

Docket Item # 4
BAR CASE # 2011-0351

BAR Meeting
January 4, 2012

ISSUE: Partial Demolition (west parapet wall)

APPLICANT: Daniel Branscome

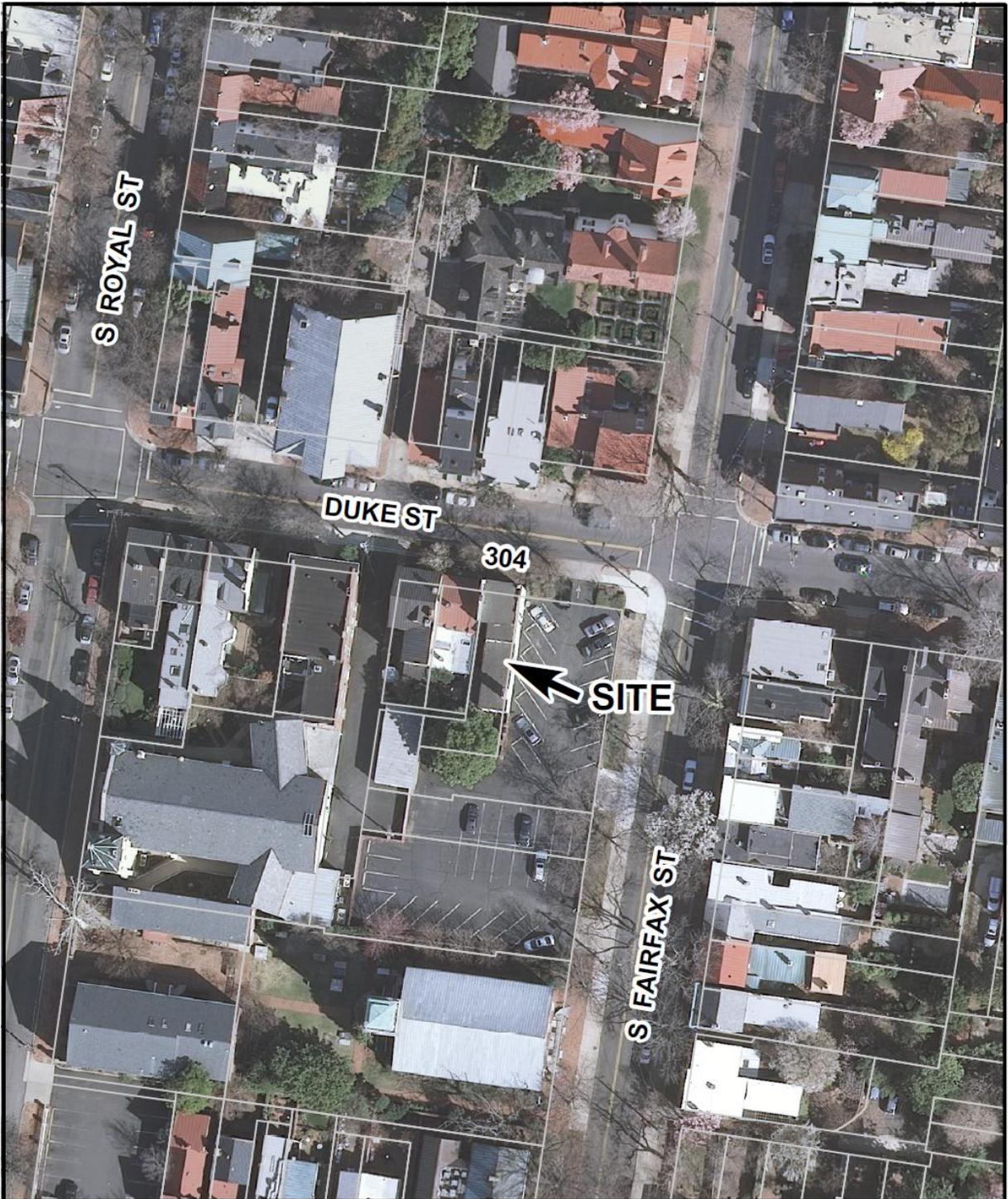
LOCATION: 304 Duke Street

ZONE: RM/Residential

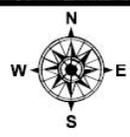
STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the Permit to Demolish, as submitted.

****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 #2011-0351



Note: This docket item requires a roll call vote.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting a Permit to Demolish to remove a portion of the rear west parapet wall (the portion that is south of the chimney) at 304 Duke Street. The parapet was damaged during the August 23rd, 2011 earthquake.

The subject parapet wall will be reduced in height by approximately 13 brick courses. This will reduce the height of the parapet by half, allowing it to line up with one of the tiers of the east wall's stepped parapet. The altered parapet will then be capped with a metal top to protect the exposed gap in the middle of the bricks and painted to match the remainder of the house.

II. HISTORY:

304 Duke Street is a three story, three bay brick Greek Revival style residence dating from the **mid-19th century** according to Ethelyn Cox in *Alexandria Street by Street* (p.22). According to the structural analysis report done by Rimkus Consulting Group, Inc. the rear portion of the property was constructed in 1795, the front section in 1845 and the middle section in 1860.

