

Docket Item #23  
BAR CASE #2004-0049

BAR Meeting  
April 7, 2004

**ISSUE:** Permit to demolish/capsulate

**APPLICANT:** Stephanie Dimond

**LOCATION:** 619 South Fairfax Street

**ZONE:** RM/Residential

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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:

“Applicant is seeking approval to capsluate the second story at the rear for a second story addition at the rear of the house.”

Issue:

In 2003, the applicant received approval for the demolition of the existing ground level shed addition and approval for alterations and a new porch on the first story of the rear (west) facade (BAR Case #2003-0196 & 0197, 9/3/2003). That project was not undertaken. The applicant now intends to construct a two story rear addition with deck instead of the previously approved porch. Staff did not initially request that the applicant apply for a Permit to Demolish for the two story rear addition. However, on further examination, it became clear that the extent of demolition for the addition is sufficiently different from that previously approved to warrant a new application. Thus, the request for certificate of appropriateness for the two story addition was heard prior to the request for demolition. The certificate of appropriateness was approved on March 17, 2004 (BAR Case #2004-0027). The addition will require the demolition of the entire rear facade whereas the previous demolition/capsulation was limited to the ground level and first floor of the rear. In addition, the cross gable on the addition will continue back over and capsule a portion of the flat roof on the existing house.

The south side and rear of the house, where the proposed demolition/capsulation is to occur, is obliquely visible from South Fairfax Street. The house to the south at 623 South Fairfax Street has a particularly generous side yard, allowing limited views to the rear of 619 South Fairfax Street. There is no alley in this block.

History and Analysis:

The two story, two bay frame house at 619 South Fairfax Street is a simple, vernacular Victorian house of a type built in large numbers in Alexandria from the 1880s through the 1920s. It has lost its original one story front porch, but still retains its original Italianate cornice. It does not appear on the 1877 Hopkins Atlas, but is present on the 1891 Sanborn Fire Insurance map, the first time the southern half of the block is included in the Sanborn mapping. In 1891, the house has a two story main block with a rectangular footprint and a small, one story rear addition. Between 1896 and 1902, it appears to have acquired its current footprint with two story main block and substantial two story rear ell. In 1951, the Board approved a number of alterations at 619 South Fairfax Street, including removing the front porch, replacing the front door with a window, replacing the window sash with multi-light sash, and adding the present rear shed (Certificate of Appropriateness, 5/17/1951 and Building Permit #28783, 7/18/1951). On December 19, 1973, the Board deferred an application for an addition at 619 South Fairfax Street, “pending further information.” It does not appear to have been heard again. On July 11,

1985, the Board approved the installation of new cedar siding at 619 South Fairfax Street (BAR Case #85-65A and Building Permit #28783, 7/18/1985). Most recently, on March 17, 2004, the Board approved the proposed two story addition (BAR Case #2004-0027).

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?

Staff believes none of the above criteria are met. The demolition will affect the 1951 shed (previously approved for demolition), the rear (west) wall of the c.1899 addition and a portion of the roof on both the c.1884 main block and c.1899 addition. The Board has routinely approved demolition at the rear of houses of this type and period for similar additions.

Staff notes the comments of Alexandria Archeology. The standard archeological condition was included in the March 17, 2004 approval of the two story addition. Therefore, Staff recommends approval of the permit to demolish/capsulate as submitted.

## CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

### Code Enforcement:

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 be taken to prevent the spread of rodents from the construction site to the surrounding community and sewers.

### Historic Alexandria:

No comment.

### Alexandria Archaeology:

- F-1 Tax records from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century show development on this street face, and in 1850, there was a free black household in an alley on the block, but the exact address is unknown. By 1891, the Sanborn insurance map indicates that a house was present on the lot. The property therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources which could provide insight into domestic activities in 19<sup>th</sup>-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.