

EXHIBIT NO.

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9-13-08

Docket Item #
BAR CASE #2008-0076

City Council
September 13, 2008

ISSUE: Appeal of a decision of the Board of Architectural Review, Old and Historic Alexandria District approving a Certificate of Appropriateness for replacement of a front door with the condition that the door be wood rather than fiberglass

**APPLICANT &
APPELLANT:** Joan Mabuchi

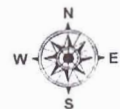
LOCATION: 209 Jefferson Street

ZONE: RM/Residential



BAR CASE #2008-0076

6/4/2008



I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Issue:

- The decision of the Old & Historic Alexandria District Board of Architectural Review was appealed by the applicant on June 9, 2008, in accordance with Section 10-309 of the zoning ordinance.
- The applicant/appellant is appealing the Certificate of Appropriateness that was approved for replacement of the existing front door because the applicant objects to the condition of approval that the door be wood rather than fiberglass, as requested by the applicant.
- The decision before the Council is whether the proposed alteration to replace the existing wood front door with a fiberglass door is appropriate for this residential townhouse in the Old and Historic Alexandria District.
- At the June 4, 2008 hearing, the Old and Historic Alexandria District Board of Architectural Review voted 5-2 to approve the application with the condition that the replacement door be constructed of all wood. The majority of the Board believed that an all wood replacement door would be appropriate and not fiberglass as proposed by the applicant.

Recommendation: Staff recommends that Council support the Board decision and intent of the design guidelines and require the applicant to retain the existing all wood door or replace the door with an appropriate all wood door.

II. BACKGROUND

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the installation of a new Jeld-Wen Fiberglass front door. The proposed door would be faux mahogany grain with a sequoia finish. The proposed door will have the same six panel formation as the existing wood front door which is currently six paneled with the top two panels being made of clear insulated beveled glass. The existing jamb and trim is proposed to remain the same.

The 3½-story, masonry common brick, residential, semi-detached townhouse at 209 Jefferson Street was constructed in 1968.

III. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The purview of the Board and the Council on appeal for the Certificate of Appropriateness is the following.

Zoning Ordinance Section 10-105(A)(1) states that "The Old and Historic Alexandria District board of architectural review or the city council on appeal shall limit its review of

the proposed construction, reconstruction, alteration, or restoration of a building or structure to the building's or structure's exterior architectural features specified in section 10-105(A)(2)(a) through (2)(d) below which are subject to view from a public street, way, place, pathway, easement or waterway..."

Section 10-105(A)(2) describes the Standards used in rendering a decision. Of these Standards, (b), (d), and (e) are the most relevant to the alterations requested by the applicant to replace a wood door with a fiberglass door:

- (b) "Architectural details including, but not limited to, original materials and methods of construction, the pattern, design, and style of fenestration, ornamentation, lighting, signage and like decorative or functional fixtures of building or structures; the degree to which the distinguishing original qualities or character of a building, structure or site (including historic materials) are retained."
- (d) "Texture, materials, color, and the extent to which any new architectural features are historically appropriate to the existing structure and adjacent existing structures."
- (e) "The relation of the features in sections 10-105(A)(2)(a) through (d) to similar features of the preexisting building or structure, if any, and to buildings and structures in the immediate surroundings."



Figure 1: 209 Jefferson Street façade and existing six panel wood door with clear beveled glass in two top panels.

