

Docket Item #6
BAR CASE# 2005-00078

BAR Meeting
June 22, 2005

ISSUE: Addition and alterations

APPLICANT: Charles Reeder

LOCATION: 227 North West Street

ZONE: RB/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. That there be no parking space on the property; and,
2. That the following statement appear in the General Notes of all site plans so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement:

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.

NOTE: Docket item #5 must be approved before this docket item may be considered.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for a new two story addition at the rear and for various alterations to the front elevation.

Rear Addition - A two story, flat roofed addition is proposed for the rear elevation. The addition will be 15'9" long, 10'9" wide and 20' high. The addition is smaller than the existing main block. It will extend several feet beyond the rear wall of one story addition to the north and will be roughly equal in length to the house to the south. It will be no higher than the existing house at the rear and 2 ½' lower than the house at the front. The addition will be 1'5" narrower than the existing house to avoid building on the area of deed overlap along the south property line and to assure that all drainage occurs on the subject property. Both side walls will be blind. The rear elevation has a pair of multi-light doors centered in the first and second stories. The doors will be wood doors with simulated divided lights manufactured by Kolbe and Kolbe. The second story will have a balcony across the full width of the addition. As drawn, the balcony has a simple railing with straight pickets. There will be two light fixtures on either side of the first story door and a single fixture beside the second story door. A cut sheet of the exterior light fixtures provided by the applicant shows a traditional lantern style fixture with a polished brass finish. Contrary to what is indicated on the drawings, the applicant has stated that the all sides of the addition will be clad with wood lap siding. The roof of the addition will be clad in single ply membrane and will not be visible. An HVAC unit will be located on the roof of the addition, close to the end of the existing house. The unit will be screened by a 24" high wood fence with 4 x 4 posts at the corners and 3" pickets with a 1" spacing. The applicant has affirmed the siding, doors, trim and HVAC screening will be painted.

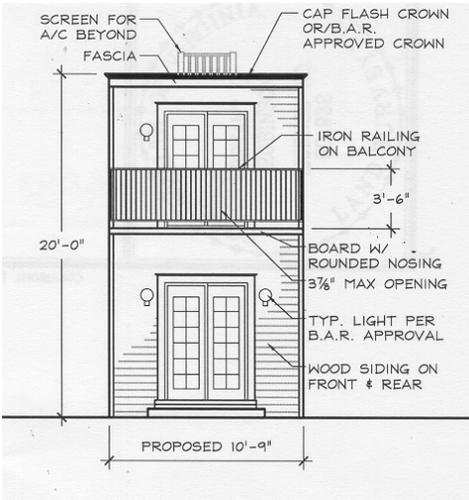


Figure 1 - Rear elevation

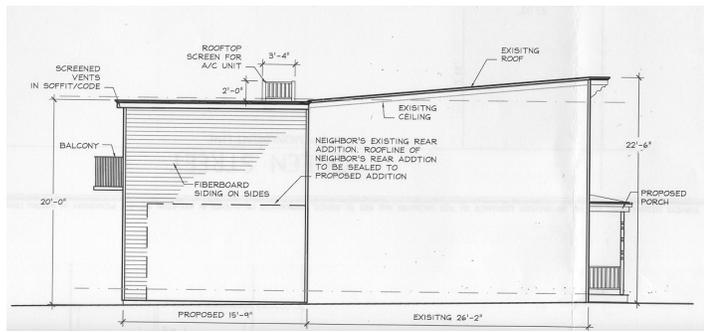


Figure 2 - North elevation

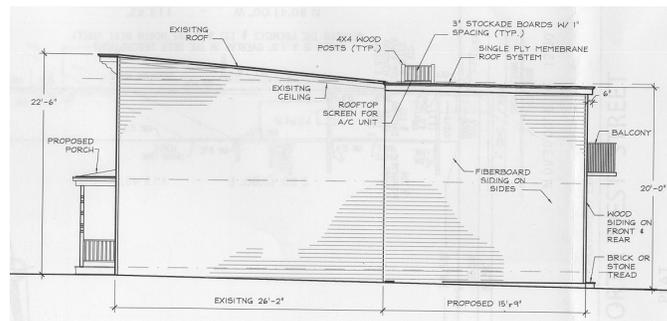


Figure 3 - South elevation

Alterations

The existing house will be renovated and a new front porch will be added. The asphalt siding will be removed and replaced with wood lap siding. The existing non-historic front windows will be replaced with new Kolbe and Kolbe wood windows with a two-over-two configuration. The applicant has stated that the front windows will have true divided lights. The existing non-historic front door will be replaced with a new four panel wood door. Although not shown on the drawing, the applicant has confirmed that there will be an exterior light fixture beside the front door. The fixture will be the same brass lantern as used on the rear addition. Although the drawing shows the first story window raised above the top of the adjacent door, the applicant has confirmed to Staff that the existing window and door locations on the front elevation will be unchanged. Similarly, the applicant has confirmed that the existing historic cornice will be retained as is and that the drawing was not intended to depict any alteration to that feature. The meter box located on the front of the house will be moved to the side and recessed.

