

Docket Item # 5 & 6
BAR CASE # 2011-0273 &
2011-0274

BAR Meeting
October 19, 2011

ISSUE: Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate and Alterations

APPLICANT: Caton & Lizzie Burwell by Patrick Camus

LOCATION: 511 South Lee Street

ZONE: RM / Residential

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

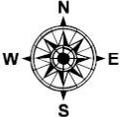
1. That the new wood stoop be constructed in the same location as the existing brick stoop; however, the stoop may be constructed approximately 8 to 9 inches wider, in its historic location, if the applicant obtains an Encroachment Ordinance from City;
2. That the proposed basement window under the new wooden stoop be deleted; and,
3. The statements in archaeology conditions below shall appear in the General Notes of all site plans and on all site plan sheets that involve demolition or ground disturbance (including Basement/Foundation Plans, Demolition, Erosion and Sediment Control, Grading, Landscaping, Utilities, and Sheeting and Shoring) so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirements:
 - a. The applicant/developer shall call Alexandria Archaeology immediately (703-746-4399) if any buried structural remains (wall foundations, wells, privies, cisterns, etc.) or concentrations of artifacts are discovered during the course of the project. Work must cease in the area of the discovery until a City archaeologist comes to the site and records the finds.
 - b. The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.

****EXPIRATION OF APPROVALS NOTE:** In accordance with Sections 10-106(B) and 10-206(B) of the Zoning Ordinance, any official Board of Architectural Review approval will expire 12 months from the date of final approval if the work is not commenced and diligently and substantially pursued by the end of that 12-month period.

****BUILDING PERMIT NOTE:** Most projects approved by the Board of Architectural Review require the issuance of one or more construction permits by Building and Fire Code Administration (including siding or roofing over 100 square feet, windows and signs). The applicant is responsible for obtaining all necessary construction permits after receiving Board of Architectural Review approval. Contact Code Administration, Room 4200, City Hall, 703-746-4200 for further information.



BAR CASE #2011-0273 & 0274



I. ISSUE

The applicant is requesting approval of a Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate and a Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations at 511 South Lee Street. The property owners are in the process of restoring the mid-19th century Greek revival style townhouse and have based the proposed alterations to the front façade on two historic photographs (figures 7 & 8). The owners are concurrently working with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources to obtain Rehabilitation Tax Credits for this work.

Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate

The areas to be demolished include the existing brick front stoop and the ca. 1980s bay window on the rear elevation. In anticipation of a future one-story rear addition, the applicant also proposes to demolish a 10 foot section of the brick wall along the north property line and encapsulate a 32 square foot portion of the rear wall.

Alterations

The following alterations are proposed at 511 South Lee Street.

Front façade

- A new wood stoop, designed to match the stoop shown in the historic photos, will be constructed in the exact location as the existing stoop.
- The existing Colonial revival-style broken pediment door surround will be removed and door shutters will be installed. The cedar shutters will be louvered and will be custom milled to match the shutters shown in the historic photos.
- The existing light fixture adjacent to the front door will be removed and a new fixture will be installed above the door. The new light fixture will have a carriage style and will have a dark bronze finish with seeded glass.
- The two existing basement windows will be removed and the openings will be enlarged. A third basement window is also proposed below the new wood stoop. All three basement windows will be wood, true divided light, single glazed awning windows. The three light windows will be manufactured by Avalon and have 7/8 inch putty glazed muntins.
- The gas meter will be relocated from the interior of the house (basement) to the exterior, below the stoop.
- Where necessary, the siding on the front façade will be repaired.

Side elevations

- On the north and south elevations the existing asbestos shingles covering the original siding will be removed and the siding will be restored.
- On the south elevation the existing door and concrete stoop will be removed and a new single glazed wood window will be installed.
- A second single glazed wood window will also be installed on the south elevation.

Rear elevation

- The existing asbestos shingles will be removed and the original wood siding will be restored.
- In the future, a one-story rear addition measuring approximately 10 feet by 12 feet will be constructed.

