

Docket Item # 6  
BAR CASE #2003-0304

BAR Meeting  
January 7, 2003

**ISSUE:** Replacement Roof  
**APPLICANT:** Alexandria Roofing Co., Inc.  
**LOCATION:** 528 North Washington Street  
**ZONE:** OC/Commercial

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### STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the existing slate roof be repaired and retained. In the alternative, if the Board determines that a replacement roof is appropriate, Staff recommends the use of decorative metal shingles.

### DISCUSSION:

#### Applicant's Description of the Undertaking:

“To remove existing slate from the front mansard roof and install new Royal Imitation Slate.”

#### Issue:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness to re-roof the mansard of 528 North Washington Street using Dura Slate Roofing System. The imitation slate tiles will be black.

The applicant has provided a sample of the Dura Slate tiles which will be made available at the public hearing.

#### History and Analysis:

528 North Washington Street is a three bay two and a half story brick townhouse originally constructed ca. 1925. It is currently used for offices.

In 2000, the Board approved a wall sign for ASCPT (BAR Case #2000-074, 5/3/00). The Board also approved a sign for the building in 1990 (BAR Case#90-177, 8/15/90).

Recently, the applicant applied for a building permit to re-roof the existing mansard and flat roof of 528 North Washington Street. The applicant was informed by Staff that the proposed imitation slate could not be administratively approved by Staff and would need to go before the Board because it did not meet the guidelines for historically appropriate roofing materials.

The proposed replacement roof complies with zoning ordinance requirements.

The Board has adopted the following policy in regard to determining appropriate and compatible roofing materials:

1. The age of the structure and its architectural style;
2. The historic, cultural and architectural importance of the structure to the City of Alexandria;
3. The location of the structure within the Old and Historic Alexandria District or along the George Washington Memorial parkway; and,
4. The visibility of the roof surface from a public street, way, pathway, easement or waterway.

A central belief of historic preservation is that original historic materials should be retained and repaired rather than replaced. According to the *Design Guidelines* “in the case of a slate roof, it is almost always better to repair rather than replace the roof” (Roofing Materials - Page 2).

Authentic slate can last for 75 to 150 years with proper maintenance and repair, the Boards do not consider synthetic slate an appropriate roof replacement material for such historic roofing materials (Roofing Materials - Page 3).

The Board has previously approved the use of imitation slate on North Washington Street. The Board approved its use on the old Registration Building as part of the Liberty Row development (BAR Case #2000-0270, 6/19/02). In this case the imitation slate was approved to replace existing asphalt shingles. The Board has also approved imitation slate for new construction.

Staff believes that the existing slate roof should be repaired and retained rather than replaced. The roof, located on the George Washington Memorial Parkway is highly visible. However, if the Board believes replacement of the roof is warranted, Staff could support the use of decorative metal shingles.

## 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.

### Office of Historic Alexandria:

“Prefer real slate.”