

Docket Item #15
BAR CASE #2004-0176

BAR Meeting
September 1, 2004

ISSUE: Replacement roof
APPLICANT: Northern Virginia Roofing
LOCATION: 320 South Washington Street
ZONE: CD/Commercial

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends deferral of the application for restudy.

I. Issue:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the replacement of the existing roof as the Beulah Baptist Church building at 320 South Washington Street with a new asphalt shingle roof.

II. History

320 South Washington Street is a two story front gable brick Gothic Revival church housing the Beulah Baptist Church. The building was originally constructed in 1863. The roof was raised two feet between 1885 and 1902. "The roof was raised again some years later, and the newer brick has a different bond than the lower section of the facade. Most of the facade has pressed brick in a running bond pattern; however the upper half of the gable is six-course common bond. Similarly the front facade shows clear evidence of alteration of the brick in the gable indicating that the roof pitch was substantially increased." (Source: National Register nomination form, African American Historic Resources of Alexandria, Virginia) A cornerstone states: "Rebuilt 1950".

Although it is entirely possible that the roof was raised at the time the building underwent substantial alteration, the building retains a distinctively 19th century Gothic Revival appearance.

III. Analysis

Proposed roof complies with zoning ordinance.

The *Design Guidelines* recommend that a roof be historically appropriate to the age of the building. In the opinion of Staff, replacing the roof with new asphalt shingles is clearly inappropriate. First, as matter of logic, asphalt shingles are a 20th century invention and so were not available at the time the church was originally constructed. More importantly, Staff believes that an asphalt shingle roof is not appropriate to the richly ornamented building and provides a discordant note to the complex surface of the building. Staff believes that any of the following roof materials would be historically appropriate for the building: wood shingles; standing seam metal or slate. Staff also believes that faux slate that is convincing could be used. Staff believes that further investigation should be undertaken regarding an historically appropriate roof material. Staff would urge that the life cycle costs of the various roofing options be considered when selecting a new roof material.

IV. Staff Recommendation

Therefore, Staff recommends deferral of the application for restudy.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

C-1 A building permit is required to replace roofing on a commercial structure. The applicant filed for a permit #BLD2004-02577 on 7/20/04. The permit is on hold pending BAR review.

Historic Alexandria:

No comment.