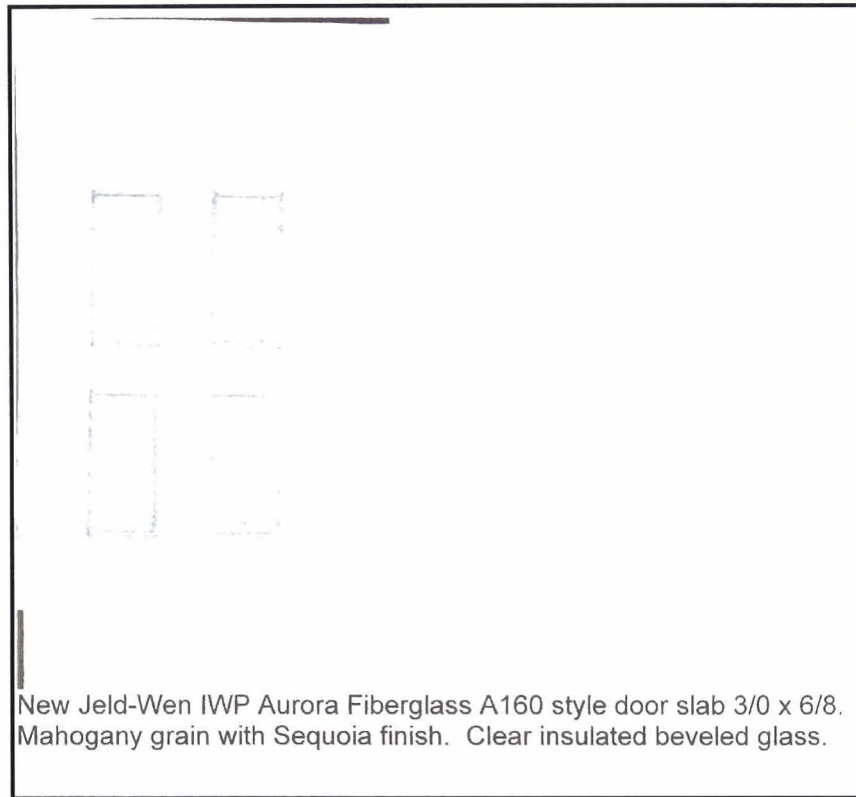


Figure 1 Specification sheet of proposed front door.

The *Design Guidelines* for the Historic District, Chapter 2 Building Alterations, Replacement Materials, page 1, state that “As maintenance is carried out, it may seem easier to use contemporary materials to replace existing historic or traditional materials ... Taken cumulatively, individual changes to properties as part of on-going exterior maintenance work have the potential to substantially alter the overall historic and architectural character of the districts.”

According to the *Design Guidelines*, Chapter 2 Building Alterations, Doors, exterior doors are prominent visual details of the main façade of a building and therefore should complement the architecture of a structure. Exterior doors are some of the most prominent visual details throughout the historic districts. Furthermore, the guidelines state that “exterior paneled metal doors are generally not appropriate on residential structures.”

The semi-detached houses at 207 and 209 Jefferson Street were constructed in 1968 using historically compatible materials including wood doors. While buildings of newer construction are permitted greater flexibility in the selection and range of materials, in many circumstances the use of historically accurate materials contributes to the compatibility of new construction in the historic district. Many of the houses on the 200 block of Jefferson Street, including the houses on either side of 207 and 209 Jefferson and on the south side of the block, are 100 to 200 years old. The pair of semi-detached

houses at 207 and 209 Jefferson was constructed using authentic historic materials such as brick exterior walls and wood front doors. Staff finds that a replacement door should retain a sense of material integrity and be compatible with the historic materials found throughout the Old and Historic District for this very prominent feature. In making its decision, the Board found that the replacement of a wooden front door with a fiberglass front door would be inappropriate.

IV. RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that Council support the BAR decision to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for replacement front door with the condition that the door be all wood rather than fiberglass, in the six panel with top panel glass configuration proposed by the applicant.

Attachment: BAR Staff Report and Supporting Materials, March 5, 2008

STAFF: Faroll Hamer, Director, Department of Planning and Zoning
Richard Josephson, Deputy Director, Planning and Zoning
Stephen Milone, Division Chief, Zoning and Land Use Services
Lee Webb, Preservation Manager, Boards of Architectural Review

Docket Item # 5
BAR CASE # 2008-0076

BAR Meeting
June 4, 2008

ISSUE: Alterations
APPLICANT: Joan Mabuchi
LOCATION: 209 Jefferson Street
ZONE: RM, Residential Townhouse

BOARD ACTION: Approved as amended, 5-2.

