

Docket Item #8  
BAR CASE #2005-0100

BAR Meeting  
May 18, 2005

**ISSUE:** Painting previously unpainted masonry

**APPLICANT:** Jack Brown and Joe Filipek

**LOCATION:** 715 Princess Street

**ZONE:** CD/Commercial

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### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted.

#### **I. ISSUE:**

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for painting a previously unpainted section of the brick rowhouse at 715 Princess Street. The applicant proposes to paint the rear (north) of the house as well as the side (west) elevation. The rear is 15.9 feet wide and the side is 7.7 feet wide. These sections will be painted to match the rest of the house.

#### **II. HISTORY:**

715 Princess Street is a two story brick Foursquare duplex that was constructed ca.1912.

There is no record of any prior BAR approvals for this property.

At some point, approximately 90% of the building was painted. Photographs from a 1984 survey of the historic district show the painted building. For some reason, the rear was left unpainted.

#### **III. ANALYSIS:**

The alterations comply with zoning ordinance requirements.

This application is before the Board as a result of a citation issued by Staff for painting the unpainted brick on the building.

The rear and side of the building are visible from North Alfred Street.

Generally Staff is opposed to painting unpainted masonry. However, in this instance Staff can support painting the brick for several reasons. First, painting the section that remains unpainted will serve as a visually unifying element that will tie together the entire building as well as serving to unite it with the adjacent townhouse. Second, the area to be painted is a relatively small section compared to the rest of the building which has previously been painted. And, third the brick on the rear of the building is different from that on the front, is of a more common brick type and was not meant as a showcase of brick workmanship. Therefore, painting the rear will not have as great an effect as does the painting of the front sections of late Victorian style brick buildings.

Staff gave consideration to recommending stripping the building of paint. However, Staff is not recommending this for several reasons. First, the brick has been painted for over twenty years and Staff does not know the reason for the initial painting. If it were to cover up spalled or failing brickwork, removing the paint could result in further deterioration and/or contribute to an unsightly building. Second, Staff does not know the condition of the paint and its attempted removal could cause harm to the brick. Finally, both 715 and 717 are painted and have a unified presence. Cleaning only one of the duplexes would create visually distinctly different buildings, a condition that was clearly not intended by the original designer.

**IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted.

## CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

### Code Enforcement:

- C-1 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-2 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-3 Construction permits are required for this project. Plans shall accompany the permit application that fully detail the construction as well as layouts and schematics of the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems.

### Historic Alexandria:

No comment.