The new, one story porch will extend nearly the full width of the front of the house and project 4' from the front of the house. Although not shown on the drawings, the applicant has confirmed that the porch will be held back 6" on either end so as not to encroach on the deed overlap on the south side of the property. According to the applicant, the porch will have a brick foundation with wood flooring. It will have a hip roof covered in standing seam metal and supported by turned wood posts. The railing will be a simple wood railing with straight pickets. The applicant has affirmed that the new siding, windows, door, trim and wood porch will be painted.

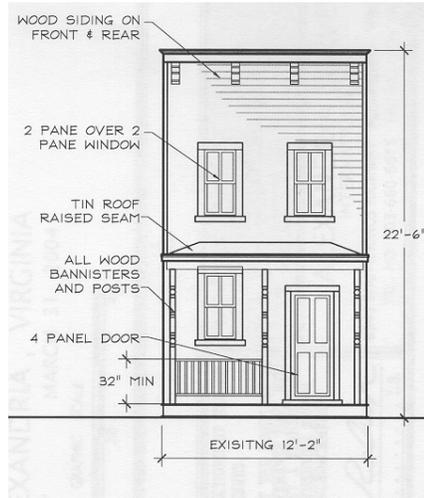


Figure 4 - Front elevation

The property is visible from the two north-south public alleys at the rear as well as from West Street.

II. HISTORY:

As discussed in docket item #5, the two bay wide, two story frame house at 227 North West Street was constructed between 1891 and 1896 as an end unit in a row of five modest rowhouses (227-235 North West Street). It has had a number of alterations, including the demolition of the original one story rear ell and replacement window sash, doors and siding.

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed addition and alterations comply with the zoning ordinance requirements. The proposed addition will leave only 800 square feet of open space, the minimum required in this zone. Therefore, the rear yard can not be used for parking.

The proposed addition will abut and capstate the south wall of the 229 North West Street, the house to the north. There are two existing windows in that wall. The applicant is working with Code Enforcement and the owner of the neighboring property to resolve issues related to this matter. It is not anticipated that this process will result in any alteration in the plans. However, if there is a significant alteration, the applicant must resubmit to the BAR for review and approval.

In the opinion of Staff, the proposed alterations and additions are acceptable. The addition is of a

reasonable size. It does not overwhelm the existing main block or adjacent properties. The design of the addition and materials used are compatible with the simple vernacular design of the 1890s house and comply with the *Design Guidelines* for residential additions. While the *Guidelines* express a strong preference for true divided light windows, Staff believes the use of simulated divided lights in the doors at the rear of the addition is acceptable (Windows - Page 2). The doors will be well removed from public view, being approximately 60' back from the rear alley. In addition, Staff believes the proposed alterations to the existing historic house are appropriate. The replacement siding, windows and door will return the house to its historic appearance. Staff has minor reservations about the addition of a porch to the front facade as there is no evidence that there ever was a porch at this location. However, Staff is will willing to accept this alteration for several reasons. First, the porch is appropriate to the style, period and type of house. Its simple design does not overwhelm or distract from the modest house. Secondly, similar small vernacular Italianate houses of this type, constructed with front porches with porches added later, can be found in both districts. For example, there are four such houses on the 300 block of North West Street. Regrettably, other houses have had their porches removed over time. In a sense, the new porch at 227 North West Street will compensate for the loss of these important architectural features at other locations. Lastly, the porch is a reversible addition.

Therefore, Staff recommends approval of the application. However, Staff notes the concern about open space and recommends that the approval be conditioned on there being no parking space on the property. In addition, Staff notes the comments of Alexandria Archaeology and recommends that they be included as a condition of the approval.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Therefore, Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. That there may be no parking space on the property;
2. That the following statement appear in the General Notes of all site plans so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement:

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.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

- F-1 The proposed project impacts on existing window openings for the adjacent property on the north interior lot line. The applicant shall meet with Code Enforcement Engineering section to resolve this conflict.
- F-2 Verification is required from the adjacent property owner affected in F-2 above that the existing windows are not Code requirements for ventilation or emergency egress.
- C-1 All exterior walls within 5 feet from an interior property line shall have a fire resistance rating of 1 hour, from both sides, with no openings permitted within the wall. As alternative, a 2 hour fire wall may be provided. This condition is also applicable to skylights within setback distance.
- C-2 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.
- C-3 Roof drainage systems must be installed so as neither to impact upon, nor cause erosion/damage to adjacent property.
- C-4 A soils report must be submitted with the building permit application.
- C-5 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-6 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-7 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.
- C-8 Permission from adjacent property owners is required if access to the adjacent properties is required to complete the proposed construction. Otherwise, a plan shall be submitted to demonstrate the construction techniques utilized to keep construction solely on the referenced property.
- C-9 A wall location plat prepared by a land surveyor is required to be submitted to this office prior to requesting any framing inspection.

Historic Alexandria:

“No comment.”

Alexandria Archeology:

- F-1 This block was part of the African American neighborhood known as Uptown in the late 19th century. Tax records indicate the presence of a free African American household on the property in 1850. The lot therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources that could provide insight into domestic activities of African Americans in 19th-century Alexandria.
- 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 all site plans so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement.