

Docket Item #27  
BAR CASE #2004-0053

BAR Meeting  
April 7, 2004

**ISSUE:** Permit to demolish/capsulate

**APPLICANT:** Stephanie Dimond

**LOCATION:** 322 North Columbus Street

**ZONE:** RB/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 requests permission/approval to remove an existing one story rear addition and to build a new two story addition.”

Issue:

The applicant is requesting approval of a permit to demolish for the removal of the existing one story frame addition and the demolition and capsulation of the entire back wall of the two story brick house.

The frame addition is 16.2' wide and 8'6" deep or approximately 138 square feet. The area of back wall to be demolished/capsulated is approximately 429.3 square feet.

The rear of the house is visible from the rear alley and views through the south side yard.

History and Analysis:

The semidetached, two story, red brick house at 322 North Columbus Street was constructed c. 1907 (Building Permit #140, 11/5/1906). Through 1902, the entire east half of the square bounded by Queen, North Columbus, Princess and Alfred streets was occupied by the Alexandria County Courthouse, a large freestanding structure constructed in 1839. By 1907, according to the Sanborn Map published that year, the Courthouse had been demolished and eight houses, including 322 North Columbus Street, had taken its place along the blockface. The 1907 Sanborn Map shows 322 North Columbus Street with the same footprint as the existing brick house. By 1912, the one story frame addition had been added to the back of the house. Constructed in the Queen Anne style, the house retains a high level of integrity and exhibits many features typical of the style, including decorative brick work, projecting bays, porches with decorative wood brackets and finials. Regrettably, the front of the house has been painted. According to the building permit, the front is constructed of “white brick.” In 1992, the Board approved the one story frame garage at the rear of the property (BAR Case #92-126, 6/17/1992). In 1999, the Board approved an arbor in the side yard (BAR Case #99-0104, 7/21/1999).

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 1921 addition and c. 1907 rear wall. The 1921 addition is without any distinguishing architectural features at all. The c. 1907 rear wall was previously compromised when a large section on the first floor was removed for a wide opening into the frame addition. However, the second story does remain intact. Given the size of the historic house, the area to be demolished/capsulated is relatively small. All demolition is confined to the rear. Moreover, the Board has routinely approved demolition at the rear of houses of this type and period for similar additions. 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 This property is situated on the site of the Alexandria Courthouse, constructed in 1839 and demolished near the turn of the century. The lot therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources related to this civic structure.
  
- 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.