

Docket Item #4
BAR CASE # 2007-0067

BAR Meeting
April 25, 2007

ISSUE: Alterations to previously approved plans

APPLICANT: Charles Reeder

LOCATION: 813 Oronoco Street

ZONE: RB/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted.

****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 the Code Enforcement Bureau (including signs). The applicant is responsible for obtaining all necessary construction permits after receiving Board of Architectural Review approval. Contact Code Enforcement, Room 4200, City Hall, 703-838-4360 for further information.

(Insert sketch here)

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a certificate of appropriateness to install a new window in the east wall on the first story toward the front (south). A new opening approximately 36" by 60" will be cut in the clapboard siding. The 15 square foot opening falls below the 25 square foot threshold for demolition and thus a demolition permit is not required from the Board of Architectural Review. However, a permit will be required from Code Enforcement for the new opening. The proposed new window will match the new window in the existing opening to the north. It is a double hung, wood, six-over-six window with simulated divided lights, manufactured by Kolbe and Kolbe. The Board previously approved plans for 813 Oronoco Street which called for true-divided-light windows on the front and simulated divided light windows on the side and rear.

The location of the proposed new window is only minimally visible from the public right-of-way due to the fence and gate on the east side of the house.

II. HISTORY:

An 1863 bird's eye view of Alexandria shows a row of gable roofed houses extending east from the northeast corner of Alfred and Oronoco Streets. It is not clear whether 813 Oronoco Street is among those shown. The building does appear to be present on the 1877 Hopkins Atlas. Based on the footprints shown on that map, some, but not all, of the eleven frame structures extant on the blockface today were present in 1877. The area is not shown in the Sanborn Fire Insurance maps until 1902. All eleven extant structures were present by 1902. Based on the map evidence and an inspection of the exterior and interior, Staff believes the house at 813 Oronoco Street was built before the row of four immediately to the west (815-821 Oronoco Street).

As early as 1877, 813 Oronoco Street had a rear ell. In 1902 it had two single story frame additions. The two story cinderblock addition with metal sash windows was added circa 1955 (Building Permit #11999, April 5, 1955). A one story cinderblock addition, described in the building permit as a "storage shed" was added circa 1960 (Building Permit #7315, 9/8/1960). This addition was approved by the Board of Architectural Review on 10/12/1960, with the condition that it be painted white. The frame additions at the end of the storage shed addition were added after 1960. The house has had other alterations over the years, including the installation of replacement windows and door on the main block. However, it retains the massing and much of the character of the early gable-roofed structure. It is located in a handsome row of mid- to late 19th century frame Italianate style houses.

In 2004, for the previous owner, the Board approved the demolition of the post 1960s frame appendages and the capsulation of the 1960 one-story cinderblock addition for a new second story addition. Other alterations to the existing building intended to return it to a more historically authentic appropriate appearance were approved at this time (BAR Case #2004-0200 & 0201, 10/27/2004). Subsequently, the one-story cinderblock section that was to remain as the base for the second story addition was demolished and rebuilt as a new two story frame addition. (This unauthorized alteration to the approved plans will not affect the exterior appearance of the project.) Other unauthorized alterations include the removal of both the fireplace chimney in the center of the historic main block and the stove chimney at the rear of the two story cinderblock addition. Both were shown as remaining on the approved plans, but were no longer extant when

the current owner/applicant took possession of the property. The prior owner did not inform Code Enforcement or BAR Staff of these changes in the approved plans and Staff became aware of them after they had been completed. The project halted in mid-2005. At the request of Code Enforcement, the building was boarded up on 10/31/2006 and the process of registration as an abandoned building initiated on 12/13/2006. The current owner purchased the property on 1/24/2007 and intends to complete the work in conformance with the previously approved plans with the exception of the already completed deviations and the proposed new window installation.

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed window alteration complies with the zoning ordinance requirements.

Staff has no objection to the proposed new window opening and double hung wood window to match the new sash to be installed in the existing window opening to the north. The proposed window will be appropriate in appearance and material and will balance the existing window. The window will have simulated divided lights. The Board previously approved simulated divided lights for all sides of the building except the front, which are to be true divided light windows. Furthermore, the new window will only be partially visible from the front sidewalk due to the gate and fence on the east side of the house.

While it is unfortunate that the previous owner made alterations to the previously approved plans without the approval of the BAR or Staff, the alterations are relatively minor. The loss of the chimney on the main block is the only alteration that will be readily visible from the public right-of-way or that involves an historic feature. Staff is pleased to have the project moving forward.

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 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-2 Additions and alterations to the existing structure and/or installation and/or altering of equipment therein requires a building permit (USBC 108.1). Five sets of plans, bearing the signature and seal of a design professional registered in the Commonwealth of Virginia, must accompany the written application (USBC 109.1).
- 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 comments received.