

Docket Item #7
BAR Case #2003-0120

BAR Meeting
October 15, 2003

ISSUE: Rear addition

APPLICANT: Robert Langston

LOCATION: 132 North Payne Street

ZONE: RB residential

BOARD ACTION, SEPTEMBER 17, 2003: The Board combined the discussion of docket item # s 15 & 16. The Chairman called the question on the Staff recommendation which was: deferral of the application for restudy for an addition which is more sympathetic to the existing footprint of the historic house. The vote on the motion was 6-0.

REASON: The Board agreed with the Staff analysis. While the Board agreed that the narrowness of the lot presented a difficult design problem, they nevertheless believed that an addition which was more sympathetic to the historic footprint was appropriate.

SPEAKER: Robert Langston, project architect, spoke in support

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends denial of the application. However, if the Board should approve the application, the following condition should be included in the approval:

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 #6 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.

Update:

There is no alteration to the exterior of the proposed addition. However, in response to the Board s direction, the remnants of the rear wall of the main block and north wall of the rear ell have been retained as interior walls in the addition. In addition, the applicant is now seeking approval of alterations to the garage at the rear of the property.

Issue:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for a new two story rear addition. The proposed 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 applicant is also requesting approval of alterations to the one story frame garage. The alterations are intended to make it more attractive and functional. The exterior, which is currently clad in metal, will be clad in lapped fiber cement siding with a 5" reveal. The doors, which are currently hinged, will be replaced with a standard roll up garage door with metal panels and a row of lights across the top.

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

History and Analysis:

As discussed in docket item #6 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. This past 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 revised plans fail to achieve the objective of providing a new addition which is sympathetic to the footprint of the historic house. In response to the Board's suggestion, the applicant and architect met with Staff. Staff suggested that the addition be held off the main block and instead be located at the rear of the ell or at least retain a substantial portion of the ell. This would create an interior courtyard adjacent to the ell. Even if the addition spanned the full width of the lot, blocking views to the rear of the historic house, at least the physical integrity of the main block and a portion of the rear ell would be retained. The applicant considered Staff's suggestions, and responded with revised plans for an addition which has the same area and configuration as that previously submitted, but does retain some remnants of the rear wall of the main block and north side wall of the rear ell. These walls will be interior walls of the addition. The retention of these wall segments was achieved by modifying the interior plan of the house. The overall size, massing and exterior appearance of the addition has not changed.

Staff continues to believe the footprint of the historic building is lost within the addition. Virtually only the front wall of the house will remain to represent the historic building. The remnants of the historic walls retained within the new addition are too minor and fragmented to

serve as any kind of representation of the historic footprint. Therefore, Staff's comments are the same as in the previous report. 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.

While Staff objects to the amount of new construction in relation to the amount of historic fabric to remain and the extent of demolition resulting from the new construction, there is no objection 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.

Staff does not object to the proposed alterations to the garage. The Board has reviewed a number of applications for the use of fiber cement siding and has adopted the following policy with respect to the product.

1. That fiber cement siding not be installed on an historic structure;
2. That historic materials should not be removed to install fiber cement siding;
3. That fiber cement siding replace other artificial or composite siding;
4. That the nails not show in the installation of the siding; and,
5. That smooth siding be installed.
6. That BAR Staff may administratively approve the installation of fiber cement siding on *non-historic* buildings (those constructed in 1975 or later).

Although the garage could be considered to be an historic structure, being over 70 years in age, Staff believes the proposed use of fiber cement siding is appropriate as it will replace metal siding, which is not a preferred siding type for the historic districts. The fiber cement siding will have more of an historic appearance than the present siding. The proposed door is a standard garage door type used throughout the districts.

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.