

Docket Item #16
BAR Case #2003-0120

BAR Meeting
September 17, 2003

ISSUE: Rear addition
APPLICANT: Robert Langston
LOCATION: 132 North Payne Street
ZONE: RB residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends deferral of the application for restudy for an addition which is more sympathetic to the existing footprint of the historic house.

However, if the Board does approve the project, the approval should be conditioned as follows:

This statement must appear in the General Notes of the site plan 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 #16 must be approved before this docket item can be considered.

DISCUSSION:

Applicant s Description of the Undertaking:

Remove a two story section of the house at the rear, measuring 7 feet by 17 feet and add a two story addition measuring 11.45 feet by 32 feet.

Issue:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for a new two story rear addition. The size of the addition has been reduced from that described above. The addition will span the full 11.45' width of the lot and extend back from the main block 23.25', to a point 6.25' beyond the existing rear wall. According to the applicant, it will be no higher than the highest point on the roof of the main block. The addition will be a flounder in form. It will be clad in brick to match the existing and will have a standing seam metal roof. The rear (west) elevation will have a pair of multi-light french doors on the first story and paired six-over-six windows at the second story. The windows and doors will be wood with simulated divided lights. The cast concrete lintels over the windows and doors will be painted. There will be a pair of coach lamps on either side of the doors and an aluminum downspout on the northern corner. The north elevation, which will extend several feet beyond the adjacent structure at 134 North Payne Street, will be a blank brick wall.

The addition will be visible from Cameron Street. The alley behind the house is private.

History and Analysis:

As discussed in docket item #16, the house at 132 North Payne Street is a 100 Year Old Building and one in a row of nine nearly identical two story, two bay brick townhouses with handsome Italianate cornices. The houses are believed to have been constructed in the mid- to late-1870s. The house at 132 North Payne was constructed with its two story rear ell, which appears to be unaltered. Most of the other houses in the row of nine have had additions constructed over the years. In the 1920s, many of the houses in the row acquired garages. The garage at 132 North

Payne appears on the 1931 Sanborn Insurance map. Staff could not locate any records of BAR review of additions in the row of houses at 118 to 134 North Payne Street. However, there are building permits for additions to a number of houses in the row. For the most part, these date to the late 1980s. It may be that the additions were added prior to the designation of the row on the 100 Year Old Building list, placing them under the Board's purview.

The existing property is not in compliance with the zoning ordinance requirements with respect to open space. In the RB zone, 800 square feet is required. The property currently has 517 square feet of open space, located between the garage and rear of the house. The area beyond the garage functions as a private alley. Earlier this summer, the applicant went before the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) requesting a variance of 467 square feet for a longer addition (BZA Case #2003-0030). On July 10, 2003, the Board of Zoning Appeals deferred the case to allow the applicant an opportunity to consider alternative designs. In response, the applicant shortened the addition by approximately 9 feet. The revised project now requires a zoning variance of 335 square feet, leaving 445 square feet of open space on the lot. Planning and Zoning Staff again recommended against the open space variance, finding no hardship and noting the adverse effect that the proposed addition would have on the interior of the block. On September 11, 2003, the Board of Zoning Appeals approved the open space variance.

In the opinion of Staff, the proposed addition, while better than the initial submission which did not go to the Board of Architectural Review, is too large and is insensitive to the historic structure. At 23.25' long, the addition will be nearly as large as the remaining historic building, which is 28.4' long. The *Design Guidelines* state that, additions to residential structures should not overwhelm the existing structure. (Residential Additions - Page 6) As designed, the proposed addition will not just overwhelm the existing structure, but will require that a substantial portion of it be demolished, resulting in both the loss of original historic fabric and loss of the distinctive original footprint.

Staff acknowledges that this case is complicated by the presence of a number of neighboring additions which are clearly out of scale with the historic buildings. As noted above, these additions appear to have been constructed without BAR approval and their presence should not be taken as justification for yet another addition which is out of scale with the historic building it is attached to.

Other than the size and extent of demolition resulting from its construction, Staff does not object to the design of the new addition. The flounder form is appropriate and the detailing, confined to the rear (west) elevation, is simple and in keeping with the character of the historic building. Although the *Design Guidelines* state a preference for true divided light windows, they also state that simulated divided lights may be acceptable in areas that are not readily accessible to the public (Windows - Page 2). Staff believes their use here is appropriate.

To conclude, Staff recommends deferral for restudy. Staff would not object to an addition which was smaller and more sympathetic to the existing footprint of the house. Admittedly, retaining the main block and ell presents a design challenge. However, Staff does note that, while the lot (11.45' wide) and rear ell (7' wide) are unusually narrow, the existing house, with 1,392.6

existing gross square feet, is not unusually small for a house in the city's historic area.

If the Board should approve the project, Staff notes the comments of Alexandria Archeology and recommends that they be included as a condition of the approval.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

- C-1 All exterior walls within 3 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.
- 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:

- F-1 This takes up a greater amount of open space. Project as built is already well below the requirement.

Alexandria Archeology:

- F-1 The Hopkins Insurance Map indicates that a structure was present on this property by

1877. The lot therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources which would provide insight into life 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 the site plan so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement.