

Docket Item #3  
BAR CASE #2003-0082

BAR Meeting  
September 17, 2003

**ISSUE:** Shed in rear yard  
**APPLICANT:** William A. Richards  
**LOCATION:** 323 South Fairfax Street  
**ZONE:** RM/Residential

---

**BOARD ACTION, AUGUST 6, 2003:** On a motion by Dr. Fitzgerald, seconded by Ms. Quill the Board deferred the application for restudy. The vote on the motion was 5-0.

**REASON:** The Board believed that there may be other locations for the location of the utility shed that would not occupy such a visually prominent section of the historic Old Presbyterian Meeting House cemetery. Specifically, the Board asked about locating the shed in the church parking lot in the 400block of South Royal Street. If the shed is to be located in the cemetery area the Board believed that it should be constructed of brick.

**SPEAKER:** Robert Dunn, representing the Old Presbyterian Meeting House, spoke in support

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted.

DISCUSSION:

---

Update:

Since the last public hearing, the applicant has examined a number of alternative locations for the utility shed and has concluded that the original location is the only one that meets all the necessary requirements for the shed. The applicant outlined the various alternatives in the enclosed material. The design of the shed has been modified it now proposed to be constructed with a brick exterior.

Applicant s Description of the Undertaking:

Construct a 50 square foot shed against the wall on the south property line of the Old Presbyterian Meeting House graveyard. The shed is needed for storage for the mower, sweeper, snow blower, and other equipment sed to maintain OPMH grounds.

Issue:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for a shed to be constructed in the rear yard of the Old Presbyterian Meeting House. The shed will be brick and is to be built against the brick wall on the south side of the cemetery near the existing condenser units. The shed is to be slightly over 6 ½ in height, 4 ½ in width and 11' in width. It will have a pair of vertical board doors in the center and wood louvers on the side. Windows are no longer proposed. The wood louvers and trim will be painted a dark green. A copper roof is proposed.

History and Analysis:

The centerpiece of the campus of the Old Presbyterian Meeting House is the sanctuary fronting on South Fairfax Street. Originally constructed ca. 1775, the church was struck by lightning and burned on July 26, 1835. The two story, Federal style brick sanctuary at the site was reconstructed over the original foundations in 1836-1837. It is four bays wide and five bays deep with a pedimented gable and a five stage bell tower of brick and wood centered on the rear elevation.

The building was colonialized and re-established to operating condition in 1950 by Walter Macomber, then the resident architect at Mt. Vernon and formerly the resident architect for the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. The meeting house had been largely unused, except for ceremonial functions, from approximately 1886 until 1949 when it was re-opened by congregants from the Second Presbyterian Church which had become extremely overcrowded following the influx of new families into Alexandria after World War II.

The new shed is needed to store maintenance equipment that was previously stored in the garage behind Elliot House facing onto Wolfe Street. The garage is being demolished as part of the underground assembly space that is being created as part of the addition to the Elliot House.

The Board of Zoning Appeals approved a side yard variance on July 10, 2003 in order to allow construction of the shed.

The Board normally prefers sheds to be as utilitarian in design as they are in function. In this instance, however, Staff believes that the importance of the site requires something more than a merely utilitarian structure. The design of the proposed storage shed is more substantial than many of shed that have been reviewed by the Board. In the opinion of Staff, the applicant has been responsive to the concerns raised by the Board at the public hearing of August 6, 2003. Staff believes that the design of the storage shed is appropriate and recommends approval.

## 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 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.

### Office of Historic Alexandria:

There is already a large addition planned. I would prefer not additional structures in this area at all.