

Docket Item #8
BAR Case #2003-0307

BAR Meeting
January 7, 2004

ISSUE: Permit to Demolish and Capsulate

APPLICANT: Amy Bayer

LOCATION: 209 South Lee Street

ZONE: RM residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted.

NOTE: This docket item requires a roll call vote.

DISCUSSION:

Applicant's Description of the Undertaking:

"The proposal is to remove a portion of the existing house containing a powder room. The proposal also includes the construction of a two-story addition to the rear of the house with a one-story addition on the south side of the house."

Issue:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Permit to Demolish and Capsulate portions of the west wall of the two story rear section as well as a portion of the east wall of the rear freestanding "guest house" of the house at 209 South Lee Street

History and Analysis:

209 South Lee Street is a three story freestanding brick townhouse that dates from ca. 1815 and was later restyled with Victorian decoration ca. 1884. It appears to Staff that the entire length of the house was all built at the same time because there does not appear to be a brick seam joint on the north side of the house that would indicate a later addition. In addition, the brick coursing on the north side is entirely consistent east to west. The mansard slate roof was apparently added in 1903 (Building Permit, 5/19/03).

According to information on the Sanborn Fire Insurance maps, the site of the current freestanding "guest house" at the west end of the property, was originally the site of a one story shed that predated 1885 and by 1921 it had become a one and a half story brick garage.

By 1921 the currently unbuilt section between the historic main block of the house and the garage to the west was infilled with a two story frame construction.

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?

West wall of main historic block

In the opinion of Staff criteria #'s 1, 3, 5 & 6 are met concerning the demolition of this section of the west wall of the main historic block of the house. However, given the facts that this section of the west wall is currently not visible from the public right-of-way and that it also not be visible after the proposed construction and the fact that a two story frame construction formerly occupied this space, Staff has little objection to the capsulation/demolition of this section of the wall of the house.

East wall of freestanding rear building

This building was constructed as an automobile garage between 1912 and 1921. Thus, in this instance Staff does not believe that any of the demolition criteria are met.

Based upon these facts, Staff supports the proposed request for capsulation/demolition.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

C-1 Prior to the issuance of an construction permit, 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:

No comment.

Alexandria Archaeology: