

Docket Item #15  
BAR Case #2003-0244

BAR Meeting  
November 5, 2003

**ISSUE:** Permit to Demolish

**APPLICANT:** Glen Stone

**LOCATION:** 126 Prince Street

**ZONE:** RM/Residential

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STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends denial of the Permit to Demolish.

NOTE: This docket item requires a roll call vote.

DISCUSSION:

Applicant s Description of the Undertaking:

Request to add front and rear dormers. Change window sash to wood 12 over 12 style. Paint east side of house.

Issue:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Permit to Demolish portions of the roof of the existing house to construct dormers on both the front (north) and rear (south) slopes of the roof. Two options for the dormers have been proposed, In Scheme 1 three dormers are proposed for the front slope and three for the rear. In Scheme 2 two dormers are proposed for the front slope and three for the rear slope. Each dormer has an overall width of 3'9", a height of 5'9" and a depth of 8'6". Thus each dormer will remove approximately 17 square feet of roof area for a total loss of original building fabric of 102 square feet under Scheme 1 and 85 square feet under Scheme 2.

History and Analysis:

The house at 126 Prince Street is a three bay two story attached frame building that likely dates from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century based upon construction techniques employed in the building. It is a largely intact example of a vernacular 18<sup>th</sup> century residence. The house is a remarkable survival. Despite documentary evidence, it appears that the house largely escaped the devastating fire of 1827 which destroyed the rest of the 100 block of Prince Street and portions of surrounding blocks. There was evidence of fire damage on the rear of the house.

In considering a Permit to Demolish, 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 # s1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 are applicable. The proposed demolition will largely destroy the historic roof, replacing it with 21<sup>st</sup> century dormers. In the experience of Staff, dormers were unusual on 18<sup>th</sup> century frame vernacular and uncommon on more high style buildings. Many of the dormers visible on extant 18<sup>th</sup> century building were later, early 19<sup>th</sup> century additions. Thus Staff opposes the demolition of portions of the roof to allow the construction of dormers for two reasons. First, the proposed demolition will constitute a substantial loss of extant 18<sup>th</sup> century building fabric and second, in the opinion of Staff, the addition of dormers to this vernacular building is inappropriate.

According to the *Design Guidelines*:

The Boards actively seek to retain the existing fabric of the historic districts and strongly discourage the demolition of any portion of an 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century structure.

(Demolition of Existing Structures - Page 2)

Therefore, Staff recommends denial of the Permit to Demolish.

## 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 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-3 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.

### Historic Alexandria:

No comment.