

Docket Item #12
BAR Case #2003-0238

BAR Meeting
November 5, 2003

ISSUE: Demoliton/capsulation
APPLICANT: Michael Margiotta
LOCATION: 217 North Saint Asaph Street
ZONE: RM/Residential

BOARD ACTION, OCTOBER 15, 2003: On a motion by Ms. Quill, seconded by Mr. Smeallie the Board approved the Staff recommendation which was: approval of the Permit to Demolish/Capsulate with the condition that the demolition of the 7 ½ wide section of the ell on the first story west end is omitted and the existing entryway is retained as is; and, with the additional condition that the demolition of the ell section be deferred for restudy

The roll call vote on the motion was 6-0.

REASON: The Board agreed with the Staff analysis and that further attention should be given to retaining the recessed ell section.

SPEAKER: Charles Moore, Moore Architects, project architect, spoke in support

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends denial of the Permit to Demolish the 7 ½ wide section of the ell on the first story west end and retention of the existing entryway in situ.

NOTE: This docket item requires a roll call vote.

Update: The Board approved the demolition/capsulation associated with the construction of the rear addition as well as several other smaller areas of demolition associated with the renovation of the existing house, but deferred for restudy the demolition of the 7 ½ wide section of the ell on the first story west end. The applicant considered the Board's request, met with Staff and revised the design for this area, but continues to request demolition of the entryway and capsulation of the recessed section of the rear ell.

DISCUSSION:

Applicant's Description of the Undertaking:

Proposal to remove rear portion of house. Construct new 2-story addition/porch. Remove existing exterior faux-stone coating. Replace with restored/new wood siding. Replace vinyl windows with wood windows.

Issue:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Permit to Demolish/Capsulate to remove the existing archway and a recessed 7 ½' wide by 10' high section of wall containing an entrance door and with sidelights located at the west end of the south wall of the rear ell on the first story. A new wall with a smaller door and a window will be constructed approximately 8' forward of the existing entryway wall, capsulating that portion of the rear ell.

The house at 217 North Saint Asaph Street is highly visible along the south side and rear (east) due to the open parking lot which extends from the south property line to Cameron Street. The rear of the house is also visible from Pitt Street through a short east-west alley.

History and Analysis:

The two story, gable roofed, frame house with rear ell appears on the 1877 Hopkins Atlas and probably dates to the early or mid-19th century. The front door surround suggests that it was constructed in the period of Greek Revival popularity in Alexandria, circa 1820 to 1860. The existing configuration with the gable roofed main block, followed by a two story flounder, terminating in a small, one-and-a-half story shed roof addition appears to date at least to 1885, based on the footprint depicted in the Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of that year, the earliest available for the city. Over the years, the house has been subject to a number of alterations. In 1936 the clapboard sided house was encased in stucco finished to look like stone on the front (west), south and east sides and with a rough finish stucco on the less visible north side (Permit #2656, 6/30/1936). In 1938 the wooden front steps were replaced with the existing concrete steps finished with stucco to match the walls (Permit #2678, 7/14/1938). In 1940 a second floor bath was added above the side entrance at the west end of the rear ell where it meets the main block (Permit #3496, 4/2/1940). Prior to this, the rear ell had jogged in on both the first and

second stories before connecting to the main block. In 1962, the standing seam metal roof was replaced with an asphalt shingle roof (Permit #18373, 5/18/1962). More recently, the windows were replaced with vinyl windows with sandwich muntins and the window trim was wrapped in vinyl. There is no record of Board review of this window replacement or of any other alteration to the property.

In considering a Permit to Demolish and/or Capsulate, the Board must consider the following criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance, Sec. 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 house?
- (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 1,3, & 5 are met for the side entry at the west end of the rear ell and that the demolition of this area should be omitted from the project. The Board's guidelines state that, it is the policy of the Boards that the absolute minimum demolition of an existing structure should take place and that the Boards strongly discourage the demolition of any portion of an 18th or early 19th century structure (Demolition - Pages 1 & 2). Map research indicates that this section of the house was historically indented on the first and second stories and served as an entry point for the service wing of the house. Similar connectors are known to exist in houses constructed in the first part of the 19th century. The existing first floor wall appears to be in its original indented location and the entryway, which retains its original sidelights, appears to date from the early- to mid-19th century and to therefore embody the fabric and craftsmanship of that period.

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:

Generally I am extremely pleased to see this project removal of faux stone, windows, general upgrade of appearance.

Alexandria Archeology:

F-1 According to Ethelyn Cox s *Historic Alexandria, Virginia, Street by Street, A Survey of Existing Early Buildings*, a structure was built on this lot during the 19th century. The property is also adjacent to the McVeigh Hospital lot, which was utilized by the Union Army during the Civil War. The property therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources which could provide insight into domestic and military activities 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.