

Docket Item #9
BAR Case #2003-0308

BAR Meeting
January 7, 2004

ISSUE: Addition and alterations

APPLICANT: Amy Bayer

LOCATION: 209 South Lee Street

ZONE: RM/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

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; and,
2. The above statement must appear in the General Notes of the site plan so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement.

NOTE: Docket item #8 must be approved before this docket can be considered.

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 Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations and an addition to the house at 209 South Lee Street.

Additions

First level

The proposed addition is to be constructed at the rear (west) of the existing house and will extend to the south of the existing building. The overall dimensions of the addition are approximately 18'10" in length and 16'10" width. The bulk of the addition is on the first level but will include the alteration of a small brick porch on the second level. The first level of the addition will extend beyond the footprint of the main block of the house approximately 5', but only approximately 1' beyond the existing trellis and arbor. It will be this section of the addition that will be minimally visible from the public right-of-way. This section of the addition is treated as a solarium and will have three arched double hung double insulated wood windows on the south side and a single arched similar window on the east side (facing South Lee Street) and a similar window on the west side (which is not visible from the public right-of-way. The addition will be constructed of brick while the solarium will be wood. The addition will have a flat roof and the solarium will have a standing seam metal roof.

Second level

The current one story section at the rear (west) of the house will have a second level added. This addition measures approximately 8' x 10' and will have a new double hung, wood double insulated simulated divided light on the north elevation. On the south elevation, an existing two-over-two double hung wood window will be removed and replaced with a new door for access to the existing second level balcony. The existing doorway on the west side of the balcony will be replaced by a new double hung wood window.

Alteration

The currently open breeze way on the north side of the house will have a new metal picket gate

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. The mansard slate roof was apparently added in 1903 (Building Permit, 5/19/03). A one and a half story freestanding brick garage was constructed at the rear of the property between 1912 and 1921. The area between the main historic block of the house and the garage was infilled with a one story frame construction ca. 1921 which was still extant in 1958.

Proposed alterations and addition complies with zoning ordinance requirements.

The current proposal for an addition is considerably different than the previous proposal for demolition and an addition that was considered by the Board. The previous addition was a two story brick addition to be built on the north side of the house and involved the capsulation and demolition of portions of the north wall which appear to be original building fabric. The Board denied the demolition/capsulation request and thus did not hear the merits of the design of the addition on the north side of the house (BAR Case #2002-0049, 5/1/02). The Board's denial was appealed to City Council which overturned the Board and approved the demolition/capsulation request so that the Board could take action on the proposed design of the addition. The decision of the City Council was subsequently appealed to court which overturned the Council decision and remanded the case back to Council to consider the case within the confines of the Zoning Ordinance criteria concerning demolition. The applicant chose not to pursue that design and is now before the Board with a substantially different design which is confined to the south side of the existing house. No addition is currently proposed for the north side of the house.

Relative size of previously proposed and revised addition:

Proposed gross square footage of revised addition: 601s.f.

Proposed gross square footage of addition previously proposed: approximately 1012 s.f.

Visual comparison of current design and previous design:



Revised addition on south side



Previous design for addition on north side. Note: the existing brick wall has been omitted for clarity.

Staff has little objection to the proposed design for the new additions. In the opinion of Staff the additions meet the recommendations in the *Design Guidelines*. The addition is clearly subservient to the historic main block of the house. The additions require minimal demolition/capsulation of existing historic fabric and the second level addition retains the principal architectural feature on the south elevation: the second story balcony. The design idiom, while respecting the overall design of the main house, clearly reads as a modern addition, thus creating differentiation between the old and the new. Finally, the addition is located in one of the most visually obscure areas of the lot, in an existing breeze way at the extreme end of the main house and has little visual impact on the overall impression of the historic house. The addition is similar in part to additions that have been approved for freestanding houses. For example, in 1998 the Board denied an addition in the sideyard of the house at 204-206 Duke Street (BAR Case #98-0016, 4/1/98) which was subsequently approved by City Council on appeal (5/16/98). In 1999 the Board approved a sideyard addition to the house at 307 South St. Asaph Street (BAR Case #99-0024, 4/7/99). In that case, the extension of a rear section of the house as a solarium is quite similar to this case. Based on these factors, Staff recommends approval of the design of the revised addition.

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.
- C-2 Roof drainage systems must be installed so as neither to impact upon, nor cause erosion/damage to adjacent property.
- C-3 A soils report must be submitted with the building permit application.
- C-4 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-5 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-6 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-7 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.

Historic Alexandria:

No comment.

Alexandria Archaeology: (Note: Comments from BAR Case #2002-0049, 5/1/02)

- F-1 Historical documents indicate that a house was present on this lot by 1817. The property therefore 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.