

Docket Item #10
BAR Case #2003-0214

BAR Meeting
November 19, 2003

ISSUE: Alteration and an addition

APPLICANT: Randal H. Beard

LOCATION: 118 & 120 South Fairfax Street

ZONE: CD/Commercial

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends deferral of the application for restudy.

NOTE: Docket item #9 must be approved before this docket item can be considered.

DISCUSSION:

Applicant s Description of the Undertaking:

1. Modify the existing stair tower at the 118 South Fairfax Street property to accommodate renovations and modifications for both buildings located at 118 & 120 South Fairfax Street.
2. Change a portion of the 120 S. Fairfax Street property from the existing residential occupancy to a business occupancy.

Issue:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the construction of a new access fire stairway and mechanical room addition at 118 South Fairfax to serve both the buildings at 118 and 120 South Fairfax Street. The new access stairway is designed to provide both handicapped accessibility and secure means of egress from the offices on the second and third levels of the two buildings.

Addition

The new stairway addition will be built above the existing second floor level on the north side of the rear flounder at 118 South Fairfax Street. The brick addition will be four bays wide, approximately 24' in overall width, 16' in height and 10' in width. The north elevation will have four six-over-six wood windows to match those existing. The south and east elevations will be blind with a brick to match that existing. The roof of the new addition will be painted standing seam metal to match that existing.

Alterations

Roofing Material - rear 120 South Fairfax Street

The rear (east) slope of the roof of the building is proposed to be re-roofed in asphalt shingle to match that existing.

New windows

New windows to match those existing are proposed to be installed - one on the north (parking lot) side of the flounder wing on the second level at the east end and the other on the first level at the west end.

Infill window

An existing window opening on the rear (east) elevation of the flounder at 120 will be infilled with brick to match the existing.

History and Analysis:

As discussed in docket item #9, the buildings at 118 & 120 South Fairfax Street are attached rowhouses that are both three bay, three story brick buildings dating from ca. 1827.

Proposed alterations (mechanical room, stairs, addition, windows) comply with zoning regulations.

Addition

In the opinion of Staff, the proposed addition is quite large and substantially alters the historic proportions of the building at 118 South Fairfax Street and changes the overall context of the building. What now appears as a subservient flounder wing disappears and becomes a three story rear addition that is nearly equal in mass to the main block of the building fronting on South Fairfax Street. The two story rear section that is being added onto is the pre-1805 two story brick kitchen. Its historic form will be subsumed as a result of the new addition and the historic roof form will be lost. Staff believes that a less disruptive solution to providing a means of egress and mechanical room space should be explored.

Even if Staff supported such a third floor addition, Staff cannot support its design and materials. As presented, by using materials and window forms to match the existing there will be further disruption in the ability to understand the physical evolution of these structures. The *Design Guidelines* recommend that there be a differentiation between an addition and the historic structure which is being added onto. In this case, that differentiation is not present. Thus, the construction of the addition as presented can only confuse the line between an early 19th building and a 21st century addition. In the opinion of Staff, if an addition is to be built, a differentiation could be achieved through the use of different building materials, window types and changes in plane.

Alterations

Roofing Material - rear 120 South Fairfax Street

The *Design Guidelines* and Zoning Ordinance are clear that replacement materials such as roof coverings should reflect the historic era of the building involved. Therefore, Staff cannot support the installation of an asphalt shingle replacement roof. In the opinion of Staff, replacement of the roof with standing seam metal or a copper roof would be appropriate.

New windows

Staff also does not support the proposed new windows on the north side of the flounder at 118 South Fairfax Street. The new second level window adds a window that was never present historically in the new alignment and thus alters the historic fenestration pattern creating a somewhat misleading impression that symmetry was a part of the historic window pattern. When the rear kitchen wing was joined to the new brick house on the front, the windows did not align and this is evident in the existing fenestration pattern. It would be the preference of Staff that the existing historic window configuration be maintained.

Staff has no objection to the re-installation of a window on the first level at the west end. It clearly appears that a window has been removed and the opening bricked up. Its reinstallation will re-create its historic appearance.

Infill window

Staff also has no objection to infilling the existing window opening on the rear (east) elevation of

the flounder at 120 South Fairfax Street with brick to match the existing. This appears to have been an anomalous window that has little in common with the historic fenestration pattern of the building.

Thus, on balance, it is the opinion of Staff that the application should be deferred for restudy. Staff believes that alternative means of achieving egress should be sought which do not involve such a severe disruption of the historic fabric and alteration of the physical evolution of the building.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

- F-1 Proposed project extends beyond the property line (118 & 120 S. Fairfax St). No structure whole or in part shall extend over a property line regardless of ownership. The proposed openings between the fire walls on the property line are not permitted. As an alternative, the applicant may obtain an consolidation of the two parcels into a Parcel and record the consolidation as part of the land records.
- 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 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-3 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-4 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-5 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-6 Required exits, parking, and accessibility within the building for persons with disabilities must comply with USBC Chapter 11. Handicapped accessible bathrooms shall also be provided.
- C-7 The current use is classified as R; the proposed use is B. Change of use, in whole or in part, will require a certificate of use and occupancy (USBC 115.4) and compliance with USBC 118.2. including but not limited to: limitations of exit travel distance, emergency and exit lighting, a manual fire alarm system, and accessibility for persons with disabilities.
- C-8 The proposed use is a change in use group classification; a new Certificate of Occupancy is required (USBC 115.4).
- C-9 The current construction type for 118 S. Fairfax is 5B (combustible / unprotected). The USBC limits the proposed use in 5B construction to 2 stories only. The current

construction type for 120 S. Fairfax is 2C (noncombustible / unprotected). The USBC limits the proposed use in 2C construction to 3 stories only. The applicant shall address building code and egress issues through a building modification or code modification request in order to achieve the proposed use in compliance with the USBC.