

Docket Item #16  
BAR CASE #2004-0177

BAR Meeting  
September 1, 2004

**ISSUE:** Permit to Demolish

**APPLICANT:** Susan and Abbott Lipsky

**LOCATION:** 517 Queen Street

**ZONE:** RM/Residential

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## STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the Permit to Demolish.

NOTE: This docket item requires a roll call vote.

### I. Issue:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Permit to Demolish portions of the rear of the residence at 517 Queen Street. The area to be demolished will allow construction of a new two story addition.

### II. History

517 Queen Street is a three story brick townhouse dating from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century according to Ethelyn Cox in *Alexandria Street by Street* (p.145). The area to be demolished is a stair enclosure that rises from the first level to the second level and is approximately 3' in width. In addition, the east wall of the rearmost addition will be removed. The additions to be removed are clearly not contemporaneous with the construction of the front of the house. Although somewhat difficult to date, it is the opinion of Staff that the sections proposed for removal date from the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century probably after 1921, according to the Sanborn Insurance maps. These later additions are readily distinguished from the original house construction because they are frame and covered in German lap siding while the main historic block is brick.

In 1996 the Board approved the demolition of the rearmost 14' of these additions to allow for the construction of a new addition (BAR Case #96-268, 12/4/96), but the addition was not constructed.

### 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?

It is the opinion of Staff that none of the demolition criteria are met because the additions do not

contribute to the overall historic importance of the main block of the historic structure and likely date from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

IV. Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends approval of the Permit to Demolish.

## CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

### Code Enforcement:

- C-1 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
  
- C-2 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.
  
- C-3 The new stairs must comply with USBC for riser and tread dimensions.

### Historic Alexandria:

No comment.

### Alexandria Archaeology:

- F-1 According to Ethelyn Cox's *Historic Alexandria, Street by Street, A Survey of Existing Early Buildings*, the house on this property was constructed in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The lot therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources that could provide into domestic activities in 19<sup>th</sup> - 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.