On a motion by Ms. Neihardt, seconded by Mr. Smeallie, the Board voted to approve the application with the condition that the replacement door be constructed of wood. The vote on the motion was 5-2 (Mr. Hulfish and Dr. Fitzgerald voted in opposition).

REASON: The Board agreed with the Staff analysis that a replacement door should be wood and not fiberglass as proposed by the applicant.

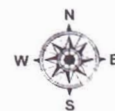
SPEAKERS: Mr. Mabuchi, applicant, spoke in support of the requested fiberglass door
Denise Robotti, Smoot Lumber representing applicants, spoke in support of the requested fiberglass door

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the application with the condition that the replacement door be constructed of all wood.



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I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting the approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the installation of a new Jeld-Wen Fiberglass front door. The proposed door would be faux mahogany grain with a sequoia finish. The proposed door will have the same panel formation as the existing wood front door which is currently six paneled with the top two panels being made of clear insulated beveled glass. The existing jamb and trim will remain the same.

II. HISTORY:

The 3½-story, masonry common brick, residential, semi detached townhouse at 209 Jefferson Street was constructed in 1968. There are no previous BAR cases for this property.

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed door complies with the zoning ordinance.

According to the *Design Guidelines* exterior doors are prominent visual details of the main façade of a building and therefore should complement the architecture of a structure. Furthermore, the guidelines state that exterior paneled metal doors are generally not appropriate on residential structures. In staff's opinion, the replacement of a wooden front door with a fiberglass front door would be inappropriate within the historic district.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application with the condition that the replacement door be constructed of all wood.

V. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

No comments received.

Historic Alexandria:

Approve.

VI. IMAGES



Figure 1 Photograph of existing front door.

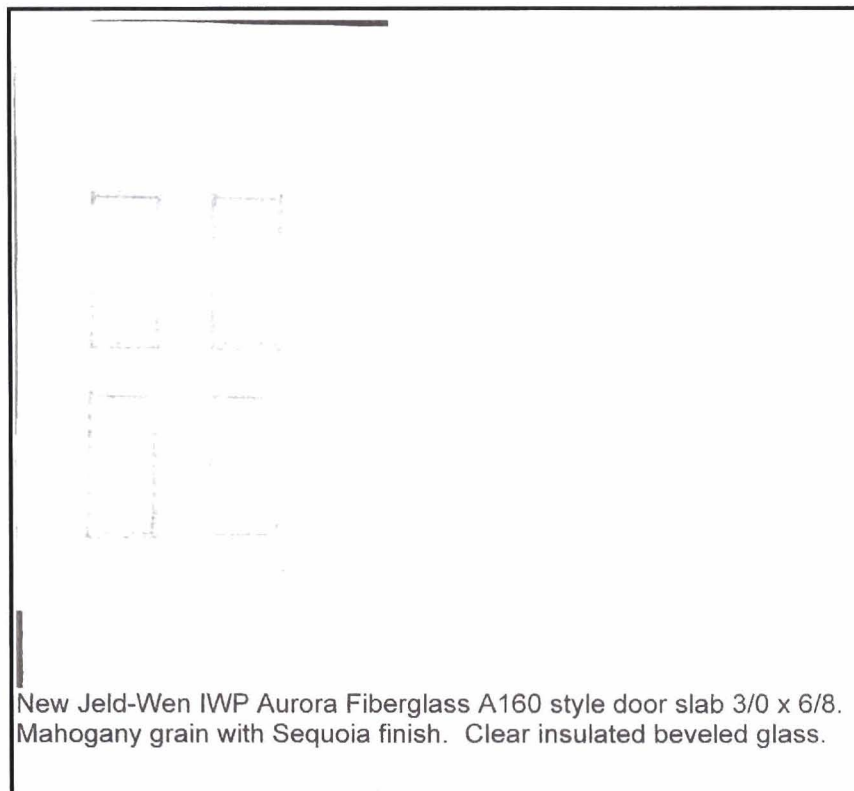


Figure 2 Specification sheet of proposed front door.