

Docket Item #16
BAR CASE# 2004-0127

BAR Meeting
July 21, 2004

ISSUE: New window
APPLICANT: Clay Perfall
LOCATION: 102 South Union Street
ZONE: CD/Commercial

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends denial of the application.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for a new double hung wood window to replace the existing shutter doors on the second floor of the King Street elevation of the building at 102 South Union Street (the former Seaport Inn).

II. HISTORY:

According to Ethelyn Cox in *Alexandria Street by Street*, the original warehouse building at this location was constructed ca. 1787 and was owned by Col. John Fitzgerald, an important Revolutionary War figure. The rear addition dates from the early 1960s and was approved by the Board on October 12, 1960.

The first floor is presently occupied by a Starbucks and the floors above are for office use. The rear addition has been separated from the 18th century portion of the structure and is now the Mai Tai restaurant. With these new uses, the building has undergone substantive changes in the last few years. The existing windows have been replaced (BAR Case #99-004, 2/3/99); signs have been installed for the Starbucks restaurant (BAR Case #2000-225, 10/18/00); and the 1960 rear addition has undergone significant change including new windows, doors, signage and outdoor seating (BAR Case #2003-011, 2/5/03 & 2003-206, 3/17/04).

Despite these changes, the building retains its status as one of the most iconic buildings in the Old and Historic Alexandria District that personifies for many the 18th century architectural heritage of Alexandria. It still retains an overall architectural character that clearly links the building to the working waterfront of the 18th century. The building was originally used as a warehouse and sail loft. The shuttered doors on the 1st, 2nd and 3rd floor provided a convenient way to haul goods from ground level to the upper levels of the building. Thus, these shuttered openings directly link the building to its original uses.

Historic American Building Survey drawings and photographs from the 1930s and 1950s clearly show that the shuttered openings had remained in place since the 18th century.

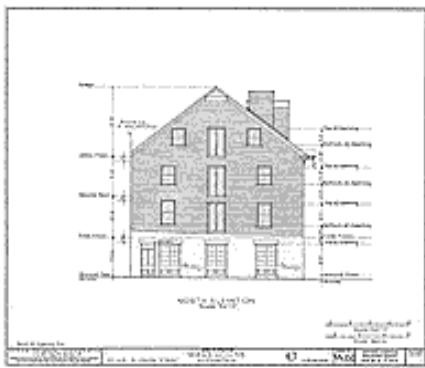


Figure 2 HABS drawing of King Street elevation of Fitzgerald's warehouse dated 1937



Figure 1 HABS photograph of King Street elevation dated 1959

III. ANALYSIS:

Proposed window to replace existing shutter door complies with zoning ordinance requirements.

While Staff is sympathetic to the desire to provide additional light to the second floor offices, it is the opinion of Staff that removing the shuttered opening and replacing it with a new double hung window would fundamentally alter a character defining feature of the building that has served to define the original historic use of the building for over 220 years.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Therefore, Staff recommends denial of the application.

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.

Office of Historic Alexandria:

This building used to be a warehouse. If the original opening was a warehouse door as shown now, I would prefer to keep that as it helps illustrate the past use.