

Docket Item #10
BAR Case #2004-0012

BAR Meeting
February 18, 2004

ISSUE: Dormer and alterations

APPLICANT: Ann Louise Mapes

LOCATION: 8 Potomac Court

ZONE: RM/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted.

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

DISCUSSION:

Applicant's Description of the Undertaking:

“Add new dormer to front of existing gable roof & add new window on south elevation at attic.”

Issue:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness to install a dormer on the front slope of the gable roof and to replace a small circular window in the peak of the gable on the south side of the house at the attic or fourth story with a new larger window. The proposed dormer is approximately 12' wide, 15' long and 7' high. It is composed of two gabled dormers each with a multi-light casement window flanking a shed dormer with a group of three multi-light fixed windows. The dormer will have wood trim, wood windows and a standing seam metal roof. The north and south sidewalls of the dormer will be clad in wood clapboard siding. The small circular window at the peak of the gable on the south side will be removed and partially in-filled with brick to match the adjacent wall. A new larger window will be located in the same vicinity. The opening will be approximately 3' wide and 4' high. It will be a multi-light casement window with operable wood shutters and a lintel and sill to match the adjacent windows. The new windows will be Pella Architect Series with simulated divided lights. The windows, shutters, trim and siding will be painted to match the existing color scheme.

The front, where the dormer is proposed, is visible from Potomac Court. The south side of the house, where the new window is proposed, is visible from Windmill Hill Park and South Union Street.

History and Analysis:

As discussed in docket item #9, 8 Potomac Court is a three story brick end unit rowhouse dating from 1967. In 1999, the Board approved demolition, alterations and the addition of a three story bay on south side of 8 Potomac Court (BAR Case #99-0216 & 0217, 12/5/1999). The Board also approved demolition and the addition of a dormer at the back of 9 Potomac Court (BAR Case #2002-222 & 223, 9/4/2002).

The proposed alterations and dormer comply with zoning ordinance requirements.

The Board should note that Code Enforcement determined that the dormer, by creating a fourth habitable floor, triggers a requirement to install an automatic fire suppression system and other fire protection features. According to the architect, he has met with Code Enforcement to develop an acceptable alternative fire protection plan for the property. These fire protection features will be located within the house and will not alter the exterior appearance.

Staff believes the proposed front dormer addition and side window alterations are acceptable.

The dormer, though larger than most, is not out of scale with the house. Staff believes it is appropriate for the Colonial Revival style house and the historic district, as it draws upon traditional forms and uses traditional materials. Like the existing south side bay, approved by the Board in 1999, the proposed dormer will have a standing seam metal roof and wood siding. Likewise, the proposed south side window is compatible with the existing building. It will match the window below in nearly every respect. It uses a single leaf casement window, rather than a double leaf casement or double hung as seen elsewhere on this facade, in order to provide a sufficiently large unobstructed opening for emergency egress. Staff believes simulated divided light windows are appropriate here as the windows, located on the fourth floor, are well removed from public access. The *Design Guidelines* allow for the use of simulated divided light windows in such situations (Windows - Page 2). Moreover, the other windows on this facade were previously replaced with simulated divided light. Therefore, Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

- C-1 Construction type for this property is 5B and is limited to 3 stories of habitable space. City records do not reflect an approved, habitable space in the attic which is located above the height threshold for occupied spaces within this construction type. The proposed project creates a habitable space above the 3 story limit which is not permitted under code. This proposal will require the applicant to install an automatic fire suppression system and other fire protection features. It is recommended that the applicant arrange a meeting with Code Enforcement to address construction and fire protection issues as soon as possible.
- F-2 The property owner shall obtain a design professional to conduct a building code analysis in order to submit a proposal of building modifications in order to obtain a change of construction type from 5B to 3B.
- 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. Plans shall accompany the permit application that fully detail the construction as well as layouts and schematics of the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems.

Historic Alexandria:

No comment.