

Docket Item #9
BAR CASE #2004-0025

BAR Meeting
April 7, 2004

ISSUE: Demolition

APPLICANT: Carlos Cecchi & Lisa Rivas Cecchi

LOCATION: 726 South Lee Street

ZONE: RM/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted.

NOTE: This item requires a roll call vote.

DISCUSSION:

Applicant's Description of the Undertaking:

“Demolition of back wall of existing townhouse and interior demolition of limited areas inside. Underground existing electrical and telephone service.”

Issue:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Permit to Demolish and Capsulate for alterations on the first, second and third stories of the rear (west) elevation of the house in order to construct a new three story addition.

The upper portion of the rear of the building is minimally visible through the block from South Union Street.

History and Analysis:

Based on historic map research, the house at 726 South Lee Street was constructed as part of a row of seven, two story brick faced cinderblock townhouses that were built between 1921 and 1941. According to oral tradition, the houses were built by Charles Hoof, a prominent local developer of the time.

The Board heard a similar case involving the demolition of the rear of an end unit in this row of townhouses in 2002 and approved the demolition (BAR Case #2002-0110, 6/5/02).

In considering a Permit to Demolish, the Board must consider the following criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance, §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 shrine?
- (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?

In the opinion of Staff, none of the above criteria are met. The house appears to have been constructed in the mid-20th century. The demolition/capsulation will be confined to the rear (east) facade, which is barely visible, and to the north side which is only minimally visible. Therefore, Staff recommends approval of the Permit to Demolish.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

C-1 Prior to the issuance of a demolition permit or land disturbance permit, a rodent abatement plan shall be submitted to Code Enforcement that will outline the steps that will taken to prevent the spread of rodents from the construction site to the surrounding community and sewers.

Historic Alexandria

Difficult to understand open space calculations, appears to be very little remaining.