

Docket Item #17
BAR CASE #2005-0098

BAR Meeting
May 18, 2005

ISSUE: Permit to Demolish
APPLICANT: Nancy Doody
LOCATION: 315 South Columbus Street
ZONE: RM/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted.

NOTE: This docket item requires a roll call vote.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Permit to Demolish. The proposed new one story rear addition will capulate approximately 115 square feet of the existing rear facade. The existing sliding glass back door will be removed.

The rear of the house is visible from the east-west public alley to the north of the house. The large parking area behind the house is owned jointly by the Block 11 owners association.



Figure 1 West elevation

II. HISTORY:

The two story, two bay wide, frame house at 315 South Columbus Street was constructed as a pair with the house at 317 South Columbus Street. The Italianate style houses do not appear on the 1877 Hopkins Atlas, but are present by 1885 when Alexandria was first mapped by the Sanborn Fire Insurance Company. As originally constructed, the house appears to have had a shorter rear ell. By 1902, the rear ell had been extended to its present footprint. By 1921, a two story porch, no longer extant, had been added to the rear elevation. The property is located in the DIP Urban Renewal Area, which was the focus of much renovation and renewal starting in the mid 1970s. The house was extensively renovated between 1982 and 1984 (Permit #38466, 12/29/1982 and Certificate of Occupancy #8993, 4/30/1984). Staff could not locate any previous BAR actions with respect to this property.

III. ANALYSIS:

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 above criteria are met. The proposed capsulation is minimal and confined to the rear elevation of a turn-of-the-20th-century addition. This elevation has previously been altered. A two story porch was added between 1907 and 1921 and later removed. The existing double sliding glass door on the first story was clearly added in the latter part of the 20th century, probably as part of the renovation completed in 1984.

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 Prior to the issuance of a demolition permit or land disturbance permit, a rodent abatement plan shall be submitted to Code Enforcement that will outline the steps that will taken to prevent the spread of rodents from the construction site to the surrounding community and sewers.

Historic Alexandria:

No comment.

Alexandria Archaeology:

The house on this property was built between 1877 and 1885. The property has been registered as an archaeological site (44AX57) with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.

Excavation of one shovel test and three 1 by 1-meter squares was conducted in 1992 as part of the City Survey project. The property was considered to represent an example of a low middle class household in the 19th century. The excavation yielded evidence of previous grading and identified the edge of a possible trash pit.

R-1 Call Alexandria Archaeology immediately (703-838-4399) if any buried structural remains (wall foundations, wells, privies, cisterns, etc.) or concentrations of artifacts are discovered during development. Work must cease in the area of the discovery until a City archaeologist comes to the site and records the finds.

R-2 The above statement must appear in the General Notes of the site plan so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement.