

Docket Item #4  
BAR CASE #2004-0069

BAR Meeting  
April 28, 2004

**ISSUE:** Replacement windows

**APPLICANT:** Gary E. Walker

**LOCATION:** 245 Buchanan Street

**ZONE:** RB/Residential

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**\*\*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 issuance 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 the Code Enforcement Bureau (including signs). The applicant is responsible for obtaining all necessary construction permits after receiving Board of Architectural Review approval. Contact Code Enforcement, Room 4200, City Hall, 703-838-4360 for further information.

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the window replacement with the following conditions:

- 1) That the windows be either wood or aluminum clad wood;
- 2) That the windows be double hung with a six-over-six configuration;
- 3) That the windows have either true or simulated divided lights; and
- 4) That the replacement windows be approved by Staff prior to installation.

### DISCUSSION:

#### Applicant's Description of Undertaking:

"Replace poorly insulated and low security metal frame windows with energy efficient high security vinyl windows."

#### Issue:

The applicant is requesting a certificate of appropriateness to replace the ten existing windows on the front, side and rear elevations. The existing windows are metal double hung six-over-six windows with aluminum exterior storm windows. The proposed windows are one-over-one vinyl windows designated, "Comfortworld 4000," and manufactured by Window World.

#### History and Analysis:

The two story, brick clad, end unit rowhouse was constructed as part of a development of similar brick rowhouses circa 1940. Typical of Alexandria's urban rowhouses of this period, the development along the 200 and 300 blocks of Buchanan Street has Colonial Revival detailing, including cornices of projecting brick rowlock with dentils, decorative cast stone panels above the cornice, rowlock trim around the front doors and six over six windows. There is no record of prior BAR reviews for 245 Buchanan Street. The Board has reviewed a number of alterations for properties on Buchanan Street over the years. At least two cases have involved window replacement. In 1995 the Board approved alterations including aluminum clad wood replacement windows with six-over-six configuration in simulated divided lights at 243 Buchanan Street (BAR 95-22PG, 7/26/1995). In 2000, the Board approved alterations including wood one-over-one replacement windows, at 231 Buchanan Street (BAR2000-0191, 8/9/2000) In addition to these two BAR approved window replacements, a number of houses along Buchanan Street have replacement windows which were either installed prior to the establishment of the Board of Architectural Review in 1986 or were installed subsequently and without Board approval. Of the six houses in the group containing 245 Buchanan Street, only 243 Buchanan Street has replacement windows. The others retain the original six-over-six metal windows.

The proposed window replacement complies with the zoning ordinance requirements.

The *Design Guidelines* note that windows are the principal character defining feature of a building and that changes to windows can have a dramatic impact on the appearance of a structure (Windows - Page 1). In this case, the six-over-six configuration of the windows reflects the Colonial Revival design influence. Metal windows are a product of technological

innovations of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century but were not widely adopted in Alexandria until the housing boom of the late 1930s and 1940s when hundreds of inexpensive rowhouses were erected to accommodate the growing population of government and defense workers. More typically, the rowhouses of this period used horizontally proportioned metal windows, often composed of combinations of fixed and casement sections. The traditionally proportioned double hung metal windows seen in the Buchanan Street development are unusual, but clearly appropriate to the Colonial Revival design of the buildings.

Staff does not generally support the removal of the original windows. However, the windows in question do appear to be in poor condition and the Board has previously approved replacement windows for at least two other properties in the same development. While Staff can support replacement windows, we are unable to support vinyl windows in a one-over-one configuration. The *Design Guidelines* specifically note that vinyl windows are a discouraged window type (Windows - Page 2). In the past, wood or aluminum clad wood windows have been recommended as appropriate replacements for metal windows. In addition, Staff strongly believes that the six-over-six window configuration is an important aspect of the Colonial Revival influenced design of the Buchanan Street houses and should be retained. Therefore, Staff is willing to support window replacement at 245 Buchanan Street with the condition that the windows be either wood or aluminum clad wood and double hung with a six-over-six configuration of either true or simulated divided lights.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

“No comment.”

Historic Alexandria:

No comment.