

Docket Item # 1  
BAR CASE # 2011-0091

BAR Meeting  
May 18, 2011

**ISSUE:** Garden Wall  
**APPLICANT:** James & Kelly Wilmeth  
**LOCATION:** 716 Gibbon Street  
**ZONE:** RB / Residential

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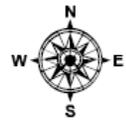
**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness application with the condition that the new gate is painted or stained.

**\*\*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 Building and Fire Code Administration (including 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, 703-838-4360 for further information.



**BAR CASE #2011-0091**



**I. ISSUE:**

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the replacement of an existing wood fence surrounding the rear patio with a new, approximately 5' high, brick wall and wood gate at 716 Gibbon Street.

**Wall**

The brick garden wall will be constructed utilizing a common bond brick pattern capped with a single course of rowlock bricks. The wall will be located on the same footprint as the existing wood fence and join the adjacent neighbor's brick wall at 718 Gibbon Street and the adjacent neighbor's wood fence at 714 Gibbon Street.

The design intent of the application is to match the existing wall at 718 Gibbon Street exactly in height, width, style, and brick color.

Due to the alley/back patio grade differentials, the brick wall's height as viewed from the alley will be approximately 5' high. It will be approximately 6'2" high when viewed from inside the back patio. The wall will have a concrete footing; however, it will be detached from any other building or structure on the subject property, and may be disassembled and removed in the future, if desired.

Additionally, the proposed height and location for the brick wall will maintain the rear alley's established fence height and setbacks.

**Gate**

The new gate will be a cedar, arch top board gate that is 42" wide and 6'8" tall (as measured from inside the patio) and will be installed in the same location as the existing gate. The gate will be accessed on the alley side by walking down two steps into the sunken back patio.

**II. HISTORY:**

Although Ethelyn Cox in her book *Alexandria Street by Street* identifies the two-story, gable roof row of houses at 716-722 Gibbon Street as mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the City's real estate records indicate that the houses were constructed in **1979**. Staff believes that while there may be some existing historic fabric in the interior of these buildings, examination of the front façades indicate that the majority of the present material on this row of townhouses dates from 1979.

*Previous Approvals:*

Staff did not locate any previous BAR approvals for the subject property.

**III. ANALYSIS:**

The proposed garden wall complies with Zoning Ordinance requirements.

The *Design Guidelines* state that "garden walls within the district were generally constructed of masonry and provide visual barriers. New walls should be sympathetic to the existing built environment and appropriate in materials, design and scale. The walls of brick are generally appropriate throughout the historic districts. Furthermore, gates are made of a number of different materials including wood and metal"

The Board commonly reviews and approves requests for brick garden walls which are six feet in height or less which surround rear yards within the historic districts. This garden wall as viewed from the public ROW will be approximately 5' in height (due to the alley's grade differentials). In Staff's opinion, the garden wall and the wood gate meet the requirements of the *Design Guidelines*. The wall will be completely free-standing, yet maintain the height and setbacks established by the other fences along the alley and will not be affixed to any identified historic resources. Staff believes that this design is appropriate and compatible with the surrounding streetscape and also enables the owner to individualize their property without negatively impacting any the existing house's remaining historic fabric.

Staff recommends approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness for the construction of the brick garden wall and gate.

**STAFF:**

Michele Oaks, Urban Planner, Historic Preservation Section, Planning & Zoning  
Al Cox, FAIA, Manager, Historic Preservation Section, Planning & Zoning

**IV. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:**

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

Zoning:

C-1 Proposed brick wall, gate, patio and planter boxes and steps comply with zoning.

Code Administration:

F-1 The plans submitted with the BAR request are not approved for construction

C-1 A building permit will be required to be issued prior to the start of construction

C-2 Clearly identify on the site plan length of existing fence and proposed masonry fence.

Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES):

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

R1. The building permit plans shall comply with requirements of City Code Section 5-6-224 regarding the location of downspouts, foundation drains and sump pumps. Refer to Memorandum to Industry dated June 18, 2004. [Memorandum is available online at the City web site under Transportation\Engineering and Design\Memos to Industry.]. (T&ES)

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

R3. All improvements to the city right-of-way such as curbing, sidewalk, driveway aprons, etc. must be city standard design. (T&ES)

R4. 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)

R5. The building permit must be approved and issued prior to the issuance of any permit for demolition. (T&ES)

**FINDINGS:**

F1. The applicant is advised that the alley access (10 ft) is a private alley. It is advised that the applicant gain permission, if needed, from the owner if materials are to be placed or if any work is performed in this area. (T&ES)

- F2. The lot itself, is under 2500 sf, the proposed improvements are replacements of existing private landscape. An approved grading plan shall not be required at the time.

**CODE REQUIREMENTS**

- C-1 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)
- C-2 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)
- C-3 Roof, surface and sub-surface drains be connected to the public storm sewer system, if available, by continuous underground pipe. Where storm sewer is not available 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. (Sec.5-6-224) (T&ES)
- C-4 All secondary utilities serving this site shall be placed underground. (Sec. 5-3-3) (T&ES)
- C-5 Any work within the right-of-way requires a separate permit from T&ES. (Sec. 5-2) (T&ES)

**V. IMAGES:**



**Figure 1: Aerial view of patio and existing fence/gate at 716 Gibbon.**



**Figure 2: View of brick wall and gate at 718 Gibbon (left) and existing wood fence at 716 Gibbon (right).**



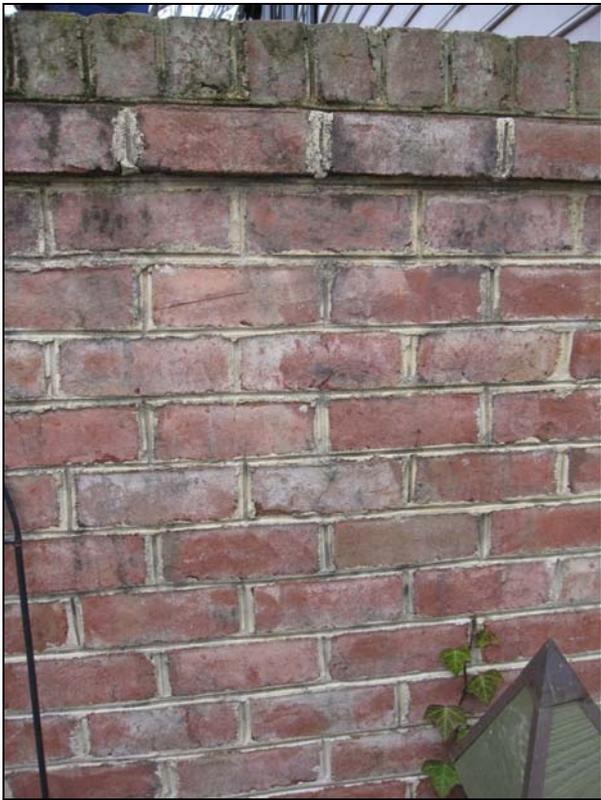
Figure 3: Gate at 718 Gibbon. Proposed gate will match this gate.



Figure 4: View of brick wall separating 718 and 716 Gibbon, as seen from interior patio at 716 Gibbon.



**Figure 5: Brick wall between 716 and 718 Gibbon. Proposed wall will match both the dimensions and color of the existing neighbor's wall.**



**Figure 6: Brick wall between 716 and 718 Gibbon. Proposed wall will match both the dimensions and color of the existing neighbor's wall.**



Figure 7: Proposed brick material.

