

Docket Item #11  
BAR CASE #2004-0013

BAR Meeting  
February 18, 2004

**ISSUE:** After-the-fact replacement door

**APPLICANT:** David & Heather Bowser

**LOCATION:** 1302 Michigan Avenue

**ZONE:** RB/Residential

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STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends deferral of the application for restudy.

DISCUSSION:

Applicant's Description of the Undertaking:

"My front door & door frame split/broke, unable to lock, replaced front door in early December, in process of locating and replacing storm door as well."

Issue:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the installation of a replacement door at 1302 Michigan Avenue. The replacement door has a single pane of decorative glass.

History and Analysis:

1302 Michigan Avenue is a stone and brick residential rowhouse dating from circa 1939. This area of Michigan Avenue was included within the original boundaries of the 1946 historic district in order to protect the George Washington Memorial Parkway. However, this row of houses is currently visually screened from the Parkway by the Mason Hall Apartments on West Abingdon Drive which were constructed in 1951.

Exterior doors and storm doors are prominent features of a building. The majority of the houses in this development have retained their original doors. The original four panel wood doors have either two or four lights at the top. Staff does not believe that the proposed decorative door is an appropriate style for the neighborhood or the historic district.

The applicant has indicated that a new stained glass storm door is also proposed to be installed. The *Design Guidelines* state that storm doors should be plain and not obscure historic doors (Doors -Page 1). A stained glass storm door is clearly inappropriate in the historic district and will obscure views to the door beyond.

A central belief in historic preservation is that original materials should be retained and repaired rather than replaced. The applicant has stated that the original damaged door has not been lost. Therefore Staff recommends deferral of the application for restudy to determine whether the original door is repairable. In the alternative, if the original door is beyond repair, Staff could support a replacement door similar in design to the original door. Therefore, Staff recommends deferral of the application for restudy.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

No comments.

Office of Historic Alexandria:

“No comment”