Polly Hulfish made a number of changes to the house in 1970 including changing out much of the fenestration. (See, Peter H. Smith, "The Work of Marianne (Polly) Hulfish in the Old and Historic Alexandria District," *The Alexandria Chronicle*, v.VII, no.1, Spring 1998, p.4). This work also included removing a chimney and adding windows to the east side (11/4/70). In 1999, a brick garden wall was constructed in the rear (BAR99-0048, 4/5/99). Most recently, part of the rear west wall was demolished in order to rebuild a side porch (BAR2011-0131 & BAR2011-0132, 6/20/01).

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed demolition complies with zoning ordinance requirements.

The August 23rd, 2011 earthquake caused substantial damage to a number of brick chimneys and parapet walls located within the district. Staff worked diligently with homeowners and masons in order to provide a clear and easy way to secure the masonry and rebuild it using appropriate preservation methods. BAR administrative approval application and fees during this time were dismissed in order to expedite the building permit approval process. The reconstruction of these masonry features was approved through the building permit process, requiring clear photographs of the existing conditions to ensure the chimneys and/or parapet walls were restored to match the original height and design. Additionally, BAR staff advised the public to carefully dismantle bricks to a point where walls were secure and rebuild to match using the original brick and a historically appropriate soft mortar. Any change to the height or design of the masonry features would require full BAR approval, hence the case before you for 304 Duke Street.

This case originated as a Code Administration violation due to safety concerns caused by the lack of structural integrity. The homeowner was notified of the violation and proceeded to have a structural analysis done to determine the exact damage caused to the building. Due to the safety risks, Staff approved the partial demolition of several brick courses pending BAR review. The

applicant's contractor has dismantled the brick to a safe height. Due to the exposed gap in the bricks, the contractor has capped the parapet at its new height to ensure that future damage did not occur from the winter elements.

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?

Staff finds that none of the conditions are met for the rear portion of the west parapet wall and therefore recommends approval of the Permit to Demolish. While 304 Duke Street has evolved over the last two hundred years, it still retains a high degree of architectural integrity. However, after careful analysis, Staff does not believe the current height of the west parapet wall to be original or character defining. The history of the building and neighboring properties were studied to determine the evolution of the differing parapets on the west and east façades. Historically, two structures existed on the two lots to the east of 304 Duke Street, standing from at least 1885 to until sometime between 1941 and 1958. After the demolition of these homes for the current Saint Mary Catholic Church parking lot a new brick façade was applied to the front portion of the east wall. Sanborn Maps illustrate that the structures on either side of 304 Duke Street were only two stories, showing no logical reason for the extreme height of the west parapet wall. Based on views from the interior of these parapets, Staff hypothesizes that there have been alterations to the structures roof line over time, perhaps from a gable to the current low-sloped flat roof.

Staffs' recommendation for the new height of the rear of the west parapet wall is to be reduced to a height that is comparable with the second or third tier of the east parapet wall. Since the contractor reduced the rear of the west parapet wall to this height, Staff recommends that the Board support the application, as submitted.

Given the relatively small area of demolition of a non-character defining feature, Staff recommends approval of the Permit to Demolish.

STAFF:

Courtney Lankford, Historic Preservation Planner, Planning & Zoning
Al Cox, FAIA, Historic Preservation Manager, Planning & Zoning

IV. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

CODE ADMINISTRATION:

- C-1 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 Ken Granata, Acting Plan Review Supervisor at ken.granata@alexandriava.gov or 703-746-4193.
- C-1 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-2 The alteration to the existing structure requires a building permit. Five sets of architectural quality drawings shall accompany the permit applications that fully detail the construction/alteration. The current permit that had been issued on 12/8/11 was for demolition of a parapet wall.

TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES (T&ES):

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1. Applicant shall be responsible for repairs to the adjacent city right-of-way if damaged during construction activity. (T&ES)
- R2. 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 all plans submitted for approvals. (T&ES)

FINDINGS:

- F1. An approved grading plan will not be required for the proposed improvement based on the information provided. (T&ES)

CITY CODE REQUIREMENTS

- C1. Any work from or within the public right-of-way requires a separate permit from T&ES. (Sec.

5-2) (T&ES)

- C2. Roof, surface and sub-surface drains shall be connect to the public storm sewer system, if available, by continuous underground pipe. Where a storm sewer is not available, the applicant must provide a design to mitigate impact of stormwater drainage onto adjacent properties and to the satisfaction of the Director of Transportation & Environmental Services. (5-6-224) (T&ES)
- C3. 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)
- C4. 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)
- C5. All improvements to the city right-of-way such as curbing, sidewalk, driveway aprons, etc. must be city standard design. (Sec. 5-2-1) (T&ES)
- C6. All secondary utilities serving this site shall be placed underground. (Sec. 5-3-3) (T&ES)

V. IMAGES



Figure 1: Front (north) façade of 304 Duke Street.