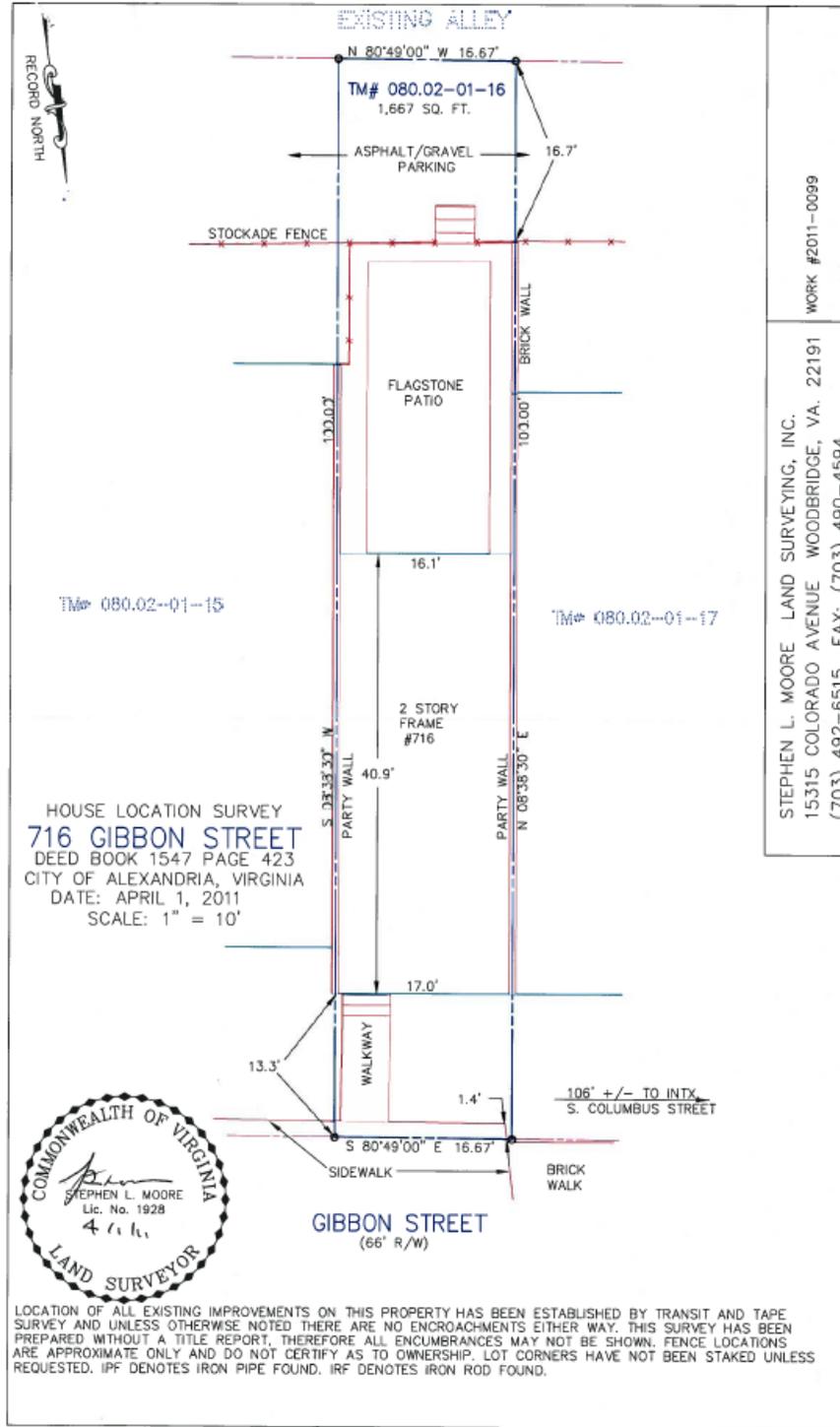


Figure 8: Plat showing existing patio and wood fence.

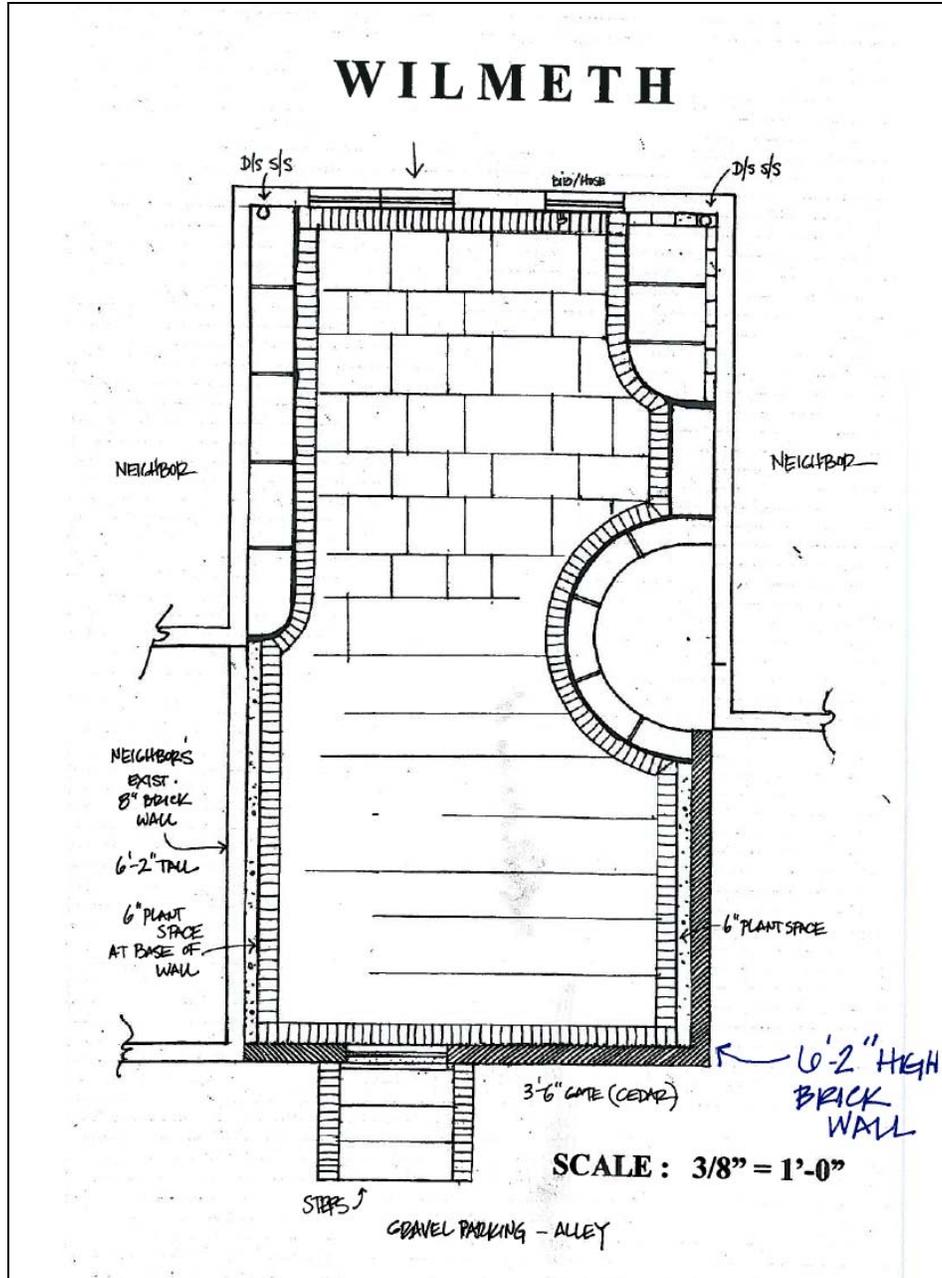


Figure 9: Proposed plat

# Proposed Gate Specifications

## W I L M E T H

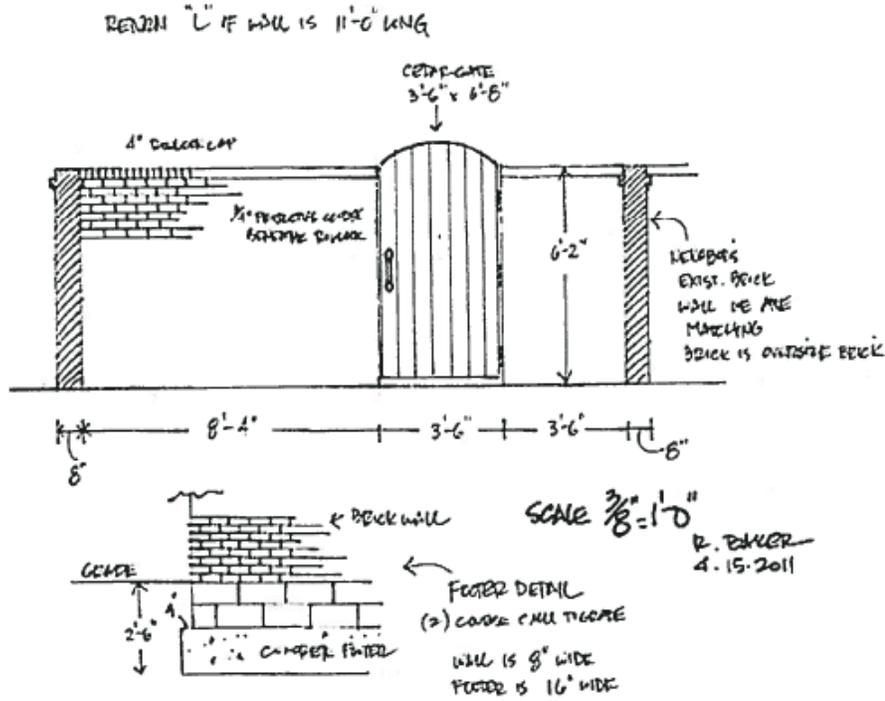


Figure 10: Proposed elevation of brick wall and wood gate as seen from inside the patio at 716 Gibbon.