Scott & Mary Young

CASE BAR2010-0068

Request for approval of awning recovering at **109 N Washington St**, zoned KR King Street Retail.

APPLICANT: Kamil Property Management, LLC

8. ADJOURNMENT

The Chairman adjourned the meeting at approximately 11:00 pm.

Minutes submitted by,

Al Cox, FAIA, Historic Preservation Manager
Boards of Architectural Review