

Docket Item #11
BAR CASE #2003-0193

BAR Meeting
September 17, 2001

ISSUE: Permit to demolish portions of the building

APPLICANT: Lynn Smarski

LOCATION: 612 South St. Asaph Street

ZONE: RM/Residential

BOARD ACTION, SEPTEMBER 3, 2003: The Board combined the discussion of docket item # s 19 & 20. On a motion by Dr. Fitzgerald, seconded by Mr. Wheeler the Board deferred the application for restudy. The vote on the motion was 5-0.

REASON: Mr. Clausen stated that the rear wall of the house dated from ca. 1997 when in had been rebuilt following a fire caused by a lightning strike and thus did not date from the mid-19th century as stated in the Staff report. The Board suggested that Staff visit the site and examine the rear wall in an attempt to determine its age. The Board will take action on the application following Staff analysis.

SPEAKERS: Richard Clausen, project architect, spoke in support
Lynn Smarski, applicant, spoke in support

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted.

Update: At the last public hearing there was discussion regarding the date of construction of the house and the Board deferred the application for Staff to visit the site in order to attempt to assess the date of the house. Staff met with the project architect and the homeowner at the site on September 8, 2003. Based upon that visit and the research provided by the applicant Staff concludes that the house was likely constructed in 1914.

NOTE: This docket item requires a roll call vote.

DISCUSSION:

Applicant s Description of the Undertaking:

Request permission to demolish existing one store brick addition at rear of existing house (mechanical room).

Issue:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Permit to Demolish portions of the existing residential building at 612 South St. Asaph Street. The rear one story brick mechanical room is proposed to be demolished. Portions of the rear wall of the existing house will also be demolished in order to allow construction of a new two story addition.

History and Analysis:

612 South St. Asaph Street is a two story two bay freestanding frame residential building dating from ca. 1914. In 1997 a fire sparked by a lighting strike destroyed part of the original rear wall and it was rebuilt and new windows and a door were installed. These repairs were made without building permits or a Certificate of Appropriateness. The brick mechanical room was constructed in 1973 (Approved by the Board on 3/21/73).

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 shrine?
- (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, criteria # s 5 & 6 are met in this instance for the original footprint of the house. As a general rule, Staff believes that the footprint of an historic building should be retained wherever possible. However, given the design of the rear addition which includes a substantial reveal that preserves an understanding of the footprint of the house and the fact that the rear wall was largely rebuilt in 1997, Staff can support the Permit to Demolish the portions of the rear of the house proposed to be removed.

As to the demolition of the one story mechanical room, it is the opinion of Staff that none of the criteria are met and the Permit to Demolish should be approved.

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 be taken to prevent the spread of rodents from the construction site to the surrounding community and sewers.

Historic Alexandria:

This takes up nearly every bit of allowable open space. Balcony appears to be a very dominant element on the back.