Figure 2: Front (north) and side (west) façade of 304 Duke Street.
Note: photo was taken after the partial demolition of the rear of the west parapet wall. Staff recommends approval of the current height shown in this photo.



Figure 3: Aerial view of 304 Duke Street. Note the different parapets height/style on the west and east side.



Figure 4: Earthquake damage to west parapet wall. Note former height of rear portion of parapet.



Figure 5: Close up of earthquake damage to west parapet wall.

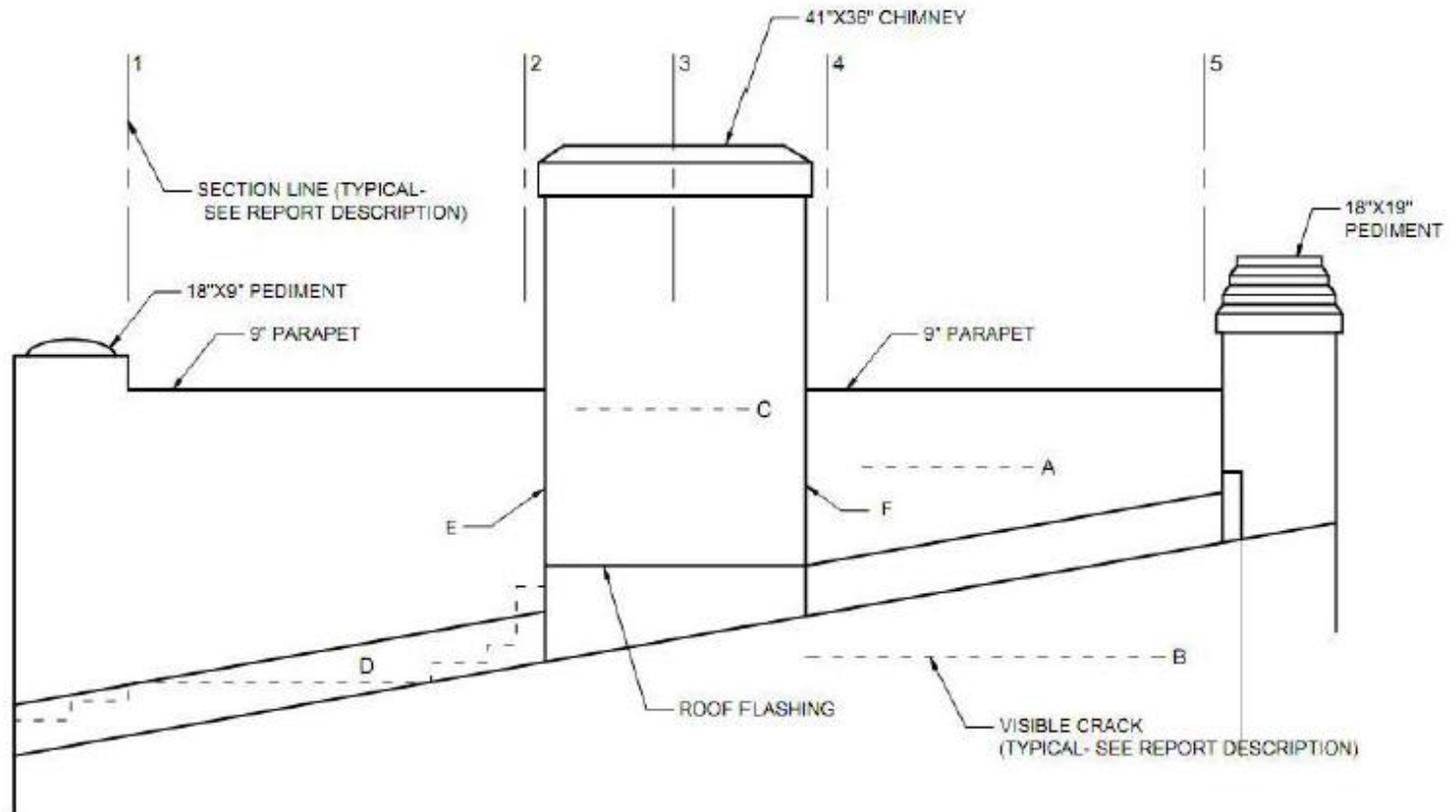


Figure 6: Before view of rear portion of west parapet wall (viewed from the south).



Figure 7: After view of rear portion of west parapet wall (viewed from the south).

Jan 14, 2011
 File No. 47505554



R. RIMKUS
 CONSULTING GROUP, INC.
 200 SULLY PARK DRIVE
 WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA 23188
 (757) 535-2222 OFFICE
 (757) 535-2224 FAX

BRANSCOME RESIDENCE
 ALEXANDRIA, VA

Right Parapet and Chimney Elevation View from Roof

PROJECT NO. SA 47505554
 DRAWN BY SA SK-1
 DATE 10-7-11 SHEET 1 OF 1
 SCALE 1/2" = 1'-0"

N

Figure 8: Elevation of damage to west parapet wall.