

Docket Item #11
BAR CASE #2004-0064

BAR Meeting
April 21, 2004

ISSUE: Demolition
APPLICANT: Paul Davey
LOCATION: 200 Prince Street
ZONE: RM/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends denial of the Permit to Demolish.

NOTE: This docket item requires a roll call vote.

DISCUSSION:

Applicant's Description of the Undertaking:

“Homeowners request approval to install 2 French sliding doors in the location of the current door and window. The new doors are on the rear of the residence.”

Issue:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Permit to Demolish an approximately 120' square foot section of the rear (west) addition to the residence at 200 Prince Street in order to install two sliding French doors.

History and Analysis:

200 Prince Street along with 201 South Lee Street has been divided into two single family residences for many years. The current owners are combining the two addressed back into a single family house.

The building at 201 South Lee and 200 Prince Street is a 3 1/2 story brick structure built in 1780 as the home of Colonel Robert Townshend Hooe, a prominent early figure and first Mayor of Alexandria. The dwelling originally faced Prince Street and has a gambrel gable fronting South Lee. According to Ethelyn Cox's *Historic Alexandria Virginia Street by Street* (p.79 & 122), the structure and a 2 1/2 story brick wing (now 203,205 and 207 S. Lee) were purchased from Townshend's heirs in 1811 by the Farmer's Bank of Alexandria. It passed to two other banks before being purchased and reconverted into a dwelling in 1909. The Sanborn Insurance Maps indicate that two wings were added to the west side of the main block of the house between 1907 and 1912 when it was subdivided into a duplex. The south wing fronting South Lee was subdivided into three dwelling units at the same time.

There are several issues involved in reviewing alterations to a house as historically significant as this one is to the history of Alexandria. The house is significant both because of its original owner and its architectural features. The period of significance associated with its most important owner was during the years 1780-1811, prior to the addition of the wings to the west. The Sanborn Maps indicate that the one story porches were significantly altered three times between 1891 and 1907 and that two, two story masonry wings were added on the west elevation by 1912. Because of this little original architectural integrity remains from the period of significance of the Hooe period. Unfortunately, there is little that would allow interpretation of the original entrance given the alterations which have already taken place to the original fabric.

The west wings are, however, now almost 80 years old and have attained historic importance in their own right in the interpretation of the building. Both of the wings of the duplex are prominently visible from Prince Street and the mass and scale of any addition is critical to an

understanding of the evolution of the property as a whole. The current wings demonstrate two historic variations on forms of additions to the townhouse in Alexandria with their flounder and gable roofs.

In considering a Permit to Demolish/Capsulate, 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 house?
- (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, in this instance criteria #'s 1, 2, 5, & 6 are met. The proposal involves the substantial demolition of the exterior of almost the entire first floor of the flounder addition dating from the early 20th century. Because the wing directly abuts Prince Street it is highly visible from the public right-of-way and its alteration would substantially alter the public perception of the house. While the front section and the rear flounder wing are substantially different in their style of architecture, they are clearly united through the use of similar materials with brick exteriors, punched window openings and multi-light double hung wood windows and are painted in a similar style. In the opinion of Staff, there is a substantial difference between installing a pair of sliding French doors in a new addition such as was done at 201 South Lee Street in 1992 (BAR Case #92-0015, 3/4/92) and removing historic fabric to allow for the installation of similar doors. Therefore, Staff recommends denial of the Permit to Demolish.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

- 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.