

Docket Item #12
BAR CASE #2004-0113

BAR Meeting
August 18, 2004

ISSUE: Permit to Demolish
APPLICANT: Stew Clark
LOCATION: 921 South Alfred Street
ZONE: RM/Residential

BOARD ACTION, JUNE 16, 2004: The Board combined the discussion of docket item #'s 15 & 16. On a motion by Ms. Neihardt, seconded by Mr. Smeallie the Board deferred the application for restudy. The motion passed on a vote of 5-0.

REASON: The Board believed that the design of the addition was too high style for the simple townhouse and that the fenestration pattern needed work as well as the placement of the addition on the lot because as drawn it would create setback problems for any adjacent additions.

SPEAKER: Stew Clark, project designer, spoke in support
Martha Bethe, homeowner, spoke in support
Andrea Snow, 917 S. Alfred Street, spoke in support
Hal Arata, 919 S. Alfred Street, spoke in opposition
Clifford Wilkering, 915 Church Street and 921 S. Patrick Street, spoke in support

UPDATE: The form of the proposed addition has been revised. Instead of a gable roofed addition perpendicular to and centered on the rear wall of the main block, the addition now has a flounder form and is located on the south property line and 3' off the north property line.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted.

Note: This docket item requires a roll call vote.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Permit to Demolish to allow for an addition on the basement and first story at the rear of the existing two story rowhouse at 921 South Alfred Street. All but the northern most 3' of the rear wall on the basement and first story will be capsulated by the proposed addition. Limited areas will be demolished to enlarge existing openings to allow access to the new addition. The right (southernmost) window opening on the second story will be partially infilled at the bottom.

The rear of the house at 921 South Alfred Street is visible from the public court and alley at the center of the block. A 6' high wood fence obscures the lower portion of the house at the rear.

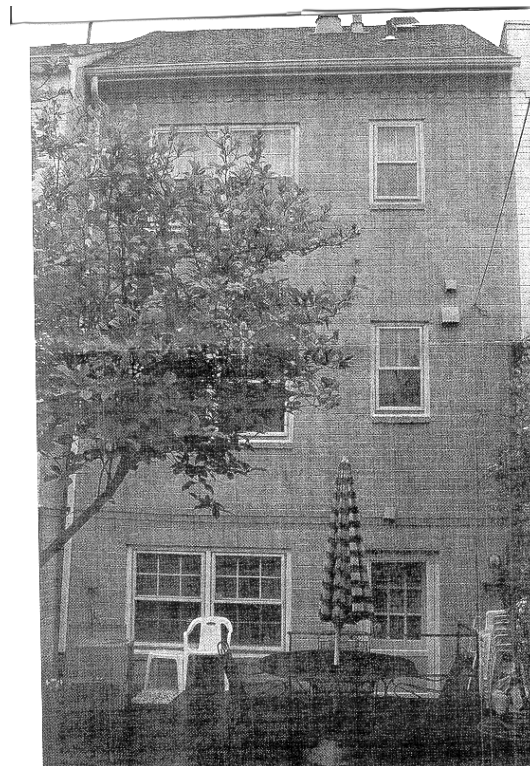


Figure 1 - Rear 921 S. Alfred Street

II. HISTORY:

The two story brick clad cinderblock rowhouse at 921 South Alfred Street was originally part of an apartment complex constructed in the 1940s or 1950s. In 1977, the Board approved the conversion of the four connected apartment buildings (then known as 911, 915, 919 & 932 South Alfred Street) to eight single family rowhomes (now known as 909, 911, 913, 915, 917, 919, 921 and 923 South Alfred Street). Michael and Michael served as the architect for the conversion. Architectural embellishments were added to the fronts of all eight units and the exteriors of a several of units were painted while openings at the rear were altered, allowing each unit to read and function as a separate two story rowhouse. The work was completed in 1978. In 1981, the Board approved a deck at 923 South Alfred Street and in 1999 minor alterations at 909 South Alfred Street (BAR Case #99-0060, 5/5/1999). To date, none of the eight houses in the row have rear additions.

III. ANALYSIS:

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?

Staff does not believe any of the above criteria are applicable. The house at 921 South Alfred Street was originally part of an apartment building constructed circa 1950. The mid-20th century building was substantially altered when converted to a row of single family houses c. 1978. The proposed demolition and capsulation is limited to the basement and first story levels of the rear wall. Staff recommended approval of the Permit to Demolish for the previous plan. The revised addition appears to involve slightly less capsulation and infill than the previous plan. Therefore, Staff concludes that the proposed demolition can be supported.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

- C-1 All exterior walls within 3 feet from an interior property line shall have a fire resistance rating of 1 hour, from both sides, with no openings permitted within the wall. As alternative, a 2 hour fire wall may be provided. This condition is also applicable to porches with roofs and skylights within setback distance.
- C-2 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 taken to prevent the spread of rodents from the construction site to the surrounding community and sewers.
- C-3 Roof drainage systems must be installed so as neither to impact upon, nor cause erosion/damage to adjacent property.
- C-4 A soils report must be submitted with the building permit application.
- C-5 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-6 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-7 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.
- C-8 Permission from adjacent property owners is required if access to the adjacent properties is required to complete the proposed construction. Otherwise, a plan shall be submitted to demonstrate the construction techniques utilized to keep construction solely on the referenced property.
- C-9 A wall location plat prepared by a land surveyor is required to be submitted to this office prior to requesting any framing inspection.

Alexandria Archaeology

“There is a low potential for this project to disturb significant archaeological resources. No archeological action is required.”

Historic Alexandria:

No comment.