

Docket Item #25
BAR CASE #2004-0156

BAR Meeting
August 18, 2004

ISSUE: Rear addition

APPLICANT: Stephanie Dimond

LOCATION: 509 South Fairfax Street

ZONE: RM/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of either of the alternatives for the addition with the following conditions:

1. The transoms over the windows are eliminated;
2. 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; and,
3. The above statement must appear in the General Notes of the site plan so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement.

Note: Docket item # 24 must be approved before this docket item can be considered.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for a two story rear addition at 509 South Fairfax Street. The addition will be approximately 29'6" in overall length and 14'4" in width and will be two stories in height with a basement. At the basement level there will be a new multi-light wood door and two sets of windows in window well. On the first level there will be a centered pair of multi-light French doors with multi-light transom over, these doors will be flanked by two-over-two true divided light wood windows both with transoms. There will be a metal railing in front of the French doors. The configuration of the third level fenestration will be the same as that on the second level. At the roof line, the center area over the French doors will be hipped roof covered with slate. The gable roof section of the addition will be covered with standing seam metal. The addition will be sheathed in painted wood siding.

Alternative with deck

The applicant is also requesting approval of an alternative design which includes a small deck at the first level. The deck is approximately 7' wide and 4' in length. The deck would replace the metal railings on the French doors at the first level. The deck and stairs will be of wood and have metal railings.

Between the existing house and the addition is an inset area which will allow light into the center portion of the house. This section will have two pair of French doors with transoms over on the first level and a pair of paired two-over-two true divided light wood windows along with a single two-over-two wood window on the second level. This section will also be sheathed in painted wood siding.

The new addition will run lot line to lot line creating two new party walls so that there is no exposed sheathing on either the north or south sides of the addition.

II. HISTORY:

The two story wood frame Queen Anne/Second Empire Victorian style, duplex townhouse was constructed between 1891 and 1896. The existing rear (west) elevation lacks any noteworthy architectural character and is visible only over the top of the cooling towers and loading dock of the Safeway store on South Royal Street.

The rear two story addition was approved by the Board on 4/13/1960.

The Board approved the construction of a rear addition at the adjacent duplex at 509 ½ South Fairfax Street in 1992 (BAR Case #92-0229, 12/16/92).

III. ANALYSIS:

Proposed rear addition/ alterations comply with the zoning regulations.

In general Staff believes that the overall form of the either design for the addition meets the recommendations in the *Design Guidelines* and is supportive of the design of the addition which reflects much of the Victorian architectural character of the front of the house including a raised centered hip roof. Staff is also supportive of the proposed materials called out for the addition which meet the recommendations of the *Design Guidelines*.

The one aspect of the design of the addition that Staff does find troubling are the proposed transoms over the individual windows of the addition. While Staff is aware that transoms over windows were a part of Victorian house designs, they are not found within the Old and Historic Alexandria District on residential buildings. The one instance where they are found within the historic district is on the Campanga Center on South Washington Street, an institutional building. There are other nearby historic districts that have Victorian residential buildings with transoms over windows, such as in Frederick, Maryland, but as noted above they are not part of the architectural traditions of Alexandria. Thus, it is the strong preference of Staff that the transoms over the windows be eliminated. Having said that, however, Staff is aware that the rear of this property has limited visibility from the public right-of-way, so that the window transoms would not become a prominent visual feature.

Staff notes the comments of Alexandria Archaeology and has included them as a condition.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the addition with the following conditions:

1. The transoms over the windows are eliminated;
2. 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; and,
3. The above statement must appear in the General Notes of the site plan so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

- C-1 Building and demolition permits required for proposed construction.
- 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 Roof drainage must not run toward adjacent property. If the footprint area of the addition: (1) exceeds the footprint area of the existing structure, or (2) the roof drainage of the existing structure is hard piped, or (3) the roof drainage from the addition will cause erosion or damage to an adjacent property, then run-off water must be hard piped (schedule 40 PVC pipe; \geq 3" in diameter) to the storm, sewer, inlet box, building subdrain, street flume or curb.
- C-5 Sheeting and shoring shall not extend beyond the property line; except when the developer has obtained a written release from adjacent property owners which has been recorded in the land records; or through an approved encroachment process.
- C-6 All exterior walls within 3 feet of 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.
- C-7 Every sleeping room shall have at lease one openable emergency escape and rescue window per IRC sec. R310.1.
- C-8 Winder stairways must comply with IRC sec. R314.4.
- C-9 Smoke alarms required per IRC sec. R317.1.

Historic Alexandria:

No comment.

Alexandria Archaeology:

- F-1 Tax records indicate the presence of a free African American household on this street face in 1810 and in 1850, but the exact addresses are not known. The 1877 G.M. Hopkins Insurance Atlas depicts a structure on the lot. The property therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources that could provide insight into domestic activities, perhaps

relating to free blacks, in Alexandria during the 19th century.

- 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.