

Docket Item # s 20 & 21
BAR Case #2003-0251 &
BAR Case #2003-0252

BAR Meeting
November 5, 2003

ISSUE: Addition and alterations and
Waiver of rooftop HVAC screening

APPLICANT: R. B. Adams

LOCATION: 820 Duke Street

ZONE: RM/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the Waiver of Rooftop Screening Requirement and approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations and addition with the following conditions:

1. That the nails not show in the installation of the fiber cement siding;
2. That smooth fiber cement siding be installed;
3. That the size of the addition be reduced by at least 10 square feet; and,
4. The following 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 #19 must be approved before this docket item may be considered.

DISCUSSION:

Applicant s Description of the Undertaking:

Request approval for 2 story rear addition, partial demolition of existing rear to allow for addition, 2 AC condensers on roof without screening.

Issue:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for a new two story rear addition and alterations to the existing house. In addition, the applicant requests approval of a Waiver of Screening Requirement for two new HVAC units.

Addition

The current two story addition with a footprint of 8.5 by 9.5 or 80.75 square feet will be replaced with a new two story plus basement addition with a footprint of 23' x 17.5' or 402.5 square feet. The new addition will extend from lot line to lot line and will create a courtyard area, enclosing the area alongside the rear ell between it and the main block. The existing house which is to remain intact has approximately 506 square feet in its L-shaped footprint and is not quite as wide as the proposed addition, but is longer. The addition will have a gable roof oriented parallel to the alley and will be 1' lower than the existing main block at its highest point. The addition will be clad in painted fiber cement siding and will have a metal roof. The east and west sides will be blind. The rear (south) elevation will have in the first story a pair of multi-light french doors flanked by single french doors, all surmounted by multi-light transoms and framed in a painted wood door surround with wooden cornice. The second story will have three evenly spaced double hung, six-over-six wood windows with true divided lights. A painted wood cornice with brackets will run along the roofline. The north elevation of the new addition will be visible only from the interior of the property.

Alterations to the existing house

All existing windows will be replaced with wood, true divided light windows in similar configurations to the existing. The three front windows will be replaced with wood, two-over-two, true divided light windows. The other windows, located on the interior courtyard which will be formed by the new addition, will not be visible from the public right of way. Similarly obscured from view are a window on the south side of the main block in the first story which will be converted to a door and window and door on the east side of the rear ell on the first story which will be removed and replaced with a new casement window. All the new windows and door will be wood and true divided light.

HVAC units

Two new HVAC units will be located on center of the roof of the rear ell. The flounder form ell is flanked on front and back by the higher gable roofed main block and addition. The applicant is requesting a waiver of the requirement for screening of rooftop equipment.

An existing shed will be removed.

A small alleyway on the east side of the house allows limited views to the rear from Duke Street. The rear of the house at 820 Duke Street is visible from the alley behind the property, but is partially obscured by a six foot high wooden fence on the rear property line.

History and Analysis:

As discussed in docket item #19, 820 Duke Street is a two story two bay frame freestanding residential townhouse dating from ca. 1860 with two two story rear additions that date from 1939 and 1957. The Board has approved a number of minor alterations to the rear of the house in recent years.

The proposed alterations, addition and rooftop HVAC unit waiver complies with zoning ordinance requirements. However, the applicant should consider reducing the proposed addition slightly to accommodate field conditions and therefore avoid an open space violation.

In the opinion of Staff, the proposed alterations and addition are acceptable. Based on permit records and field observations, the existing windows do not appear to be historic. The proposed wood true divided light windows are appropriate to the period and style of the house. The HVAC units to be located on the ell in the center of the expanded house are not likely to be visible from any public right of way and screening would only add to the rooftop mass. Section 6-403(B)(3) of the zoning ordinance permits the BAR to waive or modify the screening requirement if the Board finds such requirement to be architecturally inappropriate. Thus, Staff recommends that the request for waiver of screening be approved.

While the proposed addition is somewhat large in relation to the remaining historic house, it does preserve the original footprint of main block with ell and it is not out of scale with the neighboring houses. Moreover, the addition is compatible with the existing house and district in its design and materials. The addition will be clad in fiber cement siding. 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).

As the fiber cement is proposed for new construction only, the use is appropriate, conditioned upon item #s 4 and 5 above.

Staff is concerned that the proposed addition leaves only 539 square feet of open space, exactly the amount required under the zoning ordinance. Therefore, Staff recommends that the size of the addition be reduced by at least 10 square feet to ensure that there will be sufficient open space should there be any errors in construction. Lastly, Staff notes the comments of Alexandria Archaeology 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:

No comment.

Alexandria Archeology:

- F-1 This property is part of an early 19th -century Free Black neighborhood. Therefore it has the potential to yield archaeological resources which could provide insight into residential 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.