II. HISTORY

511 South Lee Street is a two-and-a-half-story, three-bay frame townhouse constructed in a Greek revival style in the **mid-1850s**. The house appears on the 1877 Hopkins' City Atlas of Alexandria and the 1902 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, the first year this block of the city was mapped. According to Ethelyn Cox, in her book *Historic Alexandria, Virginia: Street by Street*, the house was likely constructed by John Heymes sometime after 1853. The footprint of the house remains largely unchanged since its construction, with the exception of the bay window on the rear elevation, which the applicant believes was constructed in the 1980s.

Staff could locate no recent BAR approvals for the subject property. However, the Board "approved the front elevation" on July 8, 1959, as well as a window, skylight and window guards on February 16, 1972.

III. ANALYSIS

The proposed project complies with Zoning Ordinance regulations. The City Code allows an encroachment of 3 feet from the property line for stoops and stairs on streets measuring 50 to 66 feet in width (South Lee Street is 50 feet wide). Although the existing stoop and stairs project 5 feet from the property line (the house itself projects nearly 2 feet into the right-of-way), the applicant is permitted to replace the existing stoop/stairs in the same size and location because the existing stairs are deemed a legal noncomplying structure. Any further encroachment would require an Encroachment Ordinance.

Staff has no objection to the proposed demolition and encapsulation, and finds the proposed alterations to be generally compatible with the existing building and surrounding area. On the front, the removal of the door surround and the brick stoop will allow for an accurate restoration of the street facing facade. Because the **rear of the property is not visible from a public right-of-way**, only the Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate is before the Board. Nonetheless, the scope of the rear alterations and addition are minimal in scope and in keeping with the scale of other rear additions in the 500 block of South Lee Street.

Permit to Demolish

In considering a Permit to Demolish, 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?

In the opinion of Staff, none of the criteria for demolition and encapsulation are met and the Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate should be granted. As noted earlier, the areas proposed for demolition on the front façade are not original to the Greek revival style house, and the proposed encapsulation/demolition on the rear elevation impacts a relatively small portion of historic fabric, none of it character-defining or uncommon design or historic merit, and not visible from the public right-of-way. While at times, the cumulative effect of demolition and encapsulation can compromise the integrity of a property, Staff does not find that to be the case in this instance.

Alterations

Staff commends the applicant for undertaking the restoration of this historic townhouse and identifying historic photographs to help guide the restoration process. Staff has no objection to the removal of the brick stoop and stairs and the installation of a new wood stoop designed to match the one shown in the historic photographs, which meets the many guidelines for stoops, steps and railings outlined in the *Design Guidelines*. Wood stoops were much more prevalent historically than they are today, as evidenced by the photos provided by the applicant. Over time, many of these wood stoops have been replaced with more permanent masonry stoops, such as the one at 511 South Lee Street. While Staff would prefer to see the stoop widened to the full width shown in the photos (Figure 4 shows what is likely to be the footprint in the existing concrete sidewalk of one of the wooden posts, indicating the stoop originally projected approximately 8 to 9 inches further into the right-of-way), the City Code does not allow any additional encroachment beyond the current stoop. The applicants have indicated they may seek an Encroachment Ordinance from Planning Commission and City Council. Staff believes the sidewalk is wide enough in this location to support a larger stoop, but believe that a wood stoop in the same design as the historic stoop in the current location is also acceptable.

Staff also supports the applicant's request to slightly enlarge the two basement windows, given that there is clear evidence in the basement to suggest that at one time the windows were slightly larger. However, Staff does not support the installation of a third basement window on the front façade. Given the applicant's interest in an authentic restoration, and the lack of evidence on the interior basement wall supporting the existence of a window below the previous wood stoop, Staff does not find a compelling reason to support the addition of the third basement window. The proposed new single-glazed, true-divided-light wood windows comply with the Board's recently approved Window Policy.

Staff recommends approval of the Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate and the Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations with the condition noted above and the conditions recommended by Alexandria Archaeology.

STAFF

Stephanie Sample, Historic Preservation Planner, Planning & Zoning
Al Cox, FAIA, Historic Preservation Manager, Planning & Zoning

IV. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Administration:

F-1 The review by Code Administration is a preliminary review only. Once the applicant has filed for a building permit, code requirements will be based upon the building permit plans. If there are any questions, the applicant may contact Thomas Sciulli, Plan Review Supervisor at thomas.sciulli@alexandriava.gov or 703-746-4190. (Code)

C-1 Demolition, building and trades permits are required for this project. Five sets of construction documents sealed by a Registered Design Professional that fully detail the construction as well as layout and schematics of the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems shall accompany the permit application(s)

Transportation & Environmental Services

FINDINGS:

- F1. The front of the dwelling, to include the stairway/stoop, encroaches into the public right of way. (T&ES)
- F2. Contact shall be made with Washington Gas Company in regards to relocating the Gas Meter. (T&ES)

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1. The building permit must be approved and issued prior to the issuance of any permit for demolition. (T&ES)
- R2. The building permit plans shall comply with requirements of City Code Section 5-6-224 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.]. (T&ES)
- R3. Applicant shall be responsible for repairs to the adjacent city right-of-way if damaged during construction activity. (T&ES)
- R4. All improvements to the city right-of-way such as curbing, sidewalk, driveway aprons, etc. must be city standard design. (T&ES)
- R5. 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. (T&ES)

CITY CODE REQUIREMENTS

- C-1 The applicant shall comply with the City of Alexandria's Solid Waste Control, Title 5, Chapter 1, which sets forth the requirements for the recycling of materials (Sec. 5-1-99). (T&ES)

- C-2 The applicant shall comply with the City of Alexandria's Noise Control Code, Title 11, Chapter 5, which sets the maximum permissible noise level as measured at the property line. (T&ES)
- C-3 All secondary utilities serving this site shall be placed underground. (Sec. 5-3-3) (T&ES)
- C-4 Any work within or performed from the right-of-way requires a separate permit from T&ES. (Sec. 5-3-61) (T&ES)

Alexandria Archaeology

- F-1 According to Ethelyn Cox's Historic Alexandria, Street by Street, A Survey of Existing Early Buildings; Peter Bohrer purchased the lots at 511 and 513 South Lee Street for £259 and sold them to Robert Miller in 1797 for £400. The price increase indicates that Bohrer had developed the property. In 1810 at least one free African American family was living on the west side of Lee Street on the block; the exact location is unclear. In 1815 Jane Slacum acquired the property and four years later sold it to Hannah Gird for \$1,200. In 1850 John Heymes purchased the lot at 513 S. Lee for \$1,000 and three years later added 511 S. Lee for \$275, an indication that this lot was undeveloped at that time. Cox's research suggests that Heymes enlarged the house at 513 S. Lee and built the house that now stands at 511 S. Lee in the 1850s.
- F-2 Given the basic history of activity at 511 S. Lee Street, the property has the potential to contain archaeological resources that could provide insight into residential life in Alexandria during the late eighteenth century through the nineteenth century.
- R-1 The statements in archaeology conditions below shall appear in the General Notes of all site plans and on all site plan sheets that involve demolition or ground disturbance (including Basement/Foundation Plans, Demolition, Erosion and Sediment Control, Grading, Landscaping, Utilities, and Sheeting and Shoring) so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirements:
 - a. The applicant/developer shall call Alexandria Archaeology immediately (703-746-4399) if any buried structural remains (wall foundations, wells, privies, cisterns, etc.) or concentrations of artifacts are discovered during the course of the project. Work must cease in the area of the discovery until a City archaeologist comes to the site and records the finds.
 - b. The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.



Figure 2: Front façade.



Figure 3: Front brick stoop.



Figure 4: Ghost of previous stair footer.



Figure 5: Rear of house.



Figure 6: Bay window to be removed.



Figure 7: Interior photo of basement showing window to be removed and enlarged.

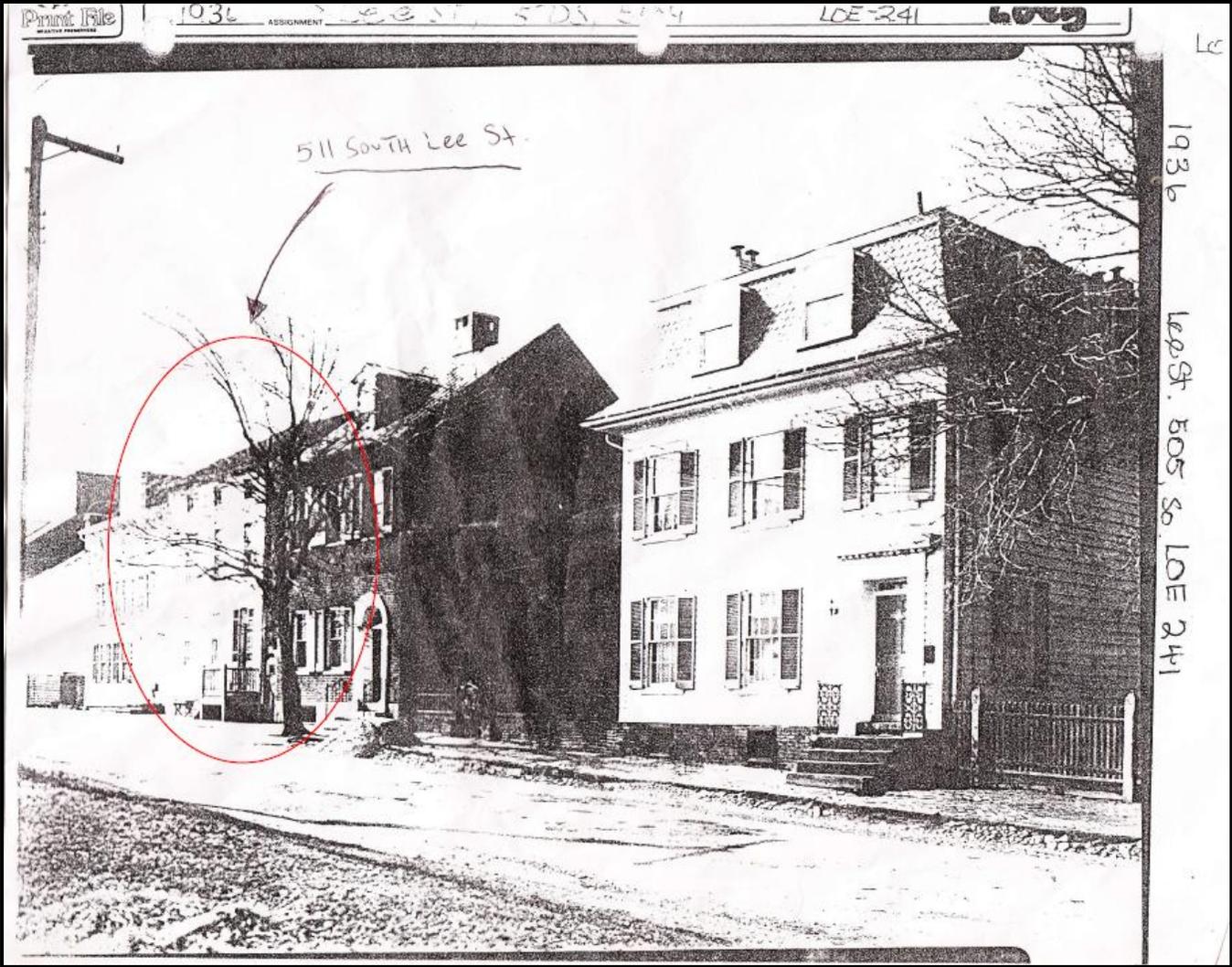


Figure 8: 1936 photo showing wooden stoop



Figure 9: 1950s photo showing brick stoop and new windows

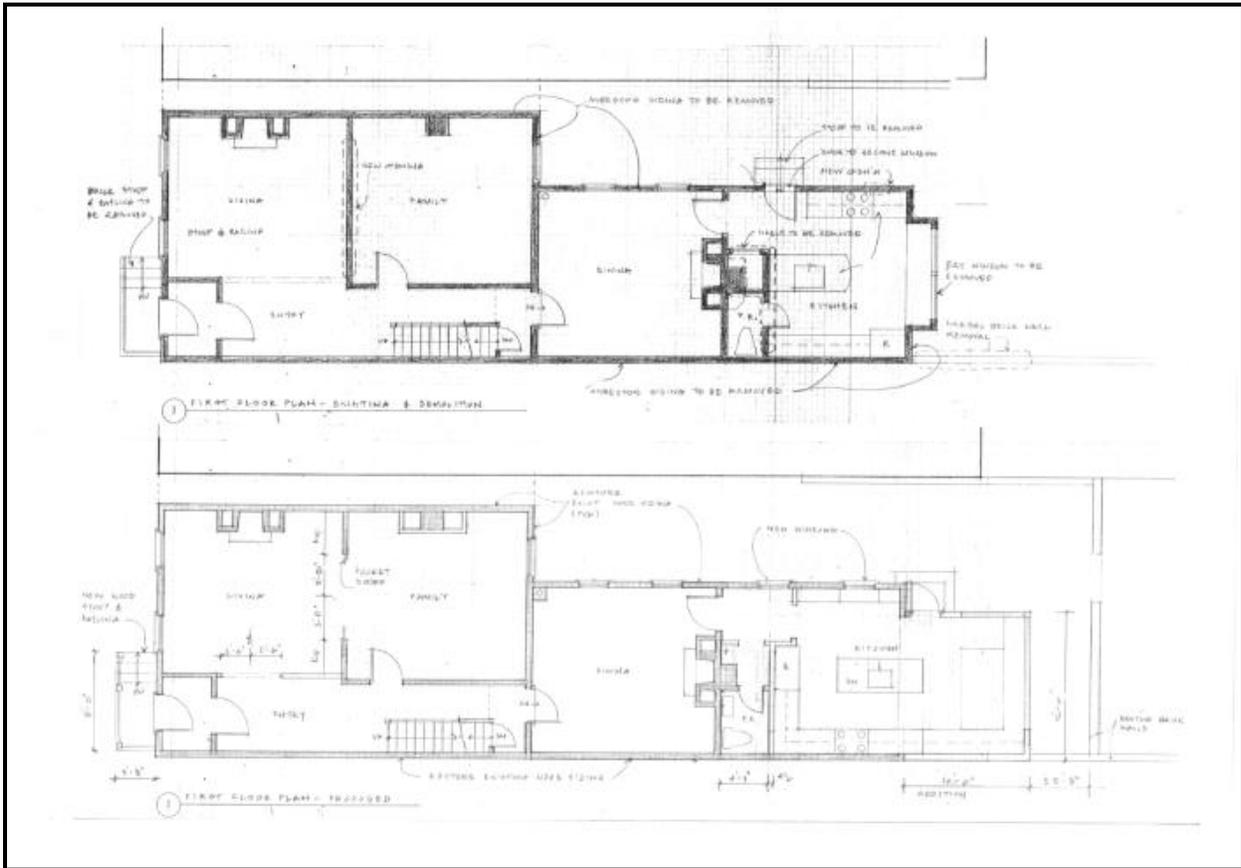


Figure 12: Existing and proposed floor plans.

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	116	135	154	173	219		140	163	186	209	263
	129	150	171	192	239		156	181	207	232	289
	142	165	188	211	260		171	199	227	255	315
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26" H 10" W 12" PROJECTION
 FRONT LIGHT FIXTURE

Move mouse over image to zoom in

Figure 13: Proposed shutter and window specifications.