

Docket Item #9
BAR CASE #2004-0068

BAR Meeting
June 2, 2004

ISSUE: Alterations and addition

APPLICANT: Steve Edson and Kelly Worthington

LOCATION: 510 North Columbus Street

ZONE: RM/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends:

1. Approval of the alterations to the front of the house; and,
2. Deferral for restudy of the size of the proposed addition.

In the alternative, if the Board determines to approve the addition, Staff recommends the following conditions:

1. That the fiber cement siding is smooth and the nails do not show in the installation; and,
2. That the following statement appears in the General Notes of the site plan so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement:

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.

NOTE: Docket item #8 must be approved before this docket item can be considered.

ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations and an addition to the brick residential rowhouse at 510 North Columbus Street.

Alterations

A number of alterations to the front of the house are proposed. These include:

- A new metal roof will replace the existing standing seam metal roof;
- New six-over-six wood simulated divided light windows with 7/8" wide wood muntins will replace the existing wood two-over one windows;
- The existing wood window sills will be replaced with new wood sills;
- A new three-light wood transom will replace the existing two light transom over the front door;
- A new four-panel wood front door with two small lights at the top will replace the existing four-light and three panel wood door;
- New metal steps with simple metal picket railings will be installed in place of the existing wood front entry steps;
- A new metal picket guard rail, approximately 36" in height, will be installed next to the stairs leading to the basement level; and,
- A new four-panel wood door with two small lights at the top will be installed at the basement entrance in place of the existing door.

Addition

An addition is proposed to be constructed at the rear (west) of the existing house. The addition will be 21'6" in overall length and run lot line to lot line. Since the lot falls away from east to west, the rear addition will be three stories in overall height. The addition will be clad in new shiplap cement fiber siding. On the third level there will be three new casement windows with

simulated divided lights in this instance because they will be replacing the existing inappropriate non-historic windows and will not be readily accessible to the public as the house is set back from the sidewalk by over 8'. The materials provided by the applicant were not entirely clear as to which of the divided light options would be included. The exterior bars should be wood and the window should also include the internal spacer bar and interior bar.

Addition

In general, Staff is supportive of a rear addition to this rowhouse and believes that the design vocabulary of the rear elevation is appropriate because the front facade and the rear elevation cannot be seen together. The design of the addition is clearly differentiated from the historic main block of the house, an approach recommended by the *Design Guidelines (Residential Additions - Page 5)*. While the Board generally prefers wood windows, Staff does not object to the proposed use of Ultrex for the rear windows. These windows will be well removed from the public access and will be on a clearly modern structure. The Board has adopted the following policy with respect to fiber cement:

1. That fiber cement siding not be installed on an historic structure;
2. That historic materials should not be removed to install fiber cement siding;
3. That fiber cement siding replace other artificial or composite siding;
4. That the nails not show in the installation of the siding; and,
5. That smooth siding be installed.
6. That BAR Staff may administratively approve the installation of fiber cement siding on *non-historic* buildings (those constructed in 1975 or later).

As fiber cement siding is proposed only for the new construction, its use will conform to the Board's policy if the siding is smooth and the nails do not show in the installation.

On the other hand, Staff is quite troubled by the overall size of the addition. As currently proposed the addition represents an increase in the size of the existing house of approximately 77%. In the opinion of Staff, the addition is so large that it overwhelms the existing relatively small historic house. In addition, the 21'6" long and three story high sidewalls will overwhelm the houses to the north and south. The *Design Guidelines* note that "[g]enerally, additions should not overwhelm the existing structure or neighboring buildings." (Residential Additions - Page 6). In general practice, the Board has striven to keep additions to a size that is approximately no larger than the historic main block so that they do not, in fact, overwhelm an existing historic building. Several of the existing additions in the row are of similar or even longer length. However, all were approved over a decade ago. On a more practical note, Staff has concerns about the fact that the proposed addition will leave only 801.55 square foot of open space when 800 square feet are required. This leaves virtually no margin for error in the construction process. Based upon all the above, Staff believes that the application should be deferred for restudy for an addition that is more appropriate to the size of the existing house.

Staff notes the comments of Alexandria Archaeology and has included them as a condition if the Board approves the addition.

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.

Historic Alexandria:

“No comment.”

Alexandria Archaeology:

- F-1 Tax records indicate that development on this street face had begun by 1810 and that two free African American households were located on the block in 1830. The property therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources which could provide insight into domestic activities, perhaps relating to free blacks, in early